

MINUTES of a MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 16th OCTOBER 2023 in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Cohen, Double, Fox, French, Guest, Lanxon, Pearce, Pears, Stephens, Thompson and Young.

In attendance: David Pooley (Town Clerk), Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk) and Steve Skinner (Operations Manager).

C/23/65) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bull, Clemo, Hamilton, Rowse and Styles.

Councillors Cohen and Guest advised that they would be late arriving.

C/23/66) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received

The Clerk advised that the Deputy Clerk, Operations Manager and he all had an interest in agenda item 21 (Staffing Committee Minutes).

Councillor Stephens arrived during the next item

C/23/67) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/23/68) Minutes of Meeting held on 4th September 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Lanxon arrived during the next item

C/23/69) Matters to Note

The Town Clerk advised that the Bethel & Holmbush and Poltair & Mount Charles Ward vacancies will be filled by co-option at the Town Council meeting on Monday 6th November. He added that following due process, a request for an election has been received for the Central & Gover Ward vacancy. If two or more candidates stand, the likely date for an election is Thursday 23rd November 2023.

Further correspondence has been received from Cornwall Council with regard to complex needs/temporary accommodation and e-mailed to all Councillors. The Green Fair is scheduled to take place on Saturday 21st October at Holy Trinity Church.

Arising from a question, Councillor Pears advised that he would update Members on the proposed ticket office closure at St Austell Railway station under Cornwall Councillor Reports.

C/23/70) Mayor's announcements

The Mayor advised that she had enjoyed her Mayoral engagement at the Deaf fest which took place at Cornwall College in September. She advised that it was a well organised event with representatives from the Fire and Police services and gave attendees an insight into the support that is available for people with a hearing disability. The Mayor added that she is looking forward to attending the Green Fair on Saturday and a Civic Event in Truro hosted by the High Sheriff of Cornwall.

C/23/71) Public Participation

None.

C/23/72) Members' questions

There were no questions from Members.

Councillor Guest arrived during the next item

Councillor Cohen arrived during the next item

C/23/73) Grounds Maintenance

The Operations Manager provided Members with an in depth report on the Grounds Maintenance Services and highlighted the following activities/projects:

- Erection of a "bat house" and demolition of the old toilet block in Poltair Park
- The planting of 637 trees and 6 wildflower areas
- The refurbishment of Bethel Park
- The trialling of a battery operated blower

The Operations Manager explained the Town Council's weed control activity and provided pictures of towns that no longer receive weed treatment. He stressed that he is watching for legislative changes with regard to the use of glyphosate and developments with regard to non-chemical weed spraying treatments. He advised that he is currently looking for a foam stream operator in Cornwall as he has lost contact with a previous contractor.

The Operations Manager highlighted the maintenance of gateways to St Austell and roundabouts as a priority and a commitment to provide more colour on Mount Charles roundabout. He advised that his staff have a long list of winter maintenance jobs across the town which include clearance works at Lostwood Gardens following its return to the Town Council to maintain on Monday 23rd October 2023.

During discussion, Members highlighted the following issues/concerns:

- Cars parking on the verge/grass banking at Lostwood Road and Landrew Road
- Overgrowth and weeds at High Cross Street Car Park
- The impact the Penwinnick Road demolition works may have on the wildflower verges at Penwinnick Road

It was **RESOLVED** to formally thank the Operations Manager and his team for their excellent environmental activities across the town.

C/23/74) Priory Car Park

The Clerk advised that an approach has been made by St John's Methodist Church for permission to instal an access from Priory Car Park to the front of St John's Methodist Church by breaking through a point in the boundary hedge. As well as a stepped access, there would be a 25m ramp with 4 level resting places. The Operations Manager advised that the only impact on the car park is likely to be the loss of one parking space.

It was **RESOLVED** to permit St John's Methodist Church to instal an accessible access from Priory Car Park to St John's Methodist Church subject to:

1. Cornwall Council (landlord) approval
2. Planning approval (if required)
3. Any costs associated with the project to be borne by St John's Methodist Church

C/23/75) School Transport – Poltair School

The Clerk advised that Poltair School is seeking support with regard to a proposal by Cornwall Council to phase out the home to school bus route from Penwithick to Poltair School and that the number of disadvantaged young people using the service appears to be high. The Clerk added that under the phasing out proposal, the young people currently using the home to school bus route will still be able to do so. However, if the proposal is approved, there will be no bus service between Penwithick and Poltair School for new young people attending the school.

During discussion, Members expressed the following:

- The route would involve crossing the busy A391;
- The area being susceptible to poor visibility;
- An increase in air quality issues due to the inevitable increase in cars taking children to school and back home again;
- The potential for young people to hang around in town after school and become involved in anti-social behaviour
- The need to make attending school as easy as possible for children
- A lack of awareness with regard to the consultation

Cornwall Councillors Guest and Pears explained that each route identified would be considered carefully during the final decision making process and following the consultation, some routes might remain. They advised that the routes identified as safe to walk had been assessed by an independent traffic consultant and that the Roche/Bugle school children would remain eligible for the Home to School bus. It was noted that the consultation has closed.

It was **RESOLVED** to write a strong letter to Councillor Barbara Ellenbroek, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families, outlining the Town Council's concerns, copying in Poltair School and Councillor Luke.

Councillor Guest voted against this proposal

Councillors Double and Pears abstained from voting

C/23/76) Priory Car Park – Saturday Christmas Shopping Events – Free Parking Request

In order to assist the town centre Christmas events organised by St Austell BID, it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should provide free parking in Priory Car Park on Saturday 25th November 2023, Saturday 2nd December 2023, Saturday 9th December 2023 and Saturday 16th December 2023.

C/23/77) Planning Application – PA23/06729

It was **RESOLVED** to make no objection to this application.

C/23/78) Small Grants Scheme

St Austell Festival of Music and Speech 2023

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to St Austell Festival of Music and Speech towards the cost of their annual festival due to take place in November and December 2023.

St Austell Choral Society

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to St Austell Choral Society towards the cost of their Autumn concert due to take place in November 2023.

C/23/79) Members appointed to outside bodies update reports

Councillor Brown advised that he had attended the inaugural Carlyon Road Working Group headed up by Cornwall Council and Mei Loci. The output will be a vision to guide future development of the Carlyon Road site excluding the Fire Station, Ambulance Station and the Library. The timescale for completion of the project is by the end of the year. A number of stakeholders will be consulted including the Town Council.

As Chair of the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership, Councillor Brown advised that the last Partnership meeting was well attended on the 26th September 2023 and that Hayhurst Consultants introduced themselves to the Partnership. It is hoped that more detail on the work in progress will be provided at the meeting scheduled for the end of the month.

Councillor Brown advised that he had recently attended the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) AGM where he was pleased to learn that Cornwall Council is still providing a large grant to assist them with their ever increasing work load. At the present time, they are not sure where their base will be in St Austell following the closure of the Penwinnick Road offices.

Councillor Brown advised that he had been unable to attend the last CALC meeting which focused on Community Safety and invited the Town Clerk to provide an update on his behalf. The Clerk advised that it was very apparent at the meeting that St Austell is in a much better position with regard to Community Safety than other towns due to the excellent CCTV partnership with Newquay Town Council, town centre security guard provision and shop watch radio. Concern was expressed at the meeting with regard to the lack of statistical information and the difficulty in reporting crime utilising the 101 telephone number or on-line reporting form.

Councillor Lanxon advised that she had been unable to attend the Community Area Partnership or the AFC Football Club/Cornwall College Working Group. The Clerk added that Mr Evans from Cornwall College is hoping to attend the Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting on the 30th October to update Members on progress with regard to the planned refurbishment at Poltair Park, AFC St Austell site.

C/23/80) Cornwall Councillor update reports

Members noted the written reports received from Councillors Double, Guest and Rowse. Councillor Double added that she is in discussions with Treverbyn Parish Council and the Highways Manager about the need for changes on the Carthew Road following another tragic accident. She also advised that the MP has spoken to the Minister responsible about the proposal to withdraw the ticket office at St Austell station and that a decision is awaited.

Councillor Pears updated Members on the speed monitoring proposals at Slades Road and Porthpean Road and double yellow lines at Morleigh Close. He advised that 23% of street lighting in Cornwall is now LED and that 226 EV charging points have been installed across Cornwall. Councillor Pears advised that £2.8m has been set aside for Active Travel Schemes and the recent bus improvements include a tap on, tap off system which negates the need for tickets. He added that people are now able to flag down buses if safe to do so and that a £2 bus ticket can now be purchased to travel anywhere in Cornwall.

During discussion, the following issues/concerns were raised:

- What the latest position is with regard to speed monitoring on Porthpean Road and Slades Road;
- An experience of having to use the ticket office as change of ticket required couldn't be done on line;
- Biffa waste collections
- The latest position with regard to plans to build a new crematorium near Bude

A discussion took place with regard to Cornwall Council's stance on the proposal to withdraw the ticket office at St Austell and the extent of the consultation with regard to the Mid Cornwall Metro Project.

Councillor Pears **AGREED** to ascertain which local Councils in Cornwall have been consulted about the Mid Cornwall Metro Project and report back to the next Council meeting.

C/23/81) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Payments for the period 24th August 2023 to 5th October 2023 totalling £250,991.02 be approved.

C/23/82) Planning and Regeneration Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting held on 25th September 2023.

C/23/83) Community Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on 11th September 2023.

C/23/84) Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 18th September 2023 and **APPROVE** the **RECOMMENDATIONS** contained therein.

C/23/85) Staffing Committee

Councillor Brown suggested that within minute number S/23/09 it should read:

..... The Clerk added that a Community Project Officer is not a priority within resources at the present time,

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 29th September 2023 should be noted.

C/23/86) 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.

C/23/87) Cornwall Council – Land Disposal

The Clerk advised that Cornwall Council is looking to dispose of two small plots of land at Eliot Road and is offering them to the Town Council before they consider other options.

It was **RESOLVED** to thank Cornwall Council for offering the two plots of land at Eliot Road to the Town Council but advise that after due consideration, the Town Council does not wish to proceed.

C/23/88) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Town Council meetings are due to take place on Monday 6th November 2023 and Monday 11th December 2023.

The meeting closed at 7.31pm.