

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING held in
Committee Room No. 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Monday 30th June 2008
at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor J Ruhmund (Chairman)

Councillors R Clark
CA Dennis
M Freeman
RM Lawrence (left at 9:50pm)
M Lovegrove
JF Moreland
D Nebesnuick
KLW Perry (left at 8:00pm)
PCH. Rendle
H Worth (left at 9:45pm)

Also present: Inspector Chris Strickland, Penzance Police
Mr Barry Turnbull, Senior Environmental Health Officer, PDC
Mr Phil Peters, Chairman, Morrab Road Association

Inspector Strickland provided a brief report on the activities of the police over the preceding Golowan weekend that, on the whole, went well although several arrests were made late Saturday evening and two further serious incidents took place in other parts of the town which were not related to the Golowan Festival.

Inspector Strickland would welcome meetings that were on a more informal basis than his reports to the Council and felt that two way discussions about specific issues would be more beneficial. Unfortunately, Inspector Strickland would be moving to Camborne sometime within the next few weeks but he had already briefed his replacement, Mark Eccles, who would also welcome informal discussions.

Inspector Strickland then extended his thanks to the Council for the support he had received during his time in Penzance and the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Inspector Strickland in turn for all his efforts and he left the meeting.

Mr Peters informed members that Morrab Road Association is a newly formed organisation that has raised concerns about the use of a property in Morrab Road owned by PAS and leased out to Charles Terence Estates.

Charles Terence Estates concern themselves with accommodation for young singles whose lifestyle makes it very difficult for them to find suitable housing.

A recent meeting of the Morrab Road Association had been well attended and concerns had also been expressed about plans for a further property in Morrab Road that had recently been purchased by PAS. Mr Peters informed members that 26 properties within the Penzance parish had now either been purchased or were on line to be purchased by PAS and that conversion into hostels appeared to be going ahead without the need for planning consent.

Mr Turnbull then spoke and provided a short summary on the 'PAS' scheme and the work they are carrying out in conjunction with Charles Terence Estates. The scheme had been running for 18-19 months and was aimed at providing suitable housing for a variety of vulnerable groups, including those with addiction problems. All the conversions had been carried out to a high standard but it was recognised that current operational problems were due to a lack of funding. A full report on the activities of the group was currently in production and should be ready by the end of July.

With regard to Morrab Road, Mr Turnbull informed members that the newly acquired premises would be let to Adult Social Care to house adults with learning difficulties. He was aware that there had been problems in relation to the existing property and that there had been complaints about noise from visitors and residents alike. It could be possible to change the client base in the premises but this would require more funding, as would 24 hour supervision.

Concerns in other areas of Penzance had also been raised, specifically a house in Alma Terrace, although this would be let to Adult Social Care as above, and a property in Treneere Road operated by Stonhams where there had been complaints about the noise caused by visitors gathering outside the building to smoke.

The overall aim of the scheme was to comply with government targets that required the reduction of the number of 'chaotics' housed in bed and breakfast accommodation and to produce a life-changing environment to facilitate the removal of dependency on drugs and alcohol. Penzance had been targeted for this housing scheme as it was seen as the town most in need of this assistance.

Mr Turnbull then answered questions from Committee members and Councillor Perry raised concerns over the operation of a Stonhams facility in Heamoor that required better management.

Members in general were very concerned that the Town Council had not been informed about the activities of Charles Terence Estates and the lack of consultation at any stage of the developments. A request was made that the Town Council be supplied with a detailed report from Penwith District Council explaining PDC's responsibilities and providing clarification of the remit of Charles Terence Estates. A list of all the sub-let properties within the parish including the nature of the client base was requested and Mr Turnbull agreed to provide this information for councillors in confidence, pending approval of PDC, and also a detailed report that could be taken forward for further discussion at the full Town Council meeting on 14th July.

The chairman thanked Mr Turnbull for his time and presentation and he left the meeting. Mr Peters stayed for the remainder of the business of the meeting.

14. **APOLOGIES**

Councillor RA Mann.

15. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lawrence declared a personal interest in Minute 17 (c) – Senior Life Skills Exhibition.

Councillors Rendle and Ruhmund declared a prejudicial interest in Minutes 17 (g) and (k) – Penzance HM Revenue & Customs Office closure/Proposed closure of ‘Penlowarth’, and left the meeting during these discussions.

Councillor Lawrence declared a personal interest in Minute 23 - ‘One Cornwall’.

16. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19TH MAY 2008**

Having been circulated, it was

RESOLVED: that they should be signed as a true and correct record.

17. **REPORT OF TOWN CLERK**

(a) **Morrab Road Association – report from Councillor Freeman**

This item, having been dealt with during the presentation by Mr Turnbull it was

RECOMMENDED: that the matter be taken forward for further consideration at full Council, pending a written report from Mr Turnbull.

(b) **Destination Great Britain**

Information had been received from ‘RTL Games’ regarding a new board game entitled ‘Destination’ which entailed players travelling by taxi to various destinations and the company was inviting various towns, cities and locations to be included in the game for promotional purposes.

The cost of inclusion ranged from £2,000 to £15,000 depending on the level of participation and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(c) **Penwith Senior Life Skills Exhibition – “Information & Inspiration for the over 60’s”**

An invitation had been received for members to attend the Penwith Senior Life Skills Exhibition taking place on Tuesday 8th July between 10.00am and 3.00pm in St John’s Hall and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(d) **Correspondence re planned waste incinerator in St Dennis**

Correspondence had been received from Matthew Taylor MP requesting the Town Council’s support in the campaign for a public inquiry into the planned waste incinerator in St. Dennis.

Concerns had been raised that the proposal contradicts regional planning guidance that waste should be dealt with in close proximity to its source in order to minimise the environmental and economic costs. If the incinerator is opened, over a hundred huge waste vehicles would be travelling to and from the incinerator from all over Cornwall six days a week.

Members felt that more background information about the planning application was required and it was

RECOMMENDED: that more information about the application should be sourced and the matter taken forward to full Council for further consideration.

(e) **Invitation to participate in the British Library Web Archiving Programme**

An invitation had been received from the British Library for the Town Council's website to be archived as part of a joint initiative between the British Library and the National Archives aimed at the long term preservation and accessibility of online central and local government information. This service would be at no extra cost to the Town Council and the information would be preserved in perpetuity.

It was

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Council should agree to take part in the archive initiative.

(f) **Town Council Elections 2009**

Following discussions at the last General Purposes Committee meeting, Councillor Nebesnick raised the point that if the Town Council's elections are held on any day other than that on which the Unitary Authority elections are held, the full cost of the election would fall to the Town Council and this was estimated at £17,800 by Penwith District Council.

It was recognised that the wording of the resolution made at the meeting of the Council on 4th February 2008 could be misleading and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the wording of the resolution be hereby clarified to show that "ordinary date" is defined as "the date on which unitary authority elections are held".

(g) **Penzance HM Revenue and Customs Office closure**

Councillors Rendle and Ruhmund left the meeting and Councillor Clark took the Chair.

Correspondence had been received from the Director of the Workforce Change Programme at HM Revenue and Customs outlining the proposals regarding the planned closure of the HMRC Office based in 'Penlowarth' building in Penzance and requesting feedback and comments by Friday 25th July 2008.

Further correspondence had been received from the Chair of the Public and Commercial Services Union at the HMRC in Penlowarth asking the Town Council to support the campaign to preserve the office in Penzance by lobbying the local MP and signing the online petition and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Council should write to Andrew George MP confirming the Council's support for the retention of the Penzance office and should also write to the relevant authority requesting the use of a local telephone number to replace the current '0845' central number.

(h) Attendance at meetings

Councillor Rendle expressed concerns over the poor attendance record at Committee and Council meetings of some members and the untimely submission of apologies to the office that sometimes led to meetings being inquorate. It was also pointed out that if a member was due to present a report to a meeting and was unable to attend, advance notice would enable another member to present the report in their stead and it was

RECOMMENDED: Councillor Rendle's proposal be copied to all members and the matter be taken forward for further consideration at full Council.

(i) Beach Management

A letter had been received from the Beach and Pools Manager at Penwith District Council in response to the Town Council's request that all aspects of beach management be dealt with by one department. It was pointed out that, due to the imminent move to a Unitary Authority, it was unlikely that PDC would be in a position to make any departmental changes prior to the changeover but assurance was given that the relevant departments worked closely together and communicated regularly to provide an effective service.

It was

RECOMMENDED: that PDC should be asked to make this suggestion to the Unitary Authority and that the Town Council should submit a similar request.

(j) CALC General meeting – Charters and Community Networks

The Clerk reported that notification had been received of a General Meeting of CALC on Tuesday 29th July at 7pm in New County Hall, Truro and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(k) Proposed closure of 'Penlowarth'

This item was dealt with under (g) above.

(l) Penwith Radio

Penwith Radio, a local station run by volunteers in conjunction with the Older People's Forum had provided two roving reporters to interview people on the street over the Mazey weekend and Councillor Lawrence informed members that the station would shortly be moving into new premises at the Wharfside and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted and that further information about the radio station be requested.

(m) Street cleaning and locking of public conveniences

Concerns had been raised by visitors to the town and members about the general untidiness of the streets and back lanes and about an ongoing problem with fly-tipping. It was suggested that direct contact with a street cleaner (via mobile phone) for emergency access would be very useful and it was

RECOMMENDED: that a letter be sent to PDC expressing the concerns of the Council about the general state of street cleaning and requesting a response before the full Council meeting on 14th July.

A response had been received from PDC regarding the locking up times of local public conveniences advising that the facilities at Alexandra Road and Wherrytown were closing at 6pm following attempts to leave them open until 10pm that had been foiled by repeated acts of vandalism and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the police be contacted and asked if they could provide extra patrols in the vicinity of the two problem areas.

(n) Information from CALC re Quality Status

Information regarding accreditation timelines for submission of Quality Status applications had been received from CALC and it was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

(o) Digital Television Switchover

The Clerk reported that a newsletter containing information about the forthcoming switchover to digital television and also details of a roadshow travelling through the West Country over the coming months were available from the office for anyone who wished to have more details.

Councillor Nebesnuick informed members that the switchover in West Cornwall was planned for July/August 2009 which was in the height of the tourist season and would cause considerable problems for guest house/hotel owners who would have to re-programme all their televisions and it was

RECOMMENDED: that a letter be sent to the relevant authority requesting a change of switchover time to a quieter period of the year.

(p) Information re BT's proposal to re-align payphone provision to meet consumer demand

Information had been received from BT about the proposed reduction in the number of public payphones in Penwith that included the loss of one at Tregavarah, Penzance and one in Sheffield, Paul, Penzance.

It was pointed out that Penwith is a deprived area and that this could have an impact on those residents who do not have their own telephone and also that in many areas of the parish mobile phone reception is very sporadic and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the matter be taken forward to full Council for further discussion.

(q) CCTV System – invitation to Interest Group Meeting

The next meeting of the CCTV Interest Group would take place on Friday 4th July and the minutes of the previous meeting would be copied out to all members for information.

The Quarter Four report for the year 2007-2008 was distributed to all councillors and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (r) List of Circulars Received (See Appendix “A”)

It was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

- (s) Reports from Outside Bodies (see Appendix “B”)

There were no reports from outside bodies and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the item be left open for full Council.

- (t) Cornwall Festival of Cycling

Notification had been received of a ‘festival of cycling’ event that would take place on the Harbour Car Park on 12th July and that was aimed at promoting cycling, health and fitness and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (u) Guide to the Sustainable Communities Act

A copy of this guide was available from the Town Clerk’s office for anyone who wished to view it and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (v) Sustainable Community Strategy for Cornwall

The Town Council’s response to the above consultation document and comments submitted by Councillor Nebesnick had been distributed prior to the meeting and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (w) Invitation to Westminster Briefing Third Sector Conference 2008

The Westminster Briefing Third Sector Conference – “A Thriving and Independent Third Sector: New Opportunities and New Challenges” would take place on 12th November 2008 in Westminster and further details were available for anyone wishing to attend and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (x) Western Power Distribution Business Plan

The Western Power Distribution Business Plan had been distributed to all members prior to the meeting and no comments were forthcoming and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(y) **Police Matters:**

(i) **Message from the Chief Constable**

An email from the Chief Constable of Devon & Cornwall Police was distributed to all members and a list of all local policing area points of contact was available for anyone who wished to receive a copy and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(ii) **Town Council relationship with local Police Force**

Councillor Lovegrove informed members of the successful efforts made by the Roscadghill Residents Association to improve contact with PHA and the local police force resulting in a closer, more informal relationship that corresponded with Inspector Strickland's request relating to the police relationship with the Town Council and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(iii) **PACT – Minutes of meeting on 8th May and invitation to meeting on 3rd July**

The next meeting of PACT would take place on 3rd July and the minutes of the meeting that took place on 8th May were available for anyone who wished to have sight of them and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

18. **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The committee considered its finances to 30th April 2008 and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position (see Appendix 'A').

19. **STREET TRADING APPLICATIONS**

(a) **Golowan Festival 2008 – application to trade at Mann's Field and Wherrytown Boating Lake on 29th June 2008**

The Clerk informed members that Penwith District Council had approved the application by the Town Council for stalls to trade at Mann's Field and Wherrytown Boating Lake on Quay Fair Day and it was

RESOLVED: that the position be noted.

20. **LICENSING**

(a) **Report on Licensing and Police Meeting held on 27th May 2008**

A written report of the above meeting was distributed to all members present and it was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

21. **HEALTH MATTERS**

- (a) Removal of upper gastrointestinal cancer surgery from Cornwall

It was

RECOMMENDED: that this item be deferred to full Council and that the document prepared for the recent public meeting be copied out to all members along with Councillor Lawrence's letter on this subject.

22. **REGENERATION MATTERS**

- (a) Visit to Abbey Warehouse and latest information on THI Scheme

A visit to Abbey Warehouse was still pending and would most likely take place in the evening due to the health and safety issue of visitors viewing the building during the day whilst the builders were still at work and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the THI progress report be copied out to all members for information.

- (b) Draft Marine Bill

A reminder of the deadline for submitting responses to the Draft Marine Bill had been received and, the Council having already responded, it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

- (c) Promenade Penzance and Sea Change Fund

Correspondence had been received from PDC regarding the promenade and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the report on the promenade included in the minutes of the Social, Economic and Environment Committee meeting should be copied out to all members and that Andy Davies, Regeneration Manager at PDC, should be invited to attend the full Council meeting on 14th July.

23. **ONE CORNWALL**

- (a) One Cornwall Newsletter Issue 9 – end of May 2008

The newsletter, having been circulated to all members prior to the meeting, it was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

- (b) One Cornwall Promotional Trailer and Team Visit

The One Cornwall Team was proposing to visit Penzance for a second visit with the information trailer but a definite date had not yet been advised and

It was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(c) Letter from the Boundary Committee re Electoral Review of Cornwall

The Town Council had already submitted its views concerning the electoral review and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the matter be taken forward to full Council with the recommendation that the Council's position be reiterated and that a firm response with regard to the lack of clarification about the way forward be formulated.

(d) Letter from CALC re Electoral Review

CALC's response to the Electoral Review had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting and it was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

(e) New Unitary Logo

Notification of the new logo to be used by the Unitary Authority had been received and it was

RECOMMENDED: that a letter of complaint be sent to the Implementation Executive regarding the lack of consultation on the design of the new logo.

(f) Report from the first meeting of the Town Council's 'One Cornwall' Sub-Committee

Councillor Clark provided a brief update on the discussions at the recent meeting of the 'One Cornwall' sub-committee that had resulted in the request that the Town Clerk pursue the meeting previously proposed by Jim McKenna for himself, Sally Newby and representatives of the Town Council to address the core issues that were still outstanding and to demand that the Implementation Executive provide reasons for this lack of response.

The agenda for forthcoming meetings of the sub-committee would be copied out to all Councillors to enable members to provide input on any given subject and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

24. Standing Items - Education

Councillor Nebesnick had requested that a standing item 'Education' be added to the agenda of the General Purposes Committee meetings and it was

RECOMMENDED: that this be taken forward to full Council for discussion.

25. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Clerk reported that a review of the standing orders and financial regulations was an ongoing process that would continue through the summer recess and be reported back to the Committee during the September cycle of meetings and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted and that members be able to participate in the review of the standing orders.

The time having reached 10:00pm, it was

RESOLVED: to suspend standing orders to allow the final business of the meeting to be discussed.

Note re Minute 17.(q) CCTV System (revisited for clarity with the consent of the Chairman)

Councillor Dennis had requested that an amendment to the discussions held earlier in the meeting be made, following a short perusal of the minutes of the last meeting of the CCTV Group.

Concerns were raised over the content of these minutes with regard to the timetable of events and the legal process where it appeared that the Town Council, as a partner in the scheme, had been omitted from the tendering process and it was

RESOLVED: that PDC be asked to clarify the timetable and legal process as a matter of urgency.

10.10pm

Chairman
15th September 2008