

ST JUST TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT, 2022/2023

We started this administrative year, in May 22, with 2 Town Councillor vacancies. I'm pleased to report that since filling those, we have achieved stability, with a full team of 12 Councillors.

For those members of our community that follow Town Council matters closely, St Just Town Council taking over responsibility and ownership of St Just and Pendeen car parks and toilets, from Cornwall Council, has been a regular topic on our meeting agendas. I am pleased to say that 2023 is the year we have achieved it; a lengthy process with many twists, turns and challenges. Whilst that is an achievement long awaited and worthy of celebration, it does mean decisions on how best to run them for our residents now rest with us and any future residents that step forward to be Town Councillors in years to come. There will be debates and a range of views both in the Council Chamber and in our community but, we and all future administrations will have to make decisions and not all will be easy; some might not be welcomed by all. Before I set hares racing, in our car parks there are no immediate plans for change beyond investigating the possibilities of improving enforcement, putting bay lines in areas that do not have them, to increase capacity a little, and considering installing electric vehicle charging. For the toilets, Town Council has taken over the current cleaning contract, which is with Cormac, but we will be monitoring this closely and will consider other options, maybe even creative community suggestions, if that might improve the service we can give and value for money to local council tax payers.

It probably surprised some in our community when, back in July, Town Council submitted a bid to Cornwall Council to take over the running of Carnyorth Outdoor Activity Centre. The bid was to have the building, grounds and equipment devolved to us with a St Ives based organisation called Cohort running the facility, supported by Pendeen Community Heritage, who run Geevor. Although our bid was taken seriously, it did not succeed and since then there has been uncertainty hanging over the Centre. I am pleased to be able to announce that Aspire Academy have just taken over the facility and from an early conversation with them, I am happy they will pick up the reigns from where Cornwall Outdoors left off; school children will return to the facility.

As a result of us securing £50,000 Town Vitality Funding we have a professionally written Vision and Implementation Plan report for our town. That is available on the Town Council website and we know that community groups are already making bids for funding, using the report as supportive evidence. The Town Council is also going to use the report to seek more funding to improve facilities and infrastructure in the Town and wider Parish.

£10,000 funding from the National Lottery, for Environmental/ Climate Change projects, allowed us to commission work within our community to consider the potential development of community renewable energy schemes as well as work with farmers and land owners to understand more about regenerative agriculture methods and to consider local shopping habits and how more can be provided locally. That report is with us and we will be considering it fully at our June meeting.

We are using Community Infrastructure Levy money received by Town Council to improve facilities at Pendeen Play Park and aim to bid for some centrally held funds to make further improvements there and in St Just Recreation Ground. Although not purchased this year, I want to remind community groups that we have purchased a range of outdoor events equipment, including gazebos,

sound and lighting equipment and a fog machine, because of course we don't get enough fog out here!

Since our last Annual meeting, our staff team has grown, reflecting the Council's increased responsibilities and ambitions – we welcomed Hester Hunt as our part-time, Deputy Clerk. Sadly, we have received a resignation letter from our Town Clerk, Cas Leo, as he plans to retire at the end of July. This generous notice period should ensure our recruitment for his replacement is well advanced before he leaves and the Council has its summer recess.

We had a more traditional Mayor's Sunday event, albeit that it had to be postponed from its usual weekend in September to 22 January, due to the death of Queen Elizabeth. The arrangements seemed to be appreciated by our community and guests.

We have given £25,727 to 12 Community Groups this year and some of their representatives have told us how they have made use of the funds. Whilst most of that money was given through our usual Community Grants scheme, some supported Platinum Jubilee events.

St Just Town Council are working with National and local organisations wanting to make life easier for hedgehogs. We are encouraging residents to provide a small hole in their wall or fence and will provide a surround to highlight the feature to get friends, relatives and neighbours talking and joining in. We are encouraging those taking part to register any hedgehog sightings and to record holes made to form a Hedgehog Highway.

We, along with other Town's and Parishes and very many residents, expressed our opposition to having a Mayor for Cornwall in order to gain some questionable extra funds and powers from Government; in our eyes, it was not a genuine devolution of power and felt more of a bribe to put local power into 1 elected official's hands. I joined other Town Mayors in a protest at County Hall and eventually Cornwall Council's Cabinet saw sense, agreeing with the many that had voiced opposition to the change in Governance and it will not now proceed.

In terms of Official engagements, I have focused on attending local events that have meaning to our residents rather than ceremonial events up and down Cornwall. Having said that, I do attend West Cornwall events, where there are benefits to building networks and relationships.

I want to end by thanking all Town Councillors for their contribution to our work for the benefit of the community. I of course want to thank our Town Clerk, Cas Leo and all our Town Council and Library staff.