

**St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership  
Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 9.45am – Stable Block/TEAMS**

**Attendees:**

Democratic: Malcolm Brown (MB), Anne Double (AD), Tom French (TF), Crystal Pearce (CP), Richard Pears (RP) (Teams).

Voluntary/Community: Sandra Heyward (SH), Heather Batho (HB), Letitia Mayne (LM), Chris Sampson (CS).

Business: Dale Lovatt (St Austell BID), Peter Moody (St Austell Print), Miles Lovegrove (Fluid Branding), Neil Woodward (South West Financial Services).

Advisors: Sara Gwilliams (TC), David Pooley (TC), Annette Miller (St Austell BID), Mark Ellis (CC) (TEAMS).

Consultants: Jonathan Nichols, Ruby Sleigh, Claire Taggart – Hayhurst and Co

**Welcome**

MB thanked everyone for attending the meeting and welcomed new members of the group. He expressed his gratitude for the contribution of Councillor Nott who has resigned from the Town Council to take up a new employment opportunity.

**Apologies for absence**

**Democratic:** Steve Double (MP).

**Voluntary/Community:** Dr Stewart Smith (NHS), David Atkinson-Beaumont (Cornwall College).

**Business:** John Watkins (White River Place)

**Advisors:** Louise Wood (CC) and Sarah Scoltock (CC)

**Minutes of the meeting dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023**

ME advised that the owner of the old General Wolfe building is Corserv Facilities Limited and not Cornwall Council. The minutes of the meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 were approved as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

**Rooftop Garden Project**

Councillor Brown welcomed representatives of Hayhurst and Co to the meeting.

Mr Jonathan Nicholls, Director of Hayhurst and Co Architects thanked the partnership for inviting him to the meeting and introduced his colleagues Ruby Sleigh and Claire Taggart.

Mr Nicholls explained that they are currently undertaking a technical appraisal of the site which included an assessment of the load capacity of the building to understand better its limitation with regard to potential uses. Once this work has been undertaken the design stage will begin which will include the production of a clearer vision for the rooftop garden and the viability of the vision. Mr Nicholls stressed the importance of consulting local stakeholders and listed several groups that had been identified who they would like to consult.

**ACTION: Mr Nicholls to send an e-mail to the Town Clerk, for onward circulation to the partnership, outlining the consultees identified to date for members to review and put forward any further consultee suggestions.**

During discussion MB stressed the need for the Town Council and the Partnership to be kept apprised of the project development in parallel of each other and that ad hoc meetings could be arranged to help this co-ordination.

The group felt that the two secondary schools would be useful consultees and John Keast, a former Mayor and local Pastor in the town. Mr Kevin Prinsloo was also suggested as a consultee.

Mr Nicholls advised that the identified consultees will be contacted within the next 2 weeks.

**ACTION: SG to send Mr Nicholls contacts for Mr Keast and Mr Prinsloo if they are both happy to be involved.**

### **Terms of Reference**

The Town Clerk advised that it would be helpful to amend the Partnership's terms of reference to require just one member from each category of member and a minimum of 5 members to be quorate.

It was **RESOLVED** to amend the terms of reference to require one member from each category of member and a minimum of 5 members to be quorate.

**ACTION: Amend the terms of reference (SG)**

### **Vacancy on the Partnership**

It was **AGREED** that SH and other members of the Voluntary/Community Sector should try to identify a suitable replacement for Jonathan Aberdeen who has resigned from the partnership.

**ACTION: Identify suitable Voluntary/Community representative (SH)**

### **High Street Task Force**

The Clerk advised that the visit by a representative of the Government's High Street Taskforce took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September and thanked the Cornwall Council officers for arranging the visit and the individuals who took part in the

discussions on the day. The representative took the opportunity to walk around the town on her own as well as with Cornwall Council officers and other key stakeholders. She praised the Town Centre masterplan and took a particular interest in the Market House. A report is expected and will be shared with the Partnership when available.

PM gave his impression of the stakeholder meeting and expressed the view that the visit was very positive and should prove very valuable when trying to attract funding.

The Chair added that the MP attended part of the afternoon stakeholder meeting which was appreciated.

AD and ME reiterated that the High Street Task Force is not a funding body but the report produced will hopefully endorse and provide credibility to the Masterplan and aims of the Partnership.

### **Levelling Up Fund**

The Clerk advised that the Round 3 Levelling Up Funding was not announced as widely anticipated before the summer recess of Parliament and little progress has been made during discussions with Cornwall Council and Newquay Town Council. The common theme for both towns is still regarded as the mid Cornwall Metro and the areas around each station which might include facilities for students. The demand for student accommodation and options for provision in St Austell are being worked on in parallel with the work on the rooftop garden which would make up part of any bid for Levelling Up funds.

Arising from a question, the Clerk advised that the term "Levelling up Fund" relates to two pots of money.

1. Cornwall Council has called a fund within their "Shared Prosperity Fund" the "Community Levelling Up Fund". This is for funding up to £100,000 per scheme or project.
2. The Government's large scale funding is called "Levelling up Funding" which is large scale funding (seven figure sums).

The "Metro Project" (improving rail links between Falmouth, Truro, Newquay and Par) is receiving Government Round 2 Levelling up Funding. Round 3 funding has not yet been announced.

By way of clarification, AD advised that there will be one application from each constituency which the local MP has to sign off. She added that the MP is currently working closely with DP and Matthew Vowels on a bid for Newquay/St Austell for student accommodation.

### **Town Council update**

The Clerk advised that:

- The Bethel Park improvement project is now complete and a formal opening will be arranged shortly;
- Funding has been awarded to the BID for new Christmas lights for the next 5 years and for additional security patrols;
- Funding for additional re-deployable CCTV cameras is being explored;
- The Penwinnick Road site has been transferred to Treveth who have agreed to enhance the security of the site with hoarding and additional Heras fencing. The Town Council will be consulted on plans for the site in due course.

MB added that the Town Council had considered the planning application for the new college building and had expressed their full support for the plans and the Finance and General Purposes Committee had recently agreed to freeze the car park charges in Priory Car Park for a further financial year.

### **Cornwall Council update (Mark Ellis)**

Mr Ellis advised that Cornwall Council has launched its budget consultation which is available on the "Let's Talk Cornwall" page of their website and that the Mid Cornwall Metro project is due to be considered by the Cabinet in December.

A Steering Group has been set up to look at the Carlyon Road land and ME advised that it would be helpful if a representative from the Partnership could sit on the Steering Group. The first meeting is scheduled to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> October at The House.

Discussions are taking place with Corserv Facilities Limited with regard to the re-development of the General Wolfe building and the Regeneration Partnership has been identified as a suitable consultative body. ME is working up an application for CIL funding for capital works for the outside space at the General Wolfe and hopefully traffic calming works.

Arising from a question, ME advised that the target date for completion of the General Wolfe building is 2025 and that it will be social housing/homeless accommodation. He added that there will be a lettings policy attached to the building which will stipulate that potential tenants with complex or support needs will not be housed there.

DL advised that the Carlyon Road site is largely in the BID area and that it would be helpful if a member of BID could be the representative on the group.

It was **RESOLVED** that St Austell BID be put forward as a representative on the Carlyon Road Steering Group and the BID Board to nominate the representative.

MB referred back to item 10 (Town Council update) and asked BM to update the group on the projects that he is working on. BM advised that his immediate priorities at the present time are working with Hayhurst on the roof top garden project and developing a plan/design with Heather Batho to improve the Holy Trinity Church Grounds. He added that he also hoped to development another

plan/design for the removal of the Poundland banner which unfortunately is proving to be a very difficult project.

### **Implications of the closure of Wilkinson**

The Chair expressed his sadness that Wilkinsons has closed in the town and invited comments from the group.

AM advised that she understood that most, if not all, staff had found other employment and that, its closure, should not visually affect the town centre as bad as other towns where the store is in a very prominent town centre location.

A general discussion ensued where many views were expressed that retail is struggling and that more public services should be encouraged to re-locate to the town centre. In answer to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that for various operational reasons and the opinions of library users, the Town Council does not support the re-location of the library to the town centre.

### **AFC St Austell Project – letter of support**

The Town Clerk advised that a Working Group, including representatives from Cornwall College, Cornwall Council and St Austell Football Club has been formed to work up a project to replace the football pitch at Poltair Park with a 4G pitch and improved grandstand facilities. LM added that the upgrade would be of huge benefit to the community as well as securing the future of AFC St Austell.

It was **RESOLVED** to send a letter of support to AFC St Austell to support them in their funding bid for a replacement pitch and grandstand at Poltair Park.

### **Education Actions**

MB advised that he had written to Mr Geoff Brown, Chair of Community Education Learning Trust (CELT) but to date had not received a reply.

CS advised that Mr David Atkinson Beaumont has indicated that he is unable to attend future meetings of the Revitalisation Partnership if they remain on a Tuesday as it clashes with a Senior Leadership Team meeting at the College.

**ACTION: SG to formulate a list of future meeting dates for consideration at the next meeting.**

### **Financial Update**

The Town Clerk referred to the financial statement tabled at the meeting and explained that approximately £140,000 of the town vitality fund monies had been expended and a further £24,000 has been committed to support the roof top garden. It is anticipated that the Cornwall Council grant will be fully spent in this financial year.

*\*\*David Pooley advised that he had another meeting and apologised for his departure\*\**

**Any Other Business**

None.

**Date of Next Meeting**

31<sup>st</sup> October 2023, 9.45am at the Stable Block.

Meeting closed at 11.29am.