

MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 23rd MARCH 2026 at Chi Austel, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Cohen, Hamilton, Hawken, Kimber, Nott, Preece, Taylor and Whitehouse.

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

Also in attendance: A Etheridge (interpreter).

CC/25/58) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Clemo, Lingham, Stephens, Thompson and Young.

CC/25/59) Declarations of Interest

None.

CC/25/60) Dispensations

None.

CC/25/61) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 23rd February 2026

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd February 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

CC/25/62) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that he had nothing further to add.

CC/25/63) Public Participation

There were no members of the public present other than Mr Jake Richards.

CC/25/64) Jake Richards

Mr Jake Richards thanked the Committee for inviting him to the meeting.

Mr Richards advised that he is the owner of Jakes Bakes in the Market House, founder of the St Austell STAR Awards and Chair of the newly formed Town Team.

Mr Richards expressed a view that St Austell town centre suffers from inconsistent footfall outside of the summer season, increasing rents, rates and utility bills for local businesses, little promotional activity and a lack of a coordinated approach to regeneration. He added that he has spoken to lots of people who do not know who the BID or St Austell Town Centre Regeneration Partnership are and expressed a view that there needs to be better communication and a collective action to drive footfall, reduce shop vacancies, strengthen the identity of St Austell, support businesses, attract new investment and build local pride.

Mr Richards referred to towns such as Newquay and Mevagissey who promote themselves well by selling memorabilia such as fridge magnets, promotional hoodies, local shortbread, fudge etc and felt that St Austell could do something similar. He expressed concern with regard to the lack of visitor information, information for potential new businesses and an unreliable discovery trail around the town due to problems with the QR codes and software issues relating to android telephones.

Mr Richards concluded that the Town Team would like to open a shop within the town centre which will act as a hub of information, provider of local produce and mementos and assist with the marketing and promotion of the town. He advised that once a proposal has been worked up, the Team would like to seek grant funding from the Town Council to support set up costs.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

- The difficulties in attracting visitors to the town;
- The excellent revitalisation projects undertaken by the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership (piazza, banners and greening across the town);
- The lack of willing volunteers to sustain community projects;
- The need to learn from history (eg: SABEF, Carnival Committee);
- Gratitude to Mr Richards and the Team for looking at the issues with a fresh set of eyes and ideas.

Arising from a question, Mr Richards advised that the Town Team Members are:

Mr Jake Richards (Chair)
Mr Dave Halton
Mr Andrew Stickland
Mr Mark Gray
Mr Steve Nott

The Chair thanks Mr Richards for his presentation.

CC/25/65) Small Grants Scheme

Cornwall Performing Arts CIC

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to Cornwall Performing Arts CIC towards their Creative Writing for Young People in St Austell project.

Cornwall International Male Choral Festival

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £500 to the Cornwall International Male Choral Festival due to take place at St John's Methodist Church in May 2026.

Cornwall Pride CIO

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to Cornwall Pride CIO subject to confirmation from the organisations of the date that the event is due to take place in St Austell.

iSight Cornwall

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to iSight Cornwall towards their BUGS (Blind Using Guided Sights) Shooting Club activity.

CC/25/66) Projects Update

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk provided an update as follows:

Shared Prosperity Funding

Pump Track – the project is now complete and an official opening event is planned for 28th May 2026.

Town Revitalisation and Improvement Programme – the five projects are now complete and the final grant claim details are being worked up for submission to Cornwall Council within the next few days.

CCTV – the cameras are still on their winter hours monitoring, but continue to provide an excellent service. A grant has been obtained for additional cameras in the Polkyth area, but there are some technical issues to overcome. The mobile camera is being repaired.

Young People Cornwall – the Town Council continues to be represented at the quarterly steering group meetings. They are an important local service and have received good publicity with Children in Need. Nick Smith, CEO is due to attend the Parish meeting on 27th April 2026.

Anti-social behaviour – still a few new faces about, but generally the town is quiet. Shoplifting, like in many towns, continues to be a problem. The Hotspot funding has been extended for six months which is good news although what happens after this time is still uncertain.

CIL Funding – two expressions of interest have been submitted to Cornwall Council for CIL funding.

1. Accessible paths in the Meadows and Poltair Park
2. Lighting of the opes in the town centre

Bowls Club – the Bowls Club lease is due for renewal and will be progressed within the next few months.

Library and The House – the freehold/leasehold transfer of the two buildings is still being negotiated.

Poltair Park – the potential for a new skateboard park at Poltair Park will be discussed at the next meeting. The replacement of aging equipment are being undertaken in a phased manner and a consultation process will start shortly with regard to the replacement of the helter skelter.

Events – at the present time there are plans for:

- Easter Event at Studio 4 - 7th April 2026
- Cornwall Armed Forces Day – 20th June 2026

- Mayor Making Ceremony – 27th May 2026
- Pump Track Opening – 28th May 2026

Councillor Kimber is liaising with the Clerk from Treverbyn Parish Council about the potential to put on a Proms in the Park style event in either Poltair Park or in an indoor location towards the end of August/beginning of September.

Youth Council

Councillor Preece advised that he had recently met with teachers from Poltair and Penrice Schools with Councillor Whitehouse and the Senior Projects Officer. It was agreed that each school would nominate 6 young people to sit on the youth council. When the new term starts, training for the young people will be provided. Once the training has been completed the youth council meetings will be held after school, once a month on a Tuesday (during term time) from 3.45pm to 5pm.

CC/25/67) 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.

CC/25/68) Priory Car Park

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint APS Construction Services Ltd to reconstruct a length of wall in Priory Car Park, St Austell based upon their quotation dated 26th February 2026.

CC/25/69) Re-admit Press and Public

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

CC/25/70) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next meeting of the Community Committee is scheduled to take place on Monday 1st June 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm.