

Cornwall Council report Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 26th July – 29th August 2021

1.0 Council and other meetings

In terms of physical meetings, during the last five weeks I attended the Constitution & Governance Committee and the Chief Officers Employment Committee at Cornwall Council, meetings of St Dennis Parish Council and St Enoher Parish Council, as well as the AGM of the South & East Cornwall Community-Led Local Development Local Action Group. This took place at the impressive new Venton Conference Centre at Chapel Town, Summercourt.

I also attended a range of meetings by TEAMS or ZOOM video-conferencing. These have included the Central Sub-Area Planning Committee, the China Clay Area Community Network Panel, the China Clay Community Support Group, a briefing for councillors from within the China Clay Area, three further sessions about regeneration and other issues in Clay Country, and two meetings of the St Dennis & Nanpean Community Fund.

In addition, I have had a number of further online meetings about a range of local issues. Some of these are referenced in this report.

2.0 Coronavirus

The last few weeks have been very concerning about the spread of Covid-19 across Cornwall and, in mid August, it was reported that Cornwall had 11 of the 20 areas across the country with the highest levels of infection. I have tried to keep up with all the data, so that I could advise local people asking questions about the present situation.

Figures are released in somewhat contrived MSOAs (Middle Layer Super Output Areas), with names that do not fully reflect the areas that they cover.

St Enoher Parish lies within the St Columb Major & St Mawgan MSOA, which was recently one of the locations within the top 20 for Covid-19. At the time of writing this report, 52 people in this area were known to be infected (454.9 per 100,000) – down from the 125 individuals in the previous week.

St Dennis Parish lies within the Roche & Goss Moor MSOA, in which the most recent figures show that 46 people in this area were known to be infected (582.8 per 100,000) – down from the 73 individuals in the previous week.

Statistics at the end of August show that, in St Columb Major & St Mawgan MSOA, 86.6% of adults have had their first jab and 78.9% have had their second, while in the Roche & Goss Moor MSOA, 83.4% of adults have had their first jab and 76.5% their second as well.

3.0 Standing up for a better deal for the China Clay Area

As one of the four councillors for Clay Country, I have been spending a considerable amount of time working to persuade senior officers within Cornwall Council to prioritise the needs of our area.

The senior officer who attends meetings of the China Clay Area Network Panel is Sophie Hosking, the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods, and we were pleased to host her for the day on 4th August and discuss a wide range of key issues for our locality.

Having produced a "Towards a Strategy" document for Clay Country, we have also been preparing for an upcoming meeting (1st September) when we will be presenting our views to senior officers from the Economic Growth & Development Directorate about the needs of the five parishes of Clay Country.

4.0 Parliamentary Boundary Review

I am pleased to be able to report that Cornwall Council's Constitution & Governance Committee unanimously objected to the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for new parliamentary constituencies, which would split the China Clay Area between two different seats.

As previously reported, the proposal places three of the four Clay Country divisions within a modified St Austell & Newquay Constituency – namely Penwithick & Boscoppa (comprising Treverbyn Parish minus Bugle), St Dennis & St Enoder (comprising two whole parishes), and St Stephen (comprising St Stephen-in-Brannel Parish minus Whitemoor). But the fourth division – Roche & Bugle (comprising the whole of Roche Parish plus Bugle from Treverbyn Parish and Whitemoor from St Stephen-in-Brannel Parish) – would be within a modified South East Cornwall Constituency.

On behalf of the Cornwall Councillors for the Clay Area, I made a written submission to the Committee and I also spoke at the meeting.

5.0 Community Chest

As a Cornwall Councillor, I have been allocated £3,000 which I can distribute to local community organisations. Grants should be above £100 and the maximum grant is usually £1,000. If you are interested in applying, please get in contact with me.

ST DENNIS PARISH ISSUES

6.0 Local surgeries

I held my first surgeries in St Dennis Parish, which took place at ClayTAWC, on Friday 6th and Monday 9th August. It was good to meet a number of people and the issues brought to my attention included highway / traffic concerns and environmental matters, plus concerns about anti-social behaviour. I am now working on addressing these issues.

Some 15 people also attended to raise concerns about issues relating to St Dennis Cemetery, which is owned and operated by the Parish Council. I have fed the representations through to the Parish Council and I am pleased to hear that the Council's Cemetery Committee will soon be carrying out a survey to find out people's views about the regulations for the management of the Cemetery.

7.0 Cornish Lithium

On 9th August, I was pleased to join Alan Baker and Kate Harcourt from Cornish Lithium for a site meeting at Trelavour to find out more about their plans for the extraction of lithium from land on the south side of St Dennis. I look forward to receiving further updates, which I will strive to share with local residents.

8.0 Neighbourhood Plan for St Dennis Parish

Parish councillors are keen to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for St Dennis Parish and I attended a meeting with the Parish Clerk and two councillors on 5th August. As I have considerable experience with planning matters, and chaired the committee which produced the St Enoder Neighbourhood Plan, I have offered to help out with this work.

There is, however, great uncertainty about neighbourhood planning because the UK Government has announced that it is looking to make significant changes to how the planning system operates and it is not clear how this will affect the standing of Neighbourhood Plans.

But at this stage, I have started pulling together some background information on housing and the provision of employment land which people may find of interest.

8.1 Background information – housing

The Local Plan includes a target of 52,500 new dwellings for Cornwall for the period 2010-2030. The Clay Area's share of the Cornwall housing target is 1,800 new dwellings for the plan period (not including the "eco-town" development near Penwithick).

Figures from Cornwall Council's "Local Plan Housing Implementation Strategy 2021" show that the housing target for Clay Country will definitely be surpassed during the plan period.

Completions (small sites <10)	543
Completions (large sites 10+)	773
Permission (small sites with planning permission <10)	250
Permission (large sites with planning permission 10+)	265
Sites (subject to signing of Section 106 agreement)	150
Anticipated windfalls (small sites <10)	144
Neighbourhood Plan site allocations	140

This presently projects the delivery of 2,265 properties – a surplus of 465 housing units.

In terms of the parish of St Dennis, a total of 76 dwellings were completed between 2010 and 2021, of which 16 were affordable homes. As of April 2021, there were extant planning permissions for 34 open market dwellings, of which four were under construction.

Council records also show that St Dennis has a total of 236 publicly-owned rental units, which equates to 19% of housing stock at this time – this is significantly higher than the average figure of 11% for Cornwall as a whole.

8.2 Background information – employment land

The Cornwall Local Plan seeks 13,250m² of office floorspace and 13,000m² of industrial floorspace within the China Clay Area.

The latest figures show that 22,319m² of industrial floorspace has been constructed, while a further 23,171m² has been consented. Together this equates to 349.9% of the Local Plan target, which is significantly more than all other parts of Cornwall. In addition, 7,883m² of office floorspace has been completed, while a further 5,326m² of office space has planning permission.

In terms of the parish of St Dennis, 2,021m² of industrial floorspace has been delivered, along with 258m² of office floorspace.

9.0 Highway issues

9.1 Hendra Road

As noted above, I have had a range of highway concerns brought to my attention. This includes speeding traffic at the very southern section of Hendra Road. I checked and found out that speed readings have not been taken in this area for a few years. I requested that Cornwall Council undertake some fresh speed readings and this has been done.

I will publicise the results as soon as I receive them.

9.2 Waiting restrictions near Wesley Place

The 21-day consultation for proposed double yellow lines near Wesley Place on Carne Hill is imminent. It had been hoped that the consultation would have commenced in August. This hasn't happened but it shouldn't be too long now.

10.0 Proposed solar farm at Trerice Manor Farm

Statkraft UK have sought a screening opinion (PA21/08542) from Cornwall Council to see if they would need to carry out an environmental impact assessment as part of their upcoming application for a solar farm. It is not a formal application as such, and the submission is based around the information

which formed the basis of the pre-application consultation that took place in April.

At this point, it is not known to what extent Statkraft UK will make changes to their original proposal when they submit the actual application.

11.0 Recycling bins

In the last term of the unitary authority, the recycling facilities in the car park off Wellington Road were removed. The new Conservative administration has stated that the recycling banks can be re-instated, where there is popular demand. I have discussed this with parish councillors and I have formally asked for such bins to be placed back within the car park.

ST ENODER PARISH ISSUES

12.0 Highway matters

12.1 Proposed new footway between Harvenna Heights estate and Indian Queens School

I am very pleased to be able to report that part of the field to the west of Indian Queens School has finally been transferred from Cornwall Council to St Enoder Parish Council. The School has started work on its enlarged play area within the remainder of the field, and the Parish Council will now be able to proceed with the works to construct the footway between the Harvenna Heights estate and the School. The path will go around the School's enlarged recreation area.

In recent weeks, I have worked with the Clerk of the Parish Council to get the extent of the Parish Council's new land marked out, the grass cut and a skipload of rubbish removed from the area. I also had meetings with Indian Queens School and Ocean Housing about the arrangements for constructing the new footway.

I am also pleased to be able to confirm that the Parish Council has appointed a contractor to construct the footway, and the works are scheduled to be carried out in late October.

12.2 Proposed works on A3058 through Summercourt

In my last update, I reported that the 21-day consultation on the A3058 improvements (including the extension of the 30mph limit on Beacon Road, two vehicle-activated signs and signalised pedestrian crossings at the traffic lights) would commence in August.

I am extremely disappointed that this did not happen. I have been informed that there have been delays in getting "cost estimates" for the works, which are now expected in mid September. I have been assured by officers that they have started preparing the consultation documents so "that as soon as the estimates are returned, reviewed and agreed, public consultation is able to get underway as soon as possible."

I am continuing to receive assurances that the resultant works will still take place in this coming Autumn / Winter.

12.3 Summercourt School

I was also expecting a 21-day consultation on proposals for enhanced safety measures outside Summercourt School (including the extension of the 30mph limit to the east, two vehicle-activated signs and a "variable" 20mph speed limit during school drop-off and pick-up times). But I have been informed that the Council is prioritising straightforward works outside Schools, and it has been deemed that a pre-works consultation is no longer necessary – though, through a new mechanism, the operation of the changes will be monitored.

The signs and the electrical equipment have been ordered, and installation has been timetabled for the last week in October. The signs should then become operational in early-mid November.

12.4 Proposed zebra crossings on Chapel Road and St Francis Road, Indian Queens

I have been briefed on the feedback from the consultation for the crossings, which took place in March/April, and I will update further in the near-future.

12.5 Sea View Terrace

On 26th July, I had a meeting with officers about their work looking at road safety problems at Sea View Terrace, on the road between Fraddon and St Stephens. They agreed to look further back through their records about incidents along this stretch of road in order to further inform their deliberations.

12.6 Penhale

I am continuing to make representations about the parking problems at Penhale, near the Kingsley Village complex, and I am continuing to push for double yellow lines in this location. I have put considerable pressure on the planning service because of the planning consent and the obligations which went with the development. Progress has not been what I had hoped and I have now further escalated the issue with the Transport team. In particular, I have spoken to both the Service Director for Transport and the Local Transport & Road Safety Lead.

12.7 Road through Fraddon and St Columb Road

As noted previously, Cornwall Council have agreed to do a full review of road safety issues on the stretch of road from Penhale and through Fraddon and St Columb Road. There will soon be an "inception" meeting for the review, which I will be attending.

12.8 Speed monitoring

12.8.1 Parish Council speed visor

The Parish Clerk and I continue to move the Parish Council owned vehicle activated flashing sign around the Parish every few weeks. During August, the sign has been at the approach into St Columb Road from Fraddon.

We have been attaching the sign to streetlights, but cannot use some of the bigger streetlights (with larger circumferences) or telegraph poles. This does mean there are some locations where the sign cannot be erected. For example, we have had a request at Chapel Town where it would be difficult to locate the sign, so I have requested Cornwall Council do some speed readings in this area.

12.8.2 Carnego Lane

Earlier this year, some speed readings were carried out in Carnego Lane, Summercourt, at the request of local residents. I have been supplied with the results and these are available from me on request.

I can however report that the average speeds were 20.5mph (southbound) and 21mph (northbound), and that 98.5% of vehicles were travelling at speeds within the 30mph speed limit.

13.0 Planning matters

13.1 Four commercial units at Indian Queens Industrial Estate and new access onto Moorland Road, Indian Queens (PA21/01683)

An application for a new access into the Indian Queens Estate from Moorland Road and the provision of 15 parking spaces was refused in November 2020 at a meeting of the Central Sub-Area Planning Committee. A subsequent application for four houses within the industrial estate was then submitted, but later withdrawn.

This latest application for four employment units was submitted in the same general area, and included a new access. It was located in the position of trees that had previously screened the industrial estate but had already been ripped out. A petition opposing the development was signed by 92 local residents, who were particularly unhappy about the impact of extra traffic near their properties.

I referred this to the Central Sub-Area Planning Committee on 2nd August. I spoke against the application as did Ross Wimberley on behalf of St Enoder Parish Council and councillors unanimously rejected the proposal. The councillors did not feel able to refuse the application on highway grounds, but did throw it out for the following reason:

The proposal, by reasons of the proposed entrance/exit onto Moorland Road, removing part of the existing stone wall/Cornish hedge along the northern boundary of the site fronting Moorland Road and by introducing the new industrial buildings themselves, will harm the distinctive character of an area prominent to public view. The

application is, therefore, contrary to policies 2 and 12 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030.

14.1 Solar farm applications

14.1.1 Tresithney Farm

As reported above in relation to the proposed solar farm on land in St Dennis Parish, Statkraft UK have sought a screening opinion (PA21/08039) from Cornwall Council to see if they would need to carry out an environmental impact assessment as part of their upcoming application for a solar farm.

At this point, it is not known to what extent Statkraft UK will make changes to their original proposal when they submit the actual application.

14.1.2 Tregonning Farm

As previously reported, there is an emerging proposal for a further solar farm, which is located immediately outside of St Enoder Parish, at Tregonning Farm in St Newlyn East Parish. The cabling would nonetheless run to the Indian Queens Power Station.

A webinar on the proposal is due to take place on Wednesday 8th September at 7pm. The link to register for the event is at tregonningsolarfarm.co.uk. If you interested in attending, please scroll to the end of the home page for the link.

14.2 Planning in principle for five dwellings, Highgate Hill, Indian Queens (PA20/08024)

On 20th November 2020, this planning application for housing units at the top of Highgate Hill was refused and the applicant has appealed the decision to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol. The application was against policies in the St Enoder Neighbourhood Plan and I have produced a detailed appeal statement on behalf of the Parish Council, which was in agreement with the unitary authority's reasons for refusal. It was submitted on 23rd August.

14.3 Seven dwellings in Higher Fraddon (PA21/05945)

An application has been submitted for seven new properties on the site of derelict farm buildings at Higher Fraddon. This would be in place of an extant planning permission for five housing units allowed via a new mechanism known as "Q Class" which allows buildings on farm holdings to be converted into dwellings as long as they are structurally sound.

14.4 New industrial units at Toldish

Planning consent has also been granted for two new industrial units at Toldish.

15.0 St Enoder byway 31

I can also report that Cornwall Council has redone the surface for byway 31 in the Toldish area.

16.0 Green spaces

There are a number of small green or play spaces within local estates that are owned by Cornwall Council and where Cormac should cut the grass and carry out maintenance. I am very disappointed that, once again, these works are not being carried out as regularly as they should.

I have made further representations in recent weeks. The areas of unkempt grass have been cut as a consequence and I have also been promised that the hedges around the open space at St James View, Fraddon, and the garden area in Clodan Mews, St Columb Road, will be placed on Cormac's work programme and tidied up in the Autumn.

I have also requested that all the play equipment in these areas have a thorough clean.

17.0 Ongoing projects

Other projects I have been working on with the Parish Council include the rebuilding of part of the wall around the old St Enoder Cemetery, and the preparations for the construction of a public toilet in Indian Queens Recreation Ground.