MINUTES of the MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 12th OCTOBER 2026 in Chi Austel, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Bull, Bullock, Clemo, Cohen, Hamilton, Kimber, Lanxon, Marshall, Nott, Preece, Stephens, Taylor, Thompson and Whitehouse.

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Ashton (Cornwall Councillor for Poltair and Mount Charles) and Councillor Yelland (Cornwall Councillor for Gover and Central).

C/26/88) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Gray, Hawken, Lingham, Rowse and Young.

Councillor Thompson advised that he needed to leave at 7pm

C/26/89) Declarations of interest and gifts or hospitality received

Councillor Whitehouse declared an interest in agenda item 10 by virtue of his stepmother being on the festival committee.

Councillor Kimber declared an interest in agenda item 20 by virtue of being a relative of one of the contractors.

Councillors Marshall and Kimber declared an interest in agenda item 11 by virtue of being BID Directors.

C/26/90) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/26/91) Minutes of Meeting held on 1st September 2026

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/26/92) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that he had nothing to add.

C/26/93) Mayor's announcements

The Mayor provided an update on his activities as follows:

- Army Cadets Open Evening on the 5th October 2026
- Pondhu School Parliament Day on the 5th October 2026
- A Books Group afternoon tea event at the Library
- Dreckly Boys Awards evening

C/26/94) Public Participation

Mrs Earl advised that the hotel works at Sedgemoor appear to have stalled and asked what the timescale is for completion.

The Clerk advised that he did not have the details and agreed to make some enquiries.

C/26/95) Member Questions

None.

C/26/96) Cornwall Councillor update reports

Councillor Yelland updated Councillors on the following:

- The B&M planning application has stalled due to land ownership issues
- The Penwinnick Road planning application has been approved without any affordable housing although it is understood that Treveth are in discussions with Homes England
- A Local Plan consultation has been published and can be found under "Lets Talk" on Cornwall Council's website
- The Trinity Street cladding works are underway with a completion date still scheduled for May 2028
- The Brewery have agreed to carry out some clearance works on their land in the Menacuddle Road area
- Attendance at the Mayor's Coffee Morning at the library
- Secured Community Chest funding for a new door at the Community Larder
- Liaising with the Arts Centre about funding opportunities and the potential to work with Cornwall College
- The work of Active Cornwall and the future funding opportunities for St Austell
- Cabinet approval for the Karensa and Blantyre site to be disposed of through a bidding process for the development of an extra care facility
- More transparency for Cornwall Council's budget setting process

Councillor Ashton updated Councillors on the following:

- The disposal of the hut at Tregonissey Close
- Approval for parking bays at Victoria Road – timescales unknown
- A Safer Cornwall ASB Strategy consultation has been published under "Let's Talk" on Cornwall Council's website
- A Talk about Cornwall survey has been published under "Let's Talk" which will inform the draft budget
- Assisting residents in the Tregonissey/Thornpark Road area with some ideas for improvements.
- Potential revisions to the Council Tax Support Scheme

Arising from the above, the following issues/comments were raised:

- A burnt out carvan at Polkyth Car Park
- A caravan at Robartes Road
- Traffic congestion at Slades Road/Robartes Road
- Calendar of events at the Arts Centre

- Safety concerns with regard to parents parking on the road outside Poltair School
- Crowd funding for a fire alarm system at the Arts Centre

The Mayor thanked Councillors Ashton and Yelland for their informative updates.

In order to assist the members of public present, the Mayor advised that agenda item 12 will be considered next, followed by agenda item 11 and then agenda item 10.

C/26/97) TG Jones – Town Centre Post Office

The Clerk advised that a letter has been received confirming that the TG Jones Store in St Austell will close with effect from 28th December 2026 and that the Post Office operating within the store will also close. The Post Office has indicated that they are looking at alternative solutions but, in the meantime, customers should use the Slades Road and Holmbush post offices.

The Clerk introduced Louise Bailey who advised that she is an existing employee at the town centre post office and that she is putting a business case together for the existing staff to run the post office from an alternative location. She advised that she is looking at a few locations including the potential to share a space with another business. She advised that the business plan is almost ready and will let Councillors have a copy when it is available. Ms Bailey advised that many customers and businesses rely on the post office, particularly as most banks have closed in St Austell and that the Town Council's support for her business case to keep a town centre service would be appreciated. Ms Bailey advised St Austell is lucky to have the Slades Road and Holmbush Post Offices but unfortunately they do not provide the wide range of services that the town centre site provides which many people rely on eg: a passport service. She also advised that if no town centre post office solution is found, the Holmbush Post Office, in particular, would struggle with the extra demands placed on it.

During discussion Members expressed disappointment at the loss of the town centre Post Office and expressed their support to Ms Bailey for trying to find an alternative location in the town centre for the service to continue running. It was suggested that Chi Austel, as a town centre location might be a good location for the post office to re-locate to, possibly temporarily, and should be explored.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To support Ms Bailey with her business case to continue a post office service in St Austell town centre;

2. That the Clerk should write to:

    a. the Post Office urging them to find a temporary town centre post office solution whilst other options are being explored;

    b. Cornwall Council requesting that Chi Austel be considered as either a temporary or permanent solution for a post office service.

C/26/98) Street Marshals (St Austell BID)

The Mayor welcomed Mr Lovatt, Chair of St Austell BID to the meeting.

Mr Lovatt advised that he would like to update Members on the street marshal provision in the town centre, jointly funded by St Austell Town Council and the BID.

Mr Lovatt advised that street marshals provide a visible presence that reassures residents and businesses and that they deal with issues long before they become incidents. He advised that they blend security, welfare and community engagement and are highly valued by the local police.

Mr Lovatt thanked the Town Council for their excellent CCTV service which is invaluable to the town. Operators regularly radio the marshals to follow up situations in real time which allows the marshals to intercept offenders and deal with the situation as appropriate.

The marshals are regularly called to shoplifting incidents, they defuse situations that could become aggressive, break up fights, support vulnerable people (giving advice and signposting), provide first aid including overdose treatment, provide intelligence to the police, make StreetLink referrals for the homeless and provide a visible and approachable presence in the town centre.

Mr Lovatt advised Members that in 2025/26 St Austell received £23,500 of Hotspot funding, made up of OPCC and Home Office contributions which allowed a 6 day coverage of street marshal patrols. In 2026/27 £9,230.70 Hotspot funding was received which finished at the end of September. There is no Home Office funding for this year.

St Austell BID contributes £18,000 per annum towards the street marshals and the Town Council contributes £29,773 and without the addition funding from the OPCC there is a shortfall of £17,042.94.

Without additional funding, the street marshal hours will reduce from 70 hours per week to 53.6 hours per week which means fewer patrols, less visibility, reduced deterrents and slower response times which will be noticeable to businesses, residents and visitors.

Mr Lovatt acknowledged Cornwall Councillor, Councillor Jack Yelland's draft letter to the OPCC requesting additional funding which he hoped the Town Council would be able to add their signature to.

Mr Lovatt concluded that he wanted to make sure that the Town Council is fully aware of the funding position, the pressures on the service and the likely impact on coverage for the remainder of the year without any additional funding. He stressed that the BID will continue to seek funding and thanked the Town Councillors for their support.

Members thanked Mr Lovatt for his presentation and expressed their support for the street marshals.

The Town Clerk advised that he is currently working on next year's draft budget and would advise members at the informal budget meeting what the impact on the budget would be if they agreed to make up the shortfall of £17,042.94.

It was **RESOLVED** to note Mr Lovatt's update and support Councillor Yelland's letter to the OPCC on condition that the logos of the BID and Town Council are added to the letter.

Councillors Kimber and Thompson left the meeting

C/26/99) Small Grants Scheme

St Austell Festival of Music and Speech

The Deputy Clerk advised that the application was before the full Council due to the event taking place before the next Community and Environment Committee. She advised that the event is popular and previous Mayors have enjoyed taking part in the opening event. The Deputy Clerk advised that in previous years, Members had approved a £500 grant and recommended that Members consider granting the same this year. She advised that to date grants totalling £3,759 have been authorised leaving £6,241 to spend.

During discussion Members expressed their full support for the event and a suggestion was put forward that additional funding is awarded for an interpreter for the event.

A proposal to award a grant in the sum of £750 was not seconded.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £500 for the St Austell Festival of Music and Speech taking place between 23rd and 28th November 2026.

C/26/100) Priory Car Park

The Clerk advised that Priory Car Park is performing reasonably well and that if Members wish, the Council can afford to freeze the car park charges for the 2027/28 financial year. He added that in previous years, the Town Council agreed to make the car park free of charge on the last four Saturdays leading up to Christmas and asked Councillors to consider agreeing to the same this year. In addition, he recommended that the evening of Friday 4th December 2026 also be made free of charge to coincide with the Town Council's Schools' Christmas Concert at St Johns Methodist Church.

The Clerk advised that the coach park area of Priory Car Park is rarely used by coaches and is under-utilised, but the Car Park Order identifies that the area can only be used for coaches. He further advised that there have been a number of occasions where long wheel-based vehicles could park in the coach parking area but have not been able to as the enforcement officers are unable to deviate from the current Parking Order. To permit parking in the coach park, the Clerk asked that Members agree to the Car Park Order being updated to allow long wheel-based vehicles to park in the coach area as well as coaches. The Clerk added that a revision of the Car Park Order is likely to cost in the region of £2,000.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The existing car park charges for Priory Car Park be frozen for the 2027/28 financial year;

2. Parking be made free of charge on the four Saturdays leading up to Christmas and for the evening of Friday 4th December 2026 for the Town Council's Schools' Christmas concert at St John's Methodist Church;

3. The Car Park order be amended to permit long wheel-based vehicles to park in the coach parking bays at Priory Car Park.

C/26/101) EG On The Move, Penwinnick Road Service Station, 1 Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP

The Clerk advised that a new operator is taking over the petrol station on Penwinnick Road and they have applied for a 24/7 off site sales liquor licence which is in line with the existing operator. The Clerk further advised that Sue Edwards, the Police Licencing Officer has asked the applicant to agree to the following conditions:

- No single cans to be sold
- No high strength beer, lager or cider

If the operators do not agree, Ms Edwards will go to the hearing suggesting these conditions.

During discussion Members raised the following:

- An employee being threatened over alcohol at the petrol station
- The site being the wrong location for 24/7 off site sales of alcohol due to the number of hostels and temporary accommodation in the area many of which are treating people with alcohol addiction
- A view that the Town Council should not object to the application
- A view that the Town Council should object to the application

It was **RESOLVED** to object to the application by 9 votes for, 3 votes against.

C/26/102) Town Team

To be postponed in the absence of Councillor Gray.

C/26/103) Members appointed to outside bodies update reports

Councillor Brown advised that he attended a recent meeting of the Cornwall Planning Partnership which is made up of Cornwall Council officers, portfolio holders and representatives from the Cornwall Area Partnerships. He advised that some slides were presented at the meeting, but they cannot be shared outside of the partnership at the present time but the main topics discussed related to the new planning committee rules, the emerging local plan, the NPPF and highways issues.

Councillor Brown advised that he attended the CALC conference at the Wadebridge Showground on the 6th October which was also attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. He advised that the conference was well run with some interesting presentations which included a briefing from Adam Birchall on the Local Plan and a discussion on hybrid meetings. The Mayor agreed it was an excellent conference.

C/26/104) Community and Environment Committee

Councillor Preece asked that the following amendments be made:

- *CC/26/44) Remembrance Day Parade and Church Service*. Add in a sentence to clarify that this year's church service will take place at St John's Methodist Church.

- *CC/26/47) Projects update (Trinity Street).* Add in a sentence to reflect that a discussion took place regarding the obstruction of view when exiting White River Place car park since the hoarding was put up.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Community and Environment Committee minutes dated 14th September 2026 and that the Community and Environment Committee should accept the suggested amendments.

C/26/105) Planning and Regeneration Committee

Councillor Brown asked that the words "if there were no other volunteers" be deleted from the bottom of page 6.

Councillor Brown reminded Councillors that if they would like to comment on the Local Plan Scoping document to send comments through to the Town Clerk for consideration by the Planning and Regeneration Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Planning and Regeneration Committee minutes dated 21st September 2026 and that the Planning and Regeneration Committee should accept the suggested amendment.

C/26/106) Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes dated 28th September 2026 and approve the **RECOMMENDATIONS** contained therein.

C/26/107) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Payments, totalling £183,236.05 and the transfers between bank accounts amounting to £1,494.22 for the period 22nd August 2026 to 27th September 2026 be approved.

C/26/108) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Council meetings are due to take place on Monday 19th October 2026 (Extraordinary Meeting) and Monday 14th December 2026.

The meeting closed at: 7.45pm.