

TRURO CITY COUNCIL



CITY OF TRURO

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MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD 16 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 1900

PRESENT: Councillors Wells (Vice-Chairman) in the chair, Swain (Mayor), Rabey (Deputy Mayor), Biscoe, Mrs Carlyon, Eathorne-Gibbons, Sunderhauf and Southcombe.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Nolan, Rich, Stokes and Webb - personal.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: David Rodda MBE (Town Clerk) and Esther Greig (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO).

1 COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies.

F/24/482

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

F/24/483

3 OPEN SESSION FOR ELECTORS OF TRURO RELATING TO ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA VERBAL QUESTIONS

None.

F/24/484

4 MINUTES

a. The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15 July 2024 were considered for accuracy. It was proposed by Councillor Swain, seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon, and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15 July 2024 were considered a correct record and signed.

F/24/485

b. The Minutes of the Grants Sub-Committee meeting held on 15 July 2024 were received and it was proposed by Councillor Wells and seconded by Councillor Swain that they be **noted**.

F/24/486

5 RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER (RFO) REPORT

The RFO gave a verbal report to the Committee including:

- a. The library's cards for good causes contract amendment so that the scheme is managed by the library staff achieving additional commission for their time. A review will take place at the end of the season.
- b. Zeb's roof had been repaired, however further problems had been identified with asbestos sheets and plywood boards to the rear of the building. A councillor notified the RFO that Cornwall Council had devolved the property with the promise it was in good repair.
- c. Lemon Street public convenience shutters had been replaced and the leak resolved.
- d. Market investments of £1.25m were placed following receipt of the precept. In November when two accounts mature an assessment will be made on whether to reinvest against the town deal project spending needs. So far £40,000 of interest had been accrued.
- e. Problems recruiting staff to position of Public convenience cleaners were felt locally, the usual contractor TCC uses is unable to assist this time.

Footfall counters had also been installed as part of an effort to assess service level and inform changes to shift patterns with a view to reduce the burden on recruitment. The possibility of neighbouring businesses locking and opening is also being explored.

- f. Currently available documentation doesn't provide enough information on the spending requirements of S106 monies; the RFO will seek out original agreements during Q3. The tennis agreement has been found and it is recommended by the RFO that the earmarked reserves are replaced.
- g. The Furniss Coal charity has met and has an in-house method of administering the payments for 2024/25.
- h. Money from the New Zealand trust has arrived for the William Yeoman Bennett Charity; bank account mandates need completion.
- i. Papers from Kresen Kernow helped to establish the original set up of the Elliot Exhibition Foundation, the Lord Lieutenant is being contacted in relation to re-establishing the foundation.
- j. The RFO ended their report on the Mayoral Chain. The committee was informed that it will be going in for repair during October. Zurich has advised that the Civic Regalia should be stored in the safe when not in use. Members asked if detailed photos could be taken once repaired.

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report to the Committee including:

- a. Ongoing discussions with Cornwall Council on a solution to the provision of CCTV. The Town Clerk also commented that an alternative option was being explored by certain councils that if progressed could impact on the viability of the Cornwall Council solution. Members were wary of joining a newly established group but wanted a solution and ask that during the budget process a maximum estimate be used.
- b. The owners of the Market Inn have agreed in principle to the terms of the outside front space noting it is imperative to the viability of their business case. They have agreed to pay a license fee to Cornwall Council that will be passed onto Truro City Council to help cover the cost of maintaining Lemon Quay on completion of the redevelopment project. It is surmised that the currently in procurement events consultant will also generate income to cover the remainder of the maintenance costs.

The Deputy Town Clerk added that the HR contract will be discussed at Full Council.

The verbal reports were **noted**.

F/24/487

6 CHAIRMANS REPORT

None.

F/24/488

7 CORRESPONDENCE

- a. The update from Cormac regarding Newbridge bus stop – footway improvements was **noted**. The proposed changes to this bus stop were supported provided that the new bus stop remains a Truro City Council Asset. Councillors gave the Town Clerk a brief history of the bus stops providing a list and informed that there had previously been a decision to relocate those at unserved locations.

F/24/489

The RFO made members aware that in addition to the advertising contract for the bus stops there were many other expired TCC contracts — therefore expectations had to be set as priorities made.

- b. The letter regarding Piazza Markets was **noted**
The Town Clerk summarised the concerns within the letter and balanced this with the significance the markets have to the offer of Truro, a pivotal point in securing the coaches from the cruise ships. In addition to this he informed

F/24/490

members that the Lemon Quay events work would target non-competing events for the most part.

Members accepted that the Farmers' Market was a part of Truro's brand but so too is the blend of small independent shops; these shops have a higher overhead and some notice reduction in trade on market days. There was also concern raised over the items available at the market becoming less and less farm-based produce with more gift items being sold.

The Town Clerk also felt that the market was going too far one way and had already had discussions with the operator about this matter in preparation for the next annual review of their booking.

c. The letter of thanks from Cornwall Music Festival was **noted**. F/24/491

8 AGENDA ITEMS

F/24/492

a. 2024/25 budget process

The RFO introduced the report reiterating that officers have been tasked with a zero-based budgeting exercise, this was to be based upon prediction of interest rates and inflation rates, discussions with other councils, recommendation from professional bodies and the production of service plans by service leads.

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, and **RESOLVED** that the suggested budgeting process for considering 2025-26 budget and precept be adopted. F/24/493

b. Fixed asset register

The RFO informed members that the appendix was a summary but welcomed any information they could share to help build the asset register.

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, and **RESOLVED** that the register be **noted**. F/24/494

c. Document retention policy

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Sunderhauf, and **RESOLVED** that the Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption as amended; F/24/495

- In 5.2 addition of 'where appropriate'.
- Addition of a review mechanism to assess future historic value.

d. Seagulls report

The Town Clerk highlighted that the catalyst of this report had been the complaints from members of the public and that at present there is no signage.

A councillor made the Town Clerk aware that there was a past decision to provide more community notice boards around town and that these would be ideal for this kind of informative display.

It was proposed by Councillor Sunderhauf, seconded by Councillor Wells, and **RESOLVED** that signage warning of seagulls be erected on Lemon Quay. F/24/496

e. Environmental statements

Councillors discussed the proposed document with views that this would hinder the general duty of the council and ignore the cost to other factors suggesting it should have more balance by using terms such as 'where practicable/appropriate'. Other members believed this to be a good working document giving a snapshot and not an edict.

It was proposed by Councillor Sunderhauf, seconded by Councillor Swain, and **RESOLVED** that the environmental statement be recommended to Full Council. F/24/497

[Councillor Mrs Carlyon asked that her vote against the motion be recorded.]

f. Hendra car park management report

The Chairman started the discussion in agreement with the reports idea of generating an income to ensure the future of the skatepark. Members concurred it should continue as a car park with the suggestion that the council be able to utilise it in a way to help the community, in particular those that live in the city without any allocated parking spaces. It was accepted that due to its location a 'top rate' can't be charged.

It was proposed by Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Wells, and **RESOLVED** that the administration of Hendra Car Park be bought in-house with annual rates payable, in two tranches if necessary, of £750 for commuters and £500 for residents - evidenced via a council tax bill - prioritising single car households without a current parking space.

F/24/498

g. Regenco – operational matters

It was reported by the Town Clerk that the project was at critical phase and councillors had already committed to the business case, grant funding agreement and structure for delivery. Whilst alternative structures are available, with only sixteen months left to deliver, any change at this point increases the risk of non-delivery. Therefore, the recommendation is to proceed as outlined in this report.

The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk for a briefing given to members previously and confirmed that the structure was set up with legal advice so members should move on from the subject. Members added that this was the only town deal project making progress so wished to record their thanks to the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk added the change to the direct purchase percentage rate meant that TCC no longer had to commit any funds to this portion of the project.

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, and **RESOLVED** that:

F/24/499

It **notes** that given the late start of the project, the delivery window for the New Life for City Buildings project is reducing with 16 months remaining to deliver contracted outputs and outcomes.

F/24/500

It **recommends** that the Truro Regeneration Company CIC (Regenco) continues to operate as a CIC as outlined in the Business Case and Grant Funding Agreement for the New Life for City Buildings project so that delivery of the project can continue without further delay.

F/24/501

It **notes** that as sole shareholder Truro City Council has a number of "controls" it can utilise to direct the work of Regenco should this become necessary and that it will receive a quarterly shareholder report on progress as a formal agenda item so that it can monitor progress.

F/24/502

It **notes** that it has been agreed with the Town Deal Programme Management Office that the grant rate for the direct purchase and refurbishment element of the New Life for City Buildings Project can be increased to 100%, therefore Truro City Council will not have to match fund any of the investments made by Regenco.

F/24/503

h. Town deal project delivery update

A verbal update was given by the Town Clerk on:

1. The first approval in principle grant for NLCB.
2. Current procurement of Boscawen Park duck pond dredging.

F/24/504

3. Upcoming submission of planning permission and procurement of builder for the Community Sports Hub building.
4. The commuted sum to be received for the riverbank stabilisation.
5. Procurement for the improvements to the sports area will begin within the next 3 months.

i. Internal control checks Q2 2024

The internal control checks Q1 was **noted**. Councillors Biscoe and Mrs Carlyon were reminded of their obligation to conduct the Q2 internal audit checks mid-October. F/24/505

9 BANK BALANCES AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, that the bank balances:

Current Account	£387,994
Public Sector Deposit	£562,860
Money Market	£1,850,000,

and schedule of payments are **noted**. F/24/506

10 GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Chairman reported that the following was awarded.

Drama Express	£750
Truro Christmas Primestock and Produce Market	£1000
Steelers Netball Club	£500

Discussions then turned to the need for the sub-committee. With so few applications being decided each meeting, it would reduce the clerk's admin and open up the process to the wider committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Swain, and **RESOLVED** that the Grants Sub-Committee be dissolved. F/24/507

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon, and **RESOLVED** that in accordance with s1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public will be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items by reason of its confidential or special nature. F/24/508

a. Municipal Buildings income generation

The Town Clerk outlined a potential hirer of the space at the Municipal Buildings to generate income as well as giving an update on the requirements to bring the site into a safety compliant state.

It was proposed by Councillor Swain, seconded by Eathorne-Gibbons, and was **noted** that once handed back to Truro City Council there is work required to the Municipal Buildings before it can be used by Truro City Council and/or hired for external use; that the Town Clerk is exploring opportunities to hire out the rooms once it is safe to do so to generate income that will help to cover the running costs of the Municipal Buildings. This may include opportunities for hiring the Town Hall and/or some of the office space for exclusive use for short periods (i.e. no more than 12 months at a time), and that the Accommodation working group be tasked to investigate options for the use of the Municipal Buildings beyond 1st April 2025 and present those recommendations to Full Council by the end of February 2025 for consideration. F/24/509

EXTENSION OF TIME

During discussion of the following item, it was on the proposition of the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Swain and **RESOLVED** that the meeting continue until 10pm to enable the following items to be concluded. F/24/510

- b. **Truro City Council funding for Truro Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officer**
Discussions focused on the role of the ASB officer and the relationship with the Rangers with regard to powers and responsibilities. It was agreed that if TCC does not contribute to the service, it would be lost.

It was proposed by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Southcombe, and it was **RESOLVED** to **note** the report and recommend that Truro City Council signs the Service Level Agreement with Cornwall Council for the provision of an Anti-Social Behaviour Officer for Truro and that funding of £27,280 is provided by Truro City Council to Cornwall Council as its contribution to the costs of the services covered by this Service Level Agreement for the period August 2025 to August 2026.

F/24/511

[Councillor Rabey asked that his vote against the motion be recorded.]

- c. **Devon and Cornwall police hotspot monthly report**
Noted.

F/24/512

12 READMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, and **RESOLVED** to readmit the press and public.

F/24/513

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 14th October 2024. Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons gave apologies for this meeting.

F/24/514

14 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

None.

F/24/515

The meeting closed at 2138.

Chairman