

MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2025 at The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Cohen, Double, Fox, Kimber, Pearce, Preece, Stephens, Thompson and Young.

In attendance: David Pooley (Town Clerk) and Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk), Jessica Hyde (Library and Community Projects Officer).

Also in attendance: Councillor Hamilton

CC/24/39) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Guest.

CC/24/40) Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hamilton declared an interest in agenda item 7 (Small Grants Scheme) by virtue of being the President of TS Hood – St Austell Sea Cadets.

Councillor Thompson declared an interest in agenda item 7 (Small Grants Scheme) by virtue of being a member of a Working Group which is exploring the potential to re-open the hydrotherapy pool at Polkyth Leisure Centre.

CC/24/41) Dispensations

None.

CC/24/42) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 25th November 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th November 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

CC/24/43) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that the Action for Children "Kernow Connect" contract has been cut and the re-structuring of staff has left no resource for St Austell.

Cornwall Council has confirmed that the Adult Education Centre at Robartes Road will close, and discussions are taking place with Cornwall College about facilitating Adult Education courses at the College. The Clerk added that he is meeting with the CEO of Cornwall College shortly to discuss a number of matters and will raise Adult Education with him at that time.

The Clerk confirmed that Councillor Gray was appointed to the White River Project Steering Group.

Arising from a question, the Clerk confirmed that the hoist in the disabled toilet at Priory Car Park is beyond economic repair and quotations are being sought for a replacement.

CC/24/44) Public Participation

The Chair agreed that representatives from the Sea Cadets and St Austell Children's Literacy Festival could speak when their application is due to be considered.

CC/24/45) Small Grants Scheme

In order to assist the public present, the Chair agreed that the St Austell Children's Literacy Festival should be considered first and St Austell Sea Cadets second.

St Austell Children's Literacy Festival

The Chair welcomed Mr Pollard to the meeting.

Mr Pollard advised that last year's event was a huge success and saw around 2,500 people attending the various workshops across the town. White River Place reported a significant increase in footfall over the festival period and local shops were pleased with the additional trade in the town. Mr Pollard stressed that he would like the event to remain free to keep it as inclusive as possible. Mr Pollard advised that he is keeping the costs to a minimum and is working with the Library, Studio 4 and the Arts Centre for this year's festival which is due to take place on the 13th and 14th June 2025.

The Clerk advised that if Members were mindful to approve a grant in the sum requested, funding could be found from another budget, but it would need the approval of full Council.

Members thanked Mr Pollard for the continuation of the St Austell Children's Literacy Festival and unanimously expressed their support for the funding requested.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that a grant in the sum of £1,000 be awarded to the St Austell Children's Literacy Festival by way of a contribution towards the Festival due to take place on the 13th and 14th June 2025.

St Austell Sea Cadets

The Chair welcomed Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Jordan Nash RNR and 2 cadets to the meeting.

Sub Lieutenant Nash explained that the Sea Cadets minibus is nearing its end of life and has broken down on a number of occasions over recent months. In addition, due to its age, the minibus is required to have a safety check every 6 weeks which costs approximately £1,000 per annum. She advised that there are currently 52 Sea Cadets in the unit who all play an active role in the community, parade twice a week and need reliable transport to fully embrace the experiences on offer which are not always within St Austell. Sub Lieutenant Nash added that many parents cannot drive so the unit cannot rely on parents taking their children to other locations. She advised that the Sea Cadets is a self-supporting charity and all their running costs (insurance, fuel, heating, lighting etc) are funded through monthly subscriptions.

Sub Lieutenant Nash advised that an opportunity has arisen to purchase a bus which is 5 years old and has low mileage for the sum of £11,000 which they feel is too good an opportunity to miss.

She advised that the Sea Cadets have £7,500 in reserves which they are prepared to use towards the cost of purchasing the mini bus but they would need to leave some funds in abeyance to cover the daily running costs and retain an emergency fund.

The Clerk advised that if Members were mindful to approve a grant in the sum requested, funding could be found from another budget, but it would need the approval of full Council.

Members thanked Sub Lieutenant Nash and the cadets for attending the meeting and unanimously agreed to recommend the grant requested.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that a grant in the sum of £2,500 be awarded to the St Austell Sea Cadets by way of a contribution towards a replacement minibus.

Amber Bee CIC

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to Amber Bee CIC to carry out a Barney and Echo Mindfulness and Internet Safety Project at Pondhu School.

Go Shopmobility, St Austell

Members considered the application and agreed that a grant should be awarded. They also suggested that Go Shopmobility should use local newspaper adverts, posters on notice boards and social media campaigns to heighten public awareness of the very valuable service.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to Go Shopmobility, St Austell to cover the costs of printing updated leaflets.

Councillor Thompson reiterated his interest and left the meeting

Councillor Stephens assumed the Chair

Merlin Neuro Therapy Centre

Members considered the application and expressed their support for the very important service provided by the Merlin Centre.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to award a grant in the sum of £1,000 to the "Every Step Counts Campaign" on condition that the grant is released upon receipt of confirmation from the centre that it has raised the required funding to go ahead with the purchase of the equipment.

Councillor Thompson returned to the meeting and re-assumed the Chair

The Farming Mother CIC

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to assist with the cost of wellbeing workshops, peer support networks and resource development for SEND children and their families.

Three Bays Wildlife

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to cover the cost of materials for a Bumblebee friendly schools project with Sandy Hill Primary School.

CC/24/46) Draft Events Programme

The Deputy Town Clerk referred to the draft events programme and stressed that it is a working document and will evolve as events and activities are developed. She advised that in some circumstances, the support for an external event will be in the form of a grant (eg: St Piran's Day), whilst support for other events organised externally might be by way of a stand or activity (eg: Party in the Park) but this will depend on the resource available.

The events organised and led by the Town Council will be insured, resourced and overseen by Town Council staff, volunteers and, if required, external contractors. The Deputy Clerk advised that the first Town Council organised event for 2025 will be an Easter Fun Day in Poltair Park on Saturday 19th April 2025.

The Deputy Clerk drew particular attention to the "After school games in the park" events which it is hoped will take place during July and, if successful, will continue into August. The plan is to have a trailer full of outdoor games which can be towed to different parks for use by primary school children for after school games. The supervision of the events is yet to be finalised but will probably be a mixture of after school teaching staff and Town Council resource. The Town Council is hoping to obtain funding for the trailer and equipment through a Shared Prosperity Fund grant.

The Deputy Clerk also advised that a proposal had been received from Eat: Festivals who would organise a festival in the town centre each year, for three years which will deliver a free day out for local residents, visitors and businesses and create a busy trading opportunity for local food and drink producers. The target number of pitches is 70 which would be positioned across the town utilising Biddicks Court, Fore Street and White River Place. Entertainment hubs would also be set up across the town to provide ambiance. The Deputy Clerk advised that the event was a success in Bodmin last year and that St Austell BID have agreed to contribute towards the costs involved.

During discussion, Members thanked the Deputy Clerk and Projects Officer for the comprehensive list of events and the good spread across the town. The after-school park events were particularly well received. Members stressed the need to ensure that the events are well publicised utilising social media, posters, leaflets, newspapers and CHAOS radio to try to reach as wide an audience as possible.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Draft Events Programme.

Members reviewed the Eat:St Austell proposal and unanimously agreed that funding to support the event should be incorporated into the 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 budget on condition that St Austell BID contributes each year towards the costs involved.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to support an Eat: St Austell festival by way of a grant to St Austell BID in the sum of £2,500 for 2026/27, £1,500 for 2027/28 and £1,000 in 2028/29.

CC/24/47) Countywide 20mph Speed Limits – Phase 3 St Austell Re-consult

Members reviewed the revised proposals for St Austell which propose speed restrictions across the parish which are broadly:

20mph – Residential areas/outside schools
30mph – Arterial roads
60mph – A roads

Members expressed various concerns with regard to the re-consultation and felt that a formal Town Council response should not be submitted. It was agreed that Members should respond on an individual basis if they wished.

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

CC/24/48) Application for pharmacy

The Clerk advised that Banns Pharmacy had been refused permission to set up a pharmacy in the Carclaze area and the applicant is appealing the decision. During discussion Members expressed their disappointment that the application had been refused and recalled instances of long queues and waits at the local pharmacies for pharmaceutical services. Members felt that with the prospect of more housing in the area and the “pharmacy first” initiative, there is a huge need for additional pharmacies in St Austell and the surrounding area and felt that the appeal should be supported.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to Banns Pharmacy re-confirming the Town Council’s support for a pharmacy in the Carclaze area.

CC/24/49) Projects Update

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk provided an update as follows:

Shared Prosperity Fund (Round 1)

The final roof top garden report has been received and was reviewed by the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership at their meeting on 11th February 2025. The report will be placed to the Planning and Regeneration Committee for consideration on 3rd March 2025.

Town Vitality Fund

Poundland banners/church piazza/highways review

The Clerk advised that due to a protracted project in Falmouth, the banner has been delayed for a couple of months. A request has been put to Cornwall Council for an extension of the funding.

The final permission from the Church for the piazza is still awaited.

The Clerk advised that he is due to meet with the CEO of Cornwall College shortly to ascertain the demand for student accommodation in St Austell which will determine whether or not the project can be taken forward.

A proposal to reverse the traffic flow through Fore Street and allow taxis/buses through at certain times of the day is being assessed by highways officers.

Community Capacity Fund

The Clerk advised that the Duke Street designs have been finalised and will be put to public consultation on the 10th and 11th March 2025 at Studio 4, White River Place.

Shared Prosperity Fund (Round 2)

Community Capacity Fund

A funding bid for a trailer and large garden games will be submitted to Cornwall Council this week.

Community Levelling up Programme

A funding bid for the creation of a pump track at The Meadows will be submitted to Cornwall Council this week. The Clerk will report this application to full Council in March.

CCTV

The town centre CCTV is currently on winter hours monitoring and 5 cameras are on order for installation, hopefully within the next few weeks.

Priory Car Park/Tregonissey Lane End

The car park income is good, and a further section of re-surfacing was carried out last week. Further re-lining work will be carried out shortly. This is being done on a phased basis so that the car park can remain open with little disruption to users. The contactless payment system is still popular, and the season tickets are steady with regular users.

St Johns Methodist Church is in discussions with Cornwall Council with regard to the creation of an access from Priory Car Park through to the front of the Methodist Church.

Tregonissey Lane End is still a free car park and has enforcement from time to time to discourage stays longer than the 3 hour limit.

No response has been received from Cornwall Council with regard to the Town Council's request for Clifden Road to transfer to the Town Council.

ASB

The extra hours for the town centre security guards is funded until March. It is hoped that the Police will find extra funding through the 2nd Homes Council Tax income that they are due to receive with effect from April.

The security guards CSAS training has been completed.

The latest emergency/temporary accommodation numbers have been received which demonstrates a further increase in placements in the town centre.

Facebook continues to be used to report ASB, which is hampering the Police dealing with issues as swiftly as they might if incidents were reported through the 101 channel. Shop lifting is still an issue, but the Community Safety Officer has advised on a number of occasions that St Austell is still in a lot better position than other towns in Cornwall.

Grounds Maintenance

The winter maintenance is nearly finished and weather permitting, the grass cutting season should commence with effect from 1st April.

2,500 bulbs have been planted across the town and the centre bed at Asda has been re-planted. A flower tower has been placed on Porthpean Road roundabout, and the paths at the library and the parks are in the process of being edged. Seeds are being grown on in the Polytunnel and will be planted out in the summer.

The Landrew Road swings and surfacing are complete, and The Meadows roundabout should be finished by the end of the week. These works have been funded through CIL funding.

Public Conveniences – Priory Car Park

The men's toilets have been refurbished but the broken hoist in the changing places toilet has been deemed beyond economic repair. Quotes are being obtained for its replacement and will be brought to full Council in due course.

CC/24/50) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next meeting of the Community Committee is scheduled for Monday 24th March 2025.

The meeting closed at 7.36pm.