

**MEETING OF TRURO CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021 at 7.00 pm via ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Bert Biscoe), Honorary Freeman Cllr Wells, Councillors Allen, Mrs Callen, Mrs Carlyon, Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, Ellis, Green, Mainwaring-Evans, Mrs Neale, Nolan, Mrs Nolan, Pascoe, Rich, Roden, Ms Southcombe, Mrs Stokes, Mrs Swain, Tamblyn, Mrs Tudor, Vella, Webb and Wilkins.

APOLOGIES: There were no apologies of absence.

Also in Attendance: Roger Gazzard, Town Clerk;
The Dean of Truro, The Very Rev'd Roger Bush (Mayor's Chaplain);
David Harris CC;
John Floyd, The Office for National Statistics;
Nikki Santolamazza and Isabelle Reisner, Administrators
Graham Smith, press
and other members of the public;

PRAYERS

Prior to the formal business of the Council, the Dean of Truro said prayers. After prayers had been given, the Dean left the meeting as he had other engagements.

388 DISCLOSURES OR DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures or declarations of interest.

389 MINUTES OF COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25 January 2021 were taken as read and signed by the Mayor as a correct record with the following comments:

Agendas

It was raised by Councillor Wilkins, and agreed by the Mayor, that it would be useful for the PDF of the Council agenda (and any large Committee agendas) to be numbered sequentially for reading ease.

Healthy Streets Working Group (Minute 339, page 171)

Councillor Allen (Deputy Mayor) commented the resolution was not quite what she read out as her written proposal. The Mayor clarified that the resolution itself was read out by the Town Clerk prior to the vote taking place and therefore the minutes were an accurate reflection of the resolution that was agreed.

390 PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

[N.B. This item was swapped with the above, changing the order of the agenda items, by agreement of the Mayor, as Mr Floyd was not in the meeting at the time of the meeting's commencement]

Mr John Floyd, Census Engagement Manager from The Office for National Statistics, briefly presented to the City Council, and circulated slides relating to changes to the Census this year, including its digitalisation, discussing the importance of collecting accurate data on the population. Notification of the Census would arrive towards the end of the week/start of the next week.

After the presentation, the Mayor thanked Mr Floyd for attending, and Mr Floyd left the meeting.

391 CORNWALL COUNCIL

(i) Highways – Installation of traffic island at Kenwyn Hill

Councillor Harris CC informed Members that Cornwall Council was planning to install a traffic island at the top of Kenwyn Hill near Truro Heights, to improve safety for pedestrians crossing. This was due to take place at the same time as the Quiet Lanes project.

(ii) Truro Development Company

(N.B. Also refer to the Finance & General Purposes Committee (15.02.2021), Minute 396, Page 199 below)

Councillor Harris CC referenced the proposed Truro Development Company (Minute 375, page 188 of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, 15.02.2021), commenting he had seen how similar companies have worked at Cornwall Council, suggesting caution should be exercised in the set-up, and that a Chairman should not be appointed prior to the formation of the company. Directors should be advertised for instead of co-opted.

(iii) Private Housing Rental in Truro

Councillor Rich CC commented he had been approached by several local people who had found it very difficult to get affordable private housing in Truro due to the high costs. Councillor Rich CC had spoken to an estate agent who informed him it was usual to have over 150 applicants for each property, and people outside of Cornwall were offering a year's rent upfront to secure properties, making it very difficult for local people. Cornwall Council did have a legal duty to house people who were unable to find accommodation. However, this could be as far away as Devon, making it impossible to continue school or work in Truro. Councillor Rich CC had been speaking to Cornwall Council, and was finding it hard to explain how widespread this issue was, particularly when emphasis was usually on affordable accommodation (of the social housing) instead of ensuring private rental was affordable too.

(iv) Road Map and local issues – Covid19.

Councillor Nolan commented that though there is now a road map out of lockdown, it was important to note that each tier would only be reached if data showed that improvements to infection levels and mortality rates had been made, and therefore it was important to still only travel if necessary. The enforcement teams would be in place until at least May and had reported encounters with aggressive members of the public harassing those queueing for their vaccinations.

Councillor Mrs Swain asked for advice regarding anti-vaccination stickers littering street furniture, and newsletters and notes from unofficial groups being posted through letterboxes. Councillor Nolan CC replied that it was important to report these incidents to Cornwall Council, and in the case of the stickers, if a location could be provided, these would be removed.

(v) Anti-social Behaviour and Covid19

Councillor Biscoe CC mentioned that people were struggling with this latest lockdown and tempers were short. Anti-social behavioural issues because of lockdown were difficult to resolve, and the City Council was working towards a solution to reopen the public toilets following an assault on a member of cleaning staff. There were also issues around the futures of young people who were entering the job market, and disruption to education was ongoing.

It was confirmed the toilets at Boscawen Park were open and that it was the toilets in the City Centre that had been closed.

(vi) Pydar Street

Councillor Biscoe felt the refusal of the application was detrimental, and it was important to work with officers to get the scheme back on track with a design that worked for everyone. Councillor Roden suggested that City Councillors could compile their ideas for the scheme and present them collectively to Cornwall Council. The Mayor asked the Town Clerk to think about the best way of approaching this.

392 OPEN SESSION FOR THE ELECTORS OF TRURO

There were no questions from the electors of Truro.

393 MAYOR'S VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS

St Piran's Day

The Mayor informed Members there would be a virtual parade on Facebook for St Piran's Day on Friday 5 March 2021, and an activity pack was available by either contacting the page, Truro City Council's Events Co-ordinator, or at Truro Public Library. At 12:30pm there would be an online tea party where people could join in from their own homes via Zoom. The events of the day would also include greetings and best wishes from several dignitaries including the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff of Cornwall, and the Mayor of Truro, amongst others. At 6pm, the Mayor and Town Crier would do a shouting of 'Oggie, Oggie, Oggie' in the main street of Truro, which would be shown virtually via the page. Truro Voice would be printing a supplement. If Members wished for more information, they were asked to either contact the Mayor or the Events Co-ordinator.

394 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

395 QUESTION TIME – WRITTEN QUESTIONS

There were no written questions.

396 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Minutes of the Meetings of the under-mentioned Committees were approved and adopted by the Council, except where otherwise stated:

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

4 FEBRUARY 2021

Proposed by Councillor Webb, seconded by Councillor Pascoe

It was confirmed that Councillor Webb, who would be Chairing the next Planning Committee meeting, to be held on Thursday 4 March 2021 at 7:00pm, would speak about the work of the Truro Conservation Area Advisory Committee, who were a sub-committee to the Planning Committee.

MEETING OF THE PARKS AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

8 FEBRUARY 2021

Proposed by Councillor Ms Southcombe, seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons

Public Conveniences (Minute 357, page 180 of the Parks & Amenities Committee, 08.02.2021)

The Town Clerk was asked whether signage at Boscawen Park could be improved as members of the public were reporting they were finding it difficult to find out where the toilets were.

Boscawen Park Project (Minute 360, page 183 of the Parks & Amenities Committee, 08.02.2021)

Councillor Mrs Neale pointed out she had asked for it to be recorded in the minutes that she was not in favour of the recommendation of the above item as she felt it was too ambitious.

Idless Nursery (Minute 364, page 185 of the Parks & Amenities Committee, 08.02.2021)

The Town Clerk reported that work at Idless Nursery was almost complete, and it would soon be time for the planting to go into the tunnels.

Staffing Structure (Minute 369, page 186 of the Parks & Amenities Committee, 08.02.2021)

It was reported that a report on this matter had gone to the Parks & Amenities Committee and if any Councillor wished to see this report, they could ask for a copy from the Town Clerk or the Parks & Amenities Manager.

MEETING OF THE FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

15 FEBRUARY 2021

Proposed by Honorary Freeman Councillor Wells, seconded by the Mayor.

Truro Development Company (Minute 375, page 188 of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, 15.02.2021)

It was agreed that as it was important that discussion should be as open and transparent as possible, Councillors would strive to stick to the subject of principles on this topic and not discuss individuals.

The Town Clerk gave a brief history of Council discussions about forming a development company, from April 2020, and the agreement at the December 2020 meeting that the Council agreed to own a company. The Town Clerk commented he felt this would benefit the City of Truro and if Councillors were concerned then the creation of the company should be paused until Councillors felt reassured about moving forward.

Councillors discussed concerns regarding appointments to the board of directors as the company had yet to be created, however the Mayor commented any suggestions were to be considered expressions of interest at this stage. There was additional concern about how the formation of the company was being carried out, with the comment that it seemed to be working backwards, which highlighted an urgent need for the company's formation to be planned out, and at the most, individuals could be pencilled into positions as suggestions, but nothing should be set in stone, and the positions should be advertised in the public domain.

Members discussed the merits of having a less formal meeting to discuss concerns (and to include other interested parties) and then the item could go through the usual channels of being discussed formally at the Finance & General Purposes Committee and then at Council again for ratification. It was also mentioned that one City Council representative on the board was not enough, and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should also be on the board in an ex-officio capacity. There was also concern expressed over deferring a decision and running the risk of being out of the loop, instead of voting on an amendment to this meeting from Councillor Roden (that had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting) that asked for an independent appraisal of options open to the City Council and also the possibility of an independent report weighing up the risks and benefits to the City Council of creating and running the company. A request was made for sight of the legal document referred to in the Town Clerk's covering report. It was agreed this would be made available for any informal meeting that was arranged. It was added that linking this with the Truro and Kenwyn Neighbourhood Development Plan would give added weight to the company, which would then be complying with planning legislation at a foundational level.

It was also commented that a separate informal meeting would be useful for Councillors to discuss Pydar Street.

Following the above discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Biscoe (the Mayor) and seconded by Honorary Freeman Councillor Wells that it be

RESOLVED that an informal meeting be held to discuss issues relating to the creation of the Truro Development Company, which

would then be followed by a formal discussion at a later meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and a recommendation made to Council. A separate informal meeting to discuss Pydar Street proposals would take place for the City Council to inform Cornwall Council of its wishes for the development.

Healthy Streets Working Group (Minute 381, pages 192-194 of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, 15.02.2021)

Honorary Freeman Councillor Wells pointed out that this was not a resolved item and the wording at Full Council on 25 January 2021 (Minute 339. Page 171 refers) stated the item would come back to Council to resolve after consultation between the Working Group and its stakeholders.

Members discussed the issue of closing the City Centre, with general comments that this was a good thing during lockdown to allow for socially distanced business in the City Centre, and that this should continue until lockdown ceased, to ensure the best chance at lifting all restrictions.

There was conversation regarding what should happen in the long term, particularly in relation to ensuring ease of access to the buses, along with enough stops throughout the City to provide access for those with mobility issues, should any permanent pedestrianisation of the City Centre occur. Also, consideration should be given to encouraging people to utilise the City Centre, as well as bearing in mind the Climate Emergency Declaration. However, it was agreed the current focus was on making sure the City could operate in a safe and productive manner for the rest of the pandemic.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Nolan, seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons and

RESOLVED that the City Council asks Cornwall Council's Highways Department to reinstate the temporary pedestrianisation that was in place during Lockdown1 during 2020 on the same terms from 12 April 2021, for the period of the Covid emergency.

Councillor Biscoe wished for his name to be recorded as having voted against the above resolution.

Councillor Harris left the meeting at 8:42pm.

397 **COMMITTEE SELECTION**

Following an email advising Councillors that the only Committee vacancy at present was on the Parks & Amenities Committee, it was proposed by the Mayor and

RESOLVED that Councillor Green would sit on the Parks & Amenities Committee for the remainder of the Council year.

398 **FURNISS COAL CHARITY**

Councillor Biscoe (the Mayor) reminded Members that the Furniss Coal Charity had been seeking ways to expand the terms of reference of the charity to offer other methods of fuel besides coal, due to the Climate Emergency Declaration. Advice from an independent solicitor for the Council was that the Council should advise the Charity Commission that the terms of reference were changing and would be implemented by a specific date, and then to go ahead with the changes if there was no response to the contrary.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Biscoe (the Mayor) and

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk writes to the Charity Commission to inform them that upon advice of an independent Solicitor, the terms of reference for the Furniss Coal Charity would be expanded to include alternative fuel to coal.

399 CITY COUNCIL ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

Councillor Webb spoke briefly on his written motion, that following the praise given to the City Council and staff about the successful continuation of running the Council with adaptations due to the pandemic, it was important to have a review to see what worked well and what did not work so well during lockdown to allow for the implementation of new ways of working to continue where successful. Councillor Webb's suggestion was to include all Committees, Councillors, and staff in this assessment, and to collate all the responses into a cohesive document for the Council to consider. Councillor Webb also commented the National and Cornwall Associations for Local Councils were looking at introducing measures such as virtual meetings to allow individual Councils to have an option about how they work.

Councillor Mrs Stokes, who seconded the motion, commented working from home was a successful way of working for many employers and employees, and she felt it was very easy for the Council to revert to previous ways of working without carrying forward the benefits the pandemic has produced in working practices. It was also important to take note of what to avoid should another similar situation occur in the future.

Councillor Biscoe (the Mayor) felt it was important to include the last four years of the previous Council in this work, not just the pandemic, to gain a broader picture of structural or organisational work that may need changing, and felt the conclusions could be written into the business plan for after the next election, when a new Council would be formed.

Members discussed the suggestions, and felt it was important that it was not just management who had input into this but also individual staff, and that this was led from the bottom up instead of the top down. It was also mentioned that it was important the benefits were continued after the cessation of lockdown and not just considered after the next election.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Biscoe (the Mayor) and

RESOLVED that Committees, Councillors, the Town Clerk, Officers and staff of the City Council were invited to review the work of the Council over the last four years, and to consider lessons learned during the Covid emergency, to feed into the new business plan preparation process.

Councillor Mrs Neale abstained from voting on the above resolution.

400 SELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2021/2022

(i) Mayor Elect 2021-2022

The Town Clerk explained the Mayoral Selection process in accordance with Procedural Guidance and called for a proposer and seconder in respect of the nomination of Mayor Elect for the forthcoming Municipal Year. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons and seconded by Councillor Rich that the present Deputy Mayor, Councillor Allen, be nominated.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon and

RESOLVED that the election for the Mayor for 2021/2022 proceed via a

secret ballot, as per Standing Order 9b and Procedural Guidance 1 and 3.

The Council then proceeded to vote by secret ballot via Zoom poll, and Councillor Allen was duly elected with a vote of sixteen votes for and four against.

Councillor Allen thanked members of the Council for their support and electing her to serve as Mayor.

(ii) Deputy Mayor Elect 2021-2022

Members were informed the most senior Councillor who had agreed for his name to go forward for nomination of Deputy Mayor was Councillor Webb.

The Town Clerk then called for a proposer and seconder in respect of the nomination for Deputy Mayor Elect for the forthcoming Municipal Year. It was proposed by Councillor Nolan and seconded by Councillor Tamblyn that Councillor Webb be nominated.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon and

RESOLVED that the election for the Mayor for 2021/2022 proceed via a secret ballot, as per Standing Order 9b and Procedural Guidance 1 and 3.

The Council then proceeded to vote, by secret ballot via Zoom poll, and Councillor Webb was duly elected by a unanimous vote.

Councillor Webb thanked members for their confidence and electing him to serve as Deputy Mayor.

It was therefore proposed by the Mayor that it be

RESOLVED that

- (a) Councillor Allen be invited to accept the office of Mayor of the City of Truro for the Municipal year 2021-2022;
- (b) Councillor Webb be invited to accept the office of Deputy Mayor of the City of Truro for the Municipal Year 2021-2022.

401 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

(Appendix A)

The Town Clerk read out his report, informing Members the Tourist Information Centre would reopen, if all was well, on 12 April 2021, that the café at Boscawen Park had taken its highest ever income the previous week, and that the Public Conveniences staff member who had been assaulted was doing well.

Councillor Roden commented that it was expected that there would be an extension to the legislation allowing virtual meetings of Councils, which would otherwise cease in May. It would be useful for the Town Clerk to join with other Councils and write to the local MP to push for the extension to take place.

It was confirmed that local elections would take place on 6 May 2021.

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

402 TRURO & THE ROSELAND COMMUNITY NETWORK PANEL

Honorary Freeman Councillor Wells reported the Network Panel met on 26 January and there was a presentation from Dr Ruth Goldstein on the pandemic. It was a sobering presentation that reiterated the pandemic was not over yet and it was

important to keep to guidelines until told otherwise. A second presentation was given by Jon Drew, Enforcement Officer at Cornwall Council, who issued a reminder that Councillors could ask for updates on enforcements they knew were ongoing. Councillors briefly discussed enforcement of trees, issues relating to lack of communication between Tree Officers and Enforcement Officers, with the consensus that not enough was being done to protect trees within the area.

403 REPORTS OF MEETINGS OR CONFERENCES ATTENDED

There were no meetings or conferences to report.

404 COMMON SEAL

RESOLVED that the Common Seal be affixed to any document or documents necessary to give effect to the resolutions passed by the Council at this Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9:25pm

MAYOR

Town Clerks Report Council 1st March 2021

Financial Position

I reported to the Finance and General Purposes committee that the accounts to the end of January show a small overspend against the revised budget, but I remain confident of at least a breakeven position at the year end.

COVID Lockdown

We are currently in Lockdown 3 which has once again impacted upon our services, but not as severely as lockdown 1. Staff are working from home where possible, the Library is open on a click and collect basis and the TIC shop is closed. The Boscawen café continues on a take-away basis only. Apart from this our services are open.

The government has now announced the intended timescale to re-open and at present our outdoor sports provision will re-open on the 29th March and the TIC and Library will open again on the 12th April. I am awaiting further information regarding the extent of the re-opening of the library.

Public Conveniences

At the time of writing the City Centre public conveniences have been shut following an incident last weekend. As a responsible employer we need to provide our employees with a safe working environment and we are currently working with the Police and Cornwall Council to achieve this. The public conveniences will re-open as soon as this is achieved.

Towns Deal Board

1 Delivery of Accelerator Projects, (Boscawen Park pavilion, St. Clement St. Day Centre, Mobile Stage, City Centre Infrastructure improvements)

The City Council is responsible for delivery of the above schemes before the end of the financial year.

Infrastructure (£198k)

- New seating and benches (up to 100)
- New cycle racks and storage for 100 bikes
- Parklets, individually designed.

We have come up against a problem of extraordinary long lead times for the supply of some items due to various issues with suppliers relating to covid and have asked for some flexibility in the end date, currently the 31st March.

Mobile Stage (£82k)

- New stage on trailer

- New audio equipment and lighting
- Construction of garage.

The stage has been purchased and delivered and we are assessing the tender for the sound and lighting. The Parks committee has agreed a site for the garage and a planning application is being prepared.

St. Clement Street Day Centre (£110k)

The contractor is on site with a completion date at the end of March. The contract has been delayed from a completion date of the end of February by the discovery of a small amount of asbestos.

Boscawen Park Pavilion contribution (£60k)

Tenders have been received and I am awaiting details from our technical advisors.

2 The Town Deal Board submitted the Town Investment Plan to the government at the end of January. I circulated the document to Councillors We expect to hear from the government at the beginning of April.

Council Elections in May 2021

We are advised that the elections will go ahead in May 2021. The period of purdah will begin on the 22nd March.

Council Meetings

We are awaiting to hear whether the current legislative change to allow Councils to hold virtual meetings will be extended from the current end date in May.

Recommendation

That the report is noted.

Roger Gazzard
Town Clerk