

**MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 at The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Cohen, Double, Fox, Stephens and Thompson (Chair).

**In attendance:** David Pooley (Town Clerk) and Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk).

**CC/23/16) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pearce, Rowse and Young.

**CC/23/17) Declarations of Interest**

Arising from a question, the Clerk confirmed that Councillor Fox's employment at Cornwall College (where Keay Theatre is located) did not preclude her from taking part in discussions at agenda item 7 (Small Grants Scheme – St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society).

**CC/23/18) Dispensations**

None.

**CC/23/19) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 5th June 2023**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**CC/23/20) Matters to Note**

The Clerk advised that he had nothing to add.

**CC/23/21) Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

*\*\*Councillor Stephens arrived during the next item\*\**

**CC/23/22) Small Grants Scheme**

*CHAOS Radio*

Nathan Hunkin and Henry Rosewall advised that CHAOS has partnered with Radio St Austell Bay which has been re-branded as CHAOS Radio. They advised that they have lots of exciting plans for the radio station and hope to provide a community platform for local voices, cover community events, air local and national news bulletins, play a variety of feel good music and engage in fund raising to ensure sustainability of the station. Mr Hunkin advised that they would like to recruit, train and develop local volunteers and provide them with opportunities to become community reporters and presenters. Members noted that if successful the funding applied for would go towards volunteer uniforms, promotional material, a portable recorder and replacement headphones.

During discussion, Mr Hunkin confirmed that they had linked in with Cornwall College and that due to a lack of software, they are unable to provide an accurate figure of listeners.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £1,000 towards the CHAOS Community Radio Development Project.

#### *Climate Action St Austell*

Mr Gray advised that CASA is in the process of organising a St Austell Green Fair at the Holy Trinity Church on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and that so far, 7 organisations have signed up to attend, with hopefully 16 stalls in total. CASA are hoping to have on display a bicycle that will produce energy and the event will be educational and informative on the issue of climate change.

Arising from a question, Mr Gray confirmed that the gazebo purchased by CASA utilising grant funding from the Town Council is regularly used.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to Climate Action St Austell towards the cost of their St Austell Green Fair in October 2023.

#### *St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society*

Mrs Prater thanked the Town Council for their previous support in the sum of £750 towards their annual theatre productions and outlined their 2024 production of "Jack and the Beanstalk" at Keay Theatre.

Members expressed their gratitude to St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society for their amazing productions over the years and a proposal was put forward to increase the grant request from £750 to £1,000 to assist with the rising costs involved.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £1,000 to St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society towards the cost of their January 2024 production of "Jack and the Beanstalk".

### **CC/23/23) Town Centre Christmas Lights**

The Clerk advised that in 2015 the Town Council agreed to contribute £5,276 per annum for five years to St Austell BID by way of a contribution to the town centre Christmas lights. He further advised that following their recent re-election a further request has been received to assist with the funding of the Christmas lights on another 5 year term.

Mrs Miller and Mr Lovatt from St Austell BID explained that a new design for the lights has been chosen for Fore Street which will hopefully provide maximum impact yet be robust enough to withstand the high winds and rain which has been experienced in Cornwall over recent years. The design also includes festoon lighting which remains in situ all year round and can be switched on when needed for other town centre events. Pictures of the proposed Christmas lighting for Fore Street, Biddicks Court, side of Boots, Chandos Place, outside Iceland and Old Vicarage Place, North Street, Victoria Place, High Cross Street, South Street, Duke Street and Trinity Street were circulated to Councillors. During discussion, Members expressed support for the new stars design for Fore Street.

The Clerk advised that without St Austell BID, the Town Council would probably be asked to fund the full cost of Christmas lights in the town centre and that contributing 50% towards the total cost is reasonable, particularly as the costs involved include the installation, removal and maintenance of the lights. Arising from a question, Mrs Miller advised that the use of holograms on buildings has been explored and is cost prohibitive.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the annual contribution to St Austell BID for Christmas lights from £5,276 to £12,500 per annum for five years.

#### **CC/23/24) Poltair Residents Association**

The Clerk advised that a letter has been received from the Chair of Poltair Residents Association to advise that at their Annual General Meeting in August it was agreed that the Association should be dissolved at the end of the year and that Lostwood Community Garden should be returned to St Austell Town Council to maintain with effect from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.

During discussion, Members expressed their gratitude to Poltair Residents Association for their successful funding applications, maintenance of Lostwood Community Garden and various community events over the years.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should write to Poltair Residents Association to acknowledge their dissolution at the end of the year, the return of Lostwood Community Garden to the Town Council with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 and thank them for their community activities in Poltair over the last 20 years.

#### **CC/23/25) Climate & Environment Projects Update**

The Clerk explained that every effort was made to incorporate environmental considerations into all of the Council's activities. He outlined a number of projects to demonstrate the Council's commitment including:

- Bethel Park – recycled furniture and recycled rubber mulch used for paths, sensory garden and planting schemes, earth used on-site to reduce transport.
- Beryl bikes – chasing installation of racks and usage reports but scheme appears to have settled down.
- Mid Cornwall including St Austell will be a pilot for the new waste management scheme and the library will host a number of roadshow events promoting the new arrangements.
- The polytunnel and tree nursery are producing 5-10% of our plants.
- EV charging points should be operational in Priory Car Park shortly.

Arising from a question, the Clerk advised that he has chased Beryl Bikes for a report on their use in the town and a timescale for the installation of bike racks.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update.

#### **CC/23/26) Garden Festival – Review of Suggestions**

The Clerk advised that at the Garden Festival in June, the public were encouraged to suggest ways in which the town centre could be improved. The suggestions were placed anonymously in a "suggestions box".

The Clerk advised that the suggestions had been summarised and circulated a list of the comments to Members. Although, very grateful for the suggestions and comments, it was noted that with the exception of assisting with the co-ordination of town centre activities, the Town Council are unable to, for example, authorise the removal of the statue in Aylmer Square or deal with matters outside its remit.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the comments and to continue encouraging outside organisations to hold events and activities in the town centre.

### **CC/23/27) Park Events**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that casual use of the parks by small groups (eg: childrens' nurseries) is permitted but there is an approval process for events where the public are invited which includes consulting the local Ward Members. She outlined the process adopted and the checks made eg: evidence of public liability insurance, risk assessments and toilet facilities.

Events held in recent months include:

1. Coronation Celebration at Chapel Field
2. Party in the Park at Poltair Park
3. Charity Dog Show at Poltair Park
4. Big Butterfly Count at Linear Park
5. Summar Garden Party at Landrew Road Community Garden
6. Time to Move Childrens' Summer Event – Linear Park
7. Homestart Kernow Summer Picnic at Poltair Park

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update.

### **CC/23/28) Projects Update**

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk provided an update on the following projects:

#### *Town Centre Regeneration*

The contract for the roof top garden has been awarded and work has commenced in the form of site visits and engagement with the landlord. Unfortunately, the GWR funding bid for station improvements was unsuccessful but funding is being explored to improve the church grounds and replace the banner on the side of Poundland. The High Street Task Force (Government Body) is visiting St Austell on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September and will meet with Cornwall Council and Town Centre Regeneration Partnership representatives. Four SABEF benches have been installed (2 at Biddicks Court, 1 at Carlyon Road and 1 at Holy Trinity Church), the fifth one has been damaged and will be installed at a later date.

#### *CCTV*

The CCTV cameras are currently on their summer monitoring hours which is almost 24/7. The re-deployable camera has had two major successes resulting in closure orders. The next site for its location is being explored.

### *Poltair Park*

The bat licences and planning permission is in place which should allow the installation of the bat house and demolition of the toilet block to be completed by the end of the year.

### *Poltair Park Café*

The café is still operational under a tenancy at will which is due to be reviewed later in the year. The Town Council is still covering utilities and partial business rate costs.

### *Car Park and Toilets*

The car park income is slightly below budget although income picked up during August due to the wet weather which brings people into town. The season tickets are well received with a number of regular users and a separate report is due to be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee next week recommending an upgrade of the car park machines which are nearing end of life. The "Pay 2 Park" web based payment system is working well. The App "Phone and Pay" has issues from time to time.

The cleaning contractors for the toilets are extremely good with very little ASB reported. The coin machines and automatic opening/closing toilet doors are aging and quotations are being sought for their replacement.

### *Anti-social behaviour*

Sector Inspector Matt Trevivian introduced himself to Town Councillors at their last Council meeting and is very supportive of the Town Council and St Austell BID. The security guards are working extremely well with the police and their good work in conjunction with the CCTV monitoring, shop watch radio and CCTV is keeping anti-social behaviour reasonably in check. Unfortunately, complaints have been received over recent weeks about large gatherings of people around the town centre and a letter has been sent to Kate Kennally requesting a review, particularly with regard to the emergency/temporary accommodation placements in or near St Austell town centre.

### *St Austell Library*

Statistical information received from Cornwall Council shows St Austell Library as the top performing library in Cornwall for books/CD's issued in July. The library has had an extremely busy summer reading challenge and continues to provide many reading, writing and support group activities as well as social events hosted by SALSA. The school visits are proving extremely popular with up to 30 children in the library when they visit.

### *Bethel Park Improvement*

The Bethel Park refurbishment has been completed and is extremely popular. Project completion documentation has been issued to Cornwall Council which should enable the release of the CIL grant funding to the Town Council.

### *Truro Road Park*

The new safety surfacing work has been completed in Truro Road and the Regeneration Officer is exploring funding to replace the outdoor gym equipment.

### *Landrew Road Park*

Funding is being sought for a potential improvement project at Landrew Road Park. If funding is identified, a report will be produced for Members' consideration.

### *Young People Cornwall (YPC)*

YPC is still extremely active in the town and has been carrying out some outreach work at Lostwood Community Garden and Landrew Road Park. The Police have also requested outreach in a few other hot spot areas.

### *Allotments*

A final reminder has been issued to an allotment holder at Alexandra Road. No response has been received so another tenant will be pursued.

### *Grounds Maintenance*

The grounds staff will shortly be working on Mount Charles roundabout to formalise and add colour and the anchor on the Field of Hope has been painted by the Rotary Club. Grass cutting is still the main priority and will be until October/November. The parks have all been very busy which has resulted in extra litter over the summer months. St Austell is in the first phase of the new waste contract roll out which will see general waste being collected bi-weekly. Officers will monitor the impact on the Town Council's parks and open spaces.

Arising from a question, the Clerk undertook to speak to the Operations Manager about the Town Council's footpath cutting responsibilities at Gypsy Lane which was raised as an issue. It was noted that only a section of the footpath is maintained by the Town Council.

Members generally welcomed the work proposed at Mount Charles roundabout and the Clerk undertook to speak to the Operations Manager about the health of the hydrangeas on the Field of Hope.

### *Footpaths*

The Town Council is responsible for cutting a number of footpaths under an agency agreement with Cornwall Council. This is now undertaken by the Town Council's grounds maintenance staff and no longer contracted out.

### **CC/23/29) To consider excluding the press and public.**

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1 (ii) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business of the meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

### **CC/23/30) Small Grant Scheme – Non-compliance of funding conditions**

The Clerk outlined the circumstances relating to the suspected non-compliance with grant conditions by a local organisation who was awarded a grant in 2022. Members noted the grant conditions agreed by the recipient at the time and felt strongly that recovery of the grant should be sought.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should seek recovery of the grant and report back to the November meeting.

### **CC/23/31) Dates of Meetings**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Community Committee is scheduled for Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm.