

MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 20th JANUARY 2020 at the Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Cohen, Jones, King (Chair), Lanxon, Oxenham, Styles, Thompson and Walker.

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

CE/19/15) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pearce and Rees.

Councillor Styles advised that he had to leave at 7.15.
Councillor Oxenham and Walker advised that they had to leave at 7.30.

CE/19/16) Declarations of Interest

None.

CE/19/17) Dispensations

The Clerk advised that no requests for dispensations had been received.

CE/19/18) Public Participation

Mrs Earl wished members a happy new year and explained that she really wanted to listen to the business of the committee and had a passion for everyone planting trees.

CE/19/19) Minutes of Meeting held on 30th September 2019

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 30th September 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

CE/19/20) Matters to note

The Clerk advised that he had nothing to add.

CE/19/21) Community Engagement Events

The Clerk advised that community engagement events had been held in the library on the 8th November 2019 and in the Information Centre on the 9th November 2019. The top priorities identified by members of the public attending the library event were:

- Plant more trees
- Lobby central government to change taxation and funding to support climate change initiatives
- lobby Cornwall Council to improve public transport

The event on the 9th November 2019 held workshops and focused on:

- Communication and education
- Green spaces
- Food and consumption

- Energy
- Transport
- Business engagement
- Health and wellbeing
- Carbon reduction and carbon accounting

Members noted the feedback from the events held.

CE/19/22) Climate Change Action Plan

The Clerk introduced a draft Climate Change Action Plan which he explained had been developed to help retain focus on climate change measures. He highlighted the green infrastructure for growth project and explained that this would deliver trees and wildflower areas at a number of Cornwall Council owned sites. He expressed a desire to drive on the production of the open spaces strategy and streamline the process for considering the remaining issues. He also highlighted a number of actions relating to cycling, trees and waste. Other actions outlined included:

- Early proposals for Bethel Park
- Gover Woods
- Electrical charging points
- Photovoltaic panels
- Alternatives to chemical weed spraying

Members highlighted the research being undertaken into biomass/aerobic digester systems for green waste and the importance of preserving trees as well as planting them. The Clerk undertook to investigate the treatment of a parcel of land in Tregonissey Road and Councillor Oxenham offered to share research done with regard to play areas by the Friends of Sandy Hill Park.

Councillor Thompson suggested that the actions on page 7 of the agenda which refer to St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF) should include the words "and other stakeholders to share best practice."

It was **RESOLVED** that the Action Plan be approved subject to the above amendment.

Councillor Thompson expressed concern that the next agenda items did not include reports or recommendations and advised that he felt very uncomfortable about making decisions on these matters without prior notice of Councillor King's intentions. Councillor King advised that he hoped that there would be a debate on each of the items listed and that some potential projects would be identified. He anticipated that there would not be a final decision on any of the items.

CE/19/23) Carbon Accounting – At the request of Councillor King

Members discussed the issues surrounding the measurement of a carbon footprint and the difficulties associated with introducing carbon accounting. Members noted that there were arguments for calculating a carbon footprint for the Town Council, the Parish of St Austell, St Austell Bay, the St Austell and Mevagissey Community Network Area or the three Community Network areas which are meeting shortly to discuss climate change in mid Cornwall.

Councillor Jones explained that the Helston Climate Action Group had commissioned a calculation of the carbon footprint for the parish of Helston which focussed mainly on domestic carbon generation and that this had been funded through a grant.

Members raised concern with regard to the value for money of employing a consultant to undertake a carbon impact assessment and noted that if Cornwall Council accounted for only 1.5% of the carbon emissions for Cornwall then the Town Council's carbon emissions would only be a tiny fraction of the carbon emissions for St Austell.

Councillor Jones advised that he might be able to produce an estimate for the carbon footprint of St Austell by applying the methodology used in Helston.

Members noted that Cornwall Council were only just recruiting to its carbon neutral team and guidance might be forthcoming from Cornwall Council in due course.

It was agreed that Councillor Jones would examine the Helston calculation methodology and see if it could be simply adapted to St Austell and that the Town Council should take no further action at this time.

CE/19/24) Working Practices – At the request of Councillor King

Councillor King expressed the view that he felt there might be ways of doing things more efficiently and in a more environmentally friendly way. He suggested considering home working and buying a water purifier in place of bottled water. Members discussed the benefits and disadvantages of home working and Councillors Jones and Thompson warned of the dangers of unforeseen consequences from changing working practices. The Clerk explained that regular staff meetings both formal and informal take place and that managers discuss ways of improving working practices with staff on a regular basis. He expressed the view that staff were very engaged in the consideration of climate change and biodiversity matters.

It was suggested that Operation Managers might be able to create a forum to share best practice.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should investigate the potential for an Operation Managers' Forum for those Managers from larger Councils to share best practice.

CE/19/25) Library – At the request of Councillor King

Councillor King enquired whether the library could be used for talks on topics relating to climate change. Councillor Styles explained the practice that the voluntary group leading on climate change in Clifton had adopted with regular speakers once a month on specific issues.

The Clerk explained that exhibitions and drop in sessions would work well within the library during daytime hours but it was most likely that talks would have to be carried out in the evenings and staff paid to be present to help manage the activity. There was a suggestion that the premises occupied by Young People Cornwall could be used for this purpose. Councillor Walker suggested that there was a need for an advice service as currently people had nowhere to go for advice on climate change issues.

It was **RESOLVED** that officers should explore the creation of a Climate Change information and signposting service in the library and the possibility of nominating a Climate Champion.

Councillor Lanxon left the meeting

CE/19/26) Engaging with schools – At the request of Councillor King

Councillor Walker tabled a paper that he had produced shortly before the meeting with a suggestion for a competition relating to climate change for primary and secondary school pupils. He suggested that the competition could be managed by Members.

It was **RESOLVED** to give this matter further thought and discuss it again at the next meeting of the Committee.

CE/19/27) Alternatives to fossil fuels transport – At the request of Councillor King

Councillor King advised that he wished to defer this item.

CE/19/28) Cornwall Council Community Network – Climate Change Workshop

Councillor King advised that a climate change workshop had been arranged on the 30th January 2020 by Cornwall Council's Community Link Officers for the three community network areas in mid and south Cornwall. He encouraged all Councillors who were interested to attend. Councillors Cohen, Jones, King, Styles, Thompson and Walker all advised that they hoped to attend the workshop.

CE/19/29) Project Update

The Clerk provided an update on a range of environmental projects including:

- Lostwood Community Garden
- Thornpark Road Park
- Tree planting
- Weed spraying
- Allotments
- Woodland Close park improvements
- Re-cycling arrangements

CE/19/30) Dates of Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Climate and Environment Committee would take place on Monday, 16th March 2020 at 6.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.33pm.