

TRURO CITY COUNCIL



CITY OF TRURO
Town Clerk

Town Clerk's Department
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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARKS AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 17 JUNE 2025 AT 7.00 PM IN THE LARGE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOP FLOOR, TRURO COMMUNITY LIBRARY, PYDAR STREET, TRURO

- PRESENT:** Councillors La Borde (Chairman), Douglas-Martin, Eathorne-Gibbons, Green, Mephram, Rabey, Rich (Deputy Mayor), Southcombe, Tann, Honorary Freeman Wells (Mayor), and Stokes (Vice-Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee).
- APOLOGIES:** None.
- ABSENT:** Councillor Tucker,
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Richard Budge, Parks and Amenities Officer, David Rodda, Town Clerk and Cheryl Simpson, Committee Clerk

Prior to the meeting, the Committee stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect for former Mayor and Councillor Mrs Doris Ansari, who had served both Truro City Council and the former Carrick District and Cornwall County Councils who had recently passed away.

1. COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

PK/25/262

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PK/25/263

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

None.

PK/25/264

4. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parks and Amenities Committee Meeting held on 19 May 2025 were a correct record and signed.

PK/25/265

[At 19:07 Councillor Green entered the meeting room.]

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was proposed by Councillor Southcombe, seconded by Councillor Rabey, and

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Terms of Reference for the Parks and Amenities Committee be adopted.

PK/25/266

6. CORRESPONDENCE

a. **Copy of letter from Kenwyn Parish Council to Cornwall Council Public Rights of Way Team dated 13 May 2025**

PK/25/267

Noted.

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b. Letter dated 1 June from Truro Primary Care Network and Neighbourhood Team seeking to use the old changing room facilities at Boscawen Park for community wellbeing purposes and the setup of Truro Wellness Hub

The Town Clerk reported that there was already a well-being hub behind the Dracaena Centre in Falmouth which targeted people with early-stage physical and mental health symptoms and offered such services as counselling and social prescribing outside of a medical facility. It was planned to replicate such a service at Boscawen Park re-purposing the four old changing rooms. Capital costs would be covered by the local GP Surgeries. At this stage a steer was requested from the Council which did not require any commitment.

A number of points were raised including;

- a. The suitability of the location being away from the City Centre was queried but the Town Clerk reported the situation in green and blue space was preferred by the project leader. The need for a traffic plan was emphasised, particularly in light of the developing bridge project, The Town Clerk noted that payment for taxis and Beryl bike vouchers might be provided for clients by the health service. He acknowledged that while parking was currently difficult this should improve once the car parking order was in operation. Under cover bicycle parking was also suggested. The Town Clerk noted that the small carpark by Truro Cricket Club may be extended in the future.
- b. The Town Clerk noted that referrals would be made by the health service. It was suggested that clients should be able to self-refer also.
- c. It was clarified that the proposed scheme covered the four changing rooms which would no longer be required following the construction of the new Sports Hub facility; the hockey pavilion was to be demolished.
- d. The Town Clerk explained that there could be a minimum ten-year peppercorn rent lease with a five-year break clause and the building would revert back to the Council if the lease ended. The health service would cover the capital and running costs; the Council might need to pay for half the cost of replacing the flat roof which was nearing its end of life as this also covered the Parks Depot Staff facilities,
- e. The issue of safeguarding in respect of Boscawen Park which was very popular with children and families was also raised

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Eathorne-Gibbons, and

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RESOLVED that the Town Clerk continues to investigate the potential use of the old changing rooms for community well-being purposes and the set-up of Truro Wellness Hub by Truro Primary Care Network and Neighbourhood Team including the points raised concerning a travel plan, capital and revenue costs, safeguarding and self-referrals and management of referrals.

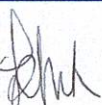
7. **APPLICATION FOR USE**

It was noted that due to timescales the event on 25 May had been approved by the Parks and Amenities Officer under his delegated powers.

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It was proposed by Councillor Rich, seconded by Councillor Rabey, and

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RESOLVED that Truro Evangelical Church be granted permission to hold open air Christian Services at the performance area, Boscawen Park on 22 June, 27 July and 7 September 2025 15:00 – 15:45 (set-up 14:45 – 15:00, pack down 15:45 – 16:00).

8. USE OF BOSCAWEN PARK FOR LANDING HELICOPTERS

A permanent restriction on helicopters landing on Boscawen Park was sought. The Parks and Amenities Officer explained that following a tragic accident at Derriford Hospital in which a member of the public died, the number of helicopters landing had increased from three to four per year to sometimes seven over a weekend.

The helicopters were landing on the field and even the cricket wicket leaving large ruts caused by the weight of the helicopter and the ambulance meeting the helicopter. Damage to the field included compression of the topsoil and damaged clay drainage pipes which could potentially cause accidents to field users; it also created significant extra work to repair by the Parks Team as well as disruption to sporting fixtures.

He had assisted the coastguard helicopter team in investigating alternative landing spots at Newbridge Lane, Newham Quay, New County Hall and Truro Airfield, but to date no suitable alternative had been identified. Proximity to housing was a limiting factor. An alternative location was to land in Falmouth followed by land transport to Truro. Coastguard helicopters were estimated to be between fourteen and sixteen tonnes in weight; however, it was noted that smaller helicopters (e.g. air ambulance helicopters) were considerably lighter at around 3.5 tonnes.

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by the Chairman, and **RESOLVED** that

- (i) no helicopters can land at Boscawen Park from the start of the drainage works and construction works for the new Sports Hub building with the exception of air ambulances due to safety concerns, and
- (ii) helicopter management organisations be suggested to contact Kenwyn Parish Council for alternative landing facilities in the future closer to the hospital.
- (iii) Once the building and drainage work has been completed no large helicopters would be permitted to land on Boscawen Park due to the damage they cause except for the air ambulance if required by users of the park.

PK/25/270

9. THE LEATS SYSTEM

The Parks and Amenities Officer explained that water for the Leats system was extracted from the river at Carvedras. Originally there was a floodgate blocking the river that was manually operated by the Parks team. Following historic flooding in the 1980s and 1990s it was then replaced by an automated system by the Environment Agency. This system was then removed in the early 2000s and the Environment Agency installed a gravity fed system via a pipe running from the depth testing station to a bubble pool located in the Leats below Victoria Gardens. The water in the Leats supplied the water for the City Centre streets, and RAM pump supplying the fishpond at Victoria Gardens. The pump used to pump 10K gallons of water to the top of the fishpond at Victoria Gardens and this would then recirculate back through the water features and back into the Leat. The RAM operated by the weight of water which then pushed the weight of the

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water in the vacuum up hill. So for every 10K gallons it pumped up it expelled 10K gallons back into the River Kenwyn. The pump ceased about eight/nine years ago due to noise and vibration affecting nearby domestic properties after various mitigation measures failed. This was due to the basements of residential properties being transformed into living accommodation.

In the past the Friends of Victoria Gardens had considered a potential project to relocate the RAM from its present location to the grassed area where the bubble pool is located. Alternatively, a secondary pipe was installed by the previous Parks and Amenities Officer, Mr Russell Holden, allowing an electric pump to be used but this proved to be prohibitively expensive to operate on a long-term basis. Currently silt and gravel was blocking the inlet pipe, made worse by fine silt washed down by the recent A30 improvement works. He was currently in contact with Mr Darren Haplin of the Environment Agency regarding unblocking the pipe.

Any water not used by the RAM then runs down the Leat, under the road at Castle Hill, then continues along the Leats where it goes underground at Edwards Street. The water continues on and branches off via a sandbag to supply Pydar Street and goes under the carpark and shops and comes out outside of Boot the Chemist. That water continues on down the Leat and around the Cathedral and then drops underground and returns to the River Allen.

In the Leat where it branches off to Pydar Street it continues on to Coombe Lane where once again a sandbag diverts the water, and any excess continues on and runs back into the River Kenwyn in Victoria Square. The water which goes down Coombe Lane goes underground beside the Body Shop and continues down High Cross and comes out at Kings Street and down through Pearsons Ope which supplies the Leat outside of Mountain Warehouse shop and returns to the river at Quay Street outside the deli shop. There it returns to the River Allen. From Pearsons Ope the water continues down to Cathedral Lane, then goes down to Boscawen Street where it meets a tumble chamber which fills up with water to give enough pressure to push the water across the other side of Boscawen Street underground where it meets a chamber split three ways outside Lloyds Bank. One route of water heads down to Nat West Bank in St Nicholas Street and then returns to the River Kenwyn in Victoria Square. Another route heads across Lower Lemon Street where it heads down past the Municipal Buildings and then goes underground under the Poundland building and returns to Lemon Quay.

Truro City Council is responsible for the Leats from the bubble pool to Castle Street. Cornwall Council is responsible for the Leats system in the City Centre as it also acts as a street drainage system. The Leats system was constructed to act as a street cleansing system for washing down the streets of litter and horse manure but also evidence can be found in Kings Street and Lower Lemon Street of metal eyes set into the granite setts where horses used to be tied up while people went about their business in the City Centre and also acted as a drinking opportunity for horses.

Interruptions to water flow could be caused by rubbish and also by damage caused (e.g. by lorries and buses) to the physical structure of the Leats by driving on the granite Leat setts. The Parks team staff check on a weekly basis the two entrapment points which are located between Castle Street

and Edward Street. Sometimes rubbish gets in the Leat system beyond this point and can block the system such as tin cans and bottles.

At a number of places, the Leats leak into the river Kenwyn which could cause a breach to the pathway and is the City Council's responsibility to fix.; The Leat was last sealed around 2003 by T J Brent who are no longer in business. Cornwall Council was responsible for the footpath. Mr Hocking of Mulberry Slip Engineering undertook some investigative work to seal the leaks.

In terms of refurbishment the Parks and Amenities Officer suggested the blockage required unblocking by the Environment Agency; the catchment table also required raising. Then the City Council could consider repairing the leaks and the potential breach to the river wall. A further step might be to relocate the RAM pump into Victoria Gardens. Signage explaining the purpose of the Leats was also suggested.

The Town Clerk suggested an initial condition survey which listed what organisation was responsible for each area should be drawn up in the first instance. This could also estimate what the repairs would cost for each area so that this can be considered in future budget-setting processes. There was currently a budget for professional fees should this be required and an allocation of capital funding for the Leats in the 2026/27 budget estimate.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Tann, and **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Town Clerk/Parks and Amenities Officer conduct an initial condition survey of the Leats System to establish potential refurbishment costs and report back to the Parks and Amenities Committee at a future meeting.

PK/25/271

10. DISCUSSION ITEM – ORGANIC GARDENING ON THE COUNCIL'S ALLOTMENT SITES

Initially the Committee began to consider encouraging an organic approach to allotment gardening and a potential amendment to the allotment tenancy agreement to encourage the use of these practices on these sites. However, discussion moved on to the definition of 'vermin', the use of rodenticide and the role of the City Council in providing education and guidance to allotment holders.

The Committee decided to bring back the allotment agreement to a future meeting to discuss how best to include vermin control and the encouragement of organic gardening methods.

PK/25/272

**11. WORKING GROUP AND SUB-COMMITTEE
Truro Nature Recovery Forum**

a. It was proposed by Councillor Southcombe, seconded by Councillor Douglas-Martin, and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Truro Nature Recovery Forum be approved.

PK/24/273


b. The minutes of the Truro Nature Recovery Forum meeting held on 29 May 2025 were **noted**.

PK/25/274

12. STANDING ITEMS

a. **Boscawen Park Dredging of Swanpool Update**

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The Parks and Amenities Officer reported that an initial test of a sample of materials from the pond, revealed trace levels of what would be classified as hazardous waste. This sample was thought to be contaminated by material from the old rubbish dump on which Boscawen Park was built. A second sample was commissioned and found to be inert although it contained a high level of organic matter (i.e. leaf litter). Investigations on whether existing waste exemption licenses would permit the dredgings to be spread on the Council's new cemetery fields or on Lord Falmouth's land (subject to agreement and a charge) adjacent to the pond were underway with the alternative option being disposal at a licensed land fill. One company had reviewed the site and, in light of the site and scale of the project (eg the unknown depth of the pond) had offered day rate for extraction of the silt with work starting at the silt trap and working down the pond until the allocated budget ran out. There was a tight deadline for works which if missed would require works to be undertaken in 2026. The report was noted. PK/25/275

b. **Towns Fund Deal Board, Boscawen Park Sports Hub Project Update**

The Town Clerk reported three companies had been shortlisted for the ground drainage project and the Procurement Panel would meet on 20 June to recommend a contractor to undertake the works. The recommendation would be considered by Council at its meeting on 30 June. The work was expected to take two/three months, and the sports fields would be out of action for one football season.

It was reported by the Town Clerk that Fox Construction had been commissioned to build the new sports hub, and officers were currently going through the design with a corresponding reduction in price. Council approval would be sought at its meeting on 30 June with the aim of beginning work by the end of July and finishing by the end of April 2026.

The Parks and Amenities Officer had assisted local football teams in identifying alternative football pitches during the works, but he'd been unable to find an alternative 11v11 pitch.

The Town Clerk noted the project budget was currently about £5.300K and an appropriate communication strategy would also be announced in due course. The report was noted. PK/25/276

c. **Swing Bridge Project Update.**

The Town Clerk reported the Towns Deal Board had met the previous week and the design for the bridge was being reviewed to incorporate a swing bridge. This change may necessitate the submission of a different planning application. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked Councillor Rich for his hard work on this project. The report was noted. PK/25/277

13. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

a. **Parks and Amenities Officer's Report**

The Parks and Amenities Officer reported on a comments (both negative and positive) log which had just been established, and which would be reported to the Committee with his regular report. He noted that there were several negative comments about the

length of grass reflecting that the grass-cutting team were one member of staff down due to long-term sickness and the grass growing quickly during these warm humid conditions.

In addition, the Parks and Amenities Officer advised that a draft memorandum of understanding had been drafted together with the Council's Solicitor for the management of the Enchanted Trail. He agreed to circulate the draft agreement to the Committee for comment prior to reporting back to the next Committee meeting.

The report was **noted**.

PK/25/278

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Monday 7 July 2025 tour and inspection of Parks and Gardens meeting at 6.15pm under the viaduct at Victoria Gardens for a 6.30pm start.
- Tuesday 8 July 2025 Parks and Amenities Committee meeting starting at 7pm.

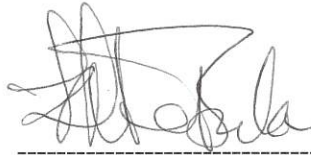
PK/25/279

15. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The items were noted: Pond Policy, Kenwyn Hill Playing Field Sublease Report, Parks Department Service Plan, Padel tennis report, a list of potential areas of land for devolution from Cornwall Council, allotment agreement and rats and organic gardening, memorandum of understanding for the management of the Enchanted Trail, Coosebean.

PK/24/280

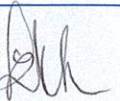
The meeting closed at 21:15.



8/7/25

CHAIRMAN

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