

**MINUTES of a MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024 in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Brown, Clemo, Double, Fox, French, Gray, Guest, Hamilton, Kimber, Lanxon, Pearce, Preece, Stephens and Thompson.

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

**C/23/127) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bull, Cohen, Pears, Rowse, Styles and Young.

The Clerk advised that Councillor Guest would be late arriving as he is chairing a meeting that is due to finish at 5.30pm.

**C/23/128) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received**

There were no declarations of interest.

**C/23/129) Dispensations**

There were no requests for a dispensation.

*The Mayor advised that in order to assist Mr Palmer and Ms Heyward, she would bring agenda items 9 and 10 forward.*

**C/23/130) Brian Palmer, Chair of Trustees – STAK**

The Mayor welcomed Mr Brian Palmer to the meeting.

Mr Palmer advised that STAK started approximately 13 years ago at 8 High Cross Street and provided heavily subsidised three course meals throughout the day (approximately 25-30 meals per day) for the less well-off people in the town. At the time, STAK also provided debt and benefit advice and computer courses. During the pandemic, the premises were closed and only a takeaway service was provided. STAK also had a contract with Cornwall Council during Covid to provide meals to the homeless temporarily housed in the Travelodge.

Mr Palmer added that since the pandemic, the number of people visiting STAK has dropped off (approximately 20-25 meals per day) and due to a change in contract arrangements, only a very limited service is provided to the homeless in the Travelodge. The advice service has also stopped. Mr Palmer also advised that post covid the clientele attending STAK changed and the more challenging behaviour from this cohort has caused friction with the neighbouring premises in High Cross Street.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, STAK closed their premises at High Cross Street and they are in the process of refurbishing their new premises in Duke Street which it is hoped will be open by the end of March. Mr Palmer advised that keeping the service going is a struggle, but the Trustees will continue to do their best for vulnerable people in the town. He acknowledged that their reputation in the town varies, but assured Members that their presence in St Austell is part of a solution to assist the vulnerable and reduce anti-social behaviour in the town centre.

The Mayor thanked Mr Palmer for his update.

### **C/23/131) Small Grants Scheme**

#### *The Gover Community Larder*

The Mayor welcomed Ms Heyward to the meeting.

Ms Heyward advised that the Gover Community Larder does not have an income stream and relies heavily on grants and donations. She added that the location of the larder has moved from the Pondhu Childrens Centre to a temporary location behind the Watermargin Restaurant and that the demand for food has increased significantly. By way of an example, she advised that on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024, 31 boxes of food were given out, compared to 19 boxes in January 2022. Ms Heyward explained that the 200kg weekly food delivery from Fare Share requires an annual membership fee of £4,000. Ms Heyward added that they also collect regularly from the local supermarkets.

Members thanked Ms Heyward for her presentation and expressed their full support for the Gover Community Larder.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £500 to the Gover Community Larder to enable them to continue to purchase food and obtain 2 new insulated boxes and ice blocks.

*\*\*Mr Palmer and Ms Heyward left the meeting\*\**

### **C/23/132) Minutes of Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Arising from a question with regard to the Mid Cornwall Metro, and in the absence of Councillor Pears, the Clerk advised that the Town Council has not been consulted on the Mid Cornwall Metro (MCM) project as it is viewed by Cornwall Council that St Austell will not be significantly affected by the proposals and no alterations are proposed for the station at St Austell. Cornwall Council has also advised that there has been no public consultation, but Cornwall Council officers have kept the Cornwall Councillors up to date with progress. Cornwall Council also advised that the Metro Project was the only Round 2 Levelling Up Funding bid approved for Cornwall and the time scales for the bidding process were very tight.

Councillor Brown expressed his disappointment that the Town Council had not been consulted with regard to this project as he felt that local knowledge from the work carried out by Restormel Borough Council on train links between Newquay and St Austell could have assisted with the project planning process. Councillor Brown suggested that the Town Council should write to Cornwall Council to express their displeasure at not being consulted and request that the Town Council is consulted in the future, as the project develops, if any issues arise that might affect Parish residents.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to Cornwall Council expressing disappointment that the Town Council has not been consulted on the Mid Cornwall Metro project and request that the Town Council is consulted in the future, if any issues arise that may affect Parish residents.

### **C/23/133) Matters to Note**

The Clerk advised that Councillor Styles represented the Town Council at a Licensing Hearing between Christmas and the New Year to outline the Town Council's objection to The Club's application to extend its opening hours. Despite a well presented objection, Cornwall Council's Licensing Committee resolved to approve the application.

Councillor Thompson referred to minute number C/23/121 and asked if any progress had been made with regard to the parking bays and associated congestion at Clifden Road.

The Clerk **AGREED** to liaise with Councillor Pears and/or Cornwall Council's Highways Officers.

### **C/23/134) Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor advised that in November she had laid a wreath on the Poppy Bus and attended the St Blazey Pantomime the evening before with 16 events attended on behalf of the Town Council in total during that period. The Mayor also read out a thank you e-mail from Kernow Young Carers who had received a number of Christmas shoe boxes for their young carers and thanked Councillors for their input into this initiative.

### **C/23/135) Public Participation**

None

### **C/23/136) Members' questions**

There were no questions from Members.

### **C/23/137) Small Grants Scheme**

*No Limits Personal Training & Wellbeing CIC*

The Deputy Clerk outlined the grant application and the breakdown of the project costs which include the hire of Par Running Track, instructor fees and the purchase of equipment and apparel.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to No Limits Personal Training for the costs involved with their "Remember You" project.

### **C/23/138) St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership**

The Town Clerk advised that he would update Members later in the agenda during private session but confirmed that the Partnership had received the same presentation from the consultants with regard to the design options for the roof top garden and they had agreed with the Town Council's informal collective view that the designs showing a higher aspiration for the roof top garden were preferred.

The Clerk advised that no progress has been made on the General Wolfe project and the Carlyon Road draft Masterplan is due to be made available to the Stakeholder Group shortly for consideration.

Councillor Double confirmed that the church piazza bid has been signed off by Cornwall Council officers.

Councillor Brown added that although supportive of the roof top garden project, the Revitalisation Partnership had expressed some concerns, particularly with regard to the impact the project could have on the tenants of the building and the town centre as a whole.

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

### **C/23/139) Town Centre – Red Pots**

The Clerk advised that due to a reduced budget, the BID has asked the Town Council to consider taking on responsibility for the twice yearly planting, watering and general maintenance of the town centre large red pots and the planters located next to the Town Council's notice board and the slope next to Studio 4 in White River Place. The BID has confirmed that they will continue to fund hanging baskets. The Clerk added that at the present time, the Town Council owns the red pots but contracts with St Austell BID to plant them up twice a year.

Costings have been obtained from the Town Council's horticultural supplier for Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter planting of the pots and watering in the sum of £1165 per annum. The Clerk added that if the Town Council's Grounds Maintenance Staff absorb some of the work involved, the costs will be reduced.

Arising from questions, the Clerk advised that if Members agree to take on the planting of the red pots and wall planters in the town centre, more sustainable planting will be considered. General concern was also expressed with regard to the BID's reduced income and the pressure this puts on to the Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to take on responsibility for the twice yearly planting, watering and general maintenance of the town centre large red pots and planters located next to the Town Council's notice board and the slope next to Studio 4 in White River Place with a maximum budget of £1165 per annum.

### **C/23/140) Edgumbe Road/Truro Road – Pedestrian Improvements**

The Clerk advised that to improve pedestrian safety at the Edgumbe Road/Truro Road junction, Cornwall Council has put forward a scheme which involves the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities which will provide push button units, tactile pavement, drop kerbs and road studs to formalise the crossing points. He added that this junction used to have air quality issues, but this has now dropped below the level of concern.

The Clerk read out a statement from Councillor Young, Deputy Mayor, who welcomed the proposals to instal pedestrian crossings but expressed concern with regard to the lack of a crossing across Truro Road from the St Austell side of Edgumbe Road in the suggestion put forward.

It was suggested that a site visit for Councillors with Highways Officers would be helpful.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- Concern with regard to the diagonal crossing proposed
- Concern with regard to the build outs proposed and whether or not they will leave enough room for buses
- The lack of clear vision at the junctions
- The need for a pedestrian crossing further up Edgcumbe Road

It was **RESOLVED** to support the scheme subject to a pedestrian crossing being installed higher up on Edgcumbe Road and Highways Officers checking the practicality of the proposed build outs either side of Edgcumbe Road and that buses can navigate the narrow turnings without adversely affecting pedestrians and cyclists.

### **C/23/141) St Austell Family Hub**

The Clerk advised that Cornwall Council has identified the St Austell Family Hub at Woodland Road as surplus to requirements through the Estates Transformation Programme and are looking to sell it on the open market when the new Family Hub is built in White River Place.

During discussion, Members noted the poor condition of the building and welcomed a new Family Hub in White River Place. Overall, Members supported the proposal as long as the new Family Hub is up and running in White River Place before the building at Woodland Road is de-commissioned.

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

### **C/23/142) Members appointed to outside bodies update reports**

Councillor Brown advised that he had attended a meeting of the Trustees of Citizens Advice Cornwall where it was advised that they are temporarily located at the Urban Village with a view to a permanent location in the CN4C building on High Cross Street. He added that he had also attended a recent meeting of the CALC Larger Councils where they had received an interesting presentation from Dr Alison Hibbert, GP Dementia Lead and Dementia Advisor NHS Cornwall. The Town Clerk from Penzance provided a presentation on dementia initiatives within Penzance and a NALC paper entitled "dementia friendly communities" was referred to. Councillor Brown advised that following a conversation with the Deputy Clerk, the NALC paper will be put to a future meeting of the Town Council to consider their role with regard to dementia initiatives and projects in St Austell. Councillor Brown advised that the refreshment of the Local Plan was also discussed at the meeting and the role of Town and Parish Councils. Sarah Mason advised that she is due to meet with planning officers shortly and agreed to seek their views on Town Framework Steering Groups being set up again. Councillor Brown suggested that the Town Council should ask Cornwall Council to set up town forums for the major towns and surrounding parishes.

During discussion, Councillor Double advised that she could not support this suggestion at this time because of the potential impact on Cornwall Council resources and Councillor Guest advised that he is always happy to liaise with Town and Parish Councils on an informal basis rather than having formal meetings.

The Town Clerk agreed to make enquiries of Cornwall Council with regard to their views on Town and Parish Council input into the refreshment of the Local Plan. It was noted that guidance is still awaited from the Government.

Councillor Lanxon advised that the Football Club/Cornwall College are hoping to submit a planning application for a new football pitch and associated facilities at Poltair Park and that the next meeting of the CAP is due to take place during the week at Lostwithiel.

### **C/23/143) Cornwall Councillor update reports**

Further to Councillor Double's report, Councillor Brown advised that Treverbyn Parish Council had supported the Town Council's views with regard to the old Carclaze School pre planning application and similar comments had been passed to Cornwall Council. In response, Councillor Double advised that she supported the façade of the building being retained but felt that the Town Council's aspiration for 100% affordable housing on the site is unrealistic. She added her disappointment with regard to the poor state and management of the property over many years.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the reports from Councillors Double and Guest.

### **C/23/144) Schedule of Payments**

It was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of payments for the period 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024 totalling £214,404.53 be approved.

### **C/23/145) White River Project**

The Clerk advised that the Cornwall South CAP has set up a White River Project Working Group of which Councillor Clemo is a member in a personal capacity. The Community Link Officer has suggested that it would be helpful if Councillor Clemo could update the Town Council from time to time on the group's activities and suggested that this role be formalised.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Clemo be appointed as the Town Council's representative on the Cornwall South CAP White River Project Working Group.

### **C/23/146) Planning and Regeneration Committee**

Councillor Brown asked that "house" on top of page 3 of the minutes be changed to "housing".

Further to minute number: P/23/104 (v) Councillor Kimber advised that he did not state that shops on the site were advertised as a certainty and asked that this be reflected in the minutes.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the Planning and Regeneration Meeting dated Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be noted.

### **C/23/147) Climate and Environment Committee**

Councillor Hamilton, Chair of the Climate and Environment Committee for clarity purposes asked if "**£1,000 to £5-600 per annum**" within minute number CE/23/23 could be amended to read "**£1,000 to £500 to £600 per annum**"

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the Climate and Environment Meeting dated Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 be noted.

**C/23/148) 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 following item in view of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be transacted.

**C/23/149) St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership**

The Town Clerk introduced the paper "St Austell Revitalisation Project Options for additional Town Vitality Funding" and the suggested projects that could be put forward to Cornwall Council for funding.

It was **RESOLVED** to submit the paper as circulated subject to the section on traffic flows around the town centre being modified as discussed.

**C/23/150)** It was **RESOLVED** to re-admit the public and press to the meeting.

**C/23/151) Dates of Meetings**

It was noted that the next Town Council meetings are due to take place on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (Annual Parish Meeting) and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (Annual Town Council Meeting).

The meeting closed at 8.03pm.