

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE PARKHOUSE CENTRE, BUDE ON THE 28TH APRIL 2022

Present: Cllr Amanda Tame (Mayor) – Chair

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

Bude-Stratton Town Council: Cllrs: Simon Bellamy, Alex Bluett, Simon Browning, Lorraine Corrigan-Turner, Sian Dearing, Martin Dorey, Katie Goode, Peter La Broy, Tom O’Sullivan, Philippa Purchase, Paul Tilzey

Cornwall Council: Cllrs: Nicky Chopak, Peter La Broy, Shone Tilbey

Bude Police: Inspector Dan Harvey

Other Attendees: 10 Electors

The Mayor opened the meeting by thanking everyone attending.

1. Apologies

Cllr Celli Moriarty, Jacky Diffey, Tony Gibbs, Mike Dawe

2. Minutes: consideration and approval of the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held 29th April 2021

Copies of the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 29th April 2021 had been distributed

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

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

Bude

Inspector Dan Harvey gave an overview of the numbers of police officers working out of the Bude response hub (10 plus 1 CID) and estimated the likely timespan for the recent government funding increase to put extra officers on the ground as being three years.

National crime stats put the Bude area as the third safest place to live in the country and whilst crime figures had increased significantly - 90% this was in comparison with the previous lockdown year’s figures. The pattern of crimes had also changed along with the different social behaviours.

Locally the police have been working to reduce Anti-social Behaviour and have had some success in the Castle grounds, though some of the issues have moved to the dunes. Work will continue on setting up a youth club with Bude Voices and improve the CCTV coverage.

Questions were raised on reporting ABS, CCTV coverage and the use of electric scooters – which are not legal on local roads or pavements.

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

The Mayor gave the following statement:

I'll talk a little about what the Town Council been up to over the last year and what we have coming up. We will be hearing from Cornwall Councillors Peter LaBroy, Sean Tilbey and Nicky Chopak, as well as our Police Sector Inspector Dan Harvey. Some of our Lead Councillors will also give updates alongside a meet the councillor session at the end.

In May last year BSTC saw the largest number for many years of new councillors elected. Lots of new faces has meant lots of new ideas and changes and I'd be lying if I said it's been plain sailing, but I'm very hopeful that the positives are coming to fruition. As a Council it's so important to evolve and try new processes, and to always be looking to do things in a better way. Behind the scenes Cllrs have been doing a huge amount of work in their lead areas, which although is not reflected in our list of resolutions deserves recognition and thanks from me.

We changed Standing Orders (which are the rules we follow) with the intention of making meetings a little less formal, accessible to all, with more opportunities for the public to participate and to speak for longer. As Chair I don't require you to stand when you speak or wear a suit, just that we debate constructively and above all else, really listen to each other and the community.

We've settled on a mixture of Committees and Forums (which is a more flexible version of a committee). The Planning Committee expertly chaired by Cllr Tony Gibbs has given that all-important local voice to planning decisions. Our Oversight Committee chaired wonderfully by Cllr Philippa Purchase has been able to monitor progress and act as that key link between us and our brilliant teams at the Library, Castle and Facilities.

Another internal process to change has been the very-welcomed revisions to the Grants Policy. This includes scrapping the previous £200 limit as well as increasing the total amount available with the goal of making a real difference to groups locally.

Over time we have increased our communications with the community as well, this has meant bringing in an extra member of staff – Cal – you're fabulous, thank you! - to get our information out there in as many ways as possible and to field all the feedback – both good and bad are valuable to us. We now stream and record our meetings and have implemented a plan of Consultations. We have already hugely benefited from the information gathered in the Downs Consultation and whilst it wasn't a referendum it WAS a big step forward in the right direction. I believe a better informed Council is a positive thing.

It led to us officially changing the use of the Pitch and Putt building to that of a Community use, we extended the Pearl Exchange lease for another year, voted to keep Dogs on the Downs as they were before and also voted down the idea for a cycle path in that area. The Council also voted to move the Skate Park project to the next phase.

Another public consultation was carried out following the sad loss of our Triangle Tree, between Oversight Committee and Facilities Manager Steve Hayes we are now in touch with local artists, wood smiths and even a local Men's Shed type charity to ensure the tree is used as the community wishes.

One very positive thing to happen last year was that 2021 saw Bude's very first Pride event thanks to a team run by Sammy James, I'm both honoured and ecstatic that this has happened during my time here, a big step forward for diversity and inclusion that I know means a huge amount to members of our community, so thank you to our Lead Cllr Sian Dearing for ensuring we give the well deserved support that is so needed.

Last year also saw the Gorsedh finally held in Bude after a two year covid delay, it was absolutely incredible to see and hear Cornish Language and heritage honoured by so many. I expect my speech in Cornish curled a few toes but I felt privileged to be able to take part! It was all held on our very own Castle lawn, which since the pandemic has opened up with wonderful programs of music, events and weddings. Huge thanks and acknowledgement to Mark Berridge, Janine King and their new events officer Luna at the Castle for all their hard work. There are of course many staff working hard behind the scenes to keep things running so well, I would like to also give a special mention to the team of volunteers behind our accredited museum. There are over 10,000 items in the archives which they help expertly enter and oversee.

As a Council we took ownership of Bude Library a few years ago, voting to scrap the late book return charges more recently. I'm so pleased we still have this because what an asset it is, not just about the books (which are obviously fantastic), it's the many community and school holiday events they also run.

Our Facilities Team as I'm sure you'd all agree, do a fantastic job of keeping the Bude-Stratton area looking beautiful. From the day to day tasks come rain or shine, to the bigger things – I know that repairs after our Triangle Tree came down were extensive yet carried out so efficiently. They also keep the four public toilets we took over from Cornwall council open and running all year round, plus they reopened the facility at Poughill and will shortly be reopening a toilet at Stratton.

An ongoing project is The Storm Tower. I've thanked our Projects Manager Frankie before, but the sheer weight and complexity of her work on it in this last year certainly warrants another thanks. I hope it's been at least as rewarding as it has been frustrating, we are all very hopeful that over the coming months all permissions will finally have been granted to us so that the long awaited next stage can get under way.

In the last couple of years we have seen unprecedented change country-wide within the housing market and living costs. Cllr Peter La Broy has liaised with local families which have found themselves in the terrible position of homelessness, we recognise completely the challenges being faced and declared a Housing Emergency last year. This was shared with all other Councils in Cornwall (some of whom followed suit) as well as Central Government to put pressure on and raise the profile of the problems. We are currently working closely with Cornwall Council on a Housing needs assessment for the Bude-Stratton area which will give both us and them a better idea of the current use and needs locally, guiding our next steps.

Lastly but by no means least, the Council continues to work to its Environmental Policy with plans to employ an Energy and Carbon Officer to enable us to reach our aim of being Carbon Neutral by 2030. We have welcomed two public-use electric cars and general charging points here outside the Parkhouse as well as multiple bike racks locally knowing the importance of using cars less.

I'd like to mention some upcoming events - very exciting to see the Gurney Inventors competition and workshops at The Castle with Discovery 42, the literary festival in May not to mention The Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June, of which I know Mark and Luna are busily planning. Over at The Parkhouse we are working with the Primary Care Network's Cancer care coordinator so they can set up a much-needed support network for Cancer patients locally, something I know this area has always missed out on previously.

You'll be pleased to hear me say finally – but very importantly I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone in the office. Keith our Town Clerk is an incredible support and essential balanced voice that keeps us all on the right path.

5. Cornwall Council: Report by Cornwall Council members regarding CC matters relating to the Bude area over the past year

Cllr P La Broy

Outlined three priority areas he'd been working on:

Homes and Housing – recognised by Cornwall Council which has declared a Housing Crisis and developed a four point plan to address; homelessness and rough sleeping; the availability of local homes; affordable homes; achieving housing targets. These would take time to deliver but CC is already planning to build 41 affordable homes in Bude and looking at a site for temporary emergency housing. The joint work on the Housing Needs survey would also need a good community response in order to help the right housing being delivered in the future.

Local economy and jobs – which would reduce poverty in the community. Cllr La Broy has worked with the Bude Coastal Community and Town Team. Improvements to the town centre remained important and making more provision for cyclists and pedestrians were also important. Joint work between the Bude Area Tourist Board and the Town Council to deliver events such as Feb Fest were also a good sign of partnership working.

Heritage assets – The Storm Tower project had proven far more complex than first envisaged but with the funding secured from the community, both councils and the National Lottery, it is hoped that the move will be undertaken next year. CC had completed the work on the Lock gates which were now fully operational. The Breakwater required further works and he was working to secure the funding.

Cllr Nicky Chopak

A part of Bude-Stratton fell into the 8 ½ Parishes in the Cllrs area. She sat on the Health and Social Care Committee and the Cross Boarder Health Group and would continue to press for the services at Stratton Hospital. The £15m overspend on social care was noted.

She also sat on the Police and Crime Commission Panel and monitored police resources. Also the Cross Boarder Multiuse trail between Bude and Holsworthy, which has been a long running ambition.

She thanked the community for its support during the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

Cllr Shorne Tilbey

Was just completing his first year as a Cornwall Councillor and thanked his fellow CC Cllrs for their support. Had worked on the Police and Crime Commission, Health and Social Care committee and the Children's Scrutiny Panel. Locally had worked on housing issues, planning enforcement, road traffic orders and local road improvements – alongside the Town Council's Cllr Katie Goode.

6. Town Council Lead Cllrs

Cllr Katie Goode – Transport and Connectivity

As the lead for Transport and connectivity, I focus on the public's daily experiences of getting from A to B. I also have a keen interest in telecommunications infrastructure and usage.

I'm looking for the visiting car driver, the electric car driver, walkers, parents with pushchairs, toddlers on their scooters and wheelchair users.

As pretty much all of the transport structure is outside of the control of this Town Council and is in the hands of Cornwall Council, Go Cornwall, Stagecoach, GWR and Government- most of the position is growing relationships between those shareholders and lobbying for change.

I've been reporting out to the public any consultation requested by CC on roads to ensure that as many residents and workers in the area get their say. It's actually refreshing to sit in the review meetings after those consultations and hear local resident's feedback actually being directly actioned on.

I've collated a long list of issues, requests and observations around the area. I document and help build evidence and small reports which result in positive change. There's two changes that I would like to highlight this year.

With my persistence and documentation of the problem, there will now be a new bus stop and footpath created on the opposite side of Sainsbury's -ensuring that the stop will be visible to the public, accessible to wheelchair users, and much safer for all walking around that land. Cornwall Council reported to me that they hope to get that work done Q4 this year.

And the second, Bush has been suffering from some serious car accidents relating to speed, with damage to both property and vehicle occupants. This was on a road without any footpath outside resident's homes too. This issue was raised by the public. Their evidence enabled my report to be exceptionally detailed. It's amazing to see the issue now being taken seriously with changes to the road being moved onto the next step of approval.

Big scale planning for the future - I'm supporting Connect Bude and attended the opening of the Dartmoor line. There's a lot of work to get rail to Bude, even a lot in just trying to get express buses to the mainline, but there's tangible steps now being made. I really want to thank Connect Bude and their partners for their incredible dedication, work and perseverance.

And as for digital connectivity - I've been building some great relationships with local ISPs and digital creatives, exploring some exciting opportunities which I hope will not only enable the Bude area to keep up, but compete and excel digitally. Enabling the area to be better connected and open up new economic development possibilities.

I've also been reviewing and supporting an update to technology with our own Town Council too. Moving closer to ensuring the public have online access to quality streams, seeing how to improve communication, and quality of digital life improvements for all.

In terms of next steps -

For the rest of this year I would like to try and get more road and path issues noted from outside of Bude center. There's much more to the area than just this town, so I need to do some outreach to more residents outside of Bude.

But there are two key areas I wish to improve on next year:

First is that I would like to document and make transparent the process of how you, as the public, can get local road improvements. Everything feels a bit "bitty", just not clear, so I'll like to help clarify that in some way.

Second, the internal issue tracker for road and path improvements I've made is useful, but I want a public one. I want a member of the public to be able to submit an issue and for them to be able to see what's going to be happening and when. I want them to feel listened to, their time and knowledge respected, and for them to feel secure knowing exactly when they can expect to get around the area safely.

That's all my report for now. Thank you to the public for all their issues raised and the responses to consultations, as things can only change with your input. I'm looking forward to seeing some of the transport issues raised to start to get resolved! Thank you

Cllr Philippa Purchase – Environment and Climate Change

Bude-Stratton Town Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019 and commissioned a carbon audit which provided recommendations on how the council could achieve its aim of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Over 2020 and 2021 Officers of the council, primarily the Facilities Manager Steve Hayes and Keith, the Town Clerk, have been working through the recommendations and carrying out those that were readily doable. So the electricity provider has been changed to a green provider, a "No Mow May" approach has been brought in for certain areas of the town, LED lighting is being installed across the estate, battery operated tools are replacing petrol ones, the use of peat-based compost has been eliminated and many more actions have been taken.

The council has also agreed to recruit an Energy and Carbon Officer in order to step up the pace of the changes needed to achieve our net zero aim. And in order to support this person when they have been recruited, we have agreed to set up an Environment and Climate Change Forum which will start meeting next month.

I am very much hoping that the forum will act as a catalyst for the achievement of the carbon audit recommendations and also the implementation of our environmental policy.

On a personal level, I've been very busy with Bude Friends of the Earth gardening in the community orchard and at the Crescent car park, plus tree planting to help offset the carbon emissions of the World Surf Kayaking event being held in September.

I've also been working with Transition Bude to run a local shopping event and to give a vegetable plant to all school children in the area, and we are currently planning a community fridge project which will distribute surplus food to the community. And I've also been working with the Bude Climate Partnership helping to shape the national lottery bid which aims to help the town achieve net zero carbon by 2030 as well.

Please do feel free to have a chat or send me an email if you have any thoughts or concerns about the environment or climate change around Bude or if you'd like to be involved in any of the work currently underway by the council or local environmental groups.

7. Questions – time permitting

Questions were asked about the cost of the triangle tree removal; a microphone system for the hall; and the availability of a printed newsletter.

The Mayor thanked the public and Cllrs for attending the Annual Town Meeting and said Cllrs would be available to meet after the meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.10pm

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