MINUTES of an EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 19th OCTOBER 2026 in Chi Austel, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

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

In attendance: David Pooley (Town Clerk), Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk), Steve Skinner (Operations Manager) and Annie Etheridge (Interpreter).

C/26/109) Apologies for Absence

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

C/26/110) Declarations of interest and gifts or hospitality received

None.

C/26/111) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/26/112) Minutes of Meeting held on 12th October 2026

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/26/113) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that further to Minute Number: C/26/97 a letter has been sent to the Post Office and Councillor Yelland's letter with regard to additional funding for street marshals has been amended to include the logos and sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (Minute Number: C/26/98).

C/26/114) Public Participation

There were four members of the public present.

Two members of the public present expressed concern with regard to the use of glyphosate in Cemetery Park and questioned why St Austell Town Council is still using glyphosate when other Councils are pesticide free.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council has agreed to honour its contract with Complete Weed Control until early in the new calendar year at which time the Government's review of the licensing of glyphosate and Cornwall Council's decision on their preferred option for weed control should be known.

C/26/115) Climate Action St Austell (CASA)

Ms Claire Briault and Rev Paul Salaman, representatives from CASA provided some background information on CASA and their recent activities including, regular litter picks, stalls at local events, a National Emergency briefing at Holy Trinity Church and a Cheaper Greener Day with Cornwall Energy Plus.

Ms Briault thanked Councillor Taylor for her help in setting up a meeting with the Town Council and advised that a recent petition campaigning for ending the use of glyphosate on St Austell's roads had 285 signatures. She advised that she had contacted the parishes around St Austell and that Carlyon Parish Council, St Mewan Parish Council and Pentewan Valley Parish Council all advised that they use glyphosate to treat the weeds in their amenity areas and/or car parks. Treverbyn Parish Council is currently weeding by hand. Ms Briault acknowledged the Government's impending review of glyphosate and the use of glyphosate on farms.

Ms Briault provided a presentation on weed treatment in Wadebridge. She explained that she had visited Wadebridge and spoken to a number of people in the town and established that glyphosate has not been used there since 2016. She added that Biffa use a steel brush to keep the streets weed free in the town centre (Zone 1) and showed a number of pictures of weeds outside of the town centre where they have been allowed to grow.

The Clerk clarified that Biffa is contracted by Cornwall Council to clean the town centre in St Austell (Zone 1) and as far as he is aware, they do not use glyphosate. He also clarified that White River Place is privately owned and is not part of Biffa's Zone 1 cleaning regime.

During discussion a view was expressed that weeds on pavements would hinder wheelchairs and another view was expressed that weeds on pavements might be beneficial to wheelchair users as they could act as a buffer to prevent the wheelchair from slipping off the pavement.

The Mayor thanked CASA for their update.

C/26/116) Alun Jones Managing Director of Complete Weed Control and Ian Graham, Chairman of the Amenity Forum

Mr Graham provided a presentation on the use of glyphosate to control weeds and raised the following points:

- Only Government licenced products are used to treat weeds and glyphosate is still licenced. The Government review of the glyphosate licence has slipped, and it will probably be the new year before the Government makes an announcement. Scientific evidence and large data sets will be used by the Government to determine whether or not glyphosate will be re-licenced and the assessment will be the subject of a 60 day consultation process;

- The machinery used to treat the roads and pavements can detect chlorophyll and when it does, releases a spot spray. Using this method of weed spraying reduces the use of glyphosate by 70% (a demonstration of this was provided);

- Complete Weed Control uses pesticide in a professional manner and training is provided to ensure appropriate use;

- Reference to the extensive weed control trial in Cardiff which resulted in glyphosate being deemed the least expensive and the most efficient and appropriate form of weed control;

- There have been costly claims for some Councils where people have slipped or tripped on weedy footpaths or pavements;

- The need to keep textured walkways on central islands weed free to assist people with poor vision who rely on the texture beneath their feet to understand their position on the road;

- The need to rely on the experts in the licencing of pesticides and to follow their professional guidance for its application.

During discussion, the following points were raised by Councillors and members of the public:

- A strong view that glyphosate should not be used and the need for the landscape to be viewed differently;
- Whether glyphosate will be re-licenced or not;
- Strong concern about public health
- How invasive plants are treated
- The use of glyphosate in agriculture

The Mayor thanked Mr Graham for his update.

C/26/117) St Austell Town Council – Interim update on weed control trials and additional research undertaken

Cornwall Council update

The Town Clerk advised that in August, Cornwall Council called a meeting of an officer working group (of which he is a member) and the following was advised:

- For the remainder of the 2026/27 financial year, 45 pilot sites will be identified for either hand or mechanical weeding. A thermal electric machine is being considered but it is not suitable for use in wet weather;

- For the 2027/28 financial year, no funding has been identified and the Government's decision is awaited before Cornwall Council form a view. It is hoped that a formal agency agreement will be set up between Cornwall Council and Town and Parish Councils which will allow the use of chemical and/or manual process.

UK towns and cities that have ceased using glyphosate

The Operations Manager advised that the Pesticide Action Network list numerous towns that have adopted glyphosate free or reduced glyphosate approaches and provided some highlights as follows:

Frome: The town relies heavily on manual weeding by volunteers. Without the volunteers the council has been quoted £700,000 by its contractor to hand weed the areas previously treated by glyphosate. The streets are not completely weed free and there has been criticism in the press about the appearance of the town.

Hammersmith and Fulham: In 2016 the borough replaced glyphosate using hot water systems, foam-based treatments and manual removal. Borough Council documents that hot water does not kill roots and manual follow up is essential. Complaints about weeds have increased since the implementation of these new practices.

Lewes, East Sussex: Lewes District Council became a pesticide free council in 2019 in their parks and gardens but East Sussex County Council still use glyphosate on the kerb lines and pavements within Lewes due to there being no viable alternative for the thousands of miles of road network they are responsible for.

Glastonbury: Non chemical weed control. Alternative treatments are being used including foam stream, hot foam, pressure washing and manual weeding by volunteer groups. Complaints about weeds on the kerbs and blocked drains can be found on social media.

Cowes: After an island wide non chemical highways trial in 2018, glyphosate use on the road network resumed in 2022.

Shaftsbury: Shaftsbury Town Council is glyphosate free on land it manages. Dorset County Council who is responsible for the highways network uses a targeted glyphosate based herbicide on roads, pavements and kerbs.

Cardiff: The Operations Manager referred to an independent scientific report assessing different types of weed killer to manage plant growth on Cardiff's highways and pavements which concluded that glyphosate is the most efficient and effective way of controlling weeds and the least damaging to the environment.

Penryn Trial of Block Blitz: The Operations Manager advised that the Penryn trial of Block Blitz (acetic acid) in July 2026 showed a rapid dying off of weeds at first but by August there was substantial regrowth which required more treatment. Penryn has moved away from this trial and is looking for alternatives.

Trial of weaker solution: The Operations Manager advised that in mid September, a trial took place in Priory Car Park using 1.25% dilution rate instead of the usual 2.5% mix. The results were mixed, with the weaker growth dying off quickly, but the more stubborn weeds remained.

Manual Weed Treatment: The Town Clerk advised that additional grounds maintenance resource to manually weed 96 miles of footways would cost the Town Council approximately £225,000 per annum and that if volunteers were used, there would need to be a pool of approximately 150 volunteers to cover the 96 miles.

C/26/118) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Council meeting is due to take place on Monday 14th December 2026.

The Mayor thanked everybody for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at: 7.54pm