

MINUTES OF PENZANCE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING held in The Guildhall, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Thursday 14th December 2006 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor D.J. Axford (Town Mayor)
Councillor F. Granger (Deputy Town Mayor)

Councillors S. Bennett
R. Clark
M.R. Cotton
C.A. Dennis (Arrived at 7.15 pm)
M. Freeman
J.S. Lambourn
R.M. Lawrence
J.F. Moreland
K.L.W. Perry
S.J. Reed
P.C.H. Rendle
J. Ruhrmund

63. **PRAYERS**

The Council's Chaplain, Reverend Julyan Drew, offered prayers.

64. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors J.H. Dixon, R.A. Mann, A.J. Richings and C.A.C. White.

65. **RESOLUTION TO VARY THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

It was

RESOLVED: that the item on the H.M. Revenue and Customs building be brought forward in the order of business.

66. **H.M. REVENUE AND CUSTOMS - REDUCTION IN STAFFING**

Mrs. Nikki James, a representative of H.M. Revenue & Customs staff based at the Penlowarth Building in Penzance, had contacted the Town Clerk to request the opportunity to give a short presentation on the future of the office.

Councillor Axford and Councillor Rendle both declared prejudicial interests in this matter and retired from the meeting during the presentation and debate

Mrs. James informed members that an announcement had been made on the 16th November that there was to be a review of staffing levels reducing the number of staff from 60 down to 30. A further review would take place in July 2008.

Mrs. James was thanked for attending the meeting.

Members were dismayed to hear of the possibility of reducing the number of staff at the Penlowarth office. The presentation showed that it would be possible for more work to be taken on in the office rather than reducing levels

It was

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk write to the Paymaster General expressing the disappointment at the loss of jobs and the impact it would have on the economy. The letter would also seek to increase the number of jobs given that the office has the capacity to take more work.

67. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the following meetings:-

- (a) Full Town Council - 13th November 2006;
- (b) Special Council Meeting - 20th November 2006;

having been circulated, it was

RESOLVED: that they be signed as true and correct records.

68. TO DEAL WITH BUSINESS EXPRESSLY REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE

The Town Clerk advised that there were no items to report under this heading.

69. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor advised that he would be holding his Christmas Drinks at the Pirates Rugby Club on Monday 18th December at 7.00 pm.

70. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 24

The Town Clerk advised that no such questions had been received.

71. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

- (a) **General Purposes Committee - 4th December 2006**
 - (i) Links between Kisoro, Uganda and Penzance Town Council (Minute 53(k))

A representative to act as link-person who would be prepared to communicate with the Kisoro was required and it was

RESOLVED: that Councillor S.J. Reed should be appointed.

(ii) Correspondence re. Toilet Provision (Minute 53 (m))

Councillor Freeman referred to the above minute and it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Council thanks Councillor Hudson Smith for his investigation into the state of the public conveniences in Penzance but cannot agree that they are 'generally satisfactory'.

The Town Council wished to register its total dissatisfaction at the state of toilet facilities, given that this was a tourist area, and requests that Penwith District Council considers the Town Council's original request to provide one state of the art public convenience, preferably manned, when the budget allows.

(iii) Health Matters (Minute 56)

Councillor Cotton reported from the Mayor's Parlour Campaign Team meeting he had attended that due to the previous Primary Care Trust 'Question Time' event not being advertised until the day it was due to be held, there would be a further event taking place on Monday the 8th January 2007.

Notice had been received from Andrew George MP that an All Parliamentary Debate on health would be held in Westminster on Tuesday 16th January and, it was hoped that the Mayor's Parlour Campaign Team would arrange for the people of Cornwall to attend the rally by providing bus travel. It was hoped that there would be an opportunity for campaigners to speak at the debate. More details would be forwarded to members when they were available.

The Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Cornwall County Council are due to meet on Tuesday the 30th January to receive the report from the Primary Care Trust with regard to the situation of healthcare in Cornwall.

Buses would be provided by both the League of Friends of West Cornwall Hospital and Healthwatch to take people to Truro to protest outside County Hall and again more details would be sent to councillors when received.

Finally, Councillor Cotton reported that papers continued to arrive from external groups which showed that the statements for Turnaround revealed that the debt of the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust is now reaching £59 million.

Councillor Cotton was thanked for his report and it was

RESOLVED: to note the report.

(iv) Isles of Scilly Route Partnership (Minute 57(b))

Councillor Clark questioned whether the information promised by Cornwall County Council had been received but the Town Clerk regretted to advise that it was not yet to hand and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

(v) Process re. Local Complaint (Minute 58(b))

Councillor Dennis declared a prejudicial interest having direct involvement in the issue under discussion, and retired from the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised that a letter had been sent to the Chief Executive of the District Council to organise a meeting between the Town Mayor, Chief Executive and Town Clerk and a reply was awaited and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

(vi) Local Government White Paper (Minute 60)

The Town Clerk reported that Councillor Granger, Councillor Rendle and himself had attended a presentation on the above at Tremough, Penryn on the 13th December.

At the time of the presentation there appeared to be a slight divide between the Unitary Authority option and the Pathfinder option ie. Cornwall County Council proposals and District Council proposals. The proposals also included the setting up of 16 Local Community Networks.

When the plans have been submitted only 8 of the bids put forward would be chosen by the Government to be implemented. There were also concerns raised with regard to the number of elected representatives which was the major stumbling block to agreement ie. 82 County Councillors in the Unitary proposal with the potential to lose 249 District Council representatives countywide.

It was

RESOLVED: that an Informal Meeting should take place on the 8th January 2007 as a public meeting, with a Special Town Council Meeting on the 15th January. The Executive Summary document links would also be put on to the Town Council website.

The Town Clerk to send any information to councillors as it arrives.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(b) **Penlee House and Park Committee - 5th December 2006**

(i) Rain it Raineth - Use of Image (Minute 25 (h))

Councillors agreed that the use of this image in an altered state was unacceptable. Norman Garstin had presented the painting to the town as a gift, and the alteration of its image for use in publicity material of any kind was seen as inappropriate.

Councillors were also concerned that it would risk offending existing and potential donors, thus jeopardising future gifts to the Town of this type.

It was, therefore,

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk write to Andrew George, MP to inform him that the council could not accede to the request.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(c) **Planning Committee - 23rd November 2006**

(i) **Abbey Warehouse - Concerns re. Security and Vandalism (Minute 45(a))**

The Town Clerk reported that a reply to his letter had been received from the Conservation and Design Officer at Penwith District Council who would now contact Mango Homes asking them to carry out the necessary work to make the building secure.

With regard to letters to other agencies, replies are still awaited.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(d) **Planning Committee - 6th December 2006**

(i) **South West Regional Spatial Strategy (Minute 50(a))**

The Town Clerk reported that it would not be possible to join Penwith District Council in presenting joint representation on responses to the Examination in Public. A letter of protest has been sent to the Government Office South West asking for reconsideration that the matters raised by the council be considered by the Panel.

Subject to the above, it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

(e) **Finance/Property Committee - 7th December 2006**

(i) **West Cornwall CCTV (Minute 27(a))**

The Town Clerk had been requested further information from Penwith District Council but it had not arrived in time for the meeting so the matter was now deferred to the January cycle of meetings. It was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

(ii) Golowan (Minute 27(d))

Councillor Clark provided a resumé of the position regarding Golowan Community Arts and concluded with the following:-

“The preferred option, which was supported by this council, was to establish a new legal entity. However, it has rapidly become apparent that to focus on doing so in the limited time available would detract from the objective it was meant to facilitate, which is the delivery of the Festival; and whilst in the latter half of next year we would wish to consider in detail the matter of a new legal entity, the immediate way forward is for the Town Council to take the lead in accepting responsibility for attempting to ensure that there is a Festival in 2007.”

It was therefore

RESOLVED: that the Town Council appeals for volunteers to write to the Town Clerk, expressing their support, and indicating practical ways in which they could assist with the delivery of the Festival.

It would then be hoped that in the new year, the Town Council would be in a position to record and acknowledge every offer of help that had been forthcoming, and that it would be possible to draw together a compact committee of volunteers which would be supported by professional administrative assistance funded by the council.

It was acknowledged that what was most special about the Festival was its diverse community involvement where the roles of spectator and participant were interchangeable.

In Golowan, everybody had a role to play. The Town Council working against the clock, could only succeed with the wholehearted support of the community it sought to serve.

(iii) Financial Position (Minute 28)

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Councillor Cotton, provided a summary of the proposed revisions to the current year's budget, and the proposed estimates in respect of 2007/2008, and thanked each of the four standing committees for their careful consideration of their budgets and he noted that each committee had recommended approval of the figures which gave rise to a precept requirement in the sum of £407,990.00, representing a rise of 3.559 per cent on the previous year.

Councillor Cotton referred to the fact that this figure took account of the estimated wage settlement for the ensuing year, a further percentage point rise in the employer's contribution to the Superannuation Fund.

The Chairman reminded members that there would also be the requirement for funding of the CCTV system to be added to this figure if the council were to support the provision.

As this matter was being considered at the next cycle of meetings, it was

RESOLVED: that the revised estimates for the current year and the proposed estimates

for 2007/2008 be confirmed, as stated above and debate on the CCTV issue would be considered at the next Town Council Meeting on the 5th February 2007.

Subject to the above it was

RESOLVED: to adopt the report.

72. **CLOSURE OF THE DRIVING TEST CENTRE, PENZANCE**

The Town Clerk advised of a letter received from a local driving instructor regarding the closure of the Penzance Driving Test Centre.

Members were concerned at the loss of yet another facility in Penzance and it was

RESOLVED: to write to the appropriate authorities deploring the decision to relocate to Redruth and demanding the retention of the Penzance facility.

Town Mayor
5th February 2007