

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 26th November 2023 – 20th January 2024

1.0 Some good news

This is my first report of 2024 and I am pleased that I can start with some good news. In the late summer of last year, I worked with two local organisations to submit funding applications to Cornwall Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Fund. I am extremely pleased that both applications have been successful.

The first application was for £70,000 for the Indian Queens Under-Fives Pre-School. The money will be used to make improvements to their existing Pre-School building. The cladding around the exterior of the structure has been failing for a number of years, and new external cladding will be installed. In addition, the internal walls of the Centre will be replaced, a new non-slip floor surface will be installed and the kitchen will be refurbished.

The second application was for £42,000 for the Fraddon Millennium Green Trust. The funding will install a wooden tractor and trailer slide (in the location of the locomotive that had to be removed in 2023) and the replacement of the existing safety surfacing across the park with a newer "wetpour" surface.

I am also chuffed because this means that the total amount of funding I have secured through grant applications, specifically for works in my division, has now passed one million pounds.

I can also confirm that St Enoder Parish Council will be supporting both of the above projects with funding.

2.0 Council and other meetings

Over the last two months, I have attended a range of physical meetings. At Cornwall Council, these have included Full Council (2), Cabinet, Strategic Planning, Customers and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (3), meeting of Chairs of the various Community Area Partnerships (CAPs) and a meeting with officers about the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy,

I have also attended a range of online Cornwall Council meetings via Teams / Zoom video-conferencing. These have included "pre-meetings" for Customers and Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2), informal meeting of Constitution and Governance Committee, Scrutiny Improvement Review Informal Working Group (4), National Minority Working Group, session with officers and senior councillors about the Homechoice Review, meetings about a strategy for the GRT community, a briefing on the Mid Cornwall Metro project, meetings about the production of a White Paper (2), a meeting of councillors from the China Clay and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership, and a briefing in advance of the January Full Council. In addition, I attended a Teams meeting about the possibility of a multi-use trail for St Dennis.

Other physical meetings have included St Dennis Parish Council, St Enoder Parish Council (3) plus a meeting between the Council and the local football teams at the Indian Queens Recreation Ground, a Cornish Lithium "coffee morning" session at ClayTAWC, a meeting of the Indian Queens Pit Committee and a number of meetings at ClayTAWC.

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

CORNWALL COUNCIL

3.0 Homechoice

I have written previously about the review into the Homechoice system, through which publicly-owned rental properties are allocated, and I have outlined my concerns. A meeting was organised for 30th November 2023 for me to discuss my concerns in detail. A number of officers were present including the Service Director for Planning and Housing (Chief Planning Officer) and the Head of Planning and Housing Policy, plus the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. I am awaiting feedback on the points I have raised.

4.0 New approach to waste collection

The new waste collection (fortnightly waste and recycling collections in alternative weeks) has commenced across most of my division, and I had a few queries about what has been happening.

5.0 "Level 2 devolution deal"

On Tuesday 28th November, the ten-strong ruling Cabinet on Cornwall Council voted to proceed with the so-called "level 2 devolution deal." But it is not about devolution at all. It is simply a range of very limited accommodations between central government and Cornwall's unitary authority. I was not surprised that the editorial in the Cornish Guardian, in early December, stated that the deal "doesn't amount to much."

I remain disappointed that the "deal" is so insubstantial. But one thing that did please me is that the administration in Truro acknowledges Cornwall needs deeper devolution. It has committed itself to producing a White Paper "making the case for much greater autonomy over Cornwall's political and economic life." This will involve a cross-party "reference group" made up of the leaders of the five political groups on the authority. The language in the report about the White Paper is certainly more ambitious and notes that the document would be a "new and bold vision for a historic national-Cornwall constitutional settlement." It adds that "the White Paper will give further amplification to Cornwall's credentials as a nation that can contribute even more to creating a stronger and more sustainable United Kingdom."

I am actively participating in this project. I have attended two meetings already and I am also feeding information to the team from the Local Government Information Unit that are engaged with the project.

ST DENNIS PARISH ISSUES

6.0 Planning matters

I have updates on a couple of applications.

- **Battery storage areas [PA23/04504 / PA23/06527]**. The first of these applications have been approved, while I understand from the planning officer that he is minded to approve the second application as well. The two proposals, each for 50MW, will collectively replace an extant consent for 100MW, which was approved on 2nd February 2022.
- **Construction of a house [PA23/04860]**. St Dennis Parish Council has raised a strong objection to this proposal for a single dwelling on Hendra Road, next to Jubilee Terrace. It has been refused by Cornwall Council for the following reason:

The proposal would, by reason of the scale and proportions of the plot would be at odds with the prevailing character of the village and fail to provide continuity with the existing built form and character of the surrounding locality. The development would be contrary to the aims of Policies 1, 2, 12 and 21 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030, paragraphs 8, 11, 124, 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

- **Lithium hydroxide demonstration facility [PA23/09395]**. A "prior approval" for this development at the Trelavour Dryers has also been agreed.

7.0 Possible multi-use trail

On 18th December, a number of senior officers including the Head of Connectivity and Transport Policy met with me to discuss my representations about the possibility of the creation of a multi-use trail along the old railway line between St Dennis and the Goss Moor nature reserve. The team at Cornwall Council has asked the Parish Council and I to approach those individuals who own sections of the trackbed to understand whether they would be supportive of such a project.

8.0 ClayTAWC

Following the confirmation of the funding to purchase the Old School Building for ClayTAWC, it has been great to start the conveyancing process.

9.0 Cornish Lithium

I popped into the coffee morning hosted by Cornish Lithium on 20th January and I am in the process of getting a fresh meeting with the company. I understand that their geotechnical assessments around the skytips are ongoing and a summary of the findings is anticipated to be published in late February.

ST ENODER PARISH ISSUES

10.0 Grant applications for Indian Queens Under-5s and the Fraddon Millennium Green

See paragraph 1.0 for an update on these two successful applications.

11.0 Planning matters

As always, there continue to be a number of significant planning applications in St Enoder Parish. Listed below are a few applications with updates.

- **Solar farm at Burthy Row / Chytane, Fraddon (PA23/01893).** This application was considered at a meeting of the unitary authority's Strategic Planning Committee on 14th December. It was approved by Cornwall Councillors. In the lead-up to this meeting, I made representations about the proposed community benefit associated with the scheme and ensured that it was increased from a proposed one-off payment of £150,000 to an annual payment £17,000 per annum for a period of 40 years [£680,000]. I also sought and secured additional screening for one property near the development.
- **Nine dwellings to the east of Motor Showroom, Summercourt (PA23/08722).** This application has been supported by the Parish Council. There had previously been a consent for houses on the site and there have been no objections from local residents.
- **Five dwellings off Pit Lane, Indian Queens (PA23/09094).** This application is in an enclosure, which had been part-developed without first securing planning permission in the past. The Parish Council has objected to this proposal.
- **One residential dwelling in place of the old pumping station, Higher Fraddon (PA23/07359).** A number of local residents have objected to this proposal.

In addition, I can confirm that the appeal into Cornwall Council's decision to refuse a dwelling at Higher Fraddon (PA23/03650) has just commenced. Submissions have to be submitted by 16th February.

12.0 Flooding at Trefullock

The recent weather has caused some localised flooding around my division. One of the worst affected areas was the road through Trefullock near Summercourt. Along with the Parish Clerk, I have been making representations to Cornwall Council about the situation.

HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES

13.0 Advice

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