

CORMAC Member, Town and Parish Council Engagement Session  
Bodmin Rugby Club, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Introduction from Mike Beckett, Head of Environmental Services, event opened by Cornwall Councillor Carol Mould (Wadebridge East & St Minver) – Portfolio holder for Neighbourhoods

Overview of Cormac – Ann Trevarton (Assets Manager)

- New contract started May 2022, allows for future flexibility in regards to budget, priorities, approach etc as Cornwall Council changes its priorities
- Look after more than 2000 green infrastructure assets keeping them fit for purpose, protected, accessible
- These assets cover 4.86% of Cornwall land area including: 40 beaches; 100 closed cemeteries; 300 hectares of woodland; 4489Km of footpaths/bridleways/byways; 4 country parks; 200 miles of coastline; 65 parks and gardens etc
- Signed up to environment charter so bespoke management plans, investment in machinery, staff training, volunteering opportunities, rewilding verges, Making Space for Nature project etc

Chemical control – right approach in the right place, used responsibly

Public Rights of Way & SW Coast Path – Donald Martin (Countryside Services Manager)

Legal (enforcement) and hard (verge cutting, repairing, improving) management plans  
Stewardship – investment, capital projects (eg cliff falls, water flows, coastal defences)

Complex to manage – UK legislation, dealing with landowners, competing needs of different users, enforcing public right of way, planning issues

Changing footpath cutting & maintenance classification from current gold/silver/bronze to new system of urban/ urban fringe/ countryside/ wilderness. Will affect LMP (local management partnership) payments in the future.

LMPs with 147 town and parish councils. Bringing in training for parish path wardens who can survey paths, identify maintenance and enforcement issues. Footpath issues need to be reported to Cornwall Council who will make decision re what work needs to be done

In the Q&A other councils said payments didn't meet their expenditure, one council thinking of cancelling their LMP altogether and handing the footpaths back to Cornwall Council.

Community, Climate & Biodiversity – Melissa Ralph (Cormac Landscape Architect)

Climate change is causing more extreme weather events, nature is in decline globally and in Cornwall.

Various policies/projects in place which provide guidance for management plans: Cornwall Council State of Nature Report 2020 updated in 2023, Environment Act 2021, Forest for Cornwall, Local Nature Recovery Strategy in progress.

UK organisations also provide guidance and campaigns: Plantlife's 'no mow May', Wildlife Trust's "30 by 30" campaign (restore 30% of nature on land and sea by 2030), Buglife's 'B-lines'. Looking at what is successful in other towns/ communities eg incredible edibles

## Designing an environment

- think about the plant palette: habitat creation with various plants to give a long flowering season to attract insects, which will attract birds and animals
- think about well-being and how the space will be/could be used by people: am I welcome? can I sit, chat, rest, enjoy? can I pick herbs & fruit? Is there wildlife?

Cormac has Community Partnership Officers who support volunteering on Cornwall Council owned land, and 2 urban rangers. The Cormac landscape team provide planting sessions in schools and communities.

## Highways – Steve Bayley (Network Manager)

Cornwall divided into 6 areas, each with an Area Manager.

Cornwall Council is the highway authority and in charge of strategy, policy, budget

Cornwall Highways has stewardship and management of highway networks

Cormac look after 4,500 miles of road, making Cornwall the 10<sup>th</sup> largest local authority highway. Cormac is responsible for routine and reactive maintenance, verge cutting, clearing spillages etc

Due to freezing weather and water running down roads the amount of potholes being reported has increased and, so in response, pothole gangs have been increased. Over 35,000 repaired in 2023. Different techniques are used, including using sub-contractor Velocity which sprays a bitumen/aggregate mix into potholes. 80% of traffic use 20% of roads so these are checked regularly, rural roads are checked once a year. Use 'Report It' to report highway issues.

Outside Cormac had a display of their new battery driven maintenance machinery – they use Stihl commercial standard equipment and they are happy with the quality, battery life and power of the motors.

Sharron Kelsey