

# Cornwall Council report

## Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 25th June – 30th July 2023.

### 1.0 Council and other meetings

In terms of physical meetings over the last five weeks, I have attended Full Council, three meetings of the Customer and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CASSOSC) (one of which covered the operational estate transformation), a scrutiny improvement discussion with group leaders on the unitary authority, a debrief about how the Council dealt with the failed approach to the Level 3 “devolution deal,” the first meeting of the China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership, the first get-together of the CAP chairs and vice-chairs, St Dennis Parish Council (2), St Enoder Parish Council (3), St Dennis Neighbourhood Plan meeting, the Board of ClayTAWC (2), the incinerator liaison group, the St Dennis and Nanpean Community Trust (incinerator fund), and the Indian Queens Pit charity.

Other meetings through TEAMS video-conferencing included an informal session of the Customer and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cornish National Minority Working Group (and two associated pre-meetings), catch-ups with the Community Link Officer for the China Clay Area (2), a meeting of Cornwall Councillors from across the China Clay Area, and a meeting about the crisis accommodation being provided in the former public house (Grenville Arms) in Nanpean.

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

## CORNWALL COUNCIL

### 2.0 China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership

In recent months, I have frequently written about the decision of Cornwall Council’s Cabinet to reduce the number of Community Networks from 19 to 12 and to refashion them into Community Area Partnerships or CAPs. Cornwall Councillors from our area have worked hard to make the case for a distinct CAP for the China Clay Area. It was finally agreed that the new CAP should cover the five parishes of Clay Country plus Luxulyan Parish. The inaugural meeting of the new CAP took place on 26th June at Roche Victory Hall and I was pleased to be elected as the Chair of the CAP. I look forward to doing my best to stand up for our part of Mid Cornwall.

### 3.0 Operational estate transformation

Cornwall Council’s Cabinet is continuing to reduce the number of principal council offices. Having already closed the Penwinnick Road offices in St Austell, a

decision was taken at the Cabinet meeting on 19th July to also close the Dolcoath offices in Camborne. I opposed this closure at meetings of CASSOSC and also spoke at the Cabinet meeting, but my perspective was a minority one.

The Council is also committed to new hubs in various towns and I have been making representations about whether the unitary authority will be looking to provide office space within the China Clay Area.

#### **4.0 "Devolution deals"**

In the CASSOSC meeting on 18 July, there was a paper about the possibility of the Council accepting a Level 2 "devolution deal," following the decision of the Cabinet to ditch its plan for a Level 3 deal because of opposition to a directly-elected mayor. In the debate, I pointed out that any Level 2 "deal" is likely to be quite insubstantial and I moved an amendment to request that the "Cabinet create a cross-party panel to develop a more ambitious devolution ask of the UK Government as a matter of urgency." The Conservative majority on the Committee were unwilling to support this and moved an amendment to defer discussion on the subject.

In relation to this, the Institute of Cornish Studies has just brought a new book called "Cornish Democracy." It includes an article that I have written about the campaigns for greater self-government for Cornwall between 1997 and the present-day.

#### **5.0 Renewal energy applications**

There continues to be a large number of applications for renewable energy proposals in and around the St Dennis and St Enoder divisions. Thought it would be good to update what has been happening.

##### **5.1 Solar farms**

Within the St Dennis and St Enoder division, there is a live planning application for a solar farm at Burthy Row / Chytane near Fraddon (PA23/01893), plus two other potential schemes (Tresithney to the north of St Columb Road and Trerice in St Dennis Parish). Immediately to the north of St Enoder parish, a proposed solar farm at Tregonning (PA22/01511) in Newlyn East Parish has been through the Strategic Planning Committee and a consent is due to be issued in the near-future, while another solar application to the south of Carland Cross (PA23/02629) is generating a large number of objections.

The chairman of St Enoder Parish Council and I were recently briefed by representatives of EDF about another incoming application for a solar farm.

It is proposed to be in St Stephen Parish and will link to the power station at Indian Queens Power Station in St Dennis. I have queried where the cabling will go and where there might be disturbance, for example across or along roadways, but I have not heard back yet.

## **5.2 Battery storage**

I have previously reported how a battery energy storage system (PA22/05961) has been consented immediately to the west of Indian Queens Power Station. A further application is now live for additional battery storage to the rear of the power station (PA23/04504). At their most recent meeting on 25th July, St Dennis Parish Council agreed to object to because of the cumulative development in this general area and related issues.

On 19th July, I attended a public consultation event on a further emerging proposal for a battery storage facility to cover about 22 acres at land at Gaverigan Manor, a short distance to the north of the power station. I will update as further information is made available.

## **ST DENNIS PARISH ISSUES**

### **6.0 Affordable housing**

An officer in Cornwall Council's affordable housing team had a meeting with the Planning Committee of St Dennis Parish Council to explore proactive ways to bring forward local-needs housing. I was pleased to attend and take part in the discussion.

### **7.0 Planning matters**

For renewable energy planning applications see Section 5.0 – 5.2.

### **8.0 ClayTAWC**

As noted in my last report, I am 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. The EOI is presently being shared with the members of the China Clay Area and Luxulyan CAP, and that I hope that I will soon be invited to submit a full application.

## **ST ENODER PARISH ISSUES**

### **9.0 Planning matters**

#### **9.1 Renewable energy applications**

For the above, see Section 5.0 – 5.2.

#### **9.2 Lindsay Fields, Fraddon**

There is an extant planning consent (PA20/01508) at the rear of Lindsay Fields for 20 houses. The land has recently changed hands and the new owner has

submitted a new planning application (PA23/04991) for 28 properties to take the place of the existing permission. The new application includes eight flats, in two blocks of four.

St Enoder Parish Council looked at the application at their most recent meeting on 25th July and have raised an objection because the overall scheme does not include two car parking spaces per unit as deemed necessary by the parking policy in the St Enoder Neighbourhood Plan.

### **10.0 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.

A site meeting was held on 26 July between a representative of HAGs, the Parish Clerk, the Chairman of St Enoder Parish Council Alan Shaw, and myself. We are now waiting for confirmation of the improvement works that HAGs may be willing to undertake, which expected within a couple of weeks.

### **11.0 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. I submitted EOIs to Cornwall Council's Community Infrastructure Levy funding and have been invited to submit full applications for both of the above projects.

### **12.0 Indian Queens Pit**

The Pit is protected as a Scheduled Monument, and the committee has secured permission from the statutory to carry out a range of management works. These started on 23rd July, when fencing was erected to the rear of the "pulpit" to mitigate against ongoing erosion. The works were carried out by the vice-chairman Liam Barkwill, his father Lee and myself. More works are planned going forward.

## **HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES**

### **13.0 Advice**

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