

St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership
Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 9.45am – Stable Block/TEAMS

Attendees:

Democratic: Councillor Malcolm Brown (MB), Noah Law MP (TEAMS), Councillor Anne Double (TEAMS).

Voluntary/Community: Heather Batho (HB), Chris Sampson (CS), David Hendry (DH), Sandra Heyward (SH).

Business: Peter Moody (PM), Neil Woodward (NW), Miles Lovegrove (ML), Dale Lovatt (DL).

Advisors: Sara Gwilliams (SG), David Pooley (DP), Bill McCardle (BMc), Mark Ellis (ME) (TEAMS), Sarah Scoltock (SS) (TEAMS), Annette Miller (AM).

Also present: Katie (Noah Law MP Assistant).

Apologies

Councillor Tom French (TF), Rob Bosworth (RB), David Atkinson-Beaumont (DAB).

Minutes of the meeting dated 12th November 2024

The Clerk advised that the two actions within the minutes have been actioned.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes dated 12th November 2024.

Councillor Brown arrived during the next item

Rooftop Garden Project

The Clerk referred to the Rooftop Garden Stage 3 report and appendices circulated at the end of the previous week. He added that the report is a good quality professional report that meets the specification but is not "shovel ready". He advised that the economic landscape has changed significantly since the feasibility study was started and due to a lack of large-scale funding in the foreseeable future, recommended at this stage that the report is noted and reviewed again at such time that funding is available.

The Chair advised that the landowner has seen the report and although disappointed with some elements of it, understands that it cannot be progressed in the current climate and the report will be shelved for the time being.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- The need to move on to projects that can be delivered in the current climate;
- Disappointment that the structural testing was not carried out;
- A view that the current design is not very visible from White River Place;
- The need to accept that the outcome is a concept design

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the RIBA stage 3 report as a concept design and not progress the project further until large scale Government funding is more likely.

Town Centre Revitalisation

Poundland Banners

The Clerk advised that the project is still on target to be delivered by the end of March 2025.

Arising from a question, BMc added that the contractors are hopeful that the new banners will only take a few days to instal utilising the existing fitments.

Holy Trinity Church Piazza

The Clerk advised that the faculty decision to enable the contractors to start work is still awaited. It is hoped that permission will be granted within the next few weeks to enable the project to commence with completion May/June.

HB confirmed that when the notice period expires on the 22nd February 2025 she will send the notice to the Chancellor for sign off.

High Cross Street

The Clerk advised that he has received an e-mail from the Chief Executive of Cornwall College advising that due to learner demand, they are now focussing their efforts on Newquay for student accommodation. He advised that the project is unlikely to be viable now and he is due to meet with Mr Bosworth soon to discuss further.

Arising from the above, disappointment was expressed with regard to Cornwall Council's decision to close the Adult Education Centre in St Austell. Noah Law MP advised that a statutory instrument is coming into force to formally devolve the Adult Education budget to Cornwall Council and that he is awaiting further information from the education officer.

Highways Review

The Clerk advised that the Highways Officers have concluded that a proposed one-way system around Queens Head/Market Street/Cross Street is not possible due to some of the roads being too small for larger vehicles. Work is still progressing on the potential to allow buses to go through Fore Street, from the church end to Truro Road which could make the Bodmin Road junction/General Wolfe corner safer.

Duke Street

The Clerk advised that the Duke Street design has been firmed up and consultation with the RBL, taxis and local shops will commence shortly.

It was **RESOLVED** to endorse the latest Duke Street design and the proposed consultation process.

Town Council update

Library and Community Project Officer (new post)

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Jessica Hyde has been appointed to a combined position of 2 days at the Stable Block and 2 days at the Library. She advised that the job role at the Stable Block is to facilitate/manage a number of events across the Parish and heighten the Town Council's profile utilising social media (Facebook, Instagram and Reels). She added that Jessica has a budget for events and has met with AM to talk about potential events in the town centre. A draft events plan for the year will be considered at the next Community Committee.

Penwinnick Road

The Clerk advised that Treveth has indicated that the Town Council is able to stay in the Stable Block for the time being and a suitable lease will be drawn up accordingly. It is understood that further designs are being worked up for the site.

During discussion, disappointment was expressed that there have been no further meetings of the Penwinnick Road site working group and that a planning application for the site had not materialised at the end of last year as previously suggested. Arising from a question, the Partnership agreed that they should remain fully involved with the plans for the site due to its close proximity to the town centre.

ACTION: It was AGREED that the Town Clerk should contact Treveth to establish the timescales for a further meeting of the Penwinnick Road site Working Group.

Blantyre site and extra care housing

The Clerk advised that the Town Council is due to consider the planning application for 77 extra care units on the Blantyre site at their Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting on 3rd March 2025.

ASB

SG advised that the five people currently occupying the doorway of Clinton Cards are either known to or have engaged with the homeless team. They are new to the town.

Getting the public to report ASB still continues to be an issue. A recent ASB issue in White River Place was put on social media but not reported to the Police.

The temporary/emergency accommodation figures for St Austell remain high with a number of people currently located in the Travel Lodge.

AM added that there have been complaints from paying guests at the Travel Lodge about the noise caused by tenants placed in the premises under emergency housing measures.

SH advised that the gatherings on the Market House steps appear to be linked to people utilising the Wi-Fi from the Market House. It was agreed that the Wi-Fi needs to be password protected.

Clinton House still remains an issue and has been reported to Cornwall Council.

ACTION: SH to liaise with the Market House Directors about password protecting the Wi-Fi.

Childrens Play Parks

The Clerk advised that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding has been secured for improvements to the Parks at Landrew Road and The Meadows.

White River Place

The Clerk advised that the last few weeks has seen closure announcements from the Halifax and New Look both of which affect St Austell. He added that Cornwall Council is the landlord of New Look and they are extremely keen to get new tenants in there as soon as possible and are exploring a number of options including discussions with The Arts Centre.

ACTION: DP to liaise with Noah Law MP about potential uses.

Shared Prosperity Funding

The Clerk provided an overview of the 4th year of Shared Prosperity Funding as follows:

Growth Hub Business Grant Scheme - £20,000 to £200,000

The Growth Hub has launched another round of grant funding for businesses in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It is available to all enterprises with ambition and capacity to grow who want to improve their productivity and competitiveness. The scheme also aims to stimulate innovation and support the development of high-quality, well-paid employment.

Things that can be funded:

Capital and Revenue costs eg:

- equipment
- building works
- consultancy costs supporting overarching aims of the scheme

Things that can't be funded:

- New for old or replacement goods and services, i.e. business as usual activity
- Routine repairs, replacements and renewals
- Staff costs

1. Grant applications to be submitted by the 27th February, with works to be completed by December 2025.

Community Capacity Fund - £1,000 - £24,999

The focus of this programme is to engage with community-based organisations across Cornwall, opening up opportunities for them to get involved in developing projects for their area.

Examples of work that could be funded by the Community Capacity Fund include:

- feasibility studies
- business plans
- architects' drawings
- concept plans
- other professional support to determine the concept of your project
- community engagement programmes leading to the development of a wider project, including piloting community project ideas
- small capital items that will result in the increase in community activity.

1. Grant applications to be submitted by the end of February, with works to be completed by December 2025

2. No match funding required from the applicant.

Community Levelling Up Programme - £25,000 to £200,000

This programme supports community-level investments for Good Growth across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Funding is available to enable locally based projects that tackle deprivation and strengthen communities across Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

All investments are made in line with local Community Area Partnership (CAP) frameworks, with each CAP allocated a portion of the total budget.

- Minimum grant amount £25,000
- Maximum grant amount £200,000 (subject to funds being available in the area) – the average grant is expected to be around £80,000
- Eligible applicants include charities, CIC, CIO, public sector (town/parish councils)
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PRIORITIES

Sustainable and accessible infrastructure

This includes capital improvements to increase an organisation's sustainability, limit impact on energy bills, make local infrastructure resilient to change, improve accessibility to create inclusive community buildings.

Green spaces and well-being

This includes investment in public parks, paths, playgrounds, green gyms, and other projects that deliver a social programme engaging the local community.

Events and culture

This includes support for projects offering an event or a programme of events to rejuvenate town centres or villages and create opportunities to come together and celebrate local places, boost the economy and increase footfall.

- 1. Grant applications to be submitted by the end of February, with works to be completed by December 2025*
- 2. 10% Match Funding required from the applicant.*

The Clerk advised that he is due to attend a Cornwall Council on-line seminar tomorrow afternoon which will hopefully provide a bit more guidance/detail and that all being well, the Town Council will be able to work up some funding bids for submission before the deadline. He added that the pots of money available are not large enough for major capital projects identified in the Masterplan.

The Clerk encouraged Partnership members to look at the funding pots with a view to applying for funding independent of the Town Council/Partnership.

ACTION: All Partnership Members to look at the funding pots available with a view to applying for funding independent of the Town Council/Partnership.

Cornwall Council update

ME provided an update as follows:

Carlyon Road

ME advised that the Carlyon Road Masterplan project has not moved on significantly due to ongoing negotiations with the Doctors for Carlyon House. It is anticipated that Cornwall Council will vacate the building in the summer. ME advised that he has put in an internal request for resource to consult the public on the work carried out by the stakeholder group on the site.

General Wolfe

The Clerk advised that he is in discussions with Cornwall Council and Corserv Facilities Ltd regarding the options available for the General Wolfe building and once further costing information has been received from the Strategic Director and a way forward established, he would update the partnership and Town Council accordingly. He advised that Cornwall Council is fully aware of the negativity in the town with regard to the building and that they are fully committed to finding and expediting a solution in the short term.

During discussion, Members of the Partnership **RESOLVED** that they would support the demolition of the building and the creation of improved public realm if that is deemed to be the most cost effective and appropriate solution for the town.

Noah Law MP advised that his recent small-scale survey shows public support for demolition.

White River Place Offices

ME advised that staff are expected to be in the new offices by September 2025.

Mid Cornwall Metro

ME advised that he had requested but not received the update in time for the meeting.

NB: Since the meeting, the following update had been received:

- Phase 1 of the active travel works are currently under construction, linking Barrowfields along Narrow cliff to Edgcumbe Avenue. These works will provide a wider shared use path which will change to a two way cycle way when phase 2 works are complete. The work is due to complete by the end of March 25.*
- Phase 2 works, which is focussed on the Cliff Road area will, in Spring, be consulted on through the Traffic Regulation Order process and is programmed for construction from September 25 with completion in March 26.*
- Designs to increase car parking through changes to Tolcarne Road Coach Park are underway and any changes to this car park as well as Newquay Station Car Park will take place as part of the phase 2 works.*
- The second platform at Newquay Station is nearing completion and works are currently underway to build the passing loop on Goss Moor.*
- The improved frequency to the service in to Newquay is likely to be in late 2025.*

Financial Update

The Town Clerk circulated a summary of income and expenditure as at 27th January 2025 which shows that the projects are all within budget.

Any Other Business

MB outlined the review of the Cornwall Local Plan, the call for sites information and the interim policy position statement. He expressed a view that the review of the Local Plan would in due course examine town centre policies and priorities for retail/commercial development.

PM advised that the last SABEF bench will be placed in White River Place shortly.

Future Meeting Dates

To be determined.

Meeting closed: 11.10am.