

MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 11th MAY 2026 in Chi Austel, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

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

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Jack Yelland (Cornwall Councillor).

C/26/01) Election of Mayor

The Mayor, Councillor Hamilton, thanked Members for their support during his Mayoral year and advised that he would say more at the formal Mayor Making Event on the 27th May 2026. He invited nominations for Mayor for the 2026/27 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Stephens be elected Mayor of St Austell for the 2026/27 civic year.

Councillor Stephens signed a declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Town Clerk and took the Chair.

Councillor Stephens thanked Members for electing him as Mayor, thanked and congratulated the outgoing Mayor on his civic year and advised that he will work hard and is looking forward to the year ahead.

C/26/02) Election of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor, Councillor Stephens, invited nominations for Deputy Mayor for the 2026/27 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Gray be elected Deputy Mayor of St Austell for the 2026/27 civic year.

C/26/03) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Hawken, Lingham, Pearce, Rowse and Thompson.

Cornwall Councillor Jack Yelland advised that Cornwall Councillor Paul Ashton sent his apologies.

C/26/04) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received

There were no declarations of interest or gifts or hospitality received.

C/26/05) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/26/06) Minutes of Meeting held on 13th April 2026

Councillor Kimber advised that he was not present at the last Council meeting and gave his apologies.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th April 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/26/07) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that the application and supporting evidence for silver quality status had been submitted to the National Association of Local Councils for assessment.

C/26/08) Mayor's/Retiring Mayor's announcements

The retiring Mayor advised that he had attended the following events:

- Honour and Awards event at County Hall, Truro
- "Come From Away" Production – St Austell Amateur Operatic Society, Keay Theatre
- Carefree Cornwall
- Poltair Presentations - Jon Egging Trust
- Beacon Vet Care opening event - Bucklers Lane
- Neighbourhood Priority Statement Briefing (Teams Meeting)
- Armed Forces Day Planning Meeting
- Cornwall International Male Choral Festival - St Johns Methodist Church

The Mayor took the opportunity to advise Members that St Austell Town Council's Mayor Making Ceremony is on Wednesday 27th May 2026, 6.30pm at Holy Trinity Church.

C/26/09) Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

Cornwall Councillor Jack Yelland outlined a number of issues he was working on including:

- General Wolfe sale and associated decision making and losses;
- Highfield Avenue Road resurfacing due in July;
- Bodmin Road near Mennacuddle Well – pressing for speed restrictions;
- Gover Road speeding;
- Trinity Street disabled parking bay – lines refreshed;
- Community highways schemes submitted for Fore Street and High Cross Street;
- Go Cornwall route improvements
- St Austell Football Club future
- Kerensa site – extra care housing scheme
- The Clinton House site on Truro Road
- Community Chest funding for the Market House
- Parking at College Road and Sawles Road
- Dog fouling – Eastbourne cemetery

Arising from the above Members expressed support for Councillor Yelland's attempts to make the Menacuddle Well junction and the nearby B3274 safer.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should liaise with Treverbyn Parish Council and write to Cornwall Council's portfolio holder for Highways reiterating the Town Council's strong concerns with regard to the safety of the B3274 as it leaves St Austell and request:

- i. The re-engineering of the Menacuddle Well junction to provide better access and visibility;
- ii. The introduction of speed restrictions, improved signage and crossing facilities near to the junction.

C/26/10) Members' questions

There were no questions from Members.

C/26/11) Internal Audit Report for year ending 31st March 2026

The Clerk referred Members to the report of the Internal Auditor and explained that as the Auditors' findings were relevant to the Annual Return which the Council had to submit for the 2025/26 financial year, the details were reported to the full Council for consideration prior to agreeing the Annual Governance Statement. He explained that the Internal Auditor had found no issues and had given the Town Council a clean bill of financial health.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the Internal Auditor be noted.

C/26/12) Annual Governance Statement

The Town Clerk introduced a report setting out the details of the Annual Return and Governance Statement which is required to be completed and sent to BDO LLP, the Council's External Auditors, by the 1st July 2026.

The Clerk asked Members if any Member had an interest in BDO LLP and no interests were declared.

Members considered each of the questions in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement in detail before agreeing the following responses.

It was **RESOLVED** that the answer to each question should be as follows:

- Question 1 Yes
- Question 2 Yes
- Question 3 Yes
- Question 4 Yes
- Question 5 Yes
- Question 6 Yes
- Question 7 Yes
- Question 8 Yes
- Question 9 Yes

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. the Mayor and the Clerk should be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return on behalf of the Town Council;
2. There were no conflicts of interest relating to the appointment of BDO LLLP;
3. The Clerk should advertise the electors' rights after the accounting statements have been approved in accordance with the External Audit guidance;
4. The annual meetings of the trustees for Truro Road and Poltair Parks should be held on the same day as the Council meeting in July.

C/26/13) Annual Return and Accounting Statements 2025/26

The Clerk advised that the Town Council's turnover for the 2025/26 financial year was £1.9 million. The main variances from the 2024/25 financial year were improved car park income, a further £200,000 of grant income had been attracted, less had been spent on playground equipment and business rates had increased. The surplus for the year, after transferring £220,000 to reserves and £43,764 from reserves, was £2,554 which will accrue to the General Fund balance. The Town Council has no borrowing and has healthy reserves.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- i. Approve the detailed accounting statements and transfers to and from reserves as shown;
- ii. Approve the accounting statement in Section 2 of the Annual Return for 2025/26;
- iii. Authorise the Clerk and Mayor to sign the Accounting Statement on the Annual Return on behalf of the Town Council; and
- iv. Instruct the Town Clerk to publish the accounts and advertise the electors' rights in accordance with the External Audit guidance.

C/26/14) Standing Committees

The Town Clerk introduced a report setting out the Terms of Reference for each Committee and the current membership of each committee.

An in-depth discussion of each committee took place and whilst the importance of climate change was acknowledged, it was agreed that due to a lack of business to produce a meaningful agenda and on one occasion the committee not being quorate during the previous 12 months, the Climate and Environment Committee should be disbanded and its responsibilities amalgamated with the Community Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Terms of Reference of the Finance and General Purposes Committee as set out be approved;
2. The Terms of Reference of the Community Committee as set out be approved (subject to amendment in due course to reflect bullet point 4 below) ;
3. The Terms of Reference of the Planning and Regeneration Committee be approved subject to the following bullet point being added to "Responsibilities"

- **To agree the basis on which the Town Council undertakes or commissions work relating to the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Priority Statement for St Austell.**
4. Delete the Climate and Environment Committee and allocate its responsibilities to the Community Committee;
 5. The Committee Membership list as set out be approved subject to:
 - Councillors Nott being added to the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
 - Councillor Hamilton being added to Planning and Regeneration Committee;
 - Councillor Hamilton being added to the Staffing Committee;
 - Councillor Rowse being deleted from the Staffing Committee;
 - Councillor Stephens being ex officio on all Committees.

C/26/15) Internal Auditor

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Hudson Accounting Limited to carry out the Town Council's internal audit work for the 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 financial years on the terms set out in the report.

C/26/16) Election of Representatives to outside bodies

It was **RESOLVED** that the following appointments to outside bodies be made for the 2026/27 civic year:

AFC St Austell Project
(Councillor Lanxon)

CALC - Larger Councils Liaison Group
(Councillor M Brown)

Climate Action St Austell (CASA)
(Councillor T Taylor)

Carlyon Road Masterplanning Group
(Councillors Bull and Lanxon and the Chair of the Planning Committee)

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Flood Forum
(Councillor A Cohen)

Holy Trinity Church Grounds Steering Group
(Councillor C Hamilton)

Rural Services Network
(Councillor J Preece)

Rural Service Network – Young Person’s Panel

(Councillor E Stephens)

Rural Service Network – Older Person’s Panel

(Councillor E Stephens)

Safer St Austell

(Councillor J Lingham)

St Austell Business Improvement District (BID)

(Councillor O Kimber)

St Austell Bay Chamber of Commerce

(Councillor O Kimber)

St Austell Revitalisation Partnership

(Councillors M Gray, C Hamilton and the Chair of the Planning & Regeneration Committee)

**St Austell, Mevagissey, St Blazey, Fowey and Lostwithiel
Community Area Partnership**

(Councillors Lanxon (voting member) and Lingham (substitute))

The House Steering Group

(Councillors M Gray and O Kimber)

Treveth – Penwinnick Road Steering Group

(Councillors M Gray and C Hamilton)

White River Steering Group

(Councillor R Clemo)

C/26/17) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Schedule of Payments for the period 7th March 2026 to 30th April 2026 totalling £304,917.61 and transfers between Bank Accounts amounting to £453,934.59.

C/26/18) Helter Skelter Replacement – Poltair Park

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Operations Manager to proceed with the replacement of the helter skelter in Poltair Park.

C/26/19) Campaign against South West Water (At the request of Councillor Thompson)

Councillors discussed a campaign against South West Water including a draft motion and formal letter of no confidence.

It was **RESOLVED** to support the campaign and associated motion and letter as worded.

Councillor Kimber abstained from voting on this item.

C/26/20) Community Engagement Policy

The Town Clerk advised that due to pressure of work the draft community engagement policy was not ready for consideration. It is proposed to bring it to a future meeting.

C/26/21) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Town Council meetings are due to take place on Monday 13th July 2026 and Monday 1st September 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.23pm.