

# Cornwall Council report

## Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 22nd May – 25th June 2023.

### 1.0 Council and other meetings

In terms of physical meetings over the last five weeks, I have attended Full Council, Customer and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Constitution and Governance Committee, as well as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training with the Local Government Association and Black Voices Cornwall. More local meetings included a get-together with a representative of Cornwall Council to discuss the future provision of adult education provision at ClayTAWC, St Dennis Parish Council, St Enoder Parish Council (2), St Dennis and Nanpean Community Trust, the working group for the St Dennis Neighbourhood Plan (2) and the Board of ClayTAWC.

Other meetings through TEAMS video-conferencing included refresher training for members and substitutes of planning committees, a briefing on the Homechoice review, Cornish National Minority Working Group (and associated pre-meeting), catch-ups with the Community Link Officer for the China Clay Area (2) and a meeting of councillors from across the China Clay Area.

### 2.0 Cornwall Council

#### 2.1 Homechoice review

As noted last month, Cornwall Council and registered providers have commenced a review into the Homechoice system, through which publicly-owned rental homes are allocated. The consultation is now "live." It is open until 5pm on Friday 25th August, and can be viewed at:  
<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/allocation-policies/>

While the consultation was being prepared, I attended a series of stakeholder sessions and argued that the "local connection criteria" should actually be strengthened. In particular, on numerous occasions I pointed out that only 20% of the affordable homes in St Dennis had legal agreements which specified the need for a "parish connection," and therefore local families often miss out on the unrestricted stock. As a consequence, in the consultation, the possible use of "Local Lettings Plans" to support a more "balanced" letting of homes in communities in this situation is noted as an option.

If you have issues with the allocation of affordable homes, please use this opportunity to let Cornwall Council and the Housing Associations know your views.

#### 2.2 Peer review into Cornwall Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

In late March, a number of representatives of the Local Government Association visited Cornwall to carry out a peer review into Cornwall Council's newly adopted

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. As the chairman of the member's working group, which worked with officers on the unitary authority to develop the Strategy, I attended three sessions for the review. The report has now been published. It is extremely positive about the EDI work being done by the Council and can be viewed at:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/people-and-communities/equality-and-diversity/equality-peer-challenge/>

I am also pleased that an EDI training session for elected members on the unitary authority has already been provided by the Local Government Association and Black Voices Cornwall.

### **2.3 Council of Europe Advisory Committee's fifth opinion**

As the chairman of Cornwall Council's National Minority Working Group, I have been involved with consideration of how the unitary authority and others respond to the Council of Europe Advisory Committee's fifth opinion on national minorities in the United Kingdom.

It is rightly critical of the UK Government and challenges it to "ensure sufficient, regular, earmarked baseline funding for the support and the promotion of Cornish language and culture" and for the adequate funding of organisations providing education in Cornish. Other topics covered by the report include the failure of the UK Government to allow a Cornish tick-box on the 2021 census and their unwillingness to allow Cornwall to have representation on the British-Irish Council. I am presently working on further representations to central government linked to the content of the opinion.

## **ST DENNIS PARISH ISSUES**

### **3.0 Affordable housing**

Officers in the affordable housing team are presently making links with local Parish Councils to explore proactive ways to bring forward local-needs housing. A meeting is soon to be arranged for an officer to meet with parish councillors to discuss this aspect of the work of the unitary authority and to discuss potential opportunities in St Dennis.

### **4.0 Multi-use trail**

The report, setting out the initial work needed to turn the section of the defunct railway line between St Dennis and the Goss Moor National Nature Reserve into a multi-use trail, has been completed. I will have copies available at the upcoming Parish Council meeting. I am continuing to speak to senior council officers about how we take the project forward.

### **5.0 Planning matters**

#### **5.1 Proposed dwelling in Hendra Road**

St Dennis Parish Council raised a strong objection to the proposal (PA23/01263) for a dwelling near to Jubilee Terrace. I can report that the application has been

withdrawn, but the case officer has told me that he expects a resubmission in the near future.

## **5.2 Neighbourhood Plan**

I am pleased that the Parish Council's working group tasked to write a Neighbourhood Plan has twice met in recent weeks, and we will soon be distributing information about feedback from the local community.

## **6.0 ClayTAWC**

As the Chairman of the Board at ClayTAWC, I am also putting a significant amount of time into the safeguarding of the future of the Centre. Our 25-year lease for the building ends in about 15 months, and we are presently seeking funding to purchase the Centre, so that it will be protected as a community-owned asset at the heart of the village. Approximately half of the money has been secured from the St Dennis and Nanpean Community Trust (incinerator fund) and I have submitted an EOI (expression of interest) for the remaining monies to the Shared Prosperity Funding (Community Levelling Up) controlled through Cornwall Council.

It was also lovely to have a community tidy-up at ClayTAWC on 3rd June. Thanks to everyone who came to help out.

## **ST ENODER PARISH ISSUES**

### **7.0 Affordable housing**

I can also report that officers in the affordable housing team at the unitary authority are finalising a report about the recent provision of local-needs housing in St Enoder Parish. They are also keen to meet with parish councillors in the near future.

### **8.0 Planning matters**

Given the significant amount of development that continues to come forward in St Enoder Parish, I annually update the Parish Council on the "trajectory" of housing that is being consented and built.

The St Enoder Neighbourhood states that 350 new dwellings should be delivered during the Plan period (2010-2030). I now have the "monitoring" data from Cornwall Council up to April 2023, and I can confirm that, over the last 13 years, 317 units have been delivered – over 90% of the "target." According to Cornwall Council, in April, there were further extant consents for 240 dwellings [of which they record 21 were under construction and 219 had yet to be started].

In addition, there are "live" planning applications being dealt with by Cornwall Council, with potential developments totalling around 100 units. This includes an application (PA22/07277) at Gnomeworld to turn part of this holiday site into an area for residential park homes. The Council and the applicant are presently in discussions about the appropriate level of "off-site contribution" towards the

provision of affordable housing should the development proceed.

## **9.0 Seaview Terrace**

It is some two years since Cornwall Council included Seaview Terrace on a list of thirty locations, where safety schemes were to be designed. This has been ongoing for a while and there have been delays, partly relating to budget pressures, but I am pleased to be able provide an update.

The Council's emerging proposal includes the following:

- Two permanent VAS (vehicle activated) signs, one at either end of Seaview Terrace. These will be programmed to flash a "SLOW DOWN" message at all approaching vehicles going as around 40mph or above.
- Slight enhancements to the "gateway" at both ends of Seaview Terrace, with signage.
- Improvements to the parking area on the opposite side of the road to Seaview Terrace, to make it easier to park and to improve visibility for pedestrians.

The Council's Principal Transport Officer (Road Safety) has confirmed that the works might need to be phased, but has confirmed some works (the vehicle activated signs and the gateway features) will definitely be done in this financial year.

## **10.0 No. 10 Westbourne Terrace**

I have been informed by Ocean Housing that they intend to sell one of their rental properties (10 Westbourne Terrace). A representative of Ocean has told me that "the property is being sold due to the investment required to make the home suitable for letting. We have given this decision careful consideration and have concluded that it is not economical for us to retain this property and improve it to the required standard. The property will be advertised for sale on the open market. The proceeds from the sale will contribute towards our investment into new affordable homes for Cornwall, as well as improving our existing ones."

I find the loss of this property to be disappointing and I have challenged Ocean to think again, but the house is now on the market.

## **11.0 Thomas Playing Field**

Along with the Parish Clerk and Cllr Mark Kessell, I have been liaising with the play equipment company HAGs, who built the new play area in Summercourt in 2019, about a range of issues with the equipment and safety surfacing.

## **12.0 More EOIs**

In addition to the EOI for funding for ClayTAWC, I have also been exploring how to fund improvements at the Indian Queens Under-5s Pre-School Building and in

the Fraddon Millennium Green. My fingers are crossed in hope of some good news in the coming weeks and months.

## **HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES**

### **13.0 Advice**

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