

MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 16th SEPTEMBER 2019 at the Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Hanlon, Heyward, Jones, Leonard, Pearce, Rees, Styles and Thompson.

Also Present: Councillor King.

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

CC/19/16) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown, Bull and Cohen.

The Clerk added that Councillor Brown was Chairing a Community Governance Review public meeting in Penzance.

CC/19/17) Declarations of Interest

None.

Councillors Jones and Leonard arrived

CC/19/18) Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations received.

CC/19/19) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 3rd June 2019

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd June 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

CC/19/20) Matters to note

Further to the Safer St Austell grant, the Clerk advised that a number of students from Poltair School had completed the Phoenix Programme and were due to collect their certificates from the Mayor at the Fire Station on Friday 27th September at 12.45. All Members were invited to attend.

CC/19/21) Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

CC/19/22) Royal Voluntary Service (RVS)

Mr Richard Sumner, Senior Volunteer for the Restormel Car Service, outlined the history of the RVS and explained that as of last year, they were independent of the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) and now carry out their own fund raising. He added that they have been operating in the town for 30 years and are based at St Austell library where volunteers are comfortable and secure and have a good relationship with Terry and the staff. He advised that they are thinking about changing their name as "Restormel Car Service" is also the name of a local taxi firm.

He explained that they have 43 volunteers at the present time (Administrative Staff, Drivers and Befrienders) providing hospital/wellbeing transport for people over 55 who suffer from ill health or mobility issues. The volunteers support the service from 10am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4pm Monday to Friday. A small mileage charge of 55p is levied plus a booking fee of £1 to help offset the volunteers' costs of running their vehicles. The Befriender service is new and is being built up gradually.

Mr Sumner thanked St Austell Town Council for their continued support and for the peppercorn rent agreed by the Town Council a year ago which had helped the organisation immensely.

Members raised the following issues/concerns:

- How the costs compared with other transport;
- The licensing/insurance/tax and DBS checking arrangements;
- Whether there are any vehicles that can accommodate wheelchair users.

The Town Clerk advised that when the Town Council took over the library the rental charged to the RVS for the use of the library space was £100 per month. Members agreed in August 2018 that in order to assist them with their new independence and the need to fund raise independently a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum should be charged for 12 months and reviewed thereafter. He advised that the review was now due and suggested that in order to continue to support the RVS, a peppercorn or small rent should continue preferably in the order of £10 to cover administrative costs.

It was **RESOLVED** that the annual rental charge to the Restormel Car Service for the use of St Austell Library should continue in the sum of £10 per annum.

CC/19/23) Small Grants Scheme

St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society

Mrs Prater explained that the production of "Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood" was due to take place during the week 18th-25th January 2020. She advised that there are a lot of mechanical props in this year's production and the full costs with regard to the use of the Keay Theatre are still not fully known.

In answer to a question, Mrs Prater advised that the Cornwall Councillor for St Blaise is supportive of the Society, but that St Blaise Town Council had in the past advised that they could not fund their production.

Members expressed their support for the St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society and the positive effect that their annual production has on the town and the people of St Austell.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £750 to the St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society for funding towards the production of "Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood" in January 2020.

St Austell Festival of Music and Speech

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to the St Austell Festival of Music and Speech for funding towards their festival due to take place in November/December 2019.

Councillor Jones declared an interest and left the meeting

One Parent Support

Although supportive of the organisation, Members felt that they were unable to contribute the full amount requested due to the lack of funding from other sources.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to the One Parent Support CIO for funding towards their community family drama project due to take place in May 2020.

Councillor Jones returned to the meeting

St Austell Town Band

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £250 to St Austell Town Band for funding towards new uniform blazers for the youth band.

AFC St Austell

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant in the sum of £279 to AFC St Austell for a pitch side advertising board and match ball sponsorship.

CC/19/24) Poltair Park – Safety Surface

The Clerk advised that this report had been deferred and would be considered at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the 23rd September 2019.

CC/19/25) Incident Report Scheme

The Clerk outlined the Cornwall Council pilot "Incident Report Scheme" where Cornwall Council train Councillors and Staff to record incidents of dog fouling, the dropping of litter and fly tipping which can then be submitted to Cornwall Council for investigation and enforcement action if appropriate. He advised that two officers and 2 Members had received the training so far. He added that the trained staff and Councillors can train other staff or Councillors.

The Clerk advised that Cornwall Council is also offering Fixed Penalty Notice Training which, upon completion, authorises Town and Parish Council staff to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental crime incidents. He advised that due to the lack of success at other Town and Parish Councils, he was not recommending this training for the time being.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues/concerns:

- The potential for the initiative to be too cumbersome;
- Cornwall Council's "Report It" system offers a similar facility and can be done anonymously;

- The potential for staff or Councillors to have to attend court to provide a witness statement.

A proposition to support the Cornwall Council Incident Report Scheme was lost on the casting vote of the Chairman following 4 votes in favour and 4 votes against.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council does not participate in the pilot scheme.

CC/19/26) Localism

The Clerk advised that there had recently been two significant national publications from Locality and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to localism and that Cornwall Council was planning to hold a localism summit on the 6th November 2019 to discuss issues surrounding localism. He advised that Cornwall Council would like to know:

1. If Parish and Town Council's agree with the principles set out in the two national documents;
2. What needs to change to support localism;
3. What does Cornwall Council need to do to improve localism.

Members were largely in favour of localism and highlighted the improvements made to services in St Austell by the Town Council. There was some concern about the capacity of many parish councils and voluntary sector groups to manage services effectively. Many voluntary sector organisations had had their funding cut in recent years due to the budget cuts experienced by principal authorities and some of the support mechanisms have been lost. It was felt important that Cornwall Council should provide support and help to build capacity/restore trust if services are to be devolved further.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should write to Cornwall Council summarising the points made by members.

Councillor Heyward abstained from voting on this item

CC/19/27) Wheal Martyn – Priory Car Park

The Clerk advised that the Town Council had been approached by Wheal Martyn to provide free parking after 4pm on the 5th, 6th and 7th December to allow attendees of the Wheal Martyn Laser Light Show to park their cars and utilise a shuttle bus service from Priory Car Park to and from the event.

Arising from a question, the Clerk confirmed that the approximate loss of revenue for providing this free service would be circa £80 per day.

Members felt that if approved, the car park should be made free to all users on these dates and well publicised on the run up to Christmas.

It was **RESOLVED** that free parking after 4pm should be made available to all users of Priory Car Park on the 5th, 6th and 7th December and suitable publicity issued to that effect.

CC/19/28) Grass cutting policy

The Clerk advised that the draft policy developed by the Green Spaces Working Group identifies a maintenance standard for each piece of Town Council owned or managed land. He advised that the suggestions drawn up provide a good balance of wild areas/cut areas and identifies areas for additional tree planting.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to:

1. Approve the Grass cutting policy;
2. Ask the Working Group to look at matters relating to dogs and litter enforcement next.

CC/19/29) Parks and Open Spaces Survey

The Clerk referred Members to the recent Parks and Open Spaces Survey results and made reference to comments around:

- Disabled access;
- The well-used parks (Poltair Park, Sandy Hill Park, Truro Road Park, Woodland Road Park);
- A lack of toilet facilities in the parks;
- The enforcement of dogs in parks;
- Anti-social behaviour.

During discussion, Members raised the following comments:

- The apparent lack of use of some parks;
- The need to maintain an area for exercising dogs;
- The need for toilets in Truro Road Park;
- The lack of equipment in the parks for wheelchair users and the potential to make Poltair Park a showcase accessible park.

The Clerk advised that the Projects Officer is currently investigating grant funding that could fund better access and playground equipment for wheelchair users and provide cycling facilities in 1-2 of the parks. He added that play equipment and safety surfacing are nearing the end of their life and that there is a need for the Town Council to start making provision for a phased replacement programme over the next few years.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the survey results.

CC/19/30) Budget Update

The Clerk advised that he would be talking to Members over the coming months about a strategy for the forthcoming budget round. He drew Members attention to the budgets that the Community Committee are responsible for and reiterated the need to budget for the replacement of play equipment and safety surfacing over the coming years. He added that there is currently no budget for climate change projects which again would need to be discussed during the budget discussions.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:

- The need to consider increasing the Council Tax to provide for future maintenance liabilities;
- The need to identify the priorities and budget for them accordingly;
- The need to review the CCTV and Youth budgets;
- Disappointment that St Austell was overlooked by Cornwall Council and the Government during the recent grant funding rounds.

The Clerk explained the need for a maintenance budget for The House and the likely increase in the CCTV budget due to the recent additional cameras and upgrades.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should write to Cornwall Council expressing the Town Council's disappointment that St Austell was overlooked during the recent grant funding rounds.

CC/19/31) Projects Update

CCTV

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that all 20 cameras are working and that the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to consider the outcome of a recent joint tender exercise with Newquay Town Council for the maintenance of the cameras.

Environmental

The grounds maintenance team are $\frac{3}{4}$ of their way through grass cut number 6. Resource has been an issue over the summer months with contractors being employed halfway through the season to help with the large areas such as Prince Charles Park. Complaints have been minimal, but as many complaints have been received from people wanting their grass left long as those wanting their grass cut short and this has been reflected in the grass cutting policy recently drafted by the Working Group.

Small scale sponsorship deals for the maintenance of the flower beds and entrance boxes have been agreed with Cornwall Signs and The Rotary Club. The Rotary Club has also painted the benches at Truro Road Park as well as undertaking ad hoc litter picks throughout the summer.

The WI 100 trees are now unlikely to be forthcoming as the Town Council cannot accommodate them all in one area as the WI wish. The procurement for the Pocket Parks funding at Lostwood Community Garden and Thornpark Road Park are both underway with just a fence to procure at Lostwood and flower beds and hedging work at Thornpark Road outstanding.

A decision regarding Mount Charles roundabout is still awaited from SABEF/Cornwall Council and Poltair Park café should be handed over to the Town Council within a couple of weeks. A kitchen fitter is on standby and the tender documentation is ready to go out. Unfortunately, the pop-up horse box café has been withdrawn because the operator has found new employment.

The bandstand refurbishment was completed during the summer and had its official opening at the beginning of the "Fun Day" in August.

The waste management contract with Cornwall Council comes to an end in March 2020 and a report from the Town Clerk outlining a business case to bring the waste

management in house will be considered at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Monday.

Allotments

There is currently one vacant allotment and one tenant with rent arrears. The owner of the Sawles Road allotments is happy to take referrals if people are looking for an allotment in the near future.

Car Park

The Town Clerk advised that the wall had been repaired at no cost to the Town Council and a report will be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the 23rd September recommending the creation of a working group to review the charges for the 2020/21 financial year.

Weed spraying

The Operations Manager is meeting a pesticide free contractor on Friday the outcome of which will be reported to Members in due course.

Youth Services

The lease between Cornwall Council and the Town Council is complete, with completion of the lease between the Town Council and Young People Cornwall due to be finalised imminently. The Clerk is meeting with the Steering Group tomorrow.

Old Vicarage Place

The Town Clerk reported that the Future High Streets Fund bid had not been successful.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

- The need for Members to visit the CCTV suite in Newquay following the recent upgrade/addition of new cameras;
- Disappointment with the lack of success with recent funding bids for St Austell town centre and the concentration of funding to the west of Cornwall;
- The improvement works outside Holy Trinity Church including the removal of the church railings;
- ASB issues at Charlestown and Carlyon Bay;
- The price of a three-month car park season ticket at Polkyth;
- The new arrangements with regard to Freshstart/Cosgarne;
- Some incidents of rough sleeping.

CC/19/32) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next meetings of the Community Committee are scheduled for Monday 2nd December 2019 and Monday 2nd March 2020.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.