

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 24th January – 22nd February 2022

1.0 Council and other meetings

In terms of physical meetings during the last few weeks, I attended Full Council, Customer & Support Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Chief Officers Employment Committee. I was also present at a conference about the housing emergency, which took place at the Bedruthan Steps Hotel, on 11th February, as well as meetings of St Dennis Parish Council and St Enoder Parish Council.

Other meetings via TEAMS or ZOOM video-conferencing included three meetings relating to equalities monitoring (Customer & Support Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee), informal meeting of Economic Growth & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee, briefing for forthcoming Full Council meeting and Group Leader meeting, Cornish National Minority Working Group and associated briefing, plus a forum.

In terms of our local area, I have attended online meetings with the China Clay Area Community Network and a meeting of the four local Cornwall Councillors, plus meetings about the development of a strategy for Clay Country with the economic development team plus the new highways scheme. In addition, I met with the Service Director for Planning & Sustainable Development and the Head of Development Management about planning matters in Mid Cornwall.

I also had a number of further online meetings about a range of local issues.

2.0 Cornwall Council budget

The Conservative administration presented its budget to a meeting of the unitary authority on 22nd February. It includes cuts of over £50 million, more than 400 job cuts and a maximum increase (2.99%) in council tax.

As the leader of the Mebyon Kernow / Green Party Group, I spoke against the budget and pointed out that local government in Cornwall is in a parlous state because it is greatly underfunded and it has suffered a decade of savage cuts. My assertion that local government is not a priority for central government funding was not contested.

The budget was voted through by 48 to 30.

3.0 Community networks

The new administration has also announced that it is doing a review of Community Networks, which could be reduced in number. I am extremely concerned that the China Clay Area Network could cease to exist, which would be a disaster – especially given our recent efforts to secure greater financial and other support for our Area. I have already made representations on this matter and I will report more in the future.

ST DENNIS PARISH ISSUES

4.0 Neighbourhood Plan

I am very pleased to have been able to assist the members of St Dennis Parish Council in the production of a detailed questionnaire for the work towards a Neighbourhood Plan. The document is at the printers and will soon be distributed to homes across the Parish.

In addition, four consultation events have been organised to allow local people to meet members of the steering group and give further information about what you want for St Dennis Parish.

The events will be held at ClayTAWC, at the following dates and times.

Tuesday 15th March	6pm-9pm
Wednesday 23rd March	2pm-5pm
Wednesday 30th March	2pm-5pm
Thursday 31st March	6pm-9pm

5.0 Proposed solar farm near Trerice

The proposed solar farm near St Dennis has been in the news recently, because the Cornwall branch of the "Campaign for the Protection of Rural England" issued a press release criticizing the development of "industrial-sized solar arrays" and the "loss of farmland."

I phoned Statkraft, the company which is working up the local scheme, and was told that it will still be a few weeks before the application is formally submitted. I previously reported that Cornwall Council had told the applicants that they needed to do an Environmental Impact Assessment on their nearby proposal at Tresithney near St Columb Road, but not the St Dennis one. Statkraft have however confirmed that they have chosen to do EIAs for both schemes.

6.0 Social / affordable rent properties in St Dennis

In my last monthly report, I published my report which investigated complaints about affordable housing in St Dennis not going to local households. On 14th February, I had a meeting with a senior officer in the housing team and received initial feedback from the authority. He agreed that I had identified significant problems with how rental properties were being allocated and I am awaiting a more formal (written) response.

I can confirm that I will be attending a meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee next week, when it will be considering a review of the Homechoice allocations system. I intend to make further representations at this meeting.

7.0 Proposed double yellow lines near Wesley Place

I previously reported that there was a 21-day consultation on parking

restrictions on Carne Hill, near Wesley Place, in November, and that I was informed that the Council had received no responses from residents in the immediate area. I have just circulated an additional letter in the area seeking feedback.

8.0 Newsletter

In recent weeks, I have been out and about delivering my (six monthly) parish-wide newsletter across St Dennis Parish. I have covered about 80% of the Parish and hope to have completed the newsletter drop within the next few days.

ST ENODER PARISH ISSUES

9.0 Update on highway improvements

9.1 Zebra crossings in Indian Queens

Local people will have seen a zebra crossing on St Francis Road is presently under construction and it is provisionally timetabled that the construction of a second zebra crossing and associated works will be undertaken on Chapel Road commencing on 9th March.

9.2 A3058 improvements

As part of the A3058 Safer Route improvements, a permanent vehicle activated sign will be erected in St Austell Street in the week commencing 28th February. The dragons teeth in the road will also be renewed at this time. In addition, the erection of a permanent vehicle activated sign, the extension of the 30mph speed limit and related works, will take place on Beacon Road over a two-week period commencing on 8th March.

The installation of the signalised pedestrian crossings at the crossroads has yet to be timetabled.

9.3 Other updates

The road safety audit of the road through Fraddon and St Columb Road (between Penhale and the Halloon roundabout) has commenced and I am feeding in local concerns to the officers undertaking the review.

I have also been promised an update, later this week, about the road safety audit at Sea View Terrace on the road between Fraddon and St Stephen. I will update further when I have more information.

I have also received a petition about speeding traffic in the Toldish area and on rural roads extending from St Enoder Parish through towards Ruthvoes, Castle an Dinas and St Columb. I am investigating these concerns as well.

10.0 Proposed solar farm near Trerice

As noted above, the application for the proposed solar farm at Tresithney near St Columb Road has yet to be formally submitted. The applicants (Statkraft) are currently carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment on their scheme.

11.0 Newsletter

As noted above, I have nearly finished distributing my newsletter around St Dennis Parish. I am presently looking to timetable the delivery of a newsletter around St Enoder Parish in the month of April.

HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES

12.0 Advice

Over the last few weeks, I have also assisted numerous households and individuals with guidance and advice on a range of topics including planning matters, housing needs, environmental concerns and more.