

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING OF HELSTON
HELD AT THE METHODIST CHURCH HALL,
COINAGEHALL STREET, HELSTON
ON WEDNESDAY 12TH APRIL 2017 AT 7.00 P.M.

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PRESENT: Councillor Mrs G A Geer (Town Mayor) in the Chair

Helston Town Councillors:

R Williams	M H Thomas	T E Grattan-Kane
R J L Boase	J Martin	P E Williams
Mrs F N E Boase	D J Potter	Rev. D P Reed

Cornwall Councillors:

Mrs J A Haycock

Residents:

Mr D E Adams	A Lewis	Mr G Williams
Mr J Buchanan	Freeman I D Perry	Freeman R Williams
Ms A Hearn	Mr L Spicer	Mrs S Williams
Ms J Hornsby	L Turner	
Mr S Hole	Mrs G Williams	

Representatives of Organisations:

Ms T Gleadowe – Cornubian Arts & Science Trust
Mr R Middleton – Helston Athletic Youth Football Club
Mr R Belton – Helston Railway Preservation Society

In Attendance:

Mr C Dawson (Town Clerk)
Miss P J Lavelle (Deputy Town Clerk)
Miss R Cook (Administrative Assistant)
Mr M Searle (Town Centre Regeneration Officer)

1. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Mrs Boase, and

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the last Annual Town Meeting held on 14th April 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

2. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented a resume of the affairs of the town during the preceding twelve months and made special reference to:

- (a) The voluntary work carried out in the town, from the Town Councillors who gave their time to benefit the town, to the contributions made by the Helston in Bloom Committee, the Helston Christmas Lights Committee, the Flora Day Association and the volunteers of the many other social groups within the town;

- (b) The work of the Events Group which was working to create and encourage a programme of events within the town and was hoping to have at least one major public event per month;
- (c) The public realm works which had transformed the area around the Grylls Monument and Bowling Green making a welcoming area in the town centre that everyone could be proud of;
- (d) The works to the Guildhall to carry out maintenance and to clean the granite façade;
- (e) Work on a new, fit for purpose building at Helston Community College which was due to start shortly as the funding required had been secured;
- (f) The work to refurbish the library building which when complete would also accommodate the Cornwall Council One Stop Shop and Jobcentre Plus confirming that the amalgamation would result in the library opening for longer hours than it currently operated;
- (g) The housing developments around Helston as a result of new housing quotas which were not to everyone's tastes but were welcomed by those without homes and those who could see the enhanced prosperity of an enlarged town;
- (h) the new director at Helston Museum whom she welcomed and hoped to see even more growth in that institution;
- (i) The CCTV cameras in Helston which were working well and were part of a joint Town Council initiative for West Cornwall;
- (j) Her disappointment that the Town Council elections were uncontested. She then expressed her thanks to Councillors A R Harrison and P E Williams who were retiring in May and welcomed Mr R F Edgcumbe who would be joining the Council from May;
- (k) Cornwall Councillor Mrs Haycock who was standing down in May, expressing her thanks for all she had done for the town, and wished those well who were standing in the Cornwall Council elections; and
- (l) RNAS Culdrose (HMS Seahawk) who would be holding the Freedom Parade in June.

The Mayor concluded her report by thanking Helston Town Council's staff for all their work, and in particular the Town Clerk for obtaining the Quality Gold Award from the National Association of Local Councils and for his work with the Helston & the Lizard Works Project which was awarded NALC Project of the Year runner-up for 2016.

3. CHARITY ACCOUNTS: TREVENEN EXHIBITION

The Town Clerk reported details of the Accounts of the Trevenen Exhibition Charity which showed balances on the 31st March 2017 of £5,662.65 representing £4,248.28 in shares currently held and £1,414.37 in the Charity's bank account.

The Town Clerk advised that the current recipient, Mr R Yung, had been selected in May 2016 and received £140 per year.

4. REPORT ON THE DOWNSLAND TRUST

Councillor T E Grattan-Kane, Chairman of the Helston Downsland Trust, outlined the history of the charity and gave a brief report on the activities of the Trust advising that the charity had been founded to aid the poor of the community.

The Charity had awarded £23,000 in grants during the past year and he particularly highlighted a grant to the Memory Café enabling members to go on an annual trip and a small grant to support a 13 year old cricketer who had been selected to represent Cornwall schools on an U13 tour to South Africa. Councillor Grattan-Kane further advised that the Trust had agreed to provide financial support to the South Kerrier Alliance for the management of Coronation Park and had provided Flambards with a longer term lease on the Trust's land at Gay's Hill.

5. TOWN AFFAIRS

A member of the public expressed concern that there were insufficient toilet facilities in the town on Flora Day and queried if the Business Rates charge had been reduced for the new toilets at Monument Walk. He also expressed concerns that vehicles would not be permitted to park in front of the Monument to use the toilets at Monument Walk. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Business Rates bill had not yet been received but advised that he expected it to be a third of the cost of the previous toilets. The Town Clerk further advised that there would be double yellow lines directly in front of the Monument but there would be no change to the road markings at the bottom end of Coinagehall Street and people needing to use the Monument Walk toilets could still park there.

A representative of Helston Christmas Lights expressed his thanks for the Town Council's grant of £10,000 and advised that the funding had enabled them to provide new lighting displays and to carry out some stress testing of fixing points in Coinagehall Street. He advised that the Committee only had £29 in its account after the year's expenditure and urgently needed more funding. He then outlined costs for the following year for further stress testing, replacement of support wires due to changes in legislation and insurance for the events. Councillor Potter queried the reduction in contributions from businesses and expressed the opinion that businesses should contribute more, although he did appreciate that the Christmas lights did not benefit all businesses. The representative of Helston Christmas Lights advised that many businesses did support the lights and whilst often this was through sponsorship it was sometimes in other ways such as providing refreshments to the volunteers whilst erecting the lights.

In response to a question from a member of the public Cornwall Councillor Mrs Haycock advised that the library building would be closing temporarily whilst refurbishment works were carried out but during this time the library service would be relocated to the One Stop Shop. She advised that the library would only be able to stock 1000 books but it would be possible to order books and the complete run of summer activities would still take place. Councillor Mrs Haycock advised that the refurbishment works would not be increasing the footprint of the building but would be using office and garage space at the rear which was not currently utilised.

A member of the public expressed concern regarding parking issues in Wendron Street and Penrose Road advising that people parked in this area to go to work. He requested that the Council take action to resolve the problem and suggested the provision of residents parking. Cornwall Councillor Mrs Haycock advised that if Cornwall Council were to provide residents parking in Helston it would be for a larger area not just one street. She advised that Cornwall Council was carrying out a trial in seven towns in Cornwall and would review the results of these schemes before considering other towns. Councillor Mrs Haycock advised that residents parking schemes were expensive and were not popular as many residents were not happy to pay when there was no guarantee of a space outside of their property.

Councillor Potter expressed the opinion that there was a parking problem in Helston, as with many towns, and advised that he was investigating the option of parking which was free at point of use before presenting his findings to the Town Council. He confirmed that the cost of the parking would need to be covered somehow as Cornwall Council would need to be reimbursed for the loss of parking revenue. Cornwall Councillor Mrs Haycock advised that Cornwall Council paid Business Rates on the car parks and so had to charge a fee to cover the costs. She further advised that the car park in Trengrouse Way was covered by covenants which meant the area had to be used for short stay parking. A member of the public suggested increasing the length of the free on-street parking to encourage more people into the town. Cornwall Councillor Mrs Haycock advised that it had been kept at half an hour to create a turnover of customers. A detailed debate then ensued during which parking examples in other towns was discussed and it was suggested that businesses reimburse parking charges and the option of a park and ride scheme be reconsidered.

A member of the public queried if there were plans to promote Helston as a historic town to the wider area as people outside of Helston did not appreciate how good Helston was. The Mayor advised that the Visit Helston website was high on search engines and the Flora Day streaming went worldwide. She expressed the opinion that physically finding Helston could be difficult as the signage was poor but this could only be rectified by Cornwall Council. The member of the public then suggested that a Tourist Information Centre be incorporated in the museum. Cornwall Councillor Mrs Haycock advised that the Museum was a tourist information point and was identified online and on town maps but it was not possible to have a brown tourism sign as it did not have a car park for 150 cars. The member of the public then suggested that markets should be encouraged in the town. The Mayor advised that she would like to hold markets in the town but market organisers often did not find Helston suitable. She advised that when the Town Council took over management of the Monument Walk area she would like to see a market held there. Councillor Grattan-Kane advised that a number of events were currently being organised which included the Guitar Festival, Harvest Fair and a cycling event. He confirmed that the aim was to have an event every month and the Marketing & Events Co-ordinator was working hard promoting the town, and encouraged people to let her know details of any events they were organising. The Mayor advised that the Town Council was trying to do what it could to promote the town and improve the appearance of the area advising that she was hoping to upgrade the town centre pavements.

6. PRESENTATIONS FROM ORGANISATIONS

Presentations were made by the following organisations that had received financial support from the Town Council over the past year:

- Cornubian Arts & Science Trust
- Helston Athletic Youth Football Club
- Helston Railway Preservation Society

The Town Clerk read reports submitted by the following organisations that were unable to attend the meeting:

- Helston Cricket Club
- Helston & District Town Twinning Association
- Shelter Cornwall

The Meeting closed at 8.21pm

Confirmed

Town Mayor