

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> MAY 2025 at 6.00pm in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD.**

**Present:** Councillors: Brown, Cohen, Gray, Hamilton, Lanxon, Lingham, Marshall, Pearce, Preece, Taylor, Thompson and Young.

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

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings.

**APM/25/01) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bull, Clemo, Hawken, Kimber, Rowse, Stephens, Whitehouse and Williams-Pears.

**APM/25/02) Minutes of the Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

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

**APM/25/03) Emma Lankford – CN4C**

The Mayor welcomed Ms Lankford to the meeting.

Ms Lankford advised that CN4C aim to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive community for everyone and have 3 key values:

- Better Lives (family activities, cooking advice, qualifications)
- Better Off (IT services, Benefits advice, integration into society assistance)
- Better Sense (making better sense of the world around, integrated care team assistance)

Ms Lankford advised that CN4C are in two locations, one in Redruth that has been running for 25 years and one in St Austell that is administered from the former Lloyds Bank building in High Cross Street.

Ms Lankford outlined a number of services and activities that they provide from the St Austell centre many of which are grant funded. Activities include:

- Clubs and social wellbeing activities
- Career progression and educational courses
- Cooking on a budget advice
- IT courses
- Financial support and benefits advice
- Resettlement assistance
- Homelessness advice
- Health checks
- Signposting to other services eg: adult social care
- Support for young people

- Foodbank vouchers

In answer to Members' questions, Ms Lankford confirmed that their doors are open to everyone, and they will sign post people to other agencies if CN4C cannot provide the help needed. She confirmed that at the present time, there are no plans for the Citizens Advice Bureau to be based at the Lloyds Bank building, mainly due to IT issues, but confirmed that CN4C continue to work closely with them and refer people to their service as required. It was suggested that Kernow Credit Union might be helpful to some clients and Ms Lankford agreed to look at what they can offer.

The Mayor thanked Ms Lankford for her interesting presentation.

### **APM/25/04) Review of the 2024/25 Civic Year**

Councillor Young provided an overview of the last 12 months and expressed his thanks to the Town Council's staff. He provided an overview of the town centre revitalisation activities and the commencement of the piazza and banner projects. Councillor Young advised that during the year the Town Council considered 117 planning applications and approved 28 grants for local organisations. Other achievements he listed as follows:

- Agreed additional funding for the town centre security guards, town centre planting schemes and Christmas lights;
- Provided free parking in Priory Car Park on the last four Saturdays in December for Christmas Shopping and for the local election;
- Lobbied Cornwall Council about a change in bus routes which had adversely impacted on St Austell;
- Obtained a clean bill of health for health and safety, financial records and governance;
- Improved the planting at St Austell station and on a number of key roundabouts;
- Facilitated a number of community events in the Town Council's parks
  - Party in the Park (Poltair)
  - Yoga in the Park
  - Easter Fun Day
- Held a very successful Town Centre Fun day in August 2024 which it is hoped will be a blueprint for future events;
- Refurbished the Library Help Desk area
- Replaced some grounds maintenance tools and machinery ;
- Appointed a part time library assistant and community projects officer who is facilitating the Town Council's events schedule and social media.

Councillor Young advised that the Town Council is continuing to invest in its assets and secured CIL funding this year to refurbish Landrew Road Park and install a new accessible roundabout at The Meadows.

The other parks and open spaces have also received some investment with new safety surfacing at Prince Charles Park and general parks and play equipment maintenance and repairs across all sites.

With regard to climate change activities, Councillor Young advised that 40 trees have been planted since May 2024 in the Town Council's parks and open spaces and that the Council continues to maintain and enhance a number of wildflower areas. The Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan is regularly reviewed by the Climate and Environment Committee.

Councillor Young advised that the Town Council remains in partnership with Newquay Town Council to run a CCTV service for Newquay and St Austell which is the envy of many towns in Cornwall, particularly as the Tolvadden CCTV service has closed and many towns are having to make alternative arrangements for their CCTV provision.

The camera monitoring is now on summer hours which means that the cameras are monitored almost 24/7 with most parts of the town centre covered by CCTV. The Town Council's mobile CCTV camera has been successful in a couple of areas around the town with one placement resulting in a closure order and the other experiencing a substantial reduction in ASB.

Councillor Young expressed his gratitude to Charity and her team in Newquay for providing such an excellent proactive CCTV monitoring service.

Councillor Young highlighted other activities as follows:

- The Town Council agreed to freeze the car park charges in Priory Car Park for the 2025~26 financial year and still managed to set a very reasonable Council Tax increase. People visiting Priory Car Park can pay by cash, contactless, Mobile App, a QR Code payment system or purchase a season ticket. Part of the car park has been resurfaced and a section of the white lines have been re-painted. Further lining works are scheduled to commence shortly. The EV charging points are attracting more use which will hopefully mean more footfall in the town centre. A business rates assessment for Priory Car Park was successfully challenged and has achieved further savings for the Town Council.
- The Town Council continues to lease The House to Young People Cornwall and provide them with an annual grant to help them provide much-needed guidance, support, academic assistance and sporting activities for young people across the town.
- The library is still in the top two busiest libraries in Cornwall and has a wide range of activities every month. SALSA are still very active at the library and host an event at least once or twice a month.

Councillor Young advised that he is looking forward to the Library 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration afternoon that is being organised for Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025. He added that SALSA is going to invite the 5 former Councillors to the event to provide everyone with an opportunity to say goodbye and wish them well with whatever they may do in the future. Invitations to this event will be sent out to all Councillors in due course.

Councillor Young concluded that it had been an honour and pleasure to be Mayor of St Austell and thanked the Town Council for its support.

The Mayor, thanked Councillor Young.

**APM/25/05) David Pooley – Town Clerk**  
**St Austell Town Council – 2024/25 Financial Accounts.**

The Town Clerk advised that the 2024/25 draft Accounts were approved by the Town Council on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and provided an overview as follows:

- Turnover for the 2024/25 year was £1.7 million
- The car park income was up £20,000 on 2023/24 financial year
- Investment income for the year was more than budgeted
- Over £200,000 grant income was received for various projects
- After a transfer of £80,000 to the projects reserve there is a surplus for the year of £38,000 which has been allowed to accrue to the General Fund.
- The Town Council has no borrowing and a precept lower than many other large towns in Cornwall.

**APM/25/06) Priorities of St Austell Town Council for the 2025/26 Civic Year**

The Mayor advised that during the budget discussions at the end of last year, Members identified a number of priorities for the 2025/26 financial year and provided a brief overview of each priority:

Reducing and controlling anti-social behaviour and making St Austell feel safer was identified as a top priority. Money has been allocated to add to the CCTV system and the Town Council will continue to invest in street wardens and campaign for more ASB officer resource from Cornwall Council.

The play equipment installed by Restormel Borough Council in 2008/09 is requiring more and more maintenance and will require replacement in due course. A programme to replace the out-of-date play equipment has been drawn up with a replacement cost estimated to be over £1m. The Town Council has started to save for these replacements.

With the planned development of the Penwinnick Road site, it is likely that the Town Council will have to move offices within the next 5 years. More clarity from Treveth about the future of the Town Council's office and depot is expected over the next 12 months.

St Austell Library is the second busiest library in the County and continues to provide a busy community hub. The VE Day event was a huge success. Other events planned include a climate change event which is due to take place on the 30<sup>th</sup> May.

The Planning and Regeneration Committee will be very busy over the next 2-3 years not only dealing with consultations on planning applications but also feeding into the development of a new local plan and housing targets by Cornwall Council. A dialogue has taken place with neighbouring parishes and an initial submission covering the St Austell area sent to Cornwall Council. Engagement is envisaged for the proposed Treveth Development at Penwinnick Road and for the proposed Blantyre Development.

Following the appointment of a Community Projects Officer, the Town Council has increased its social media activity to highlight the good work that the Council is doing.

The Town Council is committed to supporting the town centre and has agreed to continue grants to the BID for Christmas lights and security.

The Town Council took over the responsibility for the town centre planting last year and has agreed to carry this on for the 2025/26 financial year. Our new events officer will work closely with the BID and WRP for town centre events and schools and other agencies for events in the parks. This should have a benefit in raising the profile of the Town both in and out of the local community.

The Town Council is the accountable body for the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership and it is hoped that this partnership will continue to develop projects which will attract funding. It is unlikely that there will be any large-scale grants in the short term so small low-cost projects will be the order of the day.

The refurbishment of the Town Council's Changing Places Toilet at Priory Car Park to provide better facilities for the disabled has almost been completed and is the only such facility available to the public in the local area.

The Mayor concluded that he is really looking forward to his year in office and helping to take the priorities forward.

Members raised the following:

- Whether there are any further devolution opportunities for the Town Council;
- If there is any funding available to upgrade the skateboard park in Poltair Park.

### **APM/25/07) Open forum for questions from the public**

Mrs Earl expressed her concern that unlike other large towns in Cornwall, St Austell Town Council does not have an adequate meeting space with modern meeting room standards.

The Clerk advised that the Town Council has been offered meeting space at White River Place which it is understood will be to the modern standards expected of a civic meeting room. Cornwall Council's property team have advised that they will invite the Town Council to view the new offices shortly. The Clerk added that he is in discussions with Cornwall Council's Property Team and Treveth about the costs involved with regard to the renewal of the Stable Block lease and a potential charge to the Town Council to use the White River Place meeting rooms.

Mrs Earl expressed a strong desire to see trees planted along the new A30 link road and asked for the Town Council's support.

During discussion, the following items were raised:

- A number of Ash trees are dying in an area adjacent to the A391 (outside the Town Council's area)
- Gratitude to the library staff and SALSA for their excellent work
- The damage to Bethel Wall
- The future of Clifden Road Car Park
- A recent visit to St Austell by the High Sheriff
- The timescales for a decision on the pump track grant application

### **APM/25/08) Members' questions**

The Clerk advised that there were no Members questions.

**APM/25/09) Mayor's closing comments**

The Mayor thanked everybody for coming to the meeting and for their helpful contributions.

Meeting closed at 7.20pm.