

Minutes of the Council of St Ives Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall on Thursday 10 June 2021 at 7.pm

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor K Arthur (Town Mayor)

Vice-Chairman – Councillor S Tanner (Deputy Town Mayor)

COUNCILLORS

Beveridge J

Messenger K

Ryall

Bradford R

Mitchell A

Tanner S

Dale A

Hodson C

Wells

Harris T

Hynes S

OFFICERS

Town Clerk

RFO & Corporate Services Manager

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - were received from Councillors Rogers and Taylor

23. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND/ OR THE COMMUNITY LINK OFFICER

A representative from Friends of Edward Hain addressed the meeting. He gave Council an update on recent activity and, in particular, work with the Community Land Trust to acquire the building. It was the Friends' understanding that it was the intention to place the site up for auction in the early Autumn. Disposal rules meant that other public sector bodies, such as Cornwall Council and the Town Council could be priority purchasers and, subject to paying market value, could acquire the site. The Friends' now had considerable reserves to put towards this and were requesting that both organisations could consider action of this kind. The Chairman thanked Mr Carver for his update. She explained that she and Councillor Taylor as leader of Cornwall Council were arranging to meet with property professionals from Cornwall Council to explore what was possible and would report back.

24. REPORTS FROM CORNWALL COUNCILLORS

The Clerk reported that reports from both Councillors had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillor Mitchell was present and offered to answer any questions.

RESOLVED - that the Council note the reports.

25. PUBLIC SPEAKING

Th Council heard from the owner of the smock shop. They wanted to discuss their recent experience of being a leaseholder of a Cornwall Council property in Wharf Road. They understood that Cornwall Council wished to sell the property and had made an offer which had not been accepted. They wanted to express their concern that, instead Cornwall Council had accepted an offer from an individual purchaser when the property had not been tendered publicly. They were also concerned that this would result in the loss of important historic features into private ownership, including part of the old weigh bridge. The Chairman thanked them for their contribution.

26. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that the minutes from Community & Environment Committee and Staffing Committee would be considered at the next meeting. As the Staffing Committee had only met that evening, there would also be no confidential agenda item to consider. Staffing Committee had also recommended that the safeguarding report which was appended to the papers be considered by Council without a referral from Staffing Committee, as it had not been possible to debate it in the time allotted.

27. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBER/ OFFICER INTERESTS

The Town Clerk raised a matter to be dealt with under declarations of interest and a request for a dispensation below.

28. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Chairman had requested dispensation for members of the Council as one applicant for co-option was a former member of the Council and well known to all Councillors. Under the dispensation rules, this could be granted if otherwise the meeting would be in-quorate or it was in the interests of the area. This was indeed the case in this instance.

RESOLVED – that the Council grant a dispensation to all members to enable them to vote in a forthcoming agenda item on co-option.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17th May and 19th May 2021.

30. TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE REPORT

Min 15 – Outside bodies – The Town Clerk advised that she had received a formal request from the Museum for Councillors Messenger, Tanner and Mitchell (representing Cornwall Council) be nominated as trustees.

Min 121 Heads of Terms for a Commercial Lease – The Clerk confirmed that St Johns Ambulance had now agreed to proceed to enter into a lease.

RESOLVED - that subject to the above comments and amendments, the report be noted.

31. CO-OPTION TO COUNCIL

The Chairman confirmed that, following the recently unopposed elections which saw only 14 councillors returned, adverts for 2 remaining vacancies had been circulated for seats in the Lelant and Halsewtown wards. As a result, four applications had been received.

The Council received presentations from all 4 applicants who attended the meeting. Following questions from members it proceeded to vote on both vacancies in turn, with the candidate with an absolute majority of votes cast in each case, appointed.

RESOLVED – that

- i) Following consideration of the applications received for Council vacancies, the Council would fill both by co-option.
- ii) Upon receipt of a majority of votes cast Rachel Gaunt be co-opted to serve as a councillor for the Lelant ward

- iii) Upon receipt of a majority of votes cast Lisa Arthur be co-opted to serve as a councillor for the Halsetown ward
- iv) Upon receipt of their declaration of acceptance of office, both Councillors could take their seats

32. **CORNWALL REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Town Clerk introduced the report. She explained that following a national review of the code of conduct for Councillors, Cornwall Council had adopted a revised code. With some minor amendments set out on red for local councils, Cornwall Association of Local Councils were recommending the revised code to all local councils in Cornwall for adoption. The amendments were indicated and there was one matter for decision which was whether to agree to a different threshold figure above which gifts should be declared. Council agreed that the benefits and consistency of a single code should continue and it was proposed that no further amendments or revisions be made.

RESOLVED - that the Council adopt the amended Cornwall Code of Conduct for Cornwall (with the additional amendments in red proposed by CALC) to ensure relevance for local councils.

33. **APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL RETURN AND ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The RFO introduced the report. He explained that each year the Council's accounts were audited by an internal auditor. A new auditor had stepped into the breach at a late stage due to the serious illness of the incumbent. The report produced had been generally positive with some recommendations as set out. The Council were now required to approve the audit report and the annual governance and accounting statements in order that they be subject to public inspection and submitted to the Government appointed external auditor.

Members welcomed the report and noted that the accounts for previous years had now been closed. Some felt that the requirements recommended in relation to an investment strategy were onerous but could be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. In response to a question about the asset strategy, the Clerk confirmed that officers would check the requirements for writing off assets which had been lost.

She advised Council that they needed to take each recommendation separately and in order for the audit process.

RESOLVED - that:

- a) The internal audit report for the financial year 2020/21 be approved by the Council
- b) The Annual Governance Statement for the year 2020/21 be approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor.
- c) The Accounting Statement for the year 2020/21 be approved and signed by the Mayor

34. **IT INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS**

The Town Clerk introduced the report setting out both the specific acquisitions required in order to improve the hardware and network capability of the Council, and the proposal for an IT infrastructure reserve. She also stressed the importance of reviewing IT budget pressures as part of a mid year budget review. Members debated the merits of a reserve. Some members were of the view that the IT acquisitions be funded from general reserves as needed. Others felt this was too reactive and a simple IT strategy should be developed,

after the Council's needs were assessed. In response to a query, the Clerk confirmed she would establish the age and capacity of the server.

It was proposed that Finance and General Purposes Committee commission a report and seek nominees from the Committee to assist.

RESOLVED – that the Council

- i) Note the issues raised by the report
- ii) Agree that immediate hardware needs including the purchase of a new edge switch and switch for the Island Centre and laptop and phone for a new staff member can proceed with funds from the general reserve
- iii) Ensure that additional monthly support, licence and subscription costs are addressed as part of the mid year budget review
- iv) Establish an annual IT infrastructure reserve to better respond to future investment needs with a strategy commissioned by Finance and General Purposes Committee
- v) Ask officers to explore alternative broadband service providers with a report to a future meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

35. FINANCE REPORT

The RFO introduced the finance report. He explained that, at this early stage in the financial year there is generally little to report and highlight. Budgets were set before any of the latest Covid restrictions applied and therefore, it is proposed that officers will work on an early re-profiling of any budgets affected by these changes.

RESOLVED - that Council note the report

36. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Council received and considered the following committee minutes:

- 1) Planning Committee – 20th May 2021
- 2) Committee Recommendations

It was noted that two amendments to the Planning Committee were necessary as the date of the previous meeting was omitted and Councillor Rogers was recorded as having attended and sent apologies.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the committee meeting set out above be received and, subject to the above amendments, the resolutions therein be approved.

The following decisions were made in response to a recommendation from Staffing Committee:

ST.4 The Committee resolved to recommend to Council that it consider the proposed draft safeguarding policy, together with the associated proposals for disclosure and barring checks, as it had not had sufficient time to debate the matter. In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that the Council was not required to carry out DBS checks on senior Councillors, this was at the Council's own discretion as best practice.

RESOLVED that

- i) The draft safeguarding policy to be adopted with immediate effect and
- ii) A policy of enhanced DBS checks be carried for any appropriate staff and DBS checks for senior Councillors (the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Civic Deputies) who may come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults as part of their public duties.

37. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None

38. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None

39. CORRESPONDENCE

None

40. SCHEDULE OF ACCOUNTS

The RFO explained that the schedule of accounts including transactions up to the 31st May 2021 was attached. He drew members attention to some large payments including for the skate park, the heating system at the Island Centre and the annual insurance cover.

RESOLVED - that:

- i) Payments made since the last meeting totalling £302,282.34 be approved
- ii) Credit card payments made since the last meeting totalling £8,092.69 be approved
- iii) Receipts of £497,130.24 up to 1st April 2021 be noted, and the accounts listed totalling £6,920.43 be paid.

41. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider passing the following resolution:

“That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matter on the grounds that it involves information of a confidential nature.

RESOLVED – that it was not necessary to pass the resolution, confidential items from Staffing Committee having been deferred until a future meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.54 pm

Chairman