**Annual report (2022-2023) from Cllr Dick Cole,**

**Cornwall Councillor for St Dennis and St Enoder division**

This report includes a few examples of the work that I have carried out over the last 12 months in St Dennis Parish. It is not an exhaustive list.

**1.0 Council positions**

During the last year, I have served as the chairman of both the China Clay Area Community Network and the unitary authority’s Working Group for the Cornish National Minority. I have also been a member of the Customers and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Officers Employment Panel, and the Constitution and Governance Committee. I have attended a wide range of related meetings – both in person and via TEAMS / ZOOM video-conferencing.

In addition, I have attended the main council and planning committee meetings of St Dennis Parish Council. I am also a member of the St Dennis and Nanpean Community Trust (which distributes the funding generated by the planning agreement linked to the incinerator) and I attend the incinerator liaison group.

**2.0 Multi-use trail to the Goss Moor**

At last year’s Annual Assembly, I reported that St Dennis Parish Council has asked Cornwall Council to investigate the possibility of turning the section of defunct railway line between St Dennis and the Goss Moor National Nature Reserve (NNR) into a multi-use trail.

To take this project forward, I submitted applications (to work up and cost the project) to the (i) “legacy funding” relating to the G7 Summit and then (ii) Natural England. Both were initially unsuccessful, but I ended up on a “reserve list” with Natural England and, due to an underspend, we secured £10,000 for a feasibility study.

A first draft of this study has just been completed by Sustrans and I will be attending a meeting with the charity and Cornwall Council in the next few days to discuss the initial findings.

**3.0 Affordable housing**

Twelve months ago, I reported that I had produced a report following complaints that the two most recent “affordable housing” developments in St Dennis – Wesley Place (Coastline) and Hendra Heights (Sanctuary) – had failed to apply the “local connection” nomination agreements for the developments.

I can report that both registered providers have acknowledged their errors and promised that future re-lets of the houses on both estates will go to households with a local connection to St Dennis Parish.

The main owner of affordable properties in St Dennis Parish is Ocean Housing, though most of their properties do not have any “local connection” nomination agreements. However, as a consequence of the recent problems noted above, when local households did not gain access to affordable properties, they have kindly agreed to voluntarily place a “local connection” label on re-lets for a couple of years. I can confirm that this has happened on four properties so far.

I can also report that Cornwall Council and registered providers have commenced a review into the Homechoice system, through which publicly-owned rental homes are allocated. Some people are arguing that the “local connection” aspect of the allocations should be reduced, but I have attended four meetings (so far) at which I have argued that it should be strengthened in communities such as St Dennis. I am presently collating evidence for a submission to the review.

**4.0 Road safety matters**

Residents have brought a wide range of concerns to me about the condition of local roads and related safety matters, which I have continue to forward to Cormac / Cornwall Council. Through the Community Network Highways Scheme, Cornwall Council has consulted on (i) a potential scheme to slow traffic entering Hendra Road from the south, and (ii) lining to prevent access being blocked to properties located to the rear of the kebab shop. Some concerns were raised about the proposals in the consultation and I will be addressing these with officers in the next few weeks.

**5.0 Working with St Dennis Parish Council**

I have worked with the councillors on the Parish Council throughout the last year, giving advice and support as best I can. I have enjoyed helping out with some local initiatives, such as the vegetation clearance on the path between Manson Place / Trelavour Road and on the recent community litter pick.

**6.0 ClayTAWC**

I am still the Chairman of the Board at ClayTAWC and I am putting a significant amount of time into the safeguarding of the future of the centre. Our 25-year lease for the building ends in 18 months time, and we are presently seeking funding to purchase the building so that it will be protected as a community-owned asset at the heart of the village.

**7.0 A Strategy for the China Clay Area**

An ongoing priority for me has been the promotion of a better deal for the people and parishes of the China Clay Area. To this end, the four Cornwall Councillors from Clay Country have had a number of meetings with senior council officers and we are continuing to lobby for additional support and funding for our area.

The decision has been taken to reduce the Council’s 19 Community Networks into 12 Community Area Partnerships. After much lobbying, I am pleased to be able to report that the new CAP for our area will largely cover the same patch as the existing Network. It will include the five China Clay Area parishes, plus the parish of Luxulyan.

**8.0 My work at Cornwall Council**

In addition to a wide range of local issues on which I have made representations, I have been active in a number of “policy” debates. In recent months, politics have been dominated by discussions around the so-called “devolution deal,” which the Council’s Cabinet has now decided not to proceed with because of opposition to the creation of a directly-elected mayor. It would be fair to say that I had a lot to say about the disappointingly weak “deal.”

As the leader of the MK / Green Group on the unitary authority, I opposed the proposed out-sourcing of the Fire Control Centre (a proposal since withdrawn) and the closure of the Cornwall Aviation Heritage Centre at Newquay, while being involved in campaigns for fair funding for Cornwall.

I was also to the forefront of efforts to promote the Cornish write-in option on the 2021 Census and, more recently, I have been part of the Council “team” liaising with the Office of National Statistics, which has confirmed that a total of 108,860 people (across Cornwall, England and Wales) wrote-in Cornish on the census – a 30% increase on the 83,499 who did so in 2011.

I also chaired an Inquiry which fed into the Council’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2026, and took part in a subsequent peer review.

**9.0 Newsletter**

I have pledged to deliver a regular newsletter around St Dennis Parish, but the pressures on my time has made this really difficult. But I am presently aiming to get out my next newsletter in May / June.

**10.0 Assistance for local people**

Over the 12 months, I have given advice and support to a large number of people on a range of issues.

I continue to be available on 07791 876607 and cllr.dick.cole@cornwall.gov.uk.