

**St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 9.45am – Stable Block/TEAMS**

**Attendees:**

Democratic: Councillor Malcolm Brown (MB), Councillor Tom French (TF)

Voluntary/Community: Heather Batho (HB), Chris Sampson (CS), David Atkinson-Beaumont (DAB) (TEAMS), Alan Lawler (NHS).

Business: Peter Moody (PM) (St Austell Print), (TEAMS), Dale Lovatt (DL) (St Austell BID), Neil Woodward (NW) (South West Financial Services), Nick Chaplin (NC), (Running Hare Investment Management) (TEAMS).

Advisors: Sara Gwilliams (TC), David Pooley (TC), Annette Miller (AM) (St Austell BID), Mark Ellis (ME) (CC) (TEAMS), Bill McCardle (B Mc) (TC).

Also in attendance: Jon Nicholls (JH), Director, Hayhurst and Co Architects, Ruby Sleigh, Hayhurst and Co Architects, (TEAMS) and Claire Taggart, Hayhurst and Co Architects (TEAMS).

**Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in answer to a question, AM advised that the town was busy over Christmas, but the average spend was down. She added that the events in the town centre were a success and were a draw to families to come into the town. HB added that the church was very pleased with the footfall over Christmas, and that the winter wonderland event was a success. AM advised that many positive comments had been received about the new Christmas lights.

The group agreed that a regular events programme is important to encourage footfall into the town centre.

**Apologies for absence**

**Democratic:** Steve Double (MP), Councillor Crystal Pearce (CP), Councillor Anne Double (AD).

**Voluntary/Community:** Dr Stewart Smith (NHS), Sandra Heyward (SH).

**Business:** Miles Lovegrove (Fluid Branding).

**Advisors:** Louise Wood (CC), Sarah Scoltock (CC) (TEAMS),

*\*\*Councillor French advised that he needed to leave the meeting at 11.15am\*\**

**Minutes of the meeting dated 5th December 2023**

It was noted that the third paragraph on page 2 should read:

*"Concern was expressed that staff will be expected to pay to **park** at the new offices which might discourage staff from going there"*

Under "Dates of Next Meeting", the Chair added that he would like "AGM" added next to Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting dated 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were approved.

*\*\*Mr Lawler arrived to the meeting\*\**

The Chair welcomed Mr Nicholls to the meeting and suggested that following his presentation, the Clerk should update the partnership with the views of the Town Council who had received the presentation the evening before.

The Clerk put a suggestion forward that the partnership should discuss their views before being advised of the Town Council's comments to ensure that they remain impartial from the Town Council's discussions.

The partnership agreed with the Town Clerk's suggestion.

### **Rooftop Garden Project**

Mr Nicholls updated the partnership on their work so far and the concept strategies which will complete Stage 2 of the project (concept designs). Mr Nicholls provided the partnership with four concept strategies:

#### **Secret Garden**

##### *Key features*

- Meeting space (123 sqm)
- Narrow paths through swaths of wildflowers
- Seating
- Small café
- No gatherings
- Low impact

#### **Pop Up Park**

##### *Key features*

- Designed in 2 parts
- Informal area with a partial covering
- Second area suitable for food vans to trade
- Medium impact

#### **Market Garden**

##### *Key features*

- Micro brewery design

- Medium hall space (160 sqm)
- Covered area
- Town square

## **Clayscape**

### *Key features*

- Large covered hall (170 sqm)
- Large area for small business pop ups
- Potential wedding venue
- Town square
- Stepped seating

*\*Councillor French left the meeting during the next discussion\**

The Chair thanked Mr Nicholls for his interesting presentation and invited the partnership for their views. The comments raised were:

- The importance of a covered space for performance or a retractable cover for performance space
- Planting that looks good all year round
- A well maintained and sustainable space
- The need for the space to be a footfall driver
- Strategy 1 and 2 – not ambitious enough
- A better understanding of the loading of the site
- The creation of a unique town square
- The impact on the tenants and town
- Possibly not a need for any more business units in the town
- A strong agreement that the space has to be able to withstand persistent wind and rain as has been seen during the winter
- No glass construction
- Versatility of the space
- A Cornish distinctiveness
- Preservation of the views to the church
- Nothing stark
- The need for a commercial element for sustainability
- Competition with the Market House
- The potential to cover White River Place
- Poor public perception of St Austell mainly due to ASB
- The need for children/parent activities and to appeal to the elderly
- Consideration of a 2 stage phased approach to the construction
- Viability – major concern
- The need for something achievable and funded with the least impact on tenants

The Chair asked the Clerk to summarise the Town Councillors views and the Deputy Town Clerk summarised her notes as follows:

Councillor 1- definitely not option 1 due to seasonal nature of wildflower areas. Would support a hall, covered market and studios.

Need to appeal to elderly and parents. Some provision for play needed – like auditorium seating. Concern about glass structures.

Councillor 2 – marvellous piece of work – options 3 and 4 better than 1 and 2. Walkways need to be made of a non-slippery material. Benefits of a permanent, covered and scalable bar facility.

Councillor 3 – under cover area needed. The Clayscale option may be too hilly. Play provision needed – crazy golf possibly – large screen – nowhere to have afternoon tea in town centre. Social prescribing and exercise classes, deckchairs and water features suggested.

Councillor 4 – An opportunity for a visit to the site was requested. Clarification of ownership of the site was sought.

Councillor 5 – A need for flexibility as services and needs change over time.

Councillor 6 – This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It needs to be different. There needs to be entertainment – could link with our clay heritage. Options 1-3 are not ambitious enough.

Councillor 7 – welcomed a flexible performance space. Asked about police consultation and stressed the impact of weather.

## **Conclusion**

Partner Members were generally positive and supportive of the higher level options and stressed the need for flexible space, performance space, play/entertainment facilities and shelter which takes into account typical weather conditions in Cornwall.

Arising from a question, the Clerk advised that a pre-planning advice application form has been submitted to Cornwall Council which was mistakenly put into the public domain for a few days. It is now with Cornwall Council on a confidential basis and the advice is awaited. It is hoped that this advice will give a clear steer regarding what type of development is acceptable in planning terms and early issues identified.

The Chair stressed the need for the public to be engaged at the earliest opportunity.

## **Vacancy on the Partnership (Voluntary/Community Sector)**

In the absence of Sandra Heyward, this item was deferred.

## **Carlyon Road Working Group**

ME advised that a draft report has been received from Mei Loci which Cornwall Council has commented on and an updated draft should be received later this month. The Working Group will receive the updated draft when available and another meeting of the group may be called to review any issues. ME advised that the project is slightly behind schedule.

### **High Street Task Force**

The Clerk advised that the report has still not been received. Cornwall Council officers are chasing.

### **Levelling Up Fund**

The Clerk advised that there have been no further meetings or updates with regard to Levelling Up Funding.

### **Town Vitality Funding**

The Chair advised that he had attended an on-line meeting with Peter Moody, the Clerk and Cornwall Council officers to discuss Town Vitality Funding for St Austell. The meeting was helpful and the Clerk was tasked to produce an options paper for consideration by Cornwall Council to facilitate bids for funding.

The Town Clerk referred to the paper circulated which he asked to be treated as confidential for now and outlined the three pots of money within the Town Vitality Fund which are only available to the non-Town Deal Fund Towns. The three funding streams are:

- Town Accelerator Fund
- Strategic Fund
- Delivery Fund

The Clerk outlined 7 potential projects which were in the paper and the funding pot from which he believed funding could be sought:

1. Student accommodation feasibility funding (Town Accelerator Fund/Strategic Fund)
2. Highways feasibility funding (Town Accelerator Fund)
3. Banner replacement and community engagement (Delivery Fund)
4. Old fire station site improvements (Strategic Fund)
5. Church Piazza improvements (Delivery Fund)
6. Duke Street design funding (Strategic Fund)
7. CCTV cameras (Strategic Fund)

The Clerk added that he had identified funding from the Town Council's reserves to enhance funding bids but at this stage this has not been considered by the Town Council.

During discussions, Members broadly supported the proposals but counselled caution with regard to radical traffic flow changes through the town centre.

The Clerk thanked the partnership for their support and advised that he would be seeking Town Council support at their Council meeting on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Once endorsed by both the partnership and Town Council, the paper will be sent to Cornwall Council for consideration.

## **Town Council update**

The Clerk advised that a bid has been submitted to the Community Capacity Fund for funding for design works/improvements to the church grounds and piazza. He added that the bid has been approved for sign off at officer level and is awaiting consideration by the Cornwall Council funding panel.

The ethernet line has been upgraded between St Austell and Newquay which has improved the CCTV picture quality and camera speeds. Prices are being sought for additional cameras around the town centre where there are blind spots.

A housing report is due from Cornwall Council in early February which should contain the housing numbers relating to people in temporary and emergency accommodation in St Austell.

The car park machines in Priory Car Park are being upgraded to receive contactless payments. Payment by cash, mobile app and a web based payment system will all still be available.

The mineshaft in Bethel Park has been capped and the old toilet block is being demolished in Poltair Park. A new bat house has been erected in Poltair Park under the supervision of an ecologist.

The Town Council has considered and objected to an outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings on the land earmarked for commercial development at Trehiddle.

The Chair advised that the Town Council objected to The Club's application for an extension of opening hours and Councillor Styles, the Town Council's representative attended a hearing on the 27<sup>th</sup> December to outline the Council's concerns. Despite the Town Council's representations, the licence was granted. The Chair also advised that the College's planning application has been approved. D-AB added that he is due to receive an update from the developers shortly and a schedule of works.

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

ME advised that he had nothing to add.

## **Education Action**

D A-B advised that the First Education and Skills Forum for St Austell is planned for the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

## **Financial Update**

The Clerk circulated a comprehensive financial statement for the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership projects. No questions were raised.

## **Any Other Business**

None

### **Date of Next Meeting**

- Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (AGM)
- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024
- Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024

The meeting closed at 12.20pm.