Cornwall Council report
Cllr Dick Cole

Report for 21st September – 25th October 2026

1.0 Council and other meetings

Physical Cornwall Council meetings over the last month included Cabinet, Corporate Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Budget Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Local Plan Member Working Group, Bus Cross Party Working Group and China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership Meeting.

Meetings via video-conferencing included a preparatory session for the Constitution and Governance Committee, plus the Fifth Nation Member Working Group (and an associated pre-meeting),

I also attended two meetings of St Enoder Parish, and the St Dennis and Nanpean Community Trust (incinerator fund).

2.0 "Longest-serving leader of a political party in the UK"

For a number of years, it has been quite common for people to introduce me as the longest-serving leader of a political party in the United Kingdom. And I, so often, have had to say that this wasn't quite true, pointing out that I had become the leader of Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall in 1997, but Arthur Scargill had founded the Socialist Labour Party [SLP] in 1996 and had thereafter remained as leader. That all changed in 2024, when he stood down, leaving me – to the best of my knowledge – as the party leader who has been in post for the longest time.

Local residents may have seen reports that – after a period of 29 years – I have stood down as the Leader of MK at our National Conference on 24th October 2024. The new (eleventh) leader of the Party for Cornwall is my good friend Michael Bunney. I am extremely proud to have been able to play my part in making the case for greater self-government for Cornwall and a much better deal for communities to the west of the Tamar for all that time.

It recently dawned on me that prior to my time as MK Leader, I was the Press and Campaigns Officer for five years, which means that I had been an office-holder within MK for nearly 80% of his adult life. But that said, I will still be an active member of Mebyon Kernow, supporting our new leader with his work.

3.0 Still a councillor for St Dennis and St Enoder

My decision to stand down from the leadership of Mebyon Kernow has been covered in many newspapers, on radio and TV, and of course on social media. A number of people have contacted me, thinking that I was also stepping back from being a councillor. I want to assure everyone that is not the case. I will be continuing to serve local people as their elected member and I will also be continuing to serve on a host of local committees.

4.0 Cornwall Local Plan

The unitary authority is at the "scoping and engagement (Regulation 20)" stage of its preparation of a new Local Plan for Cornwall. It is holding a consultation on the "scope" of the Plan and seeking views on topics such as "the issues and opportunities facing Cornwall, the vision for Cornwall's future, how people and organisations should be involved in preparing the Local Plan" and "sustainability issues that should be considered as the Local Plan develops."

The consultation closes on 16th November.

I continue to attend meetings of the cross-party working group to give views to the cabinet member responsible for the work and also attended the recent Cabinet meeting when planning policy issues were discussed.

5.0 Devolution

On 19th October Cornwall's six MPs, the leader and deputy leader of Cornwall Council and supporting staff – some in person or some via video-conferencing – met with staff at No. 10 North to discuss a devolution deal. It is my understanding that the focus of the discussions relate to Cornwall Council securing Foundation Strategic Authority status – something I would describe as a very limited accommodation and a tweak to local government rather than meaningful devolution.

It is not the Celtic-style devolution that Cornwall merits and I continue to make representations to the leadership of the unitary authority to make more ambitious demands of central government.

6.0 "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

7.0 Possible housing development off Carne Hill

Along with a large number of local people, I attended the recent "pre-application" consultation for 110 housing units off Carne Hill, which took place on 15th October. There were no detailed plans at the consultation and, in the coming weeks, I will be keeping an eye on this scheme. If anyone has any views they wish to share, please email me.

8.0 Highway works

Since my last report, I am really pleased to see that the resurfacing of the roadway at Domellick Bridge has been completed and the surface of this section of road is, once again, in a good condition.

9.0 Cornish Lithium

There have been no meetings of the Trelavour Community Liaison Group since my last report and Cornish Lithium are working towards the submission of their Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate towards the end of this year.

Cornish Lithium has announced that it is planning to reduce staffing levels and there has been an ongoing employee consultation process at the Trelavour Demonstration Plant. The company has issued the following written update:

> "The Demonstration Plant was designed to test and validate the processes and technologies required to support future commercial lithium production, and was always intended to be temporary. The testing phase has now successfully concluded, and the project is progressing to its next stage of development.
>
> "This stage includes the time required to gain consent to build and operate the project, and the actual period of construction, which is expected to take approximately three years. As a result, the skills and resources we require have to evolve to meet the needs of the business.
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> "The current consultation regarding job roles at the Demonstration Plant reflects this planned transition, and does not change our long-term ambitions.
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> "We understand that this news might raise concerns, but we remain focused on advancing the Trelavour Lithium Project, which is expected to support more than 700 additional long-term, skilled, well-paid jobs in Cornwall over the next 25 years.
>
> "We are working closely with colleagues who may be affected, to provide all the necessary support at this time."

ST ENODER PARISH

10.0 Planning

A couple of planning applications, which may be of interest to people, are as follows:

10.1 Proposal for seven housing units off Moorland Road, Indian Queens [PA26/02128]

The application for seven open-market dwellings on land pinned between the Indian Queens Recreation Ground and the Parish Council's second allotment field (opposite the cemetery) was refused in July. The suggested access would have been down an inadequate lane, and it was opposed by residents in the vicinity.

The reason for refusal was:

> The development, if approved, by reason of the proposed access lane to the site, which due to its length, limited width and lack of passing spaces, would give rise to conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists with an increased disadvantage to certain members of the public such as young children, those with mobility impairment or those with wheeled equipment (pushchairs and wheelchairs) as well as being a likely constraint for larger vehicles including emergency vehicles. Conflict would also arise from the junction with Moorland Road resulting from cars reversing back into the site or onto the adjoining highway (including pavement) and vehicles using the pavement as a waiting and crossing area thereby displacing priority for pedestrians on the pavement. The application, therefore, fails to provide safe and suitable access for all people, fails to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, fails to create a place that is safe, secure and attractive - which minimises the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, fails to address the needs of the disabled and those with reduced mobility and fails to allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles. Overall, it represents a poor standard of design to serve the development and would be contrary to Policies 1, 12, 16 and 27 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010- 2030, Policy T1 of the Cornwall Council Climate Emergency Development Plan Document 2023; Traffic Policy 1 of the St Enoder Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2030 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 with particular regard to paragraphs 8, 96, 115, 117, 131 and 135f.

The owner of the land has gone to appeal. It will assessed by an inspector through a written representatives, which have to be received by 12th November.

10.2 Eight dwellings in Higher Fraddon (PA26/02631)

The Parish Council and local resident opposed the proposal for eight houses off Pit Lane because of concerns at the amount of housing growth in the vicinity and the inadequacy of the approach road.

Officers at Cornwall Council have refused the application for the following reason:

> The development, by reason of the subdivision of a wider parcel of land within the applicant's control and the limited scale of development proposed, fails to demonstrate an effective and efficient use of land. The Local Planning Authority considers that the subdivision of the site has the effect of artificially limiting the overall development capacity of the wider parcel and, in doing so, may avoid or reduce affordable housing provision (in addition to any other relative developer contributions) that would otherwise be required were the site considered comprehensively. The proposal would therefore undermine the delivery of both market and affordable housing and fail to make effective use of available land. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with Policies 8, 21 and 28 of the Cornwall Local

Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030, the Cornwall Housing SPD, and Policy L1 together with the housing delivery objectives contained within Policies HO7, HO8 and HO10-HO13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026).

11.0 Highway works

There have been quite a lot of roadworks in the Fraddon area in recent weeks, mostly to do with the excavation of the cable route for the Tregonning Solar Farm through Indian Queens and on the main road through Gaverigan. The extent of disturbance has been pretty difficult and I have been in contact with the manager of the road teams quite regularly and their communications officer. I will keep liaising with them as best as I can.

It is good to see that the resurfacing of the revised roundabout arrangements at the bottom of Fraddon Hill have been completed.

12.0 Newquay-Par branchline and the Mid Cornwall Metro project

At our most recent meeting of the China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership), at my request, we had a presentation about the Mid Cornwall Metro project and I was able to raise concerns about the level of service in the China Clay Area.

13.0 Solar farm at Burthy and Chytane

I have received queries from local residents about when the community and education areas included within the consented planning application are likely to be completed. I have been in contact with the company and they have stated that this will in the New Year during the new growing season.

I also raised concern about the accessibility to some of their new permissive paths and the links between public rights of way. It looks like we may be having a meeting to discuss in the near future.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

14.0 Advice

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