

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday 17 May 2023 in The Pattern Hall, Charlestown Road at 6.00pm.

The meeting was attended by Cllr Bill Leach Chairman of St Austell Bay Parish Council (who took the Chair), Cllrs Sue Leach, Trudy Reynolds, Nick Foster, Sandie Bailey and Jackie Bull from St Austell Bay Parish Council, Cllr James Mustoe Cornwall Council ward member for Mevagissey and St Austell Bay, Helen Nicholson, Community Link Officer, Cornwall Council and Julie Larter, Clerk to St Austell Bay Parish Council.

2 residents were also present

(1) Apologies for Absence

Cllr Chrissie Wright

(2) Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 21 April 2022

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

(3) Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman thanked Cllr Jackie Bull for standing in for him in his absence at the end of 2022 and the start of this year. He also thanked Cllr Mustoe for working so hard for the parish.

This has been another busy year for the council. We have considered 28 planning applications, some of them difficult and some controversial. The task is never easy, and parishioners need to remember that the parish council merely gives a view on an application: It is Cornwall Council that remains the Planning Authority which makes the final decision.

We were pleased to welcome Chrissie Wright as a new councillor for Duporth but we currently have two vacancies for the Charlestown Ward!

More happily, I am pleased to report that the Charlestown Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan has been updated and approved.

The council was pleased to support the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, funding 7 tea parties, as well as lighting a beacon and organising a firework display on the harbour. Our thanks to Charlestown Harbour for their help and support.

We also installed 3 Jubilee benches and 3 trees to commemorate the event.

We were pleased to be able to replace 2 defibrillators and make a contribution to a third.

Grants were given to Radio St Austell Bay, Cornish Barbarians Rowing Club, Light Up Charlestown and The Charlestown Rowing Club. Equipment was purchased for St Austell Society of Art and Charlestown Chums.

I am pleased to report that we were successful in getting the Ledrah added to the list of Cornwall Council's lists of assets of community value and, at last, after 4 years, getting the replacement tree on Charlestown Road!

The reorganisation of the Community Networks which have been made larger and less focussed is causing us concern – we will watch their effectiveness with interest.

We have worked very hard in trying to resolve some of the parking issues in the parish and these are summed up in the Vice Chairman's report.

Perhaps, one of the biggest problems over the year has been with the relocation and roll back of the South West Coast Path in its two falls either side of Charlestown and its roll back at Duporth. I am delighted to report that this has now been concluded, and the path has been resurfaced, re-fenced and planted at the sides in Duporth to provide privacy. This has been a massive job and we pass on our thanks to Cormac for a job very well done.

Very sadly I report the untimely death of Brian Reynolds, a former employee of the council and husband of Cllr Trudy Reynolds. Our sympathies go to Trudy and to his family and friends.

Finally, my thanks go to our caretaker Keith Carter and other staff, and our outstanding Clerk, Julie Larter, without doubt one of the best clerks in the county!

Cllr Bill Leach, Chairman, St Austell Bay Parish Council

Our Working Groups

The short accounts below record the excellent work that these groups have carried out over the past year.

(i) Regatta Working Party

Members: Cllrs Bill Leach and Jackie Bull; Terry Butler, Sue Facey, John Fowler

Until the waterlogging issue in the field is resolved, the parish council is unwilling to take over responsibility for the field so devolution from Cornwall Council is no closer. We have met with officers from Cornwall Council and from the Duchy of Cornwall on a number of occasions over the past 12 months. Initially we thought the flooding was being caused by a blocked adit and had hoped to conduct a CCTV survey of the adit under the field, but it proved impossible to find a company able to carry out such a survey. It has also been suggested that the issue could simply be a surface drainage issue caused by the clay soil used to cover the sunken mineshaft. We are currently in discussion with a drainage company to consider options for improved drainage.

Julie Larter, Clerk

(ii) Traffic Working Party

Members: Cllrs Jackie Bull and Nick Foster; Lauren Holley; Helen Childs; Janice Powell

The Traffic Working Group was formed in 2022 in response to residents' needs around parking and speeding issues within the parish, reported to the PC over a long period, particularly in areas such as Charlestown, Church, Duporth and Porthpean Beach Roads.

Highway management is the remit of Cornwall Council but the PC decided to do all it could to help residents by liaising with the Highways Manager and allocating some parish council funding. The working party consists of a mixture of councillors and residents, often joined by Cornwall Council highway officers and our Cornwall Councillor.

The first step was a survey of all parish residents asking that they report highway problems in their vicinity. The working group then met during some cold, dark winter evenings to consider the information and to create a spreadsheet of issues they believed they could help with, either now or the future. The Parish Council, therefore, has recorded a full parish picture for ongoing use. Priorities were identified, meetings held and a walkabout with CC's senior highway team took place concluding in a highways officer providing design work with suggested parking solutions for the areas in question. The Parish Council agreed to allocate £23,385 to ensure the outcome was swift. The Parish Council is pleased that additional yellow lining will be placed on Porthpean Beach Road and feels it imperative that more yellow lining is placed on Duporth Road for safety. Residents' parking solutions are now being considered by the Council's highway policy team and discussion is ongoing. This is proving to be difficult since it is a relatively small number of residents involved and much suggested seems at odds with CC's highway policy. The Parish Council will continue to do all it can to help our residents' cause and thank all involved in the valuable work the group have carried out to date, especially residents who answered the survey.

Cllr Jackie Bull, Chair, Traffic Working Party

(iii) Environment and Climate Crisis Working Party

Members; Cllrs Trudy Reynolds and Jackie Bull; Pat Smith

At the start of the year the Parish Council discussed the Carbon Footprint Report on the parish which was based on data provided by the University of Exeter and the Centre for Sustainable Energy based in Bristol. Whilst our figures are high it was felt that this was due to the rural nature of the parish together with a relatively elderly population and a large proportion of holiday homes. This data will be reviewed annually.

All planning applications are considered with energy efficiency and carbon reduction prioritised using our Neighbourhood Plan, the Climate Crisis Action Plan and the Planning Checklist,

The group has produced posters for the parish noticeboards, the parish website and other local social media channels to highlight relevant topics such as water saving measures, sensible shopping habits, hidden plastics, dealing with the summer heat etc. We have also produced a "Green Guide" of local businesses which promote green consumerism.

Suppliers are checked for their environmental credentials. Special purchases for the Platinum Jubilee excluded any single use plastics. The benches purchased for Porthpean Beach were made from plastics recycled in the UK.

The Parish Council successfully applied for a Tree Preservation Order for trees near the Church Road Playing Fields and was active in ensuring that the correct procedures were followed when trees on Charlestown Road were felled.

The Parish Council continues to support the work of Charlestown Chums in their litter picking sessions and the Two Minute Beach Clean boards. The Diggers and Doers group has continued work to improve the environment of the parish by tree planting, bulb planting, creating wildflower areas and general tidying of hedgerows and footpaths. There are ongoing projects at The Battery, the Regatta Field and Carrickowel Point. We have a small core of volunteers who I would like to sincerely thank for their efforts. New members are more than welcome.

Cllr Trudy Reynolds

(iv) History Working Party

Members: Cllrs Trudy Reynolds and Nick Foster; Andy Trudgian and Sue Facey (Charlestown History Group) and Pat Smith

Both the Charlestown History Group and the Parish Council have been involved in ongoing projects promoting the historic features and information in the parish. Archive material is available for viewing at the Pattern Hall, Charlestown at certain times and the content on the Charlestown History Group website is increasing all the time.

The Charlestown History Group has taken the lead on work at Charlestown Battery including the successful raising of the flagpole on 4 March 2023.

The parish council is taking the lead on the other major project with the creation of an Information Board and Visitors Guide for Charlestown. Consultations with businesses, residents and other relevant bodies have been undertaken and the Information Board is in the final design stage. The main board will be located at the top of the harbour with a similar board in the main car park. In addition to giving factual information about the village it will also promote a walking route around the Harbour with the key historic features being highlighted by numbered QR code boards. It is hoped that the Board and QR codes will be installed before the start of the main summer season. Similar projects for Porthpean and Duporth will be undertaken next year.

Work is also ongoing on walking routes around the parish to encourage visitors and residents to explore Duporth, Porthpean and Trenarren. Relevant historic features will be highlighted.

Anyone with an interest in the history of the parish would be welcome to get involved and join the group.

Cllr Trudy Reynolds

(4) Report from Devon and Cornwall Police

Due to the way the new NICHE crime recording system works, it has not been possible to divide up the individual parishes (Carlyon, Pentewan Valley and St Austell Bay) and as such one report has been compiled that covers all 3 parishes.

St Austell Neighbourhood Team is made up of a Sargeant plus 9 Police Officers, assisted by 6 Police Community Support Officers. The sector of St Austell is divided into 3 areas, with each area having dedicated PCs and PCSOs.

The area of St Austell Bay and Carlyon is covered by PC Will Chesterfield, PC Chris Wallbank, PC Gareth Hawken, PCSO Wendy Christophers and PCSO Yas Barrott.

There has been a recent change of sector inspector – with Matt Trevivian taking over from Ian Jolliff – Matt is a former St Austell Neighbourhood Team Leader so has knowledge of the patch and is settling into his new role.

Response teams are being bolstered by an additional 8 officers by the end of June.

Crime Data

2021 – 160 offences

2022 – 156 offences

As you can see, the numbers are virtually identical which is a positive in terms of there not being a rise in reported crimes.

Devon and Cornwall Police were recently criticised regarding their recording of crimes and as such a greater level of attention is being paid on crime recording. There are no crime trends to be concerned about in the area, with no particular spike in any crime types.

So far in 2023 we have had 57 reported crimes which is consistent with the crime rate from the previous year.

ASB Reports

This is a significant decrease and is positive.

The neighbourhood team have been working hard to address ASB and low level offending and this has been bolstered by the introduction of further Neighbourhood Beat Managers across the St Austell area which allows for more pro-active policing, community engagement, and the reduction of Anti-Social Behaviour.

In 2023 officers from St Austell Neighbourhood Team have been involved in a number of pro-active operations, including:

January 25 – proactive traffic operation, targeting the “Fatal Five” – careless driving, drink/drug driving, not wearing a seatbelt, excessive speed, and mobile phone use. 31 vehicle tickets issued for a range of offences, 3 vehicles seized for document offences (no insurance, no licence, etc) and 1 arrest made.

February – pro-active operation to arrest outstanding suspect for local burglaries. Stolen property, along with cash, class A drugs and weapons seized. Suspect arrested.

March – Operation Medusa – forcewide operation to target County Lines drug supply across Devon and Cornwall with the support of Merseyside Police. St Austell Neighbourhood were involved in the execution of 2 x drug warrants in the St Austell area and whereby several arrests were made.

April – Warrant to arrest male and female for burglaries in the St Austell area executed. Both male and female located and taken into custody, with stolen items recovered from the address. Further male arrested for outstanding offences.

May -excellent response to local robbery in the wider St Austell area with a child victim. Officers obtained information regarding the suspect and a Theft Act warrant obtained, leading to property being recovered and a suspect arrested.

PC Will Chesterfield

(5). Report from Cornwall Councillor James Mustoe

I am pleased to now be in my third year as Cornwall Councillor for St Austell Bay Parish, and overall ninth year as a Cornwall Councillor and would like to thank the Parish Council, and residents and businesses in general for your continued support.

I continue to work on a variety of local issues, and in all areas like to work closely with my parish councils to achieve real positive change and help address longstanding issues.

A few highlights include:

Getting Porthpean Road resurfaced between the Cromwell Road junction and the new roundabout.

Getting the coastpath reopened and finished to an excellent standard, between Charlestown and Porthpean, and Charlestown to Carlyon Bay.

Working with Cornwall Council to ensure the reopening and continued provision for young people at Porthpean Outdoor Education Centre.

Continued work with Cornwall Council and the Parish Council to improve facilities at Porthpean Beach.

Work to resurface the road to Trenarren, which should have recently taken place.

Work with Charlestown History Group on the incredible opening up of the Battery.

Getting the Parish Council's request for waiting restrictions on Porthpean Beach Road approved and ready for implementation

I like to be mostly positive in my reports, but must say that I remain very disappointed at Cornwall Council's continued poor handling of the work around waiting restrictions and residents parking at Charlestown and Duporth. I continue to work to try to resolve this and bring it to a positive conclusion.

I also continue to include the Parish in my regular ongoing litter pick and beach clean schedule.

I have also in my day to day work, continued to get out and about, meeting local residents, organisations, and businesses and always try my best to represent your issues and interests at County Hall.

There are always loads of local casework issues ongoing, particularly regarding potholes and verge trimming – I do my best to get a speedy and positive response once I get involved.

On a Cornwall-wide note, at Cornwall Council over the past year, I have been pleased to have led on a motion supporting the NFU's call for a national ban on sky lanterns, following up from my successful campaign to ban them being launched at licensed events or from Cornwall Council land in 2015. I will also shortly be putting forward a motion for the council to recognise young people with care experience as a protected characteristic.

With regards to my Community Chest, I have awarded grants over the past year to the parish council towards a defibrillator at Porthpean Beach, and Charlestown History Group for the flag at the battery.

Finally, with the Platinum Jubilee, Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and Coronation of Charles III, we have seen historic events over the past year and I have been honoured to represent the parish at the Cornwall Civic events to mark these occasions, as well as taking part in local events to mark them.

I would like to congratulate the Parish Council on their excellent work and positive approach and attitude. You are a pleasure to work with and I always look forward to coming to the monthly meetings.

(6). Helen Nicholson, Community Link Officer, Cornwall Council

Ms Nicholson outlined the new Community Area Partnerships which come into effect in June. St Austell Bay Parish Council will become part of the St Austell, Mevagissey, St Blazey, Fowey and Lostwithiel, and Sarah Scoltock will become the Community Link Officer. An inaugural meeting of the Partnership will be held on 11 July. The Partnership will draw together town and parish councils, the Police, health services and the voluntary and community sector. They will be able to set local priorities continue to have a Highways budget and will also be able to recommend Levelling Up funding applications.

(7). Public Forum

No members of the public wished to speak.

The meeting concluded at 1840.