

MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 20th OCTOBER 2025 at Chi Austell, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Bull, Cohen, Gray, Hamilton, Hawken and Stephens.

Also Present: Councillor Pearce observed the meeting by TEAMS.

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

CE/25/01) Election of Chair

The Town Clerk asked for nominations for Chair. A nomination was received for Councillor Stephens.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Stephens be elected Chair of the Climate and Environment Committee for the 2025/26 civic year.

CE/25/02) Election of Vice-Chair

The Chair asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. A nomination was received for Councillor Cohen.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Cohen be elected Vice-Chair of the Climate and Environment Committee for the 2025/26 civic year.

Arising from the above, Councillor Cohen advised that due to a change in her working arrangements, she could now no longer commit to attending CASA meetings.

CE/25/03) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kimber and Taylor.

CE/25/04) Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gray declared an interest in agenda item 11 (CASA update) by virtue of being the Town Council's representative on the CASA Committee.

Councillor Hamilton declared an interest in agenda item 11 (CASA update) by virtue of attending their meetings and events in his capacity as Mayor.

CE/25/05) Dispensations

The Clerk advised that no requests for dispensations had been received.

CE/25/06) Public Participation

There were no members of public present.

CE/25/07) Minutes of Meeting held on 20th January 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th January 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

CE/25/08) Matters to note

The Clerk advised that further to minute number CE/24/29, no further contact has been made from the Cornwall Council (Health Cornwall Team) with regard to installing smoke free signage in the Town Council's parks.

The Clerk advised that the Town Council has a contract for weed spraying to control the weeds on kerbsides and surfaced paths, but this does not include the Town Council's play areas. Minute number CE/24/31 refers.

Mrs Earl, member of the public arrived during the next item.

CE/25/09) Climate Action Plan

The Town Clerk went through the Climate Action Plan in detail as follows:

- **Energy.** Priory toilets and the town centre electric point are both on renewable energy contracts. The library is on a long-term contract with Kent County Council (Cornwall Council framework agreement) which is partially renewable energy.
- **Trees.** The High Sheriff has sourced a Red Oak which is due to be planted in the library garden on Monday 10th November 2025. This is part of a larger piece of horticultural activity in the library garden that the High Sheriff has overseen in conjunction with the grounds maintenance team.
- **Grants Scheme.** The Town Council's grants scheme encourages funding applications for climate emergency projects.
- **Apprentice.** The Town Council has approved the recruitment of another Grounds Maintenance Apprentice.
- **Organic foam-based weed treatment.** This treatment was trialled but was not particularly effective or environmentally friendly as the process used a lot of diesel.
- **In Bloom.** Due to a lack of resource, there are now limited entries to the South-West in Bloom competition in St Austell. The towns who enter the competition have very active community groups which is an essential part of the criteria.
- **Retro Fit.** The Clerk advised that Ocean Housing is due to meet with the Town Council later in the year/early next year for an update on their housing programmes.
- **Bus Services.** The Town Council has lobbied Cornwall Council for improvements to the bus services serving St Austell. There will probably be a need to lobby for an enhanced bus service and accessible bus stops when the Health Hub is up and running at Carlyon House.
- **Re-cycled paper.** Ecolabel paper is procured at the present time as re-cycled paper is still relatively expensive.

- **Street Lights.** The Town Council's streetlights are being replaced with LED's on a phased basis.
- **Community Engagement.** The Town Council continues to support a number of climate change themed events most recently a climate awareness event at the library and CASA's "cleaner, greener" day.
- **Composting.** The Town Council re-cycles plants and composts where it can.
- **Carbon Accounting.** Insufficient resource to complete the project at the present time.
- **Cycling facility.** Grant funding has been obtained and a pump track is being built at The Meadows. Due for completion late November/early December.
- **Reducing cash collection.** A contactless payment system installed which now accounts for more transactions than cash.
- **Solar Panels.** The Town Council has approved the installation of solar panels on the roof of the toilet block.
- **Buy Local.** The Town Council, wherever possible uses local suppliers and contractors.
- **Multi use Trails.** The Town Council has recently provided the Rotary Club with paint to paint the finger post signs at the Menacuddle end of the clay trail.
- **Re-cycling.** A re-cycling contract is held with Biffa. All new benches, tables and safety surfacing procured for the parks are made from recycled material.
- **Battery operated equipment.** The Town Council has purchased two battery operated blowers.
- **Engagement with young people.** The Town Council has set up a working group to facilitate the creation of a Youth Council.

Arising from the above, it was suggested that during the planning process, the Town Council should lobby Cornwall Council to ensure that the provision of solar panels is actively encouraged for all new builds.

It was further suggested that the Town Council considers making space available in Poltair Park for a community gardening project aimed at people who have not got a garden.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and add the suggestions outlined above to the Action Plan.

CE/25/10) In Bloom

The Chair invited Mrs Earl to speak.

Mrs Earl expressed her disappointment that there is a decline in the entrants to the annual "In Bloom" competition and made reference to the community cohesion that the competition brings.

Mrs Earl referred to some groups of people that might be interested in garden competitions similar to those held in Fowey. She also advised that she would like to see an annual harvest festival at St John's Church.

During discussion, it was noted that many of the community groups who used to enter the In Bloom competition, no longer exist.

Members felt that it would be helpful if the Town Council could advertise its Small Grants Scheme and encourage grant applications from community groups for environmental or horticultural projects.

It was **RESOLVED** to advertise the Town Council's Small Grants Scheme and encourage applications from community groups for environmental and horticultural projects.

CE/25/11) Climate Action St Austell (CASA)

Councillor Hamilton advised that the Chair of CASA is Rev Paul Salaman, the Vicar of St Mewan, who is a very welcome addition to the group.

Councillor Hamilton further advised that CASA were very appreciative of the £500 grant from the Town Council which helped fund their Cheaper, Greener day on 27th September. The event took place in St John's Methodist Church and had solar energy and recycling stalls, plant give aways and electric bikes on display. Councillor Hamilton advised that he opened the event and St Mewan School Choir provided the entertainment.

CASA are currently campaigning against toxic ash being taken from the St Dennis incinerator to Northamptonshire and an undeveloped oil field at Rosebank.

Mrs Earl added that CASA are hoping to have a table in the town centre over the Christmas period with promotional material entitled "Saving Energy, Saves Money"

CE/25/12) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Climate and Environment Committee is 19th January 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.