

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 23rd September – 25th October 2024
Please note I had one week's leave during this period.

1.0 Council and other meetings

Over the last four weeks, physical meetings at Cornwall Council were restricted to Full Council, Corporate Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership and a meeting about projects within the China Clay Area. Other physical meetings have including St Enoder Parish Council (2), the Trelavour Community Liaison Group, Fraddon Village Hall and Indian Queens Band.

I have also attended a range of online Cornwall Council meetings via Teams video-conferencing. These have included the Cornish National Minority Working Group (and an associated preparatory session), a get-together for councillors from the China Clay Area, a meeting about Local Lettings Plans for social housing in St Dennis and St Enoder parishes, an interview about the Community Levelling Up funding allocated to the Clay Area over the last 12 months and a briefing on waste.

In addition, I have had informal meetings with a wide range of groups and individuals.

2.0 Full Council

The main talking point of the last Full Council meeting of the unitary authority (24th September) was a vote on the decision of the UK Government to take away the winter fuel payment for a large tranche of pensioners.

The debate was very political and very heated, and the motion to ask central government to think again was passed with a large majority. All members of the MK/Green group voted for the motion.

3.0 China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership

This month, I have been liaising with council officers and a local consultant about an update to the "Towards a Strategy" document for Clay Country, as well as further research into the business needs of the local area.

4.0 "Report it"

Over the last month, I have reported a number of local issues of concern to residents. If you spot any problems, you can also report it through Cornwall Council's website at: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/report-something/>

ST DENNIS PARISH

5.0 Planning matters

5.1 Cornish Lithium

In my last report, I wrote about how the UK Government had classed the Cornish Lithium project at Trelavour as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), which means that the key planning decisions relating to the site will be made by the Secretary of State, rather than Cornwall Council.

Linked to this, I attended the most recent meeting of the Trelavour Community Liaison Group and I requested that Cornish Lithium do more to publicise the significance of NSIP status, particularly what it means for the planning process and the ability of local people to make representations. I am pleased that Cornish Lithium have started to do this with their contribution in the latest edition of the parish magazine [due out at the beginning of November].

The application to central government for the NSIP also included supporting information and some maps, which can be viewed on the website for the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. At the Liaison Group meeting, I also asked Cornish Lithium to do more to explain their emerging plans for the scheme.

The company has stated that the documentation and maps are not the final plans, their feasibility study is ongoing and they are still looking at options. I have been told that this assessment will be completed early in 2025 and they will then publish the full details of their commercial project.

But as their plans are now in the public domain, I can confirm that the document includes reference to the need to lay a power line from the proposed processing zone, in their "Parkandillick Lease Area," to the Indian Queens Power Station. Residents will be aware that I have been investigating the possibility of a multi-use trail along the disused railway line from St Dennis to the Goss Moor. Cornish Lithium are specifically looking at this route for their cabling and have confirmed that they are also considering the creation of a "mixed use path (for walkers and cyclists) as a benefit of the development."

I also attended the launch event at the Trelavour site on 18th October.

It is my intention to do my best to ensure that the views of the local community are well represented in the period going forward.

5.2 Proposed solar farm near Trerice

Statkraft held an information day event for their solar farm proposal at Trerice on 23rd October at the Pitch Sports Bar Function Room.

I understand that an application is soon to be submitted and it is also my intention to do my best to ensure that the views of the local community are well represented in the planning process.

5.3 St Dennis Neighbourhood Plan

I have no further updates on the above, but it is hoped that the "direction of travel" document for the Plan, which will soon be published and distributed around the local area.

6.0 Traffic matters

I continue to make a wide range of representations to Cornwall Council on a number of highway matters and, early in September, I had a meeting with the local Highway Manager (Cormac).

I used the meeting to, once again, raise my extreme frustration that so many road markings desperately need repainting, and I am keeping the pressure up as best I can. Other topics covered included some recent episodes of flooding, and my ongoing complaints about the poor quality of numerous road surfaces. I am pleased, however, to be able to report that Carne Hill and Trelavour Road have now been placed on Cornwall Council's "provisional programme" for resurfacing in the next financial year.

The insertion of an additional "pinch-point" at the southern end of Hendra Road has been included within Cormac's timetable for works and will likely be done early in the New Year.

In addition, I am arranging a site meeting with Cormac about the siting of "Welcome to St Dennis Parish" signs, as well as potential locations for name-signs for local hamlets. I hope to have a worked-up project to take forward with the Parish Council in early 2025.

I am also continuing to liaise with Cornwall Council about a report into all the traffic problems in and around St Dennis.

7.0 The incinerator

The incineration of waste has been in the news again recently. Analysis from the BBC has shown that incineration emits more CO₂ per unit of energy produced than any other form of energy creation, while there are also reports that central government may bring in an "emissions trading scheme" that will add significant costs to the running of the incinerator.

I was invited onto Radio Cornwall and asked about the unitary authority's approach to waste management. I spoke about the improvements in recycling and how the amount of domestic waste going to the plant is likely to fall while acknowledging that, because of the Council's dependence upon the burning of rubbish, the void in incineration capacity would be filled with more commercial waste.

I could not help but point out that Cornwall Council would have a much better and much more cost-effective approach to dealing with waste if they had listened to objectors to the incineration plant, some 15 years ago.

ST ENODER PARISH

8.0 Thomas Playing Field

The refurbishment of the play equipment has been ongoing. The first two weeks involved groundworks and the replacement of pieces of equipment while, in the third week, new safety surfacing.

Unfortunately, the contractors have not been back to the site over the last two weeks to finish the works, because of staff unavailability. I am continuing to be in contact with the suppliers to get an end to the works as soon as possible.

9.0 Planning matters

Listed below are some updates on planning applications in St Enoder Parish.

9.1 Single dwelling, Higher Fraddon (PA23/03650)

In my last report, I forget to include information into the appeal for a single dwelling at Higher Fraddon. It had been refused by Cornwall Council on 16th June 2023. The reason for refusal was:

The application site is located outside of the defined settlement and the development represents an undesirable extension and intrusion of built form into the countryside to the detriment of landscape character. In the absence of any other special circumstances to justify the dwellings in this context, the proposal does not represent sustainable development and would be contrary to the guidance contained in Paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies 3, 7 and 21(c) of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010 to 2030, and Policies 2 and 3 of the St Enoder Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2030.

The applicant appealed the decision to the Planning Inspectorate, which upheld the decision of the unitary authority and dismissed the appeal.

9.2 Unit 2, Indian Queens Industrial Estate (PA24/07158)

Further to my report from last month about the retrospective application for a door opening into the rear of the industrial unit, I can report that the Parish Council has raised an objection. In particular, councillors remain concerned that the owners of the site will continue to seek a permanent access off the old A30, which was denied by previous applications and at a previous appeal.

10.0 Traffic matters

10.1 20mph speed limit

The new sign at the Penhale end of Fraddon has been modified to say Fraddon rather than Penhale.

10.2 Seaview Terrace

The installation of the new 40mph speed limit at Seaview Terrace was carried out last week.

10.3 Meeting with Cormac

As noted in the St Dennis section of this report, I continue to make a wide range of representations to Cornwall Council on a number of highway matters and, early in September, I had a meeting with the local Highway Manager (Cormac).

I used the meeting to raise my extreme frustration that so many road markings desperately need repainting, and I am keeping the pressure up as best I can.

Other topics covered included some recent episodes of flooding, and my ongoing complaints about the poor quality of numerous road surfaces. In terms of the issues with the road drains at Summercourt crossroads, Cormac have acknowledged that there is some sort of blockage in the network and further investigative works have been carried out. I have also been asking council officers to keep up the pressure on Cornwall Council / National Highways to work on the deteriorated road and damaged verges between Chapeltown to Mitchell, largely caused by traffic that took detours when the A30 works were ongoing.

The erection of a number of poles to host the Parish Council's mobile speed visors has been agreed and will likely be erected early in the New Year.

11.0 Small play areas and green spaces

It is more than two years ago since St Enoder Parish expressed an interest in taking responsibility for a number of small play areas / green spaces [Clodan Mews, Hanover Park, Kingsley Court, Lindsay Fields, Penhale Gardens and St James View] from the unitary authority. I have been following this up regularly and I am pleased to report that Cornwall Council is working up a project to look at the "devolution" of such assets to Parish Council throughout Clay Country.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

12.0 Advice

In addition, I have assisted numerous households and individuals with guidance and advice on a range of topics.