

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 22nd April – 23rd May 2014

1. National minority status

It has been an exciting month with the Government announcement that the Cornish are to be recognised as a national minority through the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This means that the Cornish people will be afforded the same cultural protections as the Irish, Scots and Welsh.

I was fortunate to be interviewed by a range of newspaper, television and radio outlets, both across Britain and further afield, and I even had the *Have I Got More News for You* programme taking the mickey out of me.

2. Council meetings

I have attended a range of meetings over the last month. These included: Full Council; Environment, Heritage and Planning Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) (an associated informal meeting plus two associated pre-agenda briefings/meetings); informal Transport and Waste PAC; Strategic Planning Committee (briefing on recent appeal decisions); Central Planning Committee; informal Planning and Development Improvement Group; China Clay Area Network Panel; Group Leaders; and Code of Conduct training.

I have also attended a meeting of the working group dealing with the campaign for national minority status.

3. Other meetings

I attended meetings of (i) the Indian Queens Pit Association (trustee), (ii) the Clay Area Training and Work Centre at St Dennis (chairman), (iii) the St Piran Trust, (iv) the Executive of the Rural Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Partnership, and (v) a get-together of Local Action Groups, looking ahead to the next phase of Leader / Community Led Local Development between 2014-2020. This last meeting took place in the Summercourt Memorial Hall.

4. Repair of road bridge near Perrose and Retyn

At the time of writing, the repair work on the road bridge near Perrose and Retyn is nearing completion. It has taken slightly longer than anticipated as the Environment Agency specified that additional works had to be undertaken around the bridge in order to aid the movement of trout and eels. I would like to put on record my thanks to the Cormac team for the relative speed with which this work has been carried out.

5. Tarmaccing of Gaverigan / Highgate roundabout

The resurfacing of the roundabout took place between 6th and 14th May. I dealt with a number of queries about access issues during works, and I would like to put on record my thanks to the Cormac workmen for the manner in which they liaised with local residents and completed the works.

6. Surface dressing

It has been confirmed that the old A30 between Fraddon and Indian Queens, which was patched last year, will soon be surface dressed. The provisional date for the works is mid-late June, and the re-lining of this stretch of road will take place immediately after the surface dressing. I am liaising with officers about the extent of the relining to ensure that all bus stops are adequately marked.

7. Patching on local roads

In recent weeks, I have met with officers of Cornwall Council and Cormac, and I have the following update on possible works on roads in St Enoher Parish.

I have received an assurance that some patching will be carried out on the road leading from Fraddon Hill to Higher Fraddon. I had hoped that certain works were undertaken last year, but I am pleased that I may be able to get them done in the near-future.

The following works are definitely on the provisional list for 2014-2015:

Burthy Row	-	patching
Carnego Lane, Summercourt	-	patching & surface dressing
Halloon roundabout (approach)	-	resurfacing
Narrow Lane to St Enoher	-	patching & surface dressing
Newquay Road, St Columb Road-	-	patching & surface dressing
Trefullock Moor, Summercourt	-	patching
Whitecross to Lukes Shop	-	patching & surface dressing, plus a small drainage improvement at Lukes Shop

It is also my understanding that the following stretches of road have also been added to the provisional list for patching:

Burthy / Chytane
Carvynick, Summercourt

I have been informed that Cormac will also be undertaking a drainage improvement scheme near Melbur Blockworks in order to reduce flooding on the highway.

I am continuing to push for patching in the following areas, which have yet to be added to the provisional list for works.

These include:

Barton Lane, Fraddon
Resurrance to Goonabarn
Trewinnion to Retyn
Trevarren village

8. Drains in Fraddon

I am also pleased to be able to report that a camera survey of the road drains throughout Fraddon has been pencilled in for the first week of June. Local representatives are keen to better understand the nature of the drain network, because of the flooding problems experienced throughout the village during the last two years.

9. Property Level Protection (PLP)

As noted in my previous monthly reports, the unitary authority commenced a new Property Level Protection (PLP) scheme across Cornwall, earlier this year. A number of domestic properties were assessed in February to see what could be done to help safeguard their recently flooded homes against future incidents. I have just had it confirmed that the financial arrangement for the scheme has been put in place and nine properties in St Enoder Parish – seven in Fraddon and two in Chapel Town, Summercourt – will soon be contacted again to arrange for the improvement works to be carried out.

10. Consultation into mobile library services

Cornwall's 12-week consultation on the possible cessation of all mobile library and mobile one stop shop services, including the loss of the Clay Bus, came to an end on 30th April. I can confirm that the Parish Council's response – agreed at the last meeting – was forwarded within the consultation period, as was a further response from the China Clay Area Network Panel which I drafted with the Network Manager for our area.

11. Letter from China Clay Area Network Meeting

As noted in my last monthly report, I drafted a letter in association with the Network Manager of the China Clay Area, on behalf of the China Clay Area Network Panel in February. It was sent to the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors and the members of the Cabinet. A reasonably lengthy letter, it set out local concerns that the five parishes within Clay Country do not receive their "fair share" of Cornwall Council expenditure.

A written response has been received from the Leader of Cornwall Council and this was considered at a meeting of the China Clay Area Network on Thursday 24th April. The meeting was not pleased with the content of Mr Pollard's letter, and I drafted a further letter which was sent to him in the last week of April.

I recently received a further response from Cllr Pollard, which is a separate agenda item for tonight's meeting.

However, printed below is a telling extract:

"Not only do we have to deliver services geographically to 'communities of place,' such as the China Clay Area, but we also have to deliver services to individuals and to specific 'communities of need.' I would therefore strongly argue that an analysis of expenditure solely on geography without looking at need or interest whilst being a costly and resourceful process would not help address any perceived imbalance in service delivery.

"I maintain that the strategic work that the Council is currently doing will help address some or all of the concerns of your network. We are currently developing a Council Strategy – the 'what' – which will be evidence-based and will include socio-demographic information and will set a long-term vision for Cornwall and for local service delivery. This Strategy will be underpinned by major cross cutting service reviews that include themes such as 'customer access' and 'localism and devolution' – the 'how' – which will put the Council and partners in a much stronger position to work with the limited resources available to be able to deliver services across Cornwall and to best meet local need of both communities and individuals."

We are clearly making little progress in relation to our concerns, and I am extremely worried about what the next few months have in store for us as the unitary authority is hit by more and more cuts.

12. Homechoice

Cornwall Council has just commenced a consultation into the Homechoice housing register, which allocates social housing on behalf of Cornwall Housing and a number of registered providers such as Ocean Housing. I personally oppose a number of the changes to the register, which I consider to be retrograde and self-defeating.

The consultation is an item on the agenda of tonight's meeting and I hope to have the opportunity to outline my concerns to the meeting.

13. Planning matters – general

I have been in contact with planning officers on a range of planning applications. This includes the application by Rags SW for revised conditions for the warehouse store at Toldish. The application is to be withdrawn after I discovered that the application was seeking to modify a condition on a planning permission that had never been implemented. It will soon be resubmitted, based on the appropriate consent, with further information about additional conditions.

14. Planning matters – wind turbines

As promised at a previous meeting, I have made a number of inquiries about the planning consent for two wind turbines near Goonabarn, which was granted in 2013, and the subsequent erection of the first turbine. A written report will be tabled at the meeting.

15. 200th anniversary of Wesley Chapel, Indian Queens

I was delighted to be able to attend the concert (with Johnny Cowling and Oll an Gwella) at the Chapel, followed by a “pasty supper” to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Methodism in Indian Queens. It was lovely to see almost 200 people crammed into the Chapel and thoroughly enjoying themselves.

16. Inquiries

Throughout the last month, I have also helped numerous people with advice and guidance on a wide range of issues.