

MINUTES of the EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of ST JUST-IN-PENWITH TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, 1 Chapel Street, St Just on Tuesday 8 December 2015 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor K. McFadden – Town Mayor  
Councillor Mrs F Cock – Deputy Town Mayor

COUNCILLORS

M Blundy – arrived at 7.55 p.m.	F Morris
B Clemens	D Roberts
N McFadden	G Roberts
T McFadden	Mrs G Salmon
Mrs G McQueen	D Stevens

TOWN CLERK

Elaine Baker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr Mrs. James – Cornwall Councillor  
James Hardy – Community Link Officer, Cornwall Council

TC.217 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

TC.218 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

TC.219 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations granted.

TC.220 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – that under Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the business specified in the following item.

TC.221 FUTURE DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS FOR ST JUST

Following on from the prioritisation exercise carried out by the Town Council at the meeting held on 16 November 2015, the Town Council, together with Cllr Mrs James, James Hardy, Community Link Officer, Cornwall Council considered the devolution proposals for the parish and how individual projects dovetailed into the wider business proposal in the light of recent developments in respect of the potential transfer of the existing library to Cape Cornwall School.

James Hardy provided the Town Council with an overview of the current position regarding the devolution of services and assets to local councils and community organisations from Cornwall Council's perspective, in the context of it having to make £196m of savings to its budget by 2020.

As part of that budget saving, the Face-to-Face Service, which included libraries, was being asked to make a budget reduction of £1.8m and a range of options were being considered. Discussions had commenced with the Town Council in May 2015 on the future of the St Just Library and an Expression of Interest (EOI) had been submitted by the Town Council around a proposal to transfer of the library to Cape Cornwall School. An EOI had also been submitted by The Friends of St Library seeking a retention of the service within the existing building. Mr Hardy said that it was recognised that the library was an important local service facility, but commented on the need to engage with Cornwall Council to protect against the risk of closure. Following the submission of the EOIs a partnership working group had been established comprising all the key partners and discussions had proceeded on the basis of a potential transfer of the service as this appeared to represent the most cost effective solution to retain library provision within the community.

A further EOI had also been submitted by the Town Council for a wider devolution package which included the existing Town Council building, public conveniences, car parks, open spaces and youth provision which was set against securing tenure for the Town Council post 2017 when the current lease expired. The EOI proposed a relocation of the Town Council to the existing library thereby releasing the capital asset owned by Cornwall Council, together with other proposals to ensure longer term security, including the future of the Lafrowda Car Park Memorandum of Understanding for which the Town Council paid Cornwall Council an annual premium for maintaining a "free" car park at the point of use.

In terms of the library, Mr Hardy commented that this was the "key" element of any future deal on which the success of other elements of the package were reliant, and on which security of service provision could be ensured. It was on this specific point that the partner working group, which included representatives from The Friends Group had agreed that the relocation to school offered the best solution and discussions had continued on that basis. The proposal also provided the potential for the school to become more integrated within the local community, at a time when it was facing significant challenges. Meetings had been held with the Executive Head of the School and it was confirmed that the school, together with the Board of Governors, were supportive of the proposal, provided there was no additional cost to the school.

Mr Hardy also referred to the annual running costs of the library building (£16K) and staffing costs (£16K) upon which savings were required. The challenge would be to secure revenue funding for continuation of the service and to identify where that funding could be found. In addition, there was a need to reduce staffing costs: there was also concern that TUPE regulations might apply if another library was provided within the town for which the existing staff might have a claim to the jobs. All these factors would need to be taken into account in the development of any bid.

The Town Clerk commented on the recent meeting held by the “Friends of St Just Library” regarding the future of the existing library and tabled 34 letters of representation which had been received following the meeting; 33 letters were in support of the status quo and 1 in support of the relocation of the library to the school.

Cllr Mrs James commented on the “tensions” which had arisen locally and the lack of understanding of the wider Friends membership as to why the school was the only option being considered. It was The Friends view that a shared facility with the Town Council, TIC and the library was the best option and there was a lack of understanding amongst the group as to why this option was not being pursued, and concern that there had been a lack of dialogue on the proposal.

Cllr Stevens commented on the wider benefits of the package to the local community and that it was on this basis that the Town Council had put forward the EOI and entered into discussions with the partner organisations.

In the light of the above, Cllr Stevens suggested that the following recommendation be put forward for consideration by the Council:-

*“That, in the light of the number of letters of representation received supporting the continuation of the library within the existing building, as opposed to the transfer of the library to Cape Cornwall School, this Council holds a public meeting on Tuesday 15 December 2015, to put the Council’s case for the transfer, and to seek the wider community view on the proposal.”*

Following detailed discussion it was proposed by Cllr Mrs Salmon and seconded by Cllr D Roberts that the recommendation be put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** That, in the light of the number of letters of representation received supporting the continuation of the library within the existing building, as opposed to the transfer of the library to Cape Cornwall School, this Council holds a public meeting on Tuesday 15 December 2015, to put the Council’s case for the transfer, and to seek the wider community view on the proposal.

(Action by : Elaine Baker)

The meeting finished at 8.10 p.m.

Town Mayor