

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 17th FEBRUARY 2025 in The Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5DP at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, French, Lanxon, Pearce and Young.

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Hamilton

F/24/48) Apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Bull, Clemo and Rowse.

F/24/49) Declarations of Interest

None.

F/24/50) Dispensations

None.

F/24/51) Minutes of meeting held on 4th November 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th November 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Brown arrived during the next item

F/24/52) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that a ride-on mower has been purchased, and the repairs to the Prince Charles Park safety surfacing are complete.

A minor works contract has been drafted for the Holy Trinity Church piazza project and once the final permissions are granted the works will proceed, hopefully by end of March/beginning of April.

F/24/53) Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

F/24/54) Budget Monitoring Report

The Clerk explained the variances and advised that before the year end, it is hoped to have 5 new CCTV cameras installed in the town centre, car park improvements, a new accessible roundabout at the Meadows and the completion of tree management works. The Clerk concluded that the Town Council is in a good financial position with a small surplus likely at the year end.

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

F/24/55) Consultation paper – Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England

The Clerk advised that the Town Council agreed at its meeting on the 27th January 2025 that a response to the consultation paper should be delegated to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Members noted that the response is required to be submitted by 26th February 2025.

The Committee considered each question on-line and submitted a response on behalf of the Town Council broadly stating that a strengthening of the standards regime is required with appropriate sanctions.

F/24/56) Risk Management

Members reviewed the Risk Management strategy updated as at February 2025.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to approve the Risk Management Strategy.

Members reviewed the Risk Register and made the following suggestions:

Risk Number 1.2

Add – “Monitor postal services”

Risk Number 1.3

Amend to read – “Town Clerk to resurrect regular meetings with Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of standing committees”

Risk Number 1.6

Amend to read – “Monitor impact of inflation and global economic changes on running costs. Monitor Cornwall Council budget setting and funding settlements”

Risk Number 1.13

Add – “Engage with Cornwall Council Planning Officers”

Risk Number – 3.10

Add – “Chairs to intervene at Council/Committee meetings where necessary”

Risk Number – 3.11

Amend to read – “Removal of laptop from the SATC offices requires approval by the Town Clerk”

Risk Number – 8.8

Amend to read – “Lobby to ensure that St Austell treated as high priority by Cornwall Council and the Government”

Risk Number – 10.21

Amend to read – “Induction training to be arranged May 2025 facilitated by a suitable trainer”

It was **RECOMMENDED** that subject to the above amendments, the Risk Register 2025 be approved.

F/24/57) St Austell Library

Members considered the Library Manager’s report and expressed their gratitude to the staff and SALSA for the wide range of activities and functions at the library.

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

F/24/58) 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.

F/24/59) Stable Block

The Town Clerk provided an update on recent discussions with the Senior Commercial Property Manager from Treveth with regard to renewing the lease of the Stable Block post December 2025 when the existing lease ends.

The Clerk explained the terms of the existing lease which was negotiated as part of a wider devolution package in 2016/17 and the need to discuss any revised terms offered by Treveth with Cornwall Council’s Highways and Environmental Teams. The Clerk advised that he is awaiting Heads of Terms from Treveth to start the negotiations.

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

F/24/60) General Wolfe Building

The Town Clerk provided an update on his discussions so far with the Strategic Director for Sustainable Growth and Development at Cornwall Council. Members noted the estimated costs for the various options that Cornwall Council has identified for the building and the outcome of the MP’s survey which indicated that the public would like to see the building demolished.

It was **RESOLVED** to support the Clerk continuing discussions with Cornwall Council for the future of the General Wolfe building and adjacent land.

F/24/61) Dates of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on 7th April 2025.

The meeting closed at 7.43pm.