

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Property Committee of St Ives Town Council
held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 28 June 2023**

Present:

Councillors: J Tiddy, M Gleadow, M Mallool Wright, M King, A Riddell, C Smith, P Pope (ex officio)

In attendance:

Town Clerk: M Price

Democratic Officer: A Childs

Facilities Manager: T White

St Ivo Work Experience: B Wood

The Chairman introduced Ben Wood, who is a student at St Ivo School and will be completing work experience at St Ives Town Council between 26-30 June 2023.

PR12.00 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor P Hussain and Councillor M Burke (both personal).

PR13.00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PR14.00 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillor J Kerr, who also serves as a director of the St Ives Corn Exchange, discussed the historically good relationship between the Corn Exchange and St Ives Town Councillors. She feels this understanding has been lost, and emphasised that the Corn Exchange is an affordable community facility owned by the Town Council. She encouraged this fact to be taken into consideration when there are any decisions to be made about the building.

Former councillor Nick Dibben wished to speak about the Corn Exchange lease (Agenda Item PR21.00). He acknowledged that there are new councillors sitting on the Council and wished to provide some historical information and context (pre-Covid). Due to the national lockdown and the ceasing of certain public operations there were some issues that did not get resolved. There were proposals about the lease dating back to November 2019 but nothing was formally agreed and various issues arose surrounding St Ives Town Council and the Corn Exchange CIC. The basic principle is that the Town Council is the landlord and looks over the original building, whilst the Corn Exchange staff oversee the daily operations. He provided an example of air conditioning, which he stated should be the Town Council's responsibility. There were previous conversations in the past that the Town Council might wish to allocate a portion of its maintenance budget for the CIC directly to the Corn Exchange. He stated that he did not believe that subject was formally concluded. He hoped this provided some useful background information to the members of the Committee.

The Chairman thanked both Councillor J Kerr and Mr Dibben for their comments.

PR15.00 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Property Committee meeting held on 24 May 2023 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PR16.00 MAINTENANCE UPDATES

PR16.01 General Property and Maintenance Update

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

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PR16.02 Property Maintenance Schedules

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

PR17.00 BUDGET

Councillor M King queried the rental of the old depot that is located off Broad Leas Cemetery. She asked whether the contents stored inside were still needed and whether the items are in good condition. The Town Clerk responded that the Grounds Maintenance Team can complete an inventory check and will report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: that the budget report be received and noted.

the Town Clerk and Facilities Manager will instruct the Grounds Maintenance Team to complete an inventory check of the stored items in the depot building.

PR18.00 INTRUDER ALARMS**PR 18.01 Ground Maintenance Building**

The Facilities Manager provided a verbal report to the Committee and stated that the intruder alarm of the Grounds Maintenance Building does not match the requirements stated by the insurance provider. There are currently no trigger points on the doors themselves which is a concern. Following conversations with the insurance provider, Zurich, the Facilities Manager stated we need to meet the basic requirements and thus the intruder alarm needs to be addressed.

Councillor M Gleadow queried how this has come to light, whether the contract had come to an end or if the insurance company has stated it needs to be improved. The Facilities Manager replied that this has come from the insurance company and ensuring all alarms are up to date with no issues going forward.

Councillor M King queried if he has looked at prices of a replacement. The Facilities Manager confirmed this. The Chairman noted that the costs should be presented at a subsequent meeting, and that all Committee members should be invited to go to the site to examine the alarm and building.

Councillor M Gleadow asked if Crime Prevention or the Police are able to provide any advice on how to protect the buildings or to rely on the insurance company's guidance. The Town Clerk stated that this could be investigated, but that the insurance company's requirements and regulations must be met in order to ensure insurance coverage.

Councillor A Riddell queried what Zurich Insurance have advised to be done and suggested the possibility of a monitored system. The Facilities Manager replied that in the quotes and all the information that has been gathered thus far, it is possible to have a monitored system. If certain elements aren't covered, the insurance providers could exclude part of the Town Council's buildings. Councillor A Riddell stated that from a cost/benefit point of view and looking at the Town Hall, it could be possible to bring the intruder systems together as under one estate and not two separate entities (a dual system). This could reduce insurance cost, maintenance and pricing.

The Town Clerk asked Councillor A Riddell if he could provide him with a brief on one example site of what that might look like so a similar arrangement could be investigated.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

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that the Facilities Manager present intruder alarm replacement quotes to the next Property Committee meeting.

that the Facilities Manager arrange a site visit for Committee members to examine the building and its current alarm system.

Councillor A Riddell to provide an example brief to the Town Clerk and Facilities Manager on a dual system arrangement (internal correspondence will be adequate).

PR 18.02

Town Hall

The Facilities Manager provided a verbal report to the Committee on a proposed intruder alarm system for the Town Hall building, as well as panic buttons for staff in case of emergencies. This pertains to potential lone workers in the office or tenants who may be working early or late outside of regular office hours. The Facilities Manager stressed that this is only an intruder alarm and not a wider CCTV system.

Councillor A Riddell stated that in his experience of panic alarms they are generally not linked to the intruder alarms – they go directly to the Police. The Facilities Manager mentioned that the intruder alarms would sound off to show that there was an issue in the building. Councillor A Riddell asked if it could be heard far away from a distance. The Facilities Manager replied affirmatively, the notion being that it would be attached to the outside of the building. Councillor A Riddell questioned whether this would be effective, would members of the public know what the alarm meant and recognise someone was in danger. He suggested a potential black box system with two buttons, if both buttons were pressed at the same time the Police would be notified to come to the site. The Facilities Manager replied that could be added to the system, although this arrangement (police visitation) could add to the cost. He added that it could be possible to link it all together.

Councillor P Pope queried if there is a need for this and what caused it to be raised as an issue. Councillor J Tiddy replied that the Town Hall is a government building and therefore security is an important factor. Councillor A Riddell added that the insurance provider has said it needs to happen.

The Town Clerk stated that following a report from Zurich, there is a duty of care and the current system will need improvement. They require certain bases to be covered. Historically the current arrangement was fine, but now the Town Council is missing quite a few points on their report and have been flagged as requiring attention. The Town Clerk suggested there could be buttons located around the Town Hall building or on personal staff lanyards. He stressed that the Council have been advised these changes need to be made now.

The Chairman pointed out that the Council is different from businesses, in that we may make decisions that anger the public and there is potential for staff harassment or endangerment.

Councillor M Gleadow stated this could be looked at from a few different angles. He stated that if members of the public come in and are abusive to staff, there should be an alarm mechanism so someone else further into the building could come and offer support. He also stated that lone worker risk assessments are required and asked if those were available. The Facilities Manager replied that these are available for Town Hall office staff and the building's tenants. Councillor P Pope mentioned that the front door is normally closed in the situation of a lone worker in the Town Hall office.

The Town Clerk stated that he has a duty of care in his role to himself, his team, councillors and tenants. He stated that we will look at reports and we will need to have something, or else we will not be able to work without. Councillor P Pope agreed with this, and asked for some figures and for the Town Clerk and Facilities Manager to report back in a future meeting.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

that the Facilities Manager provide quotes of different security options from different companies and to report back to the next Committee meeting.

PR19.00

FIRE ALARM – TOWN HALL

The Facilities Manager provided a verbal report to the Committee on the installation of the new fire alarm system at the Town Hall. The current system was discussed in a previous meeting and is not adequate. It cannot be heard on the second and third floor of the building nor in the cellar; the decibal rating is too low. The proposal would be to bring it up to spec, and contain a decibal range that would be audible in every section of the Town Hall. This would need to be done to ensure the insurance provider's future coverage of the Town Council and its buildings.

The Chairman asked when the current insurance coverage expires. The Facilities Manager replied it expires at the end of March 2024, so all of these updates must be done by that date at the very latest. The Chairman asked for figures, to which the Town Clerk responded that in today's meeting the point is to stress the timeline and the need. Councillor A Riddell proposed a delegation to the Town Clerk to make arrangements for the work to be done; to examine costs for the management and installation of the fire alarm as part of the three quote procurement process.

Following Councillor A Riddell's request the Chairman responded that the existing process should remain in place (quotes and report to Committee for approval). This was seconded by Councillor M King. There was a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

that the Facilities Manager provide a minimum of three quotes for the fire alarm replacement at the Town Hall at the next Property Committee meeting.

PR20.00

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the Meeting.

PR21.00

ST IVES CORN EXCHANGE LEASE

The Chairman stated that since the Town Clerk came into his post they have been reviewing the leases of all the Council-owned buildings, such as the St Ives Corn Exchange.

Councillor J Tiddy noted that a few years ago there was some dispute between the Town Council and the Corn Exchange. As The Town Hall is an integral part of St Ives and the Corn Exchange relies on the Town Hall; it is important to maintain an amicable relationship between the two.

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The Chairman asked the Committee whether the Town Clerk and Facilities Manager proceed looking through all the leases and this item be added to the agenda of a future Full Council meeting.

Councillor A Riddell questioned if there were any figures on how much the Town Council spends on the Corn Exchange annually. The Corn Exchange roof is currently being repaired, and the Council will have to justify to residents why an increase to the precept is required. He stated that he supports the Corn Exchange but suggested it might be more beneficial for them to become more financially independent.

The Chairman noted that the Corn Exchange do not pay rent, but charge the Town Council a fee to hire space. Councillor M King mentioned that the costs being paid by the Town Council will not be continuous; at this moment repair works are required due to the age of the building and stated this is currently just a phase of specific maintenance. Councillor J Tiddy stated that the Council are the landlords of the building and are repairing its building; he believes the Corn Exchange are reasonably self-sufficient.

Councillor A Riddell stressed a need to see the figures as he originally stated. The Town Clerk agreed that the financial records will be provided to the councillors.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

that the Town Clerk and Facilities Manager continue their review of all leases and their findings be added to the agenda of a future Full Council meeting.

that the financial records of Corn Exchange maintenance be provided to the Committee at a subsequent meeting.

PR22.00

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PORTACABIN REPORT

The Facilities Manager discussed the material covered in his written report on the portacabin updates, including containers and mezzanine deck removal.

The mezzanine deck is not able to carry its load safely and must be removed. It contains toilet facilities and a break out room underneath, as well as a storage area.

Part of this proposal is to install a twenty foot portacabin outside the Grounds Maintenance building. This would allow for removal of the mezzanine deck and leave the toilet in its current position; whilst allowing space for the break out room and a small office area for the Site Supervisor to conduct meetings in. The portacabin would be linked to the main building for CCTV and electrical purposes.

Councillor M Gleadow posed a query about funding for the cabin installation costs. The Town Clerk replied it would come from the Repairs and Renewals budget; additional funds were put into this budget as this was an expected and anticipated cost. It falls well within the budget for the current financial year.

Councillor A Riddell queried the location of the portacabin and it was confirmed it would be by the depot up near the allotments. The Chairman proposed that the cabins be purchased for a cost of £8,650 and was seconded by Councillor J Tiddy. The majority of the Committee voted in favour of this proposal, with one abstained vote from Councillor A Riddell.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

that the Facilities Manager complete the purchase of the portacabins for a cost of £8,650.

PR23.00**TOWN HALL CELLAR**

The Town Clerk discussed the independent survey report on the cellar of the Town Hall, and stated that the report reveals the poor condition of the cellar. The joists are free from the wall and this must be made compliant at a minimum.

Councillor P Pope questioned whether the cellar space could be renovated to become usable office space; the Facilities Manager responded that this would not be feasible due to the level of required works and excessive cost to do so. It was explored as an option but unfortunately will not be possible due to these reasons.

The Chairman proposed some strongboys are installed on the cellar's joists. The Facilities Manager stated this could be investigated under specialist repair.

Councillor A Riddell queried the asbethos report, to which the Facilities Manager responded that the first asbethos inspection has been completed, and a subsequent inspection would be made when the construction works are taking place. Councillor A Riddell stated this process could be very costly although much needed.

Councillor J Tiddy queried the source of the funding for cellar repairs. The Town Clerk stated the funds are located in earmarked reserves and the contingency budget – unfortunately this work was not built into the existing budget as it was an unanticipated discovery.

Councillor A Riddell stated that he believed the total repairs could potentially exceed £300,000 when considering all the requirements that would need to be met. Councillor M King stated that the cellar should be a priority, as it is located at the bottom of the building and could affect the structure. It was clarified that the joists were a concern but not the main frame of the outside of the building.

The Facilities Manager explained that the cellar quote is to prevent the rising damp and repair the joists, it would also repair the floating joists to the walls. The quote is for works that would prevent the building from deteriorating further and rectify current safety issues.

Councillor A Riddell asked what the lifetime on these fixes would be; this is currently unknown. The Town Clerk stated that this can be looked into and send any relevant information across to Committee members.

The Chairman proposed that strongboys be installed to support the existing joists and the other elements of the cellar repair be added to the next meeting's agenda.

Councillor A Riddell provided a counter-proposal that the strongboys be installed, a secondary survey be completed and then a report with more information be provided for the next Committee meeting. This was seconded by Councillor M Gleadow and there was a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

that following Councillor A Riddell's proposal and the vote, strongboys be installed in the cellar and a secondary report be completed. Findings to be reported to the next Committee meeting.

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PR24.00

**PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF
THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and
the Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9:49 pm.

Chairman:

Dated: 26 July 2023

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