

Minutes of the Fowey Town Council Annual Parish Meeting
held on Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7pm in Fowey Town
Hall

24/246 Present The Mayor Cllr Mrs L Simms
Councillors J Berryman Esq
Mrs R Cooke
Mrs F Day
A Dellow Esq
Rev Mrs C Edleston
Mrs R Finlay
C Gibbon Esq
A Harris-Guerrero Esq

24/247 In attendance The Town Clerk, Sally Vincent
Members of the public

24/248 Apologies
Cllr Y Patterson
Cornwall Cllr A Virr Esq

24/249 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th April 2023
It was proposed by Cllr Gibbon, seconded Cllr Finlay and RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted and signed by the Chairman

24/250 Matters Arising not on the Agenda
None

24/252 Annual Report of the Town Council – Cllr Mrs Lynn Simms
I am pleased to report that FTC has successfully progressed a number of major projects this year.
In May 2024 the renovation of the Pavilion at Squires Field, which was project managed by Cllr Dellow, was almost complete and a vision for the future use of the building was formulated by the Council, which included the provision of a Library, an office facility for the Town Council, an area for the Quiller-Couch book collection, a meeting space and a small cafe facility. On 18th September FTC held its first Council meeting at the Pavilion and in December Cllr Finlay, Cllr Day and myself met with representatives of the Cornwall Library Service to discuss the relocation of the micro library from Squires Field Community Centre to a larger facility at the Pavilion. With help from Cornwall Library Service, Annie Stuart from Squires Field Community Centre, Volunteer co-ordinator Judith Taylor, Cllr Day and Cllr Finlay the Library opened at the Pavilion on March 22nd. FTC will be appointing a member of staff who will, among other responsibilities, have oversight of the further development of the Library Service.
Also in May, the Squires Field Working Group, led by Cllr Cooke and Cllr Harris-Guerrero, having successfully secured an award of £80,000 from the

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), planned the extension and improvement of the walkways and the installation of a pump track in the upper playground. By July work on the pump track was well underway and funding had been obtained from Cllr Virr's Community Chest to buy two senior goal posts. At the July Council meeting it was agreed that FTC would meet the cost of £33,890 for the construction of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in the upper playground. In September Cllr Cooke reported that an award of £18,511 had been received from Lottery 'Awards for All' to part fund the purchase of new play equipment. The pump track opened on 19th October and has been well received by young people since. Cllr Harris -Guerrero put out a request on social media for sponsorship for benches, and very quickly received pledges to fund 13 benches, and further donations to cover the cost of concrete plinths. The benches are now installed, the MUGA is almost finished and a number of trees have been planted in Squires Field. Thank you to everyone involved in creating this attractive community space for the wellbeing of our residents.

The question of a possible twinning was raised at the June 2024 Council meeting by Cllr Hughes following the successful exchange visit to Binic-Etables-sur-Mer on the weekend of the 8th of June. Council members considered that, whilst they were supportive of the initiative, it was not something that FTC could take the lead on. I am pleased to say that Ken and Ali Wittamore have taken on this project and have been working with the group who visited last year to organise an exchange trip to Fowey by representatives of Binic -Etables-sur-Mer. The visitors will arrive on the evening Friday 27th June and depart Tuesday 1st of July. FTC will host a Civic Reception at the Town Hall on Saturday 28th June when I will sign the Binic Accord with Paul Chauvin, Maire of Binic-Etables-sur-Mer, on behalf of FTC, thus ensuring that our two towns will benefit from friendship, cultural understanding and opportunities for economic and educational exchange.

Last year we were notified by the Trustees of the OGS Garden that the Foundation did not want to renew the lease FTC has held for the garden since the 1990's. We impressed on the Trustees the importance of the garden remaining as a much-loved public space in the town, but, to date, the Trustees have not changed their decision. In November 2024 members of FTC noted that the Trustees had published an article in the Fowey News advising that FTC's lease would not be renewed in June 2025 and stating that FTC had failed to meet the terms of its tenancy. The Trustees (via Lantic Surveyors) have also served a very substantial and expensive (and in our opinion unreasonable) dilapidations schedule on FTC, which is now in the process of being dealt with. FTC has renovated and cared for OGS since the 1990's at a significant cost to the public purse and we refute these allegations. Further, we are aware that many people, both locally and nationally, enjoy visiting the garden and feel strongly that it should remain as a public open space in the care of FTC.

FTC has been engaged in meetings about the future of Fowey Hospital for several years. Many people will remember the well-attended Public Meeting called by FTC in 2019 when Phil Confue, then head of the NHS, and a group of London architects were in attendance and reported that they were working on designs for a new modern facility on the site. The Fowey NDP then recognized the importance of the hospital and there are sections in the

document fully supporting it. Since the Public Meeting (with a pause for the pandemic) there have been almost weekly meetings with stakeholders, including FTC and the Fowey GP's, with everybody trying to save the hospital. Many different avenues have been explored but NHS England are adamant that the site is too small to house a viable unit. At the end of last year the future of Fowey Hospital was discussed at a stakeholders meeting and a public engagement meeting where Fowey residents were encouraged to put their views to Cornwall Integrated Care Board (ICB) in the form of a survey. Sadly, in spite of the public support for the hospital recorded, it soon became obvious that the ICB have already endorsed the decision that re-opening the hospital is not an option and that the site will be sold. It has very reluctantly been accepted by the Fowey GP's, Cornwall Cllr Dr. Virr and FTC that the next best option is to secure the site as a community asset. This is clearly not what people or FTC want but all other avenues have been explored and have sadly hit a brick wall. FTC considers that the site must not be sold to the highest bidder and used for expensive housing, rather that it should be used for the benefit of the local community. Our MP, Noah Law, has agreed to look into first protecting the site for the community and then to explore any options to use it for healthcare.

During this 2024-2025 session FTC has also been involved in helping organise the D Day 80 commemoration event on June 6th 2024 as well as arranging the VE Day 80 celebration on May 8th 2025. We have renewed the License to enable us to host Civil Ceremonies in the Town Hall, including weddings, naming ceremonies, renewal of vows. We are already planning the Town Hall Christmas Market during the Fowey Christmas Market and much, much more. I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their hard work over the past year and our Town Clerk, Sally Vincent, for her invaluable support and guidance.

Finally I want to make special mention and thanks to Cllr Ruth Finlay and Cllr John Berryman, who were both long serving Mayors of Fowey and who are retiring from the Council at the end of this session. Their commitment and enthusiasm for the Town of Fowey continues to have a positive impact on our community.

24/253 Annual Report of the Planning Committee –Cllr Mrs Ruth Finlay

Fowey Town Council is a significant Consultee in the planning process and we represent the Town's residents and businesses. Cornwall Council, as the Local Planning Authority, however, has the final say in planning decisions. The change of Government in July 2024 brought in changes to Planning to accommodate the demand for 1.5million homes to be built over the next 5 years; the aim is for 370,000 new homes in England every year, to fulfil the government's promise to deal with the national housing crises.

Government also published a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 12 December 2024. This sets out revised guidance and policies for planning across England and should be used from December 2024.

What does this mean for planning decisions in Cornwall? Where a Local Plan is more than 5 years old (Cornwall's Local Plan is now 8 years old, with an end date 2030) some of these housing policies will be considered 'out of date' for decision making. However, where policies in the Local Plan remain

consistent with the NPPF they can continue to be used and the same is true with Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Fowey Neighbourhood Plan (FNDP) is now 5 years old (end date is 2030). The FNDP will stay in place until 2030, but some policies will technically be out of date - typically those relating to type of housing, location and number of new houses including Development Boundaries. However, development proposals within land that forms part of a National Landscape (formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), Local Green Space, Heritage Coast, areas at risk of flooding or coastal change or irreplaceable habitat may be more likely to be refused.

You may have your own views on some of these changes to Planning legislation. However, Fowey Town Council will continue to put forward the local view as best we can. Once a planning application has been registered with CC Planning, letters will be sent to immediate neighbours (by CC). An immediate neighbour is someone whose property adjoins the proposed site and not someone who lives up the road or opposite. These letters will notify the neighbour of the proposed planning works. If you are a neighbour, the letter will inform you how to provide comments and let you know that you have 21 days to respond.

Since April 2024 to March 31st 2025 there have been 48 planning applications lodged in Fowey; of these Fowey Town Council Planning Committee had 'no objections' to 42 and objected to 6.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee members for their hard work over the past year. With the number of applications, which can take days to read through, onsite visits, discussions with planners etc. which we have had to deal with it has been a very busy year.

24/254 Annual Report of the Environment Committee – Cllr Mrs Lynn Simms

The Environment Committee is responsible for protecting the biodiversity of the town's open spaces, ensuring that the people who live in and visit Fowey can enjoy the physical and mental benefits of being outside.

The committee organises the clearance of overgrowth on the Gold Footpaths, grass cutting and weeding on the open spaces, waste management at Squires Field, safety checks and repairs in the play area, and maintenance and gardening at the Old Grammar School Garden and the Piggy Lane Triangle. This list is not exhaustive.

By law our contractor does not cut the hedges when the birds are nesting between March and August. Last summer we were informed that some of the paths were impassable due to overgrowth which was exacerbated by the hot weather and needed to be cut back earlier.

Our tree warden Cllr Day monitors the trees in the area and feeds back to the meetings if action is needed to protect them from being unnecessarily felled. In February Cllr Day reported that Cornwall Council has an obligation to replace trees that are lost as a result of actions taken to maintain public safety. In order to achieve its replacement targets Cornwall Council successfully bid for a grant from the Forestry Commission, which was designed to aid neglected or declining tree scapes within our communities. Trees due to be planted in Fowey will be at Hanson Drive, the verge at the junction to Hill Hay Close and in Readymoney Car Park.

During this session, in addition to funding repairs for the Squires Field play area, the committee resolved that an invoice be accepted, £67.50 for the MUGA signage, £125.50 for an activity panel, £480 for the installation of two goal posts and the activity panel, £1697 to install a fence between the play area and the pump track and £185 for a mini digger for the removal of an earth mound in the upper play area.

As part of the environmental growth plan 105 medium saplings and 30 nursery saplings were ordered free of charge from the Woodland Trust. These will be planted out in a nursery bed at the allotments to grow on for planting later in the year. It was resolved that an award of £400 should be made to the allotment for the purchase of tubes, stakes and compost for the planting.

As mentioned in my Council report, the trustees of OGSF have given notice that the lease will be terminated in June 2025. FTC has been served with an unreasonable delapidation schedule for the OGSF, one of the demands being that the ivy be taken from the back and side walls of the garden. This has been now successfully achieved by Leighton Paull at a significant cost to FTC. Finally I want to thank every member of the Environment Committee for their hard work and support this session and particularly Cllr Day for taking the minutes.

I especially want to thank Cllr Finlay who has been the mainstay of the committee for many years and who is retiring from FTC at the end of this session.

24/255 To receive the Financial Report – Cllr John Berryman Esq

I know I always start this report by saying as a Council we are always trying to improve the town and I think we have and are continuing to do so. This is achieved through our Committees, Town Hall & Town Quay and the Environment, each have their own budget and are responsible for the maintenance and development of their specific areas. As a Finance Committee we oversee their spending remains within their budget. Any major expense comes under our control, but the budget and further financial decisions have to be approved by the full Council.

We are very fortunate that the assets we own are now earning the Council in the region of £86,000 per year, which is a direct saving on the precept. Mentioning the precept, our budget for this coming year forecast a 6.4% increase, but when the Council Tax papers hit your doorstep the Fowey portion of the precept was down by 11%. I understand this came about because CC enforced a 100% council tax charge on 2nd homes so our precept amount was spread in theory over more houses. It just goes to show how many 2nd homes there are in Fowey

I stated last year that we were hopeful of regaining The Windmill and Alldays Field from CC, Windmill is still on the books but I'm afraid Alldays Field has gone to the National Trust.

Finally I would like to thank the members of my Committee for their commitment during the year and to all Councillors for remaining within budget

24/256 Report of the Cornwall Councillor – Cllr Andrew Virr Esq

This is my last report as your councillor after 8 years of service to the community. This has been a great honour.

I spent 17 lovely years living in Fowey with my family and had many happy times making friends, enjoying the stunning landscape, seeing our children through both schools, being part of Fowey Church, being on or near the water, bringing music and culture to the town and working with the Town Council to bring many improvements to the Town.

Over the past 4 years I have also been on Cornwall Council's Cabinet overseeing Adult Social Care and Public Health. We invested an additional 30 million pounds at the beginning of our term. We have significantly reduced the waiting lists for care, strengthened the service's leadership team, kept more residents living in their own homes rather than in care homes and have improved public satisfaction with the service.

I am very grateful for the support and challenge of Parish Councillors and for the projects we have achieved together including the devolution of the Lime Kiln, the waterfront to the Harbour Master, on many civic events on the Quay and in the Church and the road improvements on New Road Hill. Thank you for your tireless hard work.

24/257 Reports from Representatives on Other Bodies

None

24/258 To receive the Police Report - PCSO Graham Wade had supplied the Annual Police Report

The St Austell and St Blazey Neighbourhood Team currently comprises of 1 Police Sargent (PS) known as a Neighbourhood Team Leader (NTL) 5 Police Officers known as Neighbourhood Beat Managers (NBM), 4 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) and 2 Tri-Service Safety Officers (TSSO).

The Neighbourhood Inspector responsible for the St Austell and St Blazey area is currently Inspector Simon Andrews.

PC Dom Husband and PCSO Graham Wade are the neighbourhood officers responsible for the St Blazey policing area. They are assisted by TSSO Josh Harmon currently operating from Lostwithiel Fire Station.

There has been a number of changes to the neighbourhood team over the past 12 months. PS Ian Chambers, the former NTL, was successful in being promoted to Inspector. His replacement PS Martin Easter has recently joined the team following 5 years as a Custody Sargent based in Newquay. Prior to this Martin was a patrol officer based out of St Austell and St Blazey for 9 years.

The team will have 3 new PCSO's joining in early April where they will undergo a period of tutorship prior to being deployed into the community. There is the intention that one of the PCSO's will be deployed to the St Blazey policing area.

We are currently waiting for information from the Police and Crime Commissioner in regards to funding for additional NBM'S.

The team also works closely with Cornwall Council Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team and the ASB and housing teams working for the various social housing associations with housing stock in the area to deal with ASB and low level crime.

Fowey crime and ASB information from March 2024 to February 2025

A total of 104 crimes were reported during this period broken down as below;

Crime type	Number
Burglary	5
Criminal damage	16
Shoplifting	3
Other thefts	6
Drugs offences	6
Possession of weapons	1
Public order offences	4
Other crimes	16
Violence and sexual offences	47

There were 10 ASB incidents reported during this period some including neighbour disputes which are not necessarily ASB but reported as such.

24/259 Report of the Squires Field Working Group – Cllr Mrs Rhianna Cooke

It's been quite a year since I last reported. SFWG have worked extremely hard during the last 12 months to deliver the new facilities requested by residents during the public consultations and address concerns raised during targeted resident engagement.

Work started on site on the 5th June 2024; by October half term Fowey's brand new pump track and walkways were officially opened. My thanks go to Flashman's Track and Trail for all their hard work and for delivering an excellent facility that is extremely well used and enjoyed by all ages. These works were made possible thanks to funding of £80k from Cornwall Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) department and match funding from Fowey Town Council.

Work on the MUGA continues; we are now very close to it being finished. Unfortunately supply chain issues slowed its progress initially but it is due to be completed shortly. This will provide an all-weather facility for people to play football and basketball all year round. These works have been fully funded by Fowey Town Council. Following resident feedback we are also investigating further noise reduction measures to the north of the MUGA once it is in use.

The new senior football goals and activity panel were installed in January 2025 and are both welcome additions to Squires Field. These works were funded thanks to grants from Cllr Virr's Community Chest fund and matched funded by Fowey Town Council. I would also like to thank Paul Finlay for his time and expertise in planting trees around the area to soften the landscaping and ultimately provide wonderful shaded areas for people to sit and enjoy the space.

Thanks to a very generous donation of £5k from Sir Chris Evans and the extremely kind sponsorship from a number of local business and individuals we have been able to install a number of benches and picnic benches around Squires Field, all supplied by local company Turps Wood Design. My thanks go to Cllr Harris-Guerrero for securing this amount of sponsorship and coordinating these works on site and A Couchman Landscaping and Groundworks for laying the concrete pads.

Wickstead are currently onsite installing the 3 new pieces of play equipment that proved most popular when we surveyed the children of Fowey - a big slide, monkey bars and an accessible roundabout. These works are due to be completed by the end of April and have been made possible thanks to funding of £18,511.00 from the Lottery Awards for All scheme.

SFWG would like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding while these works have taken place. We hope to have a formal opening on Saturday 14 June - more details to follow in due course. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Cllr Harris-Guerrero and the members of SFWG for all their hard work on this project - they are all volunteers who freely give their time and expertise to help make Fowey a better place for us all, and we couldn't have delivered these works without their help.

24/260 Public Participation

A member of the public queried the current status of the OGS Garden and stated that nobody wanted to see it lost as a public open space available to be enjoyed by everybody, both local and from other parts of the country and wider world. The Town Clerk responded that the FTC lease was due to run out in June and currently there was no agreement in place with the Trustees to allow FTC to retain the property. FTC had asked the Trustees if they wished to sell and, if so, what the price would be but, to date, the Trustees had been unwilling to put a value on the property. As a result FTC had now submitted a cash offer to the Trustees; a response was awaited.

A member of the public considered that there should be national publicity highlighting this significant issue for the town; the garden was important to many people and not only to those living in Fowey. He suggested local newspapers, Spotlight TV, Westcountry TV should be contacted. Another member of the public added that the Chairman of Cornwall Council, the local MP and the High Sherriff would also be useful contacts.

Cllr Finlay noted that the importance of the garden had been highlighted in the consultations that had been undertaken as part of the NDP process; people had recognised it as a very special place.

A member of the public queried if there had been a change of Trustees. Given that FTC had been caring for the garden for so many years, an arrangement that had presumably benefited both the Foundation and the public, why was the tenancy now being terminated? The Town Clerk responded that the Trustees had indicated that their responsibility was to maximise their assets in order to fulfil their stated objective to 'advance the education of children and young people in the area of benefit' and leasing the garden to FTC on a peppercorn rent did not meet this criteria.

A member of the public stated that the garden was a very special and unique place and was important to people in many different ways; it was not about money, it was about people and memories.

Meeting Closed 7.50am