

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, St Ives Town Council, held in the Committee Room Guildhall on Thursday 20th November 2025 at 7pm

PRESENT

Chair – Councillor T Harris

Vice Chair – Councillor P Kennedy

COUNCILLORS

Hynes S

McNamee S

Messenger K

Mitchell A

Viney P

Walsh A

Wells J

IN ATTENDANCE

Member of the Press.

OFFICERS

Town Clerk

Head of Finance

Administration Assistant

F&GP.51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Arthur.

F&GP.52 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

F&GP.53 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chair signs as a true and correct record the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9th October 2025.

F&GP.54 REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

None.

F&GP.55 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Representatives of a local business were due to present to the Committee in the confidential section of the agenda.

F&GP.56 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLOR AND OFFICER INTERESTS

Councillor Mitchell declared a personal interest in confidential item 13.1 Property Update as he was a close associate of one of the parties.

F&GP.57 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

F&GP.58 CLERK'S UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED – that the report be NOTED

F&GP.59 COMMITTEE BUDGET 2026-2027

The Committee considered a detailed report and presentation from the Head of Finance. They introduced the draft committee budget for the three years 2026-2029.

The Committee considered the assumptions made in terms of income, for example recent

performance in bank interest and inflationary costs including the increasing needs for IT staff training and contract costs for operating the West Cornwall CCTV system and professional fees, largely legal costs linked to devolution. The Committee considered the proposed increases in charges at the Sloop carpark and the prospects for Chy an Gweal.

It was noted that there was no confirmation as yet, that the same service level agreement terms would be agreed with Cornwall Council enforcement, which enables them to deliver the service without a charge. Assumptions had also been made in relation to PSPO enforcement costs.

The Committee debated the budget and agreed that it reflected the right balance between income for discretionary services, prudent assumptions for inflation in externalised and commissioned services and the need to exercise budgetary restraint.

RESOLVED – that the Committee RECOMMENDS to Council the draft budget proposed for the Finance and General Purposes Committee for 2026-2029.

F&GP.60 **THE COUNCIL BUDGET 2026-27**

The Head of Finance presented a detailed budget report to the Committee. They updated the Committee that all service committees had now reviewed their budgets and recommended them to this Committee. Officers had incorporated all amendments and recommendations into the detailed draft Council budget for 2026-27 and additional years 2027-2029. In order to reflect the Council's ambition officers had prepared two budget options, one represented an increase of 4.99%, to align with the likely level of Cornwall Council's increase. In addition, a second option of 6.4% which recommended some additional items to reflect a more prudent approach, especially in relation to the anticipated cost of living pay award.

Inflationary and service pressures had increased all Committee budgets including C&E which had significant increases to reflect the addition of parks and gardens as part of devolution and Staffing Committee to reflect changes in the establishment. These pressures led to the need to increase budgets (and the precept) by far higher than the stated 4.99%. In order to meet the ambition, officers proposed a series of savings and contributions from ear-marked reserves including:

- Using savings accumulated in the neighbourhood plan and elections earmarked reserves
- Using one off in year savings from the staffing committee of £80,000
- Reducing the level of general reserves to 31%.
- Assuming cost of living pay award increases would not exceed 3.5%

Officers confirmed that this was achievable. They highlighted the risks associated with this approach being

- A fall in general reserves – these were forecast to rise again in 2027-28 but only if there were no further falls in levels of second homes council tax premium
- A dependency on the premium policy which could not be guaranteed
- A dampening of the increased costs of the staffing establishment with the risk that these costs would have to be more than recovered in subsequent years.
- The electoral cycle which might prevent the Council from adjusting for adverse conditions in future years.
- High risk capital projects, especially the Guildhall
- Any government policy impacts arising from the budget.

An alternative option which used a lower level of earmarked reserves and kept a higher level

of budget provision for increases in establishment costs and resulted in a precept of 6.4% was considered but not supported.

The Committee resolved to submit one proposal to full Council as set out.m

RESOLVED – that the Committee RECOMMENDS to Council that it

- i) APPROVES an expenditure budget for 2026-27 of £2,582,501 together with associated earmarked and general reserves and income targets
- ii) SETS a Precept of £1,764,670 which results in a St Ives Town Council element of the Council Tax, based on a Band D property, of £287.74, an annual increase of £13.68 (4.99%).

F&GP.64 FINANCE REPORT

The Head of Finance presented a report on the Committee's budget status and highlighted:

- Bank Interest Increases.
- Professional fees exceeding forecasts.
- Devolution budget lines split out to specific cost centres.
- Balanced parking forecasts with the Sloop exceeding target and Chy an Gweal not yet on stream.

Councillors requested a printed A3 version of the documents in future.

RESOLVED that the Committee NOTE the report and RESOLVE that the bank reconciliation has been reviewed and is APPROVED.

F&GP.65 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None

F&GP.66 CORRESPONDENCE

None

F&GP.67 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matter due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

Councillors expressed their sorrow and deep condolences to the member of the press present due to the recent unexpected death of the editor of the local paper.

F&GP.68 PROPERTY UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a regular property update report, the key points of which were as follows:

F&GP.68.1 Barnoon Workshop

A formal valuation had now been received and interested parties would be asked to submit offers in excess of £7,000.

F&GP.68.2 Old Fire Station

A formal valuation had now been received and interested parties would be asked to submit offers in excess of £10,000.

F&GP.68.3 Fishermen's Lodges:

A meeting with representatives of the lodges had taken place. They confirmed they were working together to form a single governance structure. Issues of concern were fed back in terms of the length of any lease, improvements to public realm, future income from the sub-station.

The Committee supported the principle of a very long lease of 999 years, subject to lease terms ensuring robust legacy arrangements were in place with no assignment and adequate safeguards to reflect any proposed governance arrangements.

F&GP.68.4 Porthmeor Proposal

[Councillor Mitchell declared a personal interest in the item and left the meeting]

The committee had received a proposal from interested parties seeking to lease the land for a future venture. They had submitted proposed heads of terms for lease for consideration. As previously agreed, a one year licence for the surf lifesavers would be issued in order to develop the plans.

The Committee stated the importance of community consultation and engagement and the need address key questions and to secure a satisfactory planning permission for the site. Subject to these conditions being satisfied, the Committee supported the proposed heads of terms in principle.

RESOLVED – that the Committee:

- i) NOTE the updates provided for each individual property and any actions therein
- ii) APPROVE the invitation for sealed bids for Barnoon Workshop & Old Fire Station, in accordance with the valuation advice.
- iii) APPROVE – the proposed lease term for the lodges.
- iv) APPROVE – possible, in principle lease terms for the former Porthmeor Bowling Green, subject to conditions being satisfied, as set out.

F&GP.69 DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The Clerk informed councillors that representatives from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the LGA were due to undertake a Council peer review in March and may be observers at the March meeting.

Next Meeting: 5th March 2026

Meeting closed at 20:10

Chair