

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 22nd June 2026 in Chi Austel, White River Place, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5AZ at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Clemo, Cohen, Gray, Kimber, Lanxon, Preece, Stephens, Thompson, Whitehouse and Young.

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

F/26/01) Election of Chair

The Town Clerk invited nominations for Chair for the 2026/27 civic year.

A nomination was received for Councillor Gray.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Gray be elected Chair for the 2026/27 civic year.

F/26/02) Election of Vice-Chair

The Chair invited nominations for Vice-Chair for the 2026/27 civic year.

A nomination was received for Councillor Clemo.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Richard Clemo be elected Vice-Chair for the 2026/27 civic year.

F/26/03) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marshall and Nott.

F/26/04) Declarations of Interest

None.

F/26/05) Dispensations

None.

Councillor Lanxon arrived during the next item

F/26/06) Minutes of meeting held on 26th February 2026

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F/26/07) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that the installation of three additional CCTV cameras at Polkyth is proving technically difficult as there is no line of sight to an existing CCTV camera. The Clerk further advised that he would chase the engineers to see if they are any further forward in finding an alternative solution.

F/26/08) Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

F/26/09) Town Councillor Vacancy – Bethel & Holmbush Ward

The Clerk advised that if an election is not requested, the Town Council is free to co-opt a Councillor for the vacancy in the Bethel & Holmbush Ward.

In response to a question, the Clerk advised that there has been one expression of interest in the vacancy and that if the Town Council proceeds with a co-option process, it is likely to take place at the July Council meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update.

F/26/10) Register of Interest

The Clerk advised that following a recent change by the Government, a Councillor's home address will no longer appear on the published Register of Interests unless a Councillor requests otherwise. Instead, it will be replaced with a note stating that there is an interest under this section, which is withheld under Section 32(2) of the Localism Act 2011. All current Registers of Interest will be removed from Cornwall Council's website on the 29th June 2026 and Councillors are requested to fill out a new form confirming whether they want their address published or withheld.

It was **RESOLVED** that all Councillors would complete a new Register of Interest Form confirming whether they want their address published or withheld.

F/26/11) Vexatious Complaints Policy

Members reviewed the draft policy and noted that the word "to" should be removed from the first sentence in paragraph 2.3.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that subject to the above amendment, the Vexatious Complaints Policy should be approved.

Councillor Thompson voted against this recommendation

F/26/12) Member-Officer Relations Protocol

During discussion, Members suggested the following amendments:

2.2.3

Amend the paragraph to read:

Councillors should not involve themselves in the **detailed** day to day running of the Council. This is the Town Clerk's responsibility, and the Town Clerk will **where possible** be acting on instructions from the Council or its Committees within an agreed job description.

2.3 Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Committees

- Amend the heading to read **Chair** and **Vice-Chair of Committees**

Amend the first sentence of paragraph 2.3 to read:

Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs have additional responsibilities and **where possible**, will be involved in significant issues relating to their committee.

3 Expectations

Last bullet point insert "roles and" before the word "needs".

4 Political Groups

Amend the heading to read "Political parties and Political Groups"

Change paragraph 4.1 to read

"Councillors are often elected under a party-political label. Those from the same party are free to work together as they see fit. All Councillors are allocated to committees by the full Council."

Arising from the role of Chair and Vice-Chairs, the Clerk agreed to ensure that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs have an active role in the setting of the Committee agendas.

It was **RECOMMENDED** subject to the above amendments that the Member-Officer Relations Protocol be approved.

F/26/13) Budget Monitoring Report

The Clerk explained the key variations in the report for the current financial year to 31st May 2026 and raised no concerns.

During discussion, the Clerk confirmed that invoices from the Cornwall Armed Forces Day event will increase the event expenditure and that significant funds are being spent on toilet repairs due to an increase in ASB.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

F/26/14) Member Training – 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that it is good practice to provide an annual report on Member training and referred to the previously circulated information.

Arising from the above, the Deputy Town Clerk **AGREED** to circulate the next round of Code of Conduct Training.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

Councillor Young left the meeting during the next item

F/26/15) Members Allowances

The Clerk advised that the Town Council approved a Scheme of Members' Allowances in 2022, but it has not been reviewed since.

The Clerk outlined the key types of allowances which may be paid, tax implications, mileage and subsistence allowances, car parking passes for Priory Car Park and IT equipment.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- The law prohibits co-opted Members being paid a basic allowance;
- The HMRC mileage allowance has been increased from 45p to 55p per mile;
- Only the Mayor or Chair can receive a Mayors' Allowance (eg: not the Deputy Mayor or Vice-Chair);
- A general agreement that Car Parking Passes for all Councillors should be issued for Priory Car Park;
- Mixed views as to whether or not there should be a Mayor's allowance
- The need to increase the subsistence allowances

Mayor's Allowance

A proposal to provide a Mayor's Allowance in the sum of £3,000 per annum was lost 2 votes for, 5 votes against.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that a Mayor's Allowance would not be paid.

Members Allowances

It was **RECOMMENDED** that a Members Allowance would not be paid.

Priory Car Park Pass

It was **RECOMMENDED** that all Members should be issued with a Car Park Pass for Priory Car Park for use on Town Council business only.

Travel Allowances

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the current allowance of 45p per mile for approved travel outside of the parish should be increased to 55p per mile for Councillors and Staff in line with HMRC's recommendation.

Subsistence Allowances

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the meal allowances should be increased as follows:

Breakfast – increase from £5 to £10

Lunch – increase from £5 to £20

Dinner - increase from £10 to £20

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the accommodation allowance should be increased as follows:

Accommodation in London – increase from £100 to £150

Accommodation outside of London – remain at £100

Arising from the above, it was suggested that a Working Group be set up to look at postage costs and the potential for all Members to be issued with a tablet which might negate the need for paper copies of agendas to be sent out in the post.

A number of Councillors expressed a view that they would always prefer having a paper copy of the agenda and would not use a tablet to view the agenda in a meeting.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that a Working Group be set up, comprising of Councillors Gray, Kimber, Preece and Stephens to review the postage costs and the potential to provide each Member with a tablet for use at Council meetings.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that subject to the above amendments being reflected within the document, the Members' Scheme of Allowances be approved as drafted.

F/26/16) Library

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Library has a full complement of staff and is performing well. SALSA remain very active and have put on a wide range of events and activities over recent months. The Cornwall Reading Challenge (previously Summer Reading Challenge) is due to commence shortly which is traditionally a very busy time for St Austell Library.

The Town Clerk advised that he is still negotiating the freehold transfer of the library with Cornwall Council but it has become very protracted due to a disagreement with regard to a "buy back" clause and a second building survey being undertaken to clarify the maintenance costs in the sum of £12,000 due to be paid to the Town Council before the transfer is made.

The Clerk advised that the above issues should be resolved shortly to enable the transfer to take place.

During discussion Members expressed their gratitude to the Deputy Town Clerk, Library Manager, Library Staff and SALSA for their continued excellent work.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update.

F/26/17) Dates of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be a full Council meeting, scheduled to take place on 28th September 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.39pm.