

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 23rd May to 26th June 2016.

Please note: I was on holiday between 3rd and 12th June.

1. Council meetings

I have attended a range of formal meetings at Cornwall Council over the last month. These included: Planning Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) plus two associated briefings, Constitution and Governance Committee, Informal Planning and Development Improvement Group, China Clay Area Network meeting, a meeting of Group Leaders, and a briefing on the Housing and Planning Act.

As well as the meetings listed above, I have had numerous informal meetings with council officers and I attended the final day of the "Examination in Public" (EiP) into the Cornwall Local Plan. In addition, there was a meeting of the St Enoher Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

2. Other meetings

I have attended meetings of the South and East Cornwall Local Action Group, the Fraddon Millennium Green Trust and the Indian Queens Pit Committee (x2).

3. New play area in Indian Queens Recreation Ground

The highlight of the last month for me was being able to publicise the fact that St Enoher Parish Council had secured the funding for the construction of a new play area in the Indian Queens Recreation Ground.

The application for £35,000 which I submitted to the Cornwall SITA Trust, with the help of the Parish Clerk, has been successful. The overall cost of the project will be more than £100,000 and the new play area will replace the somewhat out-dated facilities which are presently in the Recreation Ground.

The new scheme will contain a wonderful array of equipment of various sizes including climbing frames, slides, swings, a zip wire and much more, for children of a range of ages.

The Parish Council has been working for a number of years to pull together a package of funding for this proposal, and we are grateful to everyone who is providing financial support.

As well as the monies from the Cornwall SITA Trust and the Parish Council's own reserves, additional funding for the project has come from:

- Sun Edison; who built a solar farm at Burthy near Fraddon. As part of their planning permission, the company agreed to provide a one-off community payment to St Enoder Parish Council to put towards improvements in the local area.
- Kingsley Developers; who agreed to provide funding towards play equipment in St Enoder Parish (as part of Section 106 agreements) in lieu of not providing small play areas on two of their developments within the locality.

The removal of the existing play equipment is about to start and, at the present time, the construction of the new equipment is due to get underway in the week commencing 11th July. It is anticipated that the play area will be finished in early August.

4. Planning applications at Higher Fraddon

I can report that, on behalf of St Enoder Parish Council, I have produced a detailed statement for the "non-determination" appeal into the "regularisation" application for the biogas plant (PA15/03073) and the associated appeal of Cornwall Council's decision to refuse the related application (PA15/05220) to modify traffic movements to the site.

It is a quite comprehensive statement, which runs to over 11,000 words.

Cornwall Council has also received information to discharge three conditions relating to the consent for the actual pig farm covering odour management, water management and vehicle fleet management procedures. I have made a number of comments on the submitted documents and will update again next month.

5. Road traffic issues in St Enoder Parish

Over the last two-three years, I have regularly spoken to council officers about road and traffic problems in St Enoder Parish, and I have made numerous requests for traffic calming / road safety measures.

I am increasingly frustrated at the extent of Cornwall Council's response to my concerns and, as a result, I have written the following letter to the Prioritisation and Funding Team Leader.

I would also formally request a meeting, or meetings, with yourself and the appropriate Cabinet Member, plus whichever officers you would deem appropriate to attend.

For ease of reference, I will discuss my concerns in the distinct sections.

Requests for traffic schemes

In 2013, councillors were invited to put forward proposed traffic or road safety works for consideration. I did as requested and suggested a comprehensive list of proposals, which I have discussed with you on a number of occasions.

The formal response to my representations was published in March and, as you will undoubtedly recall, I have made my views known to you on what I consider to be an inadequate response. I am not happy with the feedback received, which broadly seeks to justify no actions being taken.

Indeed, I am so frustrated at the lack of schemes going forward that I question whether the exercise should have raised the hopes of elected members that some schemes would be delivered.

I wish to challenge the nature of the responses, and will take each in turn.

- Speed reduction measures / traffic calming at Fraddon, Indian Queens and St Columb Road

The measures requested may be summarised as follows:

Indian Queens Speed Reduction Measures

Traffic Calming measures at entry points and throughout village as necessary. Permanent VAS signs to be considered

Fraddon Speed Reduction Measures

Traffic Calming measures at entry points and throughout village as necessary. Permanent VAS signs to be considered

St Columb Road Speed Reduction Measures

Traffic Calming measures at entry points and throughout village as necessary. Permanent VAS signs to be considered

Parka Road, St Columb Road Traffic Calming

Possible priority build-out and or VAS signs to be considered.

The response from Cornwall Council was as follows:

Since April 2013, there has been significant structural change within the Council, with the result that some funded programmes and the corresponding management teams, no longer exist. There are no longer any funded programmes aimed specifically at works of this type. Analysis of the accident records at these locations indicates a limited accident history and further investigation will be carried out by the Road Safety Team to assess whether this warrants more detailed attention. In the meantime, subject to the outcome of further analysis by the Accident Team, there is insufficient evidence to justify funding for measures at this location. However, as this location is in an area which may be considered for development in the future the requests will be retained on a list for consideration as part of any future planning or development related issues.

I do not consider this answer to be adequate and I am particularly unhappy that it is suggested that schemes should be retained on a list and could be funded by further development.

With respect, there is an increasing number of traffic problems in St Enoder Parish because of the amount of housing and other developments in recent years. In the last twenty-five years, the amount of housing stock in St Enoder Parish – most of it in Fraddon, Indian Queens and St Columb Road – has increased by around 60%. It has been one of the fastest growing parishes in Cornwall and we have not received the same investment in road improvements that has happened elsewhere. It is also the case that there are extant planning consents for some 200 housing units – either under construction or still to be started.

It is surely the case that Cornwall Council should be looking to address present issues in my local communities, at least partly caused by housing growth, rather than seeking to argue that the area should accommodate yet more development.

In addition, I would request further information about the investigation work to be carried out by the Road Safety Team as referenced above.

I have since received a further report from a local resident about an accident in Fraddon (see below).

- Traffic management measures at Fraddon, Indian Queens and St Columb Road

The measures requested may be summarised as follows:

St Francis Rd, St Columb Road traffic management

Traffic management measures to resolve, congestion, accessibility, delivery and safety issues relating to the Co-op store in this location

Fraddon / Indian Queens Traffic Order

Changes to parking restrictions in Fraddon and Indian Queens

The response from Cornwall Council was as follows:

A fund will be available countywide for Traffic Regulation Reviews. However this will only cover one area wide consolidation order per year. This request would need to be considered with respect to a much wider review of the area. However, these types of request can attract differing views and even dispute on what is appropriate. Where resources are limited, it will be imperative that there is strong local agreement and consensus on what is required. The use of this fund will need to be agreed through Highways network managers. This area has been considered previously for Traffic Regulation Orders.

I am also concerned at this because of Cornwall Council's approach to the enforcement of double yellow lines. It is clear that the priority for the unitary authority is for civic enforcement officers to be active in urban areas and it is rare to see them active within the parishes of the China Clay Area.

Likewise, I would question how new yellow lines might be agreed as a priority for this area, when it is not deemed a priority for actual enforcement actions?

- Indian Queens Primary School Transportation Improvements

The measures requested may be summarised as follows:

Range of measures including: Pedestrian crossing improvements, parking restrictions, footpath links/improvements and localised road widening (The Drang)

The response from Cornwall Council was as follows:

Whilst there is no specific funding available to carry out this work, the request will be retained on a list for consideration as part of any future development related issues. Following discussions with the Planning Team, a more detailed response will be sent separately to this request.

I must say that I am perplexed at this response. The above improvements were all included within a Travel Plan submitted by Cornwall Council in 2014 as part of its planning application to construct additional classrooms at Indian Queens School – and which only Cornwall Council could deliver.

Though the community welcomed the construction of the new classrooms, there continues to be a great deal of concern about the traffic congestion and related problems around the School. The delivery of all the elements within the Travel Plan are vital, especially if Cornwall Council is to maintain any form of credibility with the residents in my local area.

It is my view that the above response which states that there is "no funding available" and that the works should be "retained on a list for consideration as part of any future development related issues" is frankly inappropriate.

It is also the case that I have not received the more detailed response promised above.

- Summercourt Crossroads - Pedestrian Crossing

The measure requested may be summarised as follows:

Introduce pedestrian phase to existing signalised junction to improve safety and accessibility to services

The response from Cornwall Council was as follows:

It may be possible for pedestrian phases to be installed at signals, at marginal cost, as part of future maintenance work. Again, not aware of any significant proposed developments in this area. A pedestrian/Vehicle count and review of accidents will be carried out to see if the location meets the numeric criteria set out in Cornwall Council policy.

I would point out that this crossroads at the centre of the village includes the A3058, which links Newquay and St Austell, and is extremely busy. It is also the case that many families with children live to the west of the junction and cross it on a daily basis taking their children to the primary school which is at the other end of the village.

If the cost of providing a pedestrian crossing here by controlling the timing of the lights is "marginal," then surely we should just get on and do it. The benefits to the local community would be self-evident.

- Summercourt Speed Reduction Measures

The measures requested may be summarised as follows:

Traffic calming measures at entry points and throughout village as necessary. Permanent VAS signs to be considered

The response from Cornwall Council was as follows:

As with traffic calming requests and speed reductions measures generally, there is currently no specific funded programme for speed check warning lights, for which there is a significant number of requests. However it is a measure which can be funded alternatively (e.g. Developer or Parish Council), provided an agreement is reached with the Council regarding maintenance. This location will be retained on the list of requests for consideration with larger scale developments.

I also consider this response to be inadequate. Summercourt is a small village and it is unlikely that there will be any large-scale developments in the near future to fund such works. The traffic issues are nonetheless very significant and Cornwall Council should take some responsibility, for example, for reducing the speed of existing traffic and putting at least some road safety measures in place.

- Summercourt School 20mph Zone

The measures requested may be summarised as follows:

20mph Limit outside the school. Variable message signs?

The response from Cornwall Council was as follows:

A meeting with the Planning Team did not reveal any proposed developments of sufficient scale in the Summercourt area which could generate circumstances to warrant financial support for this request. This will be retained on list for development officer consideration in the event of any large scale developments which arise. There is currently no funded programme of 20 mph zones or single stretches of road. Analysis of the accident records at this location identifies limited accident history and further investigation will be carried out by the Road Safety Team to assess whether this warrants more detailed attention. In the meantime, as with all other requests for 20 mph speed limits in Cornwall, subject to the review of accidents in the area, it is unlikely that funding will become available for this request in the foreseeable future.

Once again, I am concerned at the tenor of the response and the failure, as yet, to put in place a 20 mph speed restriction (and associated improvements) outside Summercourt Primary School which is on the main road into the village, where cars do travel quite fast.

I do acknowledge that the Transport Planning and Strategy Officer has contacted me, following a meeting of the Transport Policy Advisory Committee where I raised concerns on this matter, to inform me that she would be "requesting speed readings for this location to provide and confirm the necessary evidence that a speeding problem exists at this location." I understand that the officer in question is now on maternity leave and I would welcome an update on this request.

- Priorities?

I am concerned that my non-urban division is being denied fair consideration, when it comes to matters of traffic and road safety. But I am particularly frustrated at how the responses to the above requests have been broadly sidelined, whereas the unitary authority is developing transport plans for various urban areas.

This is frankly unjust and, as you may already know, I raised these concerns when the latest iteration of the Cornwall Transport Plan was agreed and voted against the document at Full Council.

This imbalance in the prioritisation of schemes is something which I feel needs to be reconsidered.

I would welcome a meeting to discuss all the above requests as well as the approach of the Council to road safety in general.

Road safety problems at New Road, Fraddon

I have previously raised concerns about the ongoing, and very serious, traffic problems at New Road near Fraddon, and sent a short report to you

on 31st March 2016. As you will recall, the location is in open countryside to the south of Fraddon, on the road to Brighton Cross.

I reattach this report for your information which shows a number of road incidents which included serious accidents outside the cottages in this location.

There have been concerns raised about speeding in this area for many years. In the 2009-2013 council, I tried to get a reduced speed limit and traffic calming at this location. This was not allowed because of the small number of affected properties. Some improved signage was installed but that has not had the desired effect.

As you will see, in recent months, there have been a number of accidents and a significant number of cars have been written off outside the cottages and people taken to hospital. I believe it is time that we seriously investigated some form of traffic calming to ameliorate this situation before, quite frankly, someone is seriously injured or even killed.

I am grateful to you that you have taken this forward with the Road Safety Team, but I have to say that I am concerned at the verbal updates that you have provided me with, which at this point indicate that there is not a road safety issue at this location.

I cannot accept that. It is my view that this present situation is untenable and Cornwall Council has to act. There is a serious issue at this location and I believe it does need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

I would request a meeting with all the relevant officers to discuss the problems set out in the attached report and I would also be pleased to meet the same officers on site.

Road safety problems at Sea View Terrace, Fraddon

The issues at Sea View Terrace in terms of speeding traffic is very similar to those set out in the above section on New Road, Fraddon. In the 2009-2013 council, I also attempted to get a reduced speed limit and traffic calming at this location. This was not allowed because of the small number of affected properties. Some improved signage was installed but again this has not had the desired effect.

In the above report on New Road, I did formally request that the Council also investigates the extent of the incidents recorded by the Police at this location and consider whether additional measures would be appropriate in this area.

I would be grateful if this could be done.

Accident outside of Ridgewell Terrace, Fraddon

You will hopefully recall, that some months ago, I brought your attention to accidents outside Ridgewell Terrace in Fraddon. I asked that the

associated request be added to the list for potential works and we agreed that it would be associated with the requested "speed reduction measures / traffic calming at Fraddon, Indian Queens and St Columb Road" set out above.

I have now received an email informing me of yet another accident at this location where a parked car has suffered considerable harm.

I will forward this information to you in a separate email.

As I am failing to make much headway with my requests for traffic calming, etc, I would ask that the Road Safety Team look at the recent incidents near Ridgewell Terrace and liaise direct with the complainant about the various points that have been raised and the possibility of build-outs to protect parked cars in the village.

I have not had a formal response to my letter and will update the Parish Council at our next meeting.

6. Highway maintenance

Cornwall Council has given notice through the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Temporary Traffic Restriction) that maintenance works will be carried out on the following roads in the coming months.

Patching and surfacing

- B3279 from Gaverigan to Carne Hill, St Dennis (full length of road will be affected)
- B3279 from Highgate Hill Roundabout to Alton Cottage, Gaverigan (the roundabout at Highgate Hill to approx. 100m east of Alton Cottage)
- Moorland Road, Indian Queens (from Toldish Road to Highgate Hill)
- Lodge Way, Indian Queens
- Access to Trevarren Farm (full length of road will be affected)
- From junction north-west of Perrose Farm to Kimberley, Summercourt (full length of road will be affected)
- Narrow Lane, Penhale (full length of road will be affected)
- Carnego Lane, Summercourt (full length of road will be affected)
- Pencorse Lane from Penscawn Farm to Beacon Road, Summercourt (full length of road will be affected)

Surface dressing

- Barton Lane, Fraddon St Enoder (full length of road will be affected)
- Arrallas Road, Summercourt St Enoder (full length of road will be affected)
- Road from Arrallas Road to Trendeal Lane, Summercourt (full length of road will be affected)
- Junction west of Resparva to Arrallas Road (full length of road will be affected)

Please note much of this surface dressing has already been done.

7. Cornwall Local Plan

I attended the final day of the Examination in Public (EiP) into the proposed Cornwall Local Plan, at Newquay's Atlantic Hotel, on 24th May.

The Inspector has since released his "Schedule of Post Hearing Changes for Consultation." This sets out the changes that he deems necessary to make the Plan "sound" in the eyes of central government. He has now asked the Council to publish the changes for consultation and to then forward responses to him before he provides his final recommendations to the unitary authority.

At the previous session (May 2015), the Inspector instructed Cornwall Council to make a series of changes to the Plan as originally proposed. This included an uplift in the overall housing target.

The Inspector has accepted the Council's revisions and he has not sought to increase the overall housing target of 52,500 dwellings for the period 2010 to 2030. He has however inserted an additional target for 2,550 bed-spaces in communal facilities for older people.

Other changes have been made largely because of shifts in government policy and to take account of the views of statutory consultees.

These include changes to the affordable housing policy to make it consistent with the Government's view that such properties should not be provided on small sites, changes to certain sections following representations from Natural England and Historic England, and a range of changes which the Inspector considered appropriate to add greater clarity to policies such as, for example, that relating to the Council's approach to infill.

Having opposed the so-called "eco-community," I was disappointed that the Inspector did not agree to the removal of the scheme from the Plan.

The consultation into the proposed changes is likely to be published before the end of June for a six week period, and the Inspector has stated that he is hoping to issue his final report towards the end of September.

8. Planning Policy Advisory Committee; 23rd June

At the above meeting, I was re-elected Chairman of the Planning PAC for the next 12 months. This committee has a considerable work programme and will be devising a range of planning documents associated with the Local Plan.

9. Neighbourhood Plan Working Group; 21st June

I am also pleased that we have re-commenced meetings of the Working Group. The Group will be holding regular meetings and the next three sessions have been organised for 5th July, 19th July and 2nd August.

10. Inquiries

In the last month, I have also helped numerous people with advice and guidance. Issues have included housing problems, various enforcement matters and so much more.