MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 27th APRIL 2026 at 6.00pm in Chi Austel, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Clemo, Cohen, Gray, Hamilton, Lanxon, Preece, Stephens, Taylor and Whitehouse.

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

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings.

APM/26/01) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bull, Hawken, Kimber, Lingham, Marshall, Nott, Pearce, Thompson and Young.

Councillor Clemo advised that he needed to leave the meeting at 7pm

APM/26/02) Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th May 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on the 13th May 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

APM/26/03) Kate Sidwell and Catherine Hendy – Young People Cornwall

The Mayor welcomed Kate Sidwell, Youth and Community Work Manager and Catherine Hendy, Project Manager to the meeting.

Ms Sidwell advised that Young People Cornwall (YPC) work across Cornwall and strive towards the following:

Our Vision – "to improve the quality of life for young people in Cornwall"

Our Mission – "through inspirational youth work we support the needs and aspirations of young people in Cornwall, promoting young people as role models and positive assets within their communities"

Ms Sidwell advised that YPC was formed as a charity in 1974 and was originally known as "Youth Clubs Cornwall" and was part of the Boys Club Network. Early work focussed on helping small volunteer led youth clubs and then developed into self-funded youth projects in response to Government funding cuts. In 2026 YPC employ 60 staff, have 6 centres and deliver a wide range of projects.

YPC has an income of approximately £1.97 million, expenditure of £1.88 million and reserves of £450,000. Funding is obtained from various sources including contracts with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly NHS ICB, Health Education England, Cornwall Council, Children in Need, Big Lottery Fund, contracts with Town and City Councils and from various Trusts and grant giving organisations.

During 2025/26 the following projects were provided for young people:

- Open access youth centres
- Hear our Voice (mental health project)
- Outreach work

- Victims of crime
- Participation and youth voice
- Social prescribing mental health support hubs
- Neurodiversity and weight management
- Parish youth project

Ms Sidwell advised that recessions, public sector cuts and the cost-of-living crisis has placed increased pressure on vulnerable families and added that between April 2025 and March 2026 YPC dealt with over 1,000 safeguarding concerns – 90% of which related to mental health issues.

Ms Hendy provided an update on the activities at The House Youth Centre in St Austell and providing the following statistics for 2025/26:

- 813 individual young people (11 to 19 years) accessed open access youth provision
- 268 safeguarding concerns dealt with
- 197 young people accessed mental health support via mental health support hubs
- 324 young people accessed sports based activities (swimming, football, boxing)
- 26 young women accessed a single gender group work
- 134 young people participated in off-site activities (including ice skating at Eden)
- 103 young people took part in community events
- 114 families accessed food vouchers/hampers through the winter

Ms Hendy explained some of the positive outcomes achieved at The House:

- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Increase in community engagement
- Raising aspirations and realising potential
- Development in relationship skills
- Improvement in mental health and physical wellbeing
- Enabling young people to have their voices heard

Ms Hendy concluded with some positive feedback from young people and thanked the Town Council for enabling them to lease The House from the Town Council and for the annual financial assistance.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

- The funding YPC receive from the Police and Crime Commissioner
- The assertive outreach projects
- The Phoenix Project work with the fire station
- Mental Health support
- The importance of gaining the views of young people.

The Town Clerk expressed his gratitude to Ms Sidwell and Ms Hendy and congratulated YPC on their excellent grant fundraising and preventative work.

APM/26/04) Review of the 2025/26 Civic Year

Councillor Hamilton, Mayor of St Austell advised that the 2025/26 had been a very successful year maintaining the Town Council's facilities and services, delivering regeneration projects, engaging with the local community and working with Cornwall Council and St Austell BID. He passed on his gratitude to the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Grounds Team and Library Team for their tremendous work and achievements. Councillor Hamilton welcomed the new Councillors elected in May 2025 and thanked them for bringing a new focus on some key areas. Councillor Hamilton expressed gratitude to the former High Sheriff, Geraint Richards, who had been instrumental in arranging a visit by His and Her Majesties the King and Queen. The Mayor outlined the following key projects delivered during the year:

- Poundland banners
- Holy Trinity Church Piazza – Phase 1
- Pump Track at The Meadows
- Five Town Regeneration and Investment Programme projects

    - Old Fire Station refurbishment
    - Priory car park signage
    - Refurbishment of the Baptist church railings and installation of planters
    - Holy Trinity Church – design study for Phase 2 of improvements
    - New planters, seating and planting on the slope outside Studio 4 in White River Place

In addition the Mayor provided an update on:

Town Council's services:

- Excellent maintenance of the Town Council's parks and open spaces which have an excellent balance between cutting the grass and leaving wilding areas.
- Beautiful flower displays on 5 of the town's roundabouts (Mount Charles Asda Trewhiddle, Urban Village and Porthpean Road)
- St Austell Library - a very successful library/community hub offering a wide variety of activities for young and old assisted by the library support association – SALSA

Community Engagement

- Stepping Stones Community Event in Poltair Park
- Garden Festival in White River Place where the Town Council organised a schools welly boot garden competition
- After school games
- VJ Day Fun Day
- Remembrance Day Parade and Church Service
- School's Christmas concert at St John's Methodist Church
- Various competitions, bingo, quizzes and talks at St Austell Library

Royal Visit

Their Royal Highnesses the King and Queen visited St Austell in March to show support for the regeneration of the historic quarter of the town and the Market House. Despite the weather cutting the visit short, it was a tremendous success and the ensuing publicity will hopefully assist the town with future funding bids.

APM/26/05) David Pooley – Town Clerk
St Austell Town Council – 2025/26 Financial Accounts.

The Town Clerk advised that the 2025/26 draft accounts had been audited by the Council's Internal Auditor and would be considered in more detail by the Town Council on Monday 11th May 2026. The accounts would also be subject to an external audit in due course.

He provided an overview as follows:

- Turnover for the 2025/26 year was £1.9 million
- Car park income had increased by £16,000 on the 2024/25 financial year
- Over £200,000 grant income was received for various projects
- After a transfer of £220,000 to the projects reserve and a transfer of £44,000 from reserves there is a surplus for the year of £2,500 which has been allowed to accrue to the General Fund.
- The General Fund balance equates to approximately 25% of turnover which is an acceptable level
- The Town Council has no borrowing and is in a sound financial position.

In response to a question from a councillor about the cost of interpretation costs, the Town Clerk explained that officers were under a duty to ensure value for money.

APM/26/06) Priorities of St Austell Town Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year

The Town Clerk advised that Members discussed their priorities at the informal meeting in October and the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting in November and approved them when setting the budget in December. The top 12 priorities were identified as follows:

- Secure suitable premises for the Town Council
- Influence the development of the Cornwall Local Plan
- Anti-social behaviour mitigation (CCTV, Security guards etc)
- Engage with Cornwall Council regarding property reviews/place shaping
- An events programme across the parish
- Grant funded projects
- Continuation of the town centre revitalisation partnership projects
- Maintain a good standard of environmental activities (grass cutting, flower beds etc)
- Continue to provide well researched comments into planning applications
- Re-location/future of Arts Centre
- Playground equipment replacement across the parish
- Upgrade of skateboard park at Poltair Park

The Clerk added that the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership has not met for a while due to a lack of grant funding for projects. He suggested that if grant funding is available in due course, the historic quarter of the town could be the focus.

Members noted that a representative from Maverick Industries is due to attend the Community Committee in June to discuss a potential upgrade to the skateboard park in Poltair Park.

Councillor Clemo left the meeting

APM/26/07) Open forum for questions from the public

Mr Brian Palmer thanked the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their excellent year and welcomed the Town Council's commitment to replacing the aging play equipment across the 17 parks and open spaces. Mr Palmer thanked the Mayor's kind words regarding SALSA of which he advised that he is a member. He advised that the library is extremely busy and on some months beats Truro City Library for the number of books issued.

Mr Palmer advised that he is an ex-member of St Austell Town Council and thanked everyone for their hard work.

APM/26/08) Members' questions

Arising from a question, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that a report detailing a potential way forward for Poltair Café will be considered by Members at the June Community Committee.

In answer to a question regarding weed control in St Austell, the Clerk confirmed that the Town Council has contracted with a local contractor since 2014 to carry out weed treatment on the 155km of roads in the parish of St Austell. He assured members that weed treatment is not used on flower beds or in play areas. He further advised that the contractor uses spot treatment rather than spraying.

A discussion ensued with regard to the use of glyphosate and Cornwall Council's decision to review a recent Cabinet decision to start weed treatment across Cornwall.

Councillor Brown advised that the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) had discussed the matter on two occasions (Executive Board Meeting and a Larger Council's meeting) where the lack of time for Town and Parish Councils to react to Cornwall Council proposals to reintroduce weed treatment was criticised. Councillor Brown suggested that St Austell Town Council should re-visit their policy on weed treatment at a future meeting.

Councillor Taylor expressed strong concern with regard to the Town Council's current policy of weed treatment across the town.

APM/26/09) Mayor's closing comments

The Mayor thanked everybody for coming to the meeting and for their helpful contributions.

Meeting closed at 7.23pm.