

MINUTES of the MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 16th MARCH 2026 in Chi Austel, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Bull, Clemo, Cohen, Gray, Hamilton, Hawken, Kimber, Lanxon, Lingham, Marshall, Nott, Preece, Stephens, Taylor, Whitehouse and Young.

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

Also in attendance: Annie Etheridge (Interpreter).

C/25/140) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rowse and Thompson.

C/25/141) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received

Councillor Hamilton advised that he had accepted two tickets from Penrice Academy to see their excellent production "Into the Woods".

C/25/142) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/25/143) Minutes of Meeting held on 26th January 2026

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th January 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/25/144) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that the Town Revitalisation Investment Programme (TRIP) projects and grant claim forms are almost complete.

C/25/145) Mayor's announcements

The Mayor advised that he had attended the following:

- A number of Cornwall Armed Forces Day meetings
- Saltash Town Council Civic Ceremony
- St Johns Awards at Truro Cathedral
- A visit to the Redruth Buttermarket with the High Sheriff
- Brian Palmer's 85th Birthday celebrations at the Library
- Global Pasty Championships at Heligan where he was a judge
- St Piran's Day Events
- Health and Wellbeing Event at Chi Austel
- Soroptomists Unsung Heroine Awards evening
- Sea Cadet Coffee Morning

C/25/146) Public Participation

Mr Jake Richards advised that he did not wish to speak.

C/25/147) Members' questions

There were no questions from Members.

C/25/148) Mr Richard Gray – A Band of Brothers

The Mayor welcomed Mr Gray to the meeting.

Mr Gray thanked Members for inviting him to the meeting and provided an update on A Band of Brothers. Mr Gray advised that A Band of Brothers is a local charity that pairs trained mentors with young men (aged 18 to 25) who are in, or in danger of being in, the criminal justice system. He advised that they have been in St Austell for 2 years and operate out of The House and thanked the previous and current Mayor for nominating A Band of Brothers as their chosen charity. He advised that St Austell Lions, Cornwall Community Foundation and St Austell Brewery have also provided funding and St Austell Brewery have offered two young men with job opportunity placements. Mr Gray advised that they currently have 5 young men on the referral programme across Cornwall.

Members thanked Mr Gray for his interesting update.

Councillor Marshall declared an interest in the next item by virtue of being a BID Director

C/25/149) St Austell BID

Annette Miller thanked the Town Council for their continued funding support for the Christmas lights, town centre planting and security personnel. She advised that the Christmas period had been good with the shops reporting an increase in footfall across the four event days. The security hotspot funding has been extended for a further 6 months to September 2026 but funding after this date is uncertain. Ms Miller advised that she has a "find the bunny" event in the town centre over the Easter period and the crazy golf will be set up again in a unit in White River Place as it proved extremely popular during the February half-term. The Eat St Austell Festival is due in the town centre on the 30th May which should see 70 stalls and 5 entertainment spots across the town.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

- The accessibility of the Market House
- The need to lobby for more security personnel funding

Ms Miller advised that if she had more budget she would like to enhance the events programme and put an enhanced street cleaning regime in place.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should write to the Police and Crime Commissioner seeking additional hotspot funding when it lapses after six months.

C/25/150) Cornwall Councillor update reports

The Clerk advised that Councillor Yelland had submitted his apologies.

Councillor Ashton advised that along with Councillor Yelland he works closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner and he has a seat on the Police and Crime Panel. He advised that through these forums he is happy to assist with any future lobbying for hotspot funding.

Councillor Ashton advised that he has started a campaign about potholes in St Austell and invited Town Councillors to contact him with any pothole concerns. Councillor Ashton advised that he is working with Cornwall Council on potential highways projects at Tregonissey Road and Victoria Road and that Cornwall Council has launched a Cornwall Evergreen Regeneration Fund.

Arising from questions, the Clerk advised that he has not received an update from Cornwall Council on the future of the football club and Councillor Ashton advised that there is a lot of opposition with regard to Cornwall Council's proposal to increase charges/introduce winter parking in a selection of Cornwall Council car parks including Par.

C/25/151) Nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Clerk explained that, although legally the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected at the Town Council's Annual Meeting in May each year, it was the Council's usual practice to choose a Mayor elect and a Deputy Mayor elect in March to ensure continuity.

Members considered the nominations received for Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2026/27 Civic Year.

There was one nomination for Mayor.

Councillor Stephens was proposed by Councillor Hamilton and seconded by Councillor Pearce.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Stephens as Mayor elect for the 2026/27 civic year.

There were two nominations for Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Gray was proposed by Councillor Stephens and seconded by Councillor Clemo.

Councillor Preece was proposed by Councillor Lanxon and seconded by Councillor Pearce.

It was **AGREED** to appoint the Deputy Mayor by secret ballot.

Members voted for their preferred candidate and the Town Clerk announced the votes received as follows:

Councillor Gray – 10 votes
Councillor Preece – 6 votes

There was 1 void vote.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Gray as Deputy Mayor elect for the 2026/27 civic year.

C/25/152) Action Plan – 2026/27

The Clerk advised that it is good practice to have an Action Plan and referred Members to the latest draft plan.

During discussion the following was suggested:

Page 13 - Literacy Festival

- Add the word "Children's" before the word Literacy

Page 17 - Local Plan

- Add the word "the" after the word "on"
- After the word "plan" add "and the spatial development strategy"

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendments, the Action Plan – 2026/27 be approved.

C/25/153) Schedule of Meetings – May 2026 to May 2027

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of meetings for the period May 2026 to May 2027.

C/25/154) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Schedule of Payments for the period 17th January 2026 to 6th March 2026 totalling £283,113.03 and the transfers between bank accounts amounting to £237,999.39.

C/25/155) Cornwall Armed Forces Day

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Mr Mark Bardsley, Royal British Legion, Cornwall County Chairman is leading on the organisation of Cornwall Armed Forces Day due to take place on Saturday 20th June 2026 in St Austell and the Event Notification Form/Road Closure has been submitted to Cornwall Council for approval. She advised that the Town Council has agreed to assist with the road closures for the parade which is likely to see 400-500 participants. It has been estimated that 15 security staff and 4-5 grounds maintenance staff will be required on the day to oversee the road closures and parking in Priory Car Park which will require funding of approximately £2,000 which could be found from the Events budget.

Mr Bardsley and Councillor Hamilton have secured additional parking at the College, Poltair School and Penrice School and 2 buses to take the public to and from the sites to the town centre which it is hoped will assist with the traffic flows around the town centre and town centre car parks.

In addition to the parade, a Military Village will be set up in White River Place.

The Deputy Town Clerk suggested that the Town Council might like to consider making Priory Car Park free on the day for armed forces parade participants and disabled parking.

The Deputy Clerk advised that the organisers are trying to identify additional resource to assist on the day, particularly to oversee the car parking at the schools, the bus pick up and drops offs and town centre activities.

Arising from the above Members suggested writing to the operators of White River Place Car Park and Co-op Car Park to see if they would be prepared to reduce their fees on the day.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note progress with the Cornwall Armed Forces Day preparations;
2. Approve a budget of £2,000 from the Events budget to assist with the resource required to oversee the road closures, and
3. Approve the closure of Priory Car Park to the general public on the day to accommodate parade participants and disabled attendees.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** to write to the operators of the Co-op Car Park and White River Place Car Park, if the event is approved, suggesting that they consider reducing their parking fees on Saturday 20th June 2026 to support the Cornwall Armed Forces Day Event.

C/25/156) Health and Safety

Members reviewed the Executive Summary of the Health and Safety Inspection carried out in October 2025. The Clerk advised that the Operations Manager is working his way through the actions identified, none of which are considered high risk.

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

C/25/157) Members appointed to outside bodies update reports

Councillor Brown advised that he had attended planning training facilitated by Andrew Towleron which was very good and which he recommended to others.

Councillor Lanxon advised that there is a Community Health and Wellbeing event at St Austell College on Wednesday 29th April 2026 facilitated by the Community Area Partnership. She added that she had received no update on the football club.

C/25/158) Community Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the meeting dated 23rd February 2026 and approve the **RECOMMENDATIONS** contained therein.

C/25/159) Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the meeting dated 16th February 2026 and approve the **RECOMMENDATIONS** contained therein.

C/25/160) Planning and Regeneration Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the meetings dated 2nd February 2026 and 2nd March 2026.

C/25/161) 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 next item of business in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

C/25/162) Communication Support

Members considered a confidential report setting out the need to make reasonable adjustments for a councillor.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should:

1. Obtain detailed information from Cornwall Council on the specification of the microphone system at Chi Austel;
2. Identify a suitable interpretation software package which converts speech into text that is compatible with Cornwall Council's microphone system at Chi Austel;
3. Trial the identified software package and, if felt suitable, trial the software with councillors and provide training as appropriate which could include the use of consultancy support;
4. Identify a budget of up to £500 per meeting for communication support for a 3-month period or until a suitable software package has been identified and agreed as fit for purpose whichever is the sooner;
5. Update the Town Council in three months' time on the outcome of the trial.

It was **RESOLVED** to re-admit the press and public.

C/25/163) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Town Council meetings are due to take place on Monday 13th April 2026 and Monday 11th May 2026 (Annual Town Council Meeting).

The meeting closed at 8.01pm.