

MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 19th JANUARY 2026 at Chi Austell, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

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

Also Present: Councillor Pearce (TEAMS)

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

CE/25/13) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kimber

CE/25/14) Declarations of Interest

None.

CE/25/15) Dispensations

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

CE/25/16) Public Participation

Four members of CASA were present at the meeting.

CE/25/17) Minutes of Meeting held on 20th October 2025

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

CE/25/18) Matters to note

The Clerk advised that:

- The High Sheriff and Mayor planted a red oak in the library garden just after Remembrance Day
- A date in January is awaited from Ocean Housing to provide the Town Council with an update on their retro-fit programme and the selling of housing stock
- A condition survey is being carried out on the Town Council's streetlights

Mr Hubbard, CASA representative expressed his disappointment with the Town Council's "lack of enthusiasm" for entering the Britain in Bloom competition.

The Clerk explained that the Britain in Bloom competition is for community groups to enter, not local authorities and at the present time there is a lack of community groups in the parish willing to take this initiative on. Councillor Brown referred to two community groups that have recently folded in the Bethel area, both of which had previously entered the "in bloom" competition.

CE/25/19) Climate Action St Austell (CASA)

The Chair welcomed Mr Hubbard from CASA to the meeting:

Mr Hubbard provided a presentation on behalf of CASA. He explained the work of CASA and showed diagrams depicting the rising global temperature and rising carbon dioxide levels.

Mr Hubbard outlined the activities of CASA and expressed their gratitude for the assistance and funding that the Town Council has provided to enable them to carry on their activities.

Mr Hubbard circulated a questionnaire for Members to complete and thanked the Committee for their time and continued support.

Arising from the above, Members raised the following:

- Concern with regard to the public transport question on the questionnaire
- How CASA are contributing to the carbon zero pledge
- How CASA are funded
- What CASA's view is on Newquay airport
- How CASA obtain the views of young people

Arising from the above, the Deputy Town Clerk agreed to provide Mr Hubbard with Simon Pollard's contact details to see if CASA can have an information stand at the Childrens' Literacy Festival.

CE/25/20) Biodiversity Policy

The Clerk advised that it is good practice to have a biodiversity policy in place to assist land management decisions.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

- The need to keep rural paths well-lit and safe
- The potential to turn part of Poltair park into a community garden

In order to stress the need for safety on rural footpaths, it was suggested that paragraph 7.2 Rural Footpaths, Verges and Rights of Way bullet point 4 should read as follows:

- *Avoid unnecessary widening, surfacing or lighting of rural paths subject to supporting measures to improve the safety of pedestrians*

It was **RECOMMENDED** to approve the Biodiversity Policy subject to the above amendment.

CE/25/21) Climate Action Plan

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

Trees. 680 trees have been planted since 2027. 9 large trees being planted in the parks over the winter.

Arising from the above, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had very little storm damage on its land, with only a few trees fallen.

She advised that the Operations Manager and the grounds maintenance team had worked extremely hard in the days following the storm which allowed the Town Council's parks and gardens to remain safely open. She added that the annual tree surveys and good tree management were a contributing factor for the little damage seen.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Operations Manager and Grounds Team should be thanked for their hard work in the aftermath of the storm.

Polytunnel. 500 plants have this year been grown from seed or plugs in the polytunnel.

Apprentice. The grounds maintenance apprentice qualified in July 2025. A further apprentice will be recruited within the next few months.

Streetlights. A survey by Enerveo is due to be carried out shortly.

Cycling at The Meadows. Pump Track complete.

Wildflower areas. The wildflower areas are due to be completed in Spring 2026.

Church Piazza. Sustainable planting incorporated within the new church piazza.

Clay Trails. Signage cleaned and painted again by the Rotary Club in September 2025.

Biodiversity. The Government appears to be weakening the biodiversity targets to make it easier for house building to proceed.

Arising from the above, Members raised the following:

- Under the Action "*Lobby for improvements to public transport and more flexible hopper/community bus*" add under the section "*complete*" the following "*timetables and routes reviewed regularly*" and *reassign the responsible officer/committee to "Town Clerk, Planning Committee"*
- Add a new "Action" as follows: "*monitor changes in planning protocols which affect biodiversity in government planning policy and the Cornwall Local Plan and make representations where appropriate*"
- Whether wildflowers could be added to Lostwood Garden
- Investigate the idea of creating Councillor and Community Champions for aspects of diversity where appropriate.

Arising from the above, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Town Council has a Tree Warden who was appointed a few years ago by the Town Council under the Cornwall Council Community Tree Warden initiative.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Climate Action report subject to the amendments suggested.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Clerk should explore with the Operations Manager the sustainability of wildflowers in Lostwood Gardens and the potential to nominate further Councillor/Community Champions.

CE/25/22) Dates of Meetings

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.17pm.