

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Monthly report for 1st – 24th May 2026

1.0 Council and other meetings

Physical Cornwall Council meetings during the last three weeks included Full Council, Strategic Planning Committee (for the proposed solar farm at Trelion in St Stephen Parish and associated cable route which is mostly in St Enoder Parish), and an all-day planning hearing into the proposed solar farm at Trerice,

Meetings via video-conferencing meanwhile included a pre-meeting for the next Constitution and Governance Committee meeting, a work programming session for the Corporate Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an associated briefing on consultation responses to the new Belonging [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion] Strategy, a technical briefing on the solar farm application at Trelion, a meeting of Group Leaders, plus briefings on Cornwall Council's Homes Cornwall project, its Cornish Language Strategy and the implications of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025.

Other physical meetings included a public meeting about the development of the consented Tregonning Solar Farm, St Dennis Parish Council, St Enoder Parish Council and the committee of Indian Queens Band.

2.0 Planning policy

Last month, I wrote before about my anger at how central government has completely undermined planning in Cornwall with the imposition of an unsustainable and undeliverable housing target, which has meant that those in authority have decreed Cornwall does not have a "five-year land supply" and key housing policies in the present Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans should no longer be given weight.

I have complained that Cornwall Council is not being vocal enough about this dire situation and I have a meeting with two cabinet members to discuss this on 28th May.

In addition, I have attended a briefing on the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, which contains a "national scheme of delegation" that, when enacted, will prevent councillors from referring planning proposals of fewer than ten houses to a planning committee. I understand that this new arrangement will come into effect in September.

3.0 "Report it"

I continue to report a number of local issues of concern to residents. If you spot any problems, you can also report it yourself through Cornwall Council's website at: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/report-something/>

ST DENNIS PARISH

4.0 Trerice Solar Farm

I attended the planning hearing into the proposed 32MW solar farm at Trerice [PA24/09234], which took place at The Pitch on 12th May. Also present were the Chair of the Parish Council, Julia Clark, and the Clerk, Lynn Clarke. I had prepared a 4,000-word representation on behalf of the Parish Council and, at the meeting, I raised concerns set out in this document about landscape harm, the cumulative impact on a community that has already accommodated very substantial industrialisation, as well as heritage matters. The applicant brought along a team of eight, which included two barristers. The Cornwall Council side was much smaller and it was much less well-resourced. That said, we did our very best to ensure local perspectives were properly aired and now we await the outcome, which is in the hands of a government inspector.

Since the hearing, I have raised my concerns that Cornwall Council should be better resourced at planning hearings. I made my concerns public at the last meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee and I have since written to senior planners and the chairs and vice-chairs of the unitary authority's planning committees.

5.0 Highway works

I can report that resurfacing of various stretches of Carne Hill, Fore St and Trelavour Road has been timetabled for 3rd-21st August, and local residents may have noticed that staff from Cormac have been out measuring out areas for the works. In addition to this, I am continuing to make representations about the condition of the roadway around Domellick Bridge, where some further patching has been done.

6.0 Cornish Lithium

The Cornish Lithium complex continues to experience anti-social behaviour on their site. There have been a number of incidents, including damage to signage, CCTV equipment, fencing, monitoring equipment and health and safety measures. I understand that some of those involved appear to be younger teenagers, which is very concerning for all involved. The firm is working with the local Police on this.

7.0 Incinerator

Local residents may be aware that the repairs to the incinerator are nearing completion. Internal works have been completed, and they have been steam blowing the system. The damaged line will then be reconnected to the system.

ST ENODER PARISH

8.0 Community Infrastructure Levy

The Parish Clerk and I submitted an expression of interest to Cornwall Council's CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding for funding towards improvements

to the skate park in the Indian Queens Recreation Ground. Over 400 EOIs were submitted and I am pleased to report that our project was one of 40 proposals that were invited to submit a full application.

We will be completing the full application over the next few weeks.

9.0 Tregonning Solar Farm

Last month, I reported that work would soon be starting on the construction of a solar farm [PA22/01511] at Tregonning Farm in St Newlyn East Parish, but that the cable route would be dug along the old A30 from Barton Lane in Fraddon and through Indian Queens, before heading up Highgate Hill and passing under the bypass.

The developers (European Energy) arranged a public meeting about their plans, which took place at Indian Queens Victory Hall on 6th May. I attended along with the Parish Council Chairman, Ross Wimberley.

At the meeting, representatives of the company confirmed that they had listened to representations about the deliveries to the site passing through Summercourt and were working on a revised Traffic Management Plan. I understand that, once the plan is agreed, the lorries will go and turn around at the Carland Cross roundabout before accessing the site along the A3076 (from Mitchell).

In terms of the excavation of the cable route through Fraddon and Indian Queens, this will be later in the year, but could cause delays to works on the roundabout at the bottom of Fraddon Hill. It would not be good for the roundabout improvements to be carried out immediately in advance of the same section of road being dug up for a cable.

10.0 Trelion Solar Farm

On 21st May, I attended a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee, which was considering the application for a solar farm [PA24/05312] at Trelion in St Stephen Parish and the associated cable route [PA25/02936], most of which is through clay working ground and fields in St Enoder Parish. It was deferred for a site inspection meeting.

I raised concerns about the (temporary) impact of works on the paths in the local area, particularly between Pedna Carne and the Gaverigan roundabout, and asked for an additional condition. This is partly because the path in this area is not on the "definitive" map, while the PROWs (public rights of way) shown on that maps do not exist.

11.0 Developments in Higher Fraddon

I have also raised concerns about the increase in housing applications in Higher Fraddon, not least because of the condition of the road through the area and the lack of a pavement. I have met with two senior planners on this matter. They understood my concerns but referenced the top-down changes to the planning system, which are designed to make it easier for people to secure planning

permissions. I am now making further representations to Cormac about the condition of the road.

12.0 Highway works

I can report that the resurfacing of various stretches of the road between Fraddon and Sea View Terrace is scheduled for 2nd-22nd August. These works were originally planned for earlier in the year, but were cancelled because of the storms and need for reactive works on the highway network.

The construction of a build-out and related works outside Ridgewell Terrace is due to take place between 20th-24th July. Improvement works for the roundabout at the bottom of Fraddon Hill were planned to follow, but there is a possibility that these works could be delayed because of the upcoming excavation of the cable route for the Tregonning Solar Farm.

13.0 Closure of pedestrian crossing to St Columb Road station

Last year, Network Rail consulted on a proposal to close the pedestrian crossing over the railway line at St Columb Road, which links Station Approach to the Station. Following representations, they withdrew their proposal.

However, they have now closed the crossing. I had video-conferencing call with Network Rail about this and they have released the following statement to me:

"As part of the risk assessment for the proposed Mid Cornwall Metro timetable, it was identified that the increase in train services would significantly increase the level of risk at the crossing and that additional safety measures would therefore be required. A number of options were explored, including the installation of a Miniature Stop Light (MSL) system, however due to the layout of the station, platform location and the mix of stopping and non-stopping trains, this was not considered a viable solution.

"Following further engagement with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), Network Rail's independent safety regulator, and in light of increasing safety concerns at the site, including trespass and other high-risk behaviour, it was concluded that the crossing could no longer remain open safely. While the original plan had been to undertake a phased closure with advance notice, the level of immediate risk meant the crossing ultimately needed to be closed immediately on safety grounds.

"Whilst the crossing has neither public or private access rights over it, Network Rail understands the concerns this has caused within the community and remains committed to working with local stakeholders to support safer alternative access arrangements".

I will be following up on this further in terms of ensuring safe access to the station.

14.0 Indian Queens Band

It would be an understatement to say that the role of councillor can be quite stressful and challenging. But being a councillor can also be so rewarding, when you are able to support and celebrate what is so special about the communities that you represent.

A real highlight for me in May was being able to help organise an event at Indian Queens Pit to mark the 170th anniversary of the founding of Indian Queens Band. As I don't play a brass instrument, I helped deal with things such as the road closure, which allowed the musicians to parade through the village.

This meant a lot to me – not least because the founder of the Band was my great-great-great uncle Martin Strongman Kessell. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported the event.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

15.0 Advice

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