

**REPORT OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE
PARKHOUSE CENTRE, BUDE ON THE 25TH APRIL 2019**

Present: B Willingham (Mayor) – Chair

In attendance: Mr Keith Cornwell (Town Clerk & RFO)

Bude-Stratton Town Council: Cllrs: S Browning, L Deely, B Dixon, T Gibbs, P Kelly, I Mason, L Moores, P Moores, P La Broy, F Partridge, H Partridge, T Philp, P Tilzey, D Towl, N Tucker

Cornwall Council: Cllr P La Broy, D Parsons

Bude Police: Inspector J Morris

Other Attendees: 21 Electors, 1 Press

The Mayor opened the meeting by thanking everyone attending.

1. Apologies

Cllrs J Bryson

2. Minutes: consideration and approval of the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held 26th April 2018

Copies of the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 26th April 2018 had been distributed

Resolved: That the minutes were a true record and they should be signed by the Chair

3. Bude-Stratton Town Council: Report by the Chairman of the meeting regarding the Town Council's achievements and development matters over the past year and projects for the forthcoming year

The Mayor of Bude-Stratton Town Council read a statement:

It's been a privilege to serve as Mayor over the past 12 months for Bude and Stratton.

Every new start likes to stamp their mark and I am happy to say that with Keith Cornwall, Town Clerk, we have proposed a 30 step Learning and Improvement Plan to ensure best working practice and the rationalising of the committees to try make the council as efficient as possible, which have been accepted by the Council.

Overview of 2018/19:

Bude-Stratton Town Council has been especially busy this past year with the absorption and maintenance of some new services previously undertaken by Cornwall Council, in addition to our traditional duties.

One in particular that I am sure you will have heard about is the management of Bude Library and Information Service. I really am delighted that the Town Council has taken on the library; thereby securing its long term future for the people of this parish and others who use this valuable service.

I think Bude can really benefit from having the library under Town Council management as our town now has a greater say over the service. We already have plans to develop more community activities in the library, and in the past month have begun refreshing furnishings and décor to make the building even more inviting.

This is in addition to taking on ownership and maintenance of the Summerleaze and Crooklets beach play areas - and the Town Council are building a new play area from scratch for Summerleaze, which we hope will be ready for the summer season.

We're also expanding the amount of public toilets available in Bude - finalising leases on the three of the main public toilets and also securing the ownership of the closed toilets at Stratton and Poughill (which will need to be refurbished). Unlike many other council-owned toilets, ours are free to use. And we aim to keep them to a high standard; they are cleaned daily by our staff, and we are providing a contact number for the public to message the cleaning operative if there are ever any issues with the toilets. Taking over these assets will mean we can ensure they are fit-for-purpose and designed for our community.

Whilst steps have been taken to reduce budgeted spend in certain areas, office staff costs have been reduced overall. As a result of the continued growth in services delivered by the Town Council, the precept has only slightly increased above inflation - an increase of 3.14%.

In addition these new services, Bude-Stratton Town Council have been busy with their typical duties and have seen progress in many areas.

The Pitch and Putt on Summerleaze Downs has been a big area of work, the Town Council took this facility on and replaced the building in 2018. We're reopening it next month and are currently working on advertising for the facility. We are pleased that we are able to provide another attraction in Bude for both locals and tourists alike.

We have also been busy Bencoolen Play Area, which is now undergoing a complete refurbishment to ensure Bude's main play area is something to be proud of. Including the replanting of five, 1 year old, Monterey Cypress Lutea trees.

You may have seen the facilities team out and about in Bude too, they now have a yellow uniform so you'll know when you see them! They work tirelessly to ensure Bude looks beautiful and tidy. Not only cutting the grass year round, but also working on flower beds and baskets, emptying bins, then of course all of the maintenance required in Town Council owned building that include the Parkhouse Centre, The Castle, Bude Library, and more. They ensure that these buildings can be enjoyed by the community and locals too, throughout the year.

They've also recently installed the new water fountain on The Triangle, which had not been operational in some time. It is looking better than ever in Bude, and it really is thanks to these guys. We have cooperated with Refill Bude to provide a water fountain at the Triangle to reduce the single use plastic bottles etc.

The Town Council office staff have also been doing a brilliant job this year - supporting councillors with their work, keeping the public informed and assisting them with all sorts of enquiries, running the Parkhouse Centre and helping the community into making the most from the building.

As part of ongoing efforts to communicate more effectively with residents, I have set up a Facebook page for the 'Mayor of Bude-Stratton Council' which disseminates information to residents in a more informal and relaxed way than the typical agendas and minutes expected from the Council. The page on average reaches over 10,000 people each week with news from

the Town Council and myself as Mayor, and it is helping us reach and engage with a younger demographic, which is so important for the future of our town. For traditionalists the Bude and Stratton Post have published a monthly article from me, which I thank them for doing.

The Town Council has also created a 'Latest News' page on their website, and is producing a quarterly Town Newsletter - which is available to read in print and online. These both offer the latest news and information about Town Council services and also general goings-on in the town.

We also saw the Bude Heroes Awards last November, an awards ceremony I organised as Mayor to raise awareness of and to celebrate the unsung heroes who do so much for our community. Our town is full of brilliant, selfless people who do so much for others, and the awards ceremony was a fantastic opportunity to recognise and celebrate the efforts of these inspiring individuals, and also a chance for the Town Council to engage with the community.

Did you know, not-for-profit groups operating for the benefit of the community in Bude-Stratton are able to apply for grants from the Town Council? Over the past year, Bude-Stratton Town Council have awarded grants to the following groups: Bude Folk Festival Section, Inner Wheel of Bude Grant, Bude Pilot Gig Club, Connect Bude, Bude Jazz Festival, Bude Carnival, Bude Canal & Harbour Society, Bude Marine Group, Bude Twinning Association, Poughill Village Hall, Bude Town Football Club, Friends of Bude Sea Pool, Bude Boxing Academy, Cornwall International Male Choral Festival, Cornwall Air Ambulance and Cornwall Women's Centre.

There has been quite a lot going on at The Castle, too - in the case you didn't know, The Castle is owned and run by Bude-Stratton Town Council. In December last year, they were awarded full accreditation by Arts Council England. How fantastic for our town to have an accredited museum, and what an attraction for tourists to visit! The Castle also came back with some great wins at The Cornwall Heritage Awards. They won 'Cornish Object of the Year' with their Gurney Stove - an early type of radiator which was invented in the 1800s by Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, the same man who built The Castle. In addition to this fantastic win, The Castle also won the prestigious 'Judge's Special Award', and was praised in two other categories at The Cornwall Heritage Awards.

The 'Judge's Special Award' is given to the project or organisation that merits additional commendation. The judges praised The Castle on a number of elements including: the creative use of space, excellent initiative, great environmental policy, staff commitment and ambition, quality of displays, and everything that has been achieved. Café Limelight was 'Highly Commended' in the 'Environmentally Responsible Award' category for its initiatives in supporting a greener Bude by stamping out single use plastics, increasing recycling, and also focusing on sourcing from local food suppliers. The Castle was also 'Highly Commended' in the 'Innovation Award' category for creating a new temporary exhibition area, which boasts improved security and temperature and humidity monitoring, currently being used for a railway exhibition.

And it looks like these exhibitions are going to get even better. We are delighted to say that The Castle has been chosen alongside four other special museums, to receive funding from Cornwall WAVE - for the creation of virtual, augmented and immersive heritage experiences and engagement activities. £698,000 in total will be shared between the museums - how fantastic. WAVE will benefit local museums and will provide digital training to staff to help them attract new visitors to the area.

What a great year it has been. And we are sure next year will be just as good. Here are some of our plans for the forthcoming year.

At the next Full Council meeting we are hoping to adopt an Environmental Policy to show that we are committed to support the creation of a sustainable community.

The Town Council facilities team are once again getting ready to beautify Bude with their Bude in Bloom initiative, in which the town council prepare and maintain flower baskets for display outside local businesses for a small cost. It really brightens the town for everyone, making Bude an even more stunning place to live or visit.

We're also planning to improve the Parkhouse Centre entrance, in addition to general maintenance and improvements of our community building, ensuring it is fit for purpose for our whole community to make use of.

Personally I would like to see BSTC obtain the permission own/lease the eyesore triangle of land that we have called the Morwenna Triangle opposite the Supermarket at the top of town. There is a desperate need for a safe alighting a boarding area for buses and the rest could be grassed over with seating.

The Town Council is also in the process of reviewing and strengthening the Neighbourhood Development Plan, an essential document which protects the views and rights of local people in the planning process, affording them the opportunity to develop their own ideas about where they live and work. With our experiences we have seen how professional planners are able to bend the words contained within the document, hence we have taken on the task of reviewing it to ensure it is bullet proof. The present NP has actually just stopped the plan for a block estate of 300 houses in Bude! It is critical that the townsfolk support the new NDP.

Over at The Castle, there is loads planned for the year, including Bude Earth Festival - an event dedicated to protecting the planet and its creatures - which has attracted local and national support from environmental groups. There is also the more established Heritage Day, which looks already to be a fantastic event with so much planned - from dog shows, to a bird of prey demonstration, to surf simulators! There is fantastic gallery programme planned for the year too, and an assortment of creative workshops to come along to. There really is always something on at The Castle.

Thank you again for having me as Mayor, I have thoroughly enjoyed this time and I feel privileged to have been able to get so involved with the town and our community. I hope to see our community become more engaged with the Town Council, and to play a greater part in making decisions that affect us all. I hope that in this year I, along with the Councillors, will have been able to make positive change to Bude and Stratton. Thank you.

4. Cornwall Council: Report by Cornwall Council member(s) regarding CC matters relating to the Bude area over the past year

Cllr Peter La Broy In addition to duties on CC Audit Committee and the Economic growth and Development Panel also served on BSTC. Key points of the year: The Beach Play areas and Bude Library had been devolved to the control of BSTC. Work on economic development had continued with a High Street Vitality Panel and the future of the Tirpos building with its new owners. Improvements to the Triangle (Blanchminster Square) as the central focal point of the town. The future of Compass Pont will need consideration as it is at risk.

Cllr David Parsons: Spoke of his return to Cornwall Council and how over the passage of time local services has been centralised to the Unitary Authority. He welcomed the return of some services through the localism process. He reported that cross boarder work had been undertaken between Cornwall and Devon in order to secure new ways of working at Stratton Minor Injuries Unit, better NHS apps to promote availability.

Small grants were still available through Cornwall Councils Community Chest Scheme.

The importance of Bude Canal as a heritage and tourist asset was being recognised after a period of neglect and he was working to secure the improvements required to bring it up to standard.

5. Bude Police: Report by a representative from Bude Police Station regarding policing matters relating to Bude

Inspector Julian Morris made a report: A long-time resident of Bude, Inspector Morris is responsible for the whole North Cornwall area. He spoke of the challenges policing such a large area with a team of limited resources and a custody centre forty miles away. Crime figures had reduced by 1.6% in 2017/18. Areas of focus were: County Lines, which has been found in Cornwall, Modern Day Slavery, Child exploitation and travelling criminals. Community intelligence in reporting out of the ordinary was an important resource for the police. Mental Health and people in crises was also an increase call on police services.

The Police were fully aware of antisocial behaviour and criminal damage issues and were using banning orders and dispersal powers over defined periods. The use of Criminal Behaviour Orders was also being explored for targeted cases.

The use of the xanax drug was also of a growing concern and he was talking to schools about the issue.

6. Questions – time permitting

Questions were asked in relation to:

- Litter bins and it was confirmed that Cornwall Council bins are dual use for litter and dog waste.
- Play areas in the new housing estate – for which Bovis are responsible for providing.
- CCTV – which was a community initiative staffed by volunteers
- Public toilets- where it was confirmed that Crooklets would remain open.
- It was noted that recycling rates in Cornwall were lowish but higher in Bude-Stratton at 33.4%. Cornwall Council were due to introduce a new refuse collection procedure.
- The role of Bude Coastal Community Team was highlighted in the long term economic development of the area.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15 pm

Signed.....Dated.....