

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 24th February – 24th March 2024

1.0 Council and other meetings

Over the last month, I have attended a range of physical meetings. At Cornwall Council, these have included Cabinet, Customers and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership (CAP).

I have also attended a range of online Cornwall Council meetings via Teams / Zoom video-conferencing. These included a briefing for the Customers and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Scrutiny Improvement Review Informal Working Group, meetings about the CAP Action Plan, local lettings plans for affordable rental homes in St Dennis and St Enoder parishes (2), the production of a White Paper seeking greater devolution for Cornwall, a briefing about the approach to the next Cornwall Local Plan, an all member briefing on Cornish identity and a get-together for Cornwall Councillors from the China Clay Area.

Other physical meetings have included St Dennis Parish Council, St Enoder Parish Council and the working group for a Neighbourhood Plan for St Dennis,

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

2.0 Homechoice

Following on from last month's report on the Homechoice, I have attended two meetings to discuss "local lettings plans" for the two parishes I represent. Discussions are ongoing and the drafting of the paperwork is at an earlier stage, but I am continuing to make strong representations to influence what is agreed.

3.0 Renewable energy

At the most recent meeting of the Customers and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, representatives of Celtic Sea Power gave a presentation about their business plan. This is a long-term project relating to the off-shore generation of energy and the firm is talking about how they might link into the Indian Queens Power Station. No detail is being given at this stage in the development of the scheme, but I have formally requested a meeting to better understand their intentions and what this might mean for our area.

Last month, I reported that I had attended a consultation event about the proposed solar farm at Trelion near St Stephen. It has not yet been well-publicised that, in terms of linking the solar farm (if consented) to the grid, the applicant's preferred option is mostly to go through clayworks to the Indian Queens Power Station, but they have also identified a second option. This would be along a distance of 7km along roads in St Enoder Parish, extending past Sea

View Terrace, along the old A30 through Fraddon and Indian Queens, and past Gaverigan to the power station.

4.0 Cornwall Local Plan

The unitary authority is starting to do background work on how it approaches the production of a new Local Plan for Cornwall, which will set the key planning framework for Cornwall until 2050. Central government expects the work to be completed in a very short period (30 months), though there is a lack of clarity about what is expected of the unitary authority.

I attended a recent briefing about this and I am in the process of ensuring that this briefing will also be shared with a future meeting of the China Clay Area and Luxulyan CAP.

It is likely that the main work will commence in the middle part of 2025, but I am concerned about the processes being put in place to guide the work. I am presently questioning to what extent elected councillors will be able to influence what is happening, which will be driven by senior officers and the leadership of Cornwall Council.

5.0 Road problems

The weather over the last few weeks has been really damaging to the local road network, while there have been a large number of flooding problems. I have been out on a regular basis to visit areas where I know there can be problems, so that I can make a number of representations to Cornwall Council / Cormac.

6.0 Community Chest

As the local Cornwall Councillor, I am allocated £3,000 to grant to local community organisations. I can confirm that, for 2023-24, I supported ClayTAWC (supplies for small foodbank), Indian Queens Pit, Indian Queens Under-5s Pre-School, St Dennis Bells and Ringers, St Dennis Youth Football, St Ender Youth Club and Summercourt Academy PTFA.

My new allocation will be with me soon and I look forward to supporting a range of local groups.

ST DENNIS PARISH

7.0 St Dennis Neighbourhood Plan

It is also unclear what the production of a Cornwall Local Plan will mean for neighbourhood plans, but I am pleased that St Dennis Parish Council's NDP working group has started to meet again. The last meeting was on 20th March and the next three meetings have already been timetabled in.

8.0 Cornish Lithium

Cornish Lithium have been carrying out geotechnical studies in and around Pointy and Flatty on the downs. It is my understanding that a summary of the findings will soon be published and I have arranged a meeting with the company on 27th March to find out more about what is happening.

9.0 Signs

I have been approached about the lack of nameplate signs in places such as Enniscaven. I have raised this with the Parish Council at a recent meeting and there was also discussion about "welcome" signs on entry points into the Parish. I am preparing a report about such signage for a future meeting of the Council.

ST ENODER PARISH

10.0 Thomas Playing Field, Summercourt

In 2019, new play equipment was installed into the playing field at Summercourt. Since then, there have been some issues with rust on some of the equipment, plus problems with localised slumps in the groundworks and the safety surfacing.

I have been making representations to the suppliers / installers with Cllr Mark Kessell and other parish councillors, and I am pleased to be able to report that we are nearing agreement for a significant refresh of the area in order to resolve all the concerns that we have raised.

11.0 Indian Queens School

I was also pleased to attend Indian Queens School recently and to be one of a number of speakers about their careers. I spoke my work as an archaeologist, rather than politics.

12.0 Advice

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