

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Report for 25th May – 31st July 2026

1.0 Council and other meetings

Physical Cornwall Council meetings over the last two months included Full Council; Cabinet (2); Strategic Planning Committee; Central Sub-Area Planning Committee; Corporate, Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Constitution and Governance Committee; China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership; Fifth Nation Member Working Group; Local Plan Members' Working Group (2); Central Integrated Care Area forum; and a catch-up with the local Cormac Manager about a range of highway issues.

I also attended a Cornish language event involving children from ten schools as part of Speak Cornish Week.

Meetings via video-conferencing meanwhile included "task and finish group" sessions on council tax relief and discretionary rate relief for charities (through the Corporate, Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee) (2) and an additional briefing meeting; pre-agenda meeting for the Constitution and Governance Committee; meeting with the Service Director for Community Services about the Council's emerging Valuing Local Framework; meeting with Cabinet members about the impact of top-down housing targets on the planning system, a planning chairs and vice-chairs meeting and a briefing on financial viability for housing developments; a briefing on the Cornwall Road Safety Strategy; a training session on planning appeals; Group Leader meetings (2); and meetings about St Columb Road railway station (2).

I was also present, via video-conferencing, at a meeting with representatives of the Office of National Statistics about the upcoming 2031 census.

I attended one meeting of St Dennis Parish Council and five meetings of St Enoder Parish Council. I was also on the interview panel for a new clerk for St Enoder Parish. Other physical meetings have included St Dennis and Nanpean Community Trust (incinerator fund) (2); Trelavour Community Liaison Group (2); the Board of ClayTAWC: Fraddon Village Hall Committee (2); Indian Queens Band Committee (2); and Indian Queens Pit Committee.

In addition, I visited Indian Queens Primary School and gave a talk on local history to some of the children, and consulted them on the Parish Council's proposal to replace the skate park in the Indian Queens Recreation Ground with a new concrete facility.

2.0 Full Council

At the last meeting of Cornwall Council on 21st July, councillors overwhelmingly backed a motion of no confidence in SWW Water. It was proposed by Mebyon Kernow councillor Loveday Jenkin and seconded by Cllr Dean Evans of the Cornish Green Party. I was a signatory to the motion. It built on the Dowr Glan

(clean water) campaign, which has been supported by approximately 60 town and parish councils, including both St Dennis and St Enoder Parish Councils.

In addition, councillors voted to modify the Council's constitution to reflect the "national scheme of delegation" set out in the UK Government's Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025. This had previously been considered at a meeting of the Constitution and Governance Committee, which I chair. Members were not happy with the changes, but did not have the power to say no to central government.

The changes will limit the ability of councillors to refer planning applications to a planning committee and, after 31st October, I will no longer be able to refer proposals of fewer than ten houses to a planning committee.

3.0 Planning policy

In addition to the changes emanating from the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, I continue to be frustrated at how central government has completely undermined planning in Cornwall with the imposition of an unsustainable and undeliverable housing target. This has meant that those in authority have decreed Cornwall does not have a "five-year land supply" and key housing policies in the present Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans should no longer be given weight.

I have complained that Cornwall Council is not being vocal enough about this dire situation and I had a meeting with two cabinet members to discuss this on 28th May. I remain disappointed that they are not willing to challenge central government more robustly on planning policy.

In my last report, I reported back on the planning appeal hearing into the proposed 32MW solar farm at Trerice [PA24/09234], and how I subsequently raised my concerns that Cornwall Council needed to be better resourced at planning hearings. A meeting was held with the chairs and vice-chairs of planning committees on the authority on 25th June, at which I set out my concerns.

4.0 Cabinet meetings

I also attended two meetings of the unitary authority's governing body, on 17th June and 29th July. This body agreed a number of documents or strategies, which I had been involved with through scrutiny or other panels. These include "Belonging in Cornwall" – a refresh of Cornwall Council's equity, diversity and inclusion strategy; a cultural strategy; a Cornish language strategy; and a "Valuing Local" Framework.

At the most recent meeting, the Cabinet voted to "accept the UK Government's intention to designate Cornwall Council as a single Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA)." I have commented that this is not the Celtic-style devolution that Cornwall merits, but a "local government-esque" arrangement.

However, this designation will hopefully safeguard Cornwall as the geography for future governance and I challenged everyone at Cornwall Council to continue to campaign for proper devolution as exists in Scotland and Wales.

5.0 China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership

The annual general meeting of the China Clay Area and Luxulyan Community Area Partnership took place in St Dennis Methodist Church on 13th July, and I am pleased to be able to confirm that I was re-elected chair of the CAP for another year.

A key discussion at recent CAP meetings has been about the upcoming work to produce a Local Plan for Cornwall, and there has been a consensus that the parishes of the China Clay Area should work together to ensure that local views will be appropriately reflected in the document. It has been suggested that all parish councils in the CAP come together through a working group, with all parishes working on a neighbourhood priority statements, to inform the process.

I can confirm that a letter will soon be sent to all parish councils across Clay Country to promote this approach in the near-future.

6.0 Central Integrated Care Area (ICA) forum

I was pleased to attend a meeting of the Integrated Care Area (ICA) forum for Mid Cornwall on 17th June. This forum brings together local health professionals, voluntary teams, community link workers and community representatives, and it is doing good work to connect neighbourhood health plans with local Community Area Partnerships.

7.0 Corporate, Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

I was one of the members who served on a "task and finish" group, which was set the task of reviewing whether "savings" could be found through reductions to Council Tax Support (CTS) or Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) for charities and community groups.

We concluded, unanimously, that cuts to CTS or DRR would create adverse impacts for low-income households, increase collection and recovery risks, and reduce support available to community organisations, and recommended to our parent committee that no reductions should be made to either scheme. The Scrutiny Committee agreed with our position.

8.0 Meeting with ONS

Over the last two decades, I have been at the heart of the campaign to get a tick-box for Cornish national identity on the census and I helped produce a number of representations to a recent consultation about the content of the 2031 census.

A meeting was held in Westminster on 15th July between representatives of the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and four of Cornwall's MPs – Anna Geldard,

Andrew George, Noah Law and Perran Moon. I was pleased that the leader of Cornwall Council, Cllr Leigh Frost, and I were able to attend via video-conferencing.

I did not feel that the officers of the ONS fully understood the representations from Cornwall and the significance of the national minority status of the Cornish, and I am continuing to discuss with council colleagues and others about how we continue to lobby the ONS and Government Ministers.

9.0 “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

10.0 Trerice Solar Farm [PA24/09234]

In my last report, I noted how I had attended the planning hearing into the proposed 32MW solar farm at Trerice on 12th May. At the time of writing this report, I was surprised that the planning inspector has not yet published her ruling, though I had been informed that she has written to the main parties asking if they would be happy with revised planning conditions.

I can confirm that the planning inspector granted planning permission on 11th August. I will cover this in more detail in my next monthly report.

11.0 Highway works

At the time of writing this report, I am pleased that the resurfacing of Carne Hill, Fore St and Trelavour Road is timetabled to commence on 3rd August. I have been making representations on this for a significant period and I am glad that works will soon be happening.

In addition to this, I have been making representations about the condition of the roadway around Domellick Bridge. I asked whether works could be done on this stretch of road at the same time as Carne Hill, etc, but that has not proved possible. But I am pleased to be able to report that works around the bridge will be done in October.

12.0 Cornish Lithium

I continue to attend meetings of the Trelavour Community Liaison Group in advance of Cornish Lithium’s submission of their Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate. The company had been working towards an application date of late August or September, but recently confirmed that are now aiming for November 2026.

The last meeting of the Liaison Group was useful in explaining how local people can engage with the main elements of the DCO process. It looks like individuals

and local groups will need to register as “interested parties” to fully participate. In the coming weeks, I will ensure that local residents are aware of what they need to do register, etc.

ST ENODER PARISH

13.0 Proposed improvements to skate park in Indian Queens Recreation Ground

As noted previously, the Parish Clerk and I submitted an expression of interest to Cornwall Council’s CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding for monies towards the revamping of the skate park in the Indian Queens Recreation Ground (into a concrete facility). Over 400 EOIs were submitted and our project was one of 40 proposals that were invited to submit a full application.

I was pleased to visit Indian Queens School and discuss the project, and it was good that more than 180 people took part in the online survey about the project. The feedback will inform the design of the park.

I can also confirm that the full application was submitted within Cornwall Council’s timeframe.

14.0 Planning

14.1 Trelion Solar Farm [PA24/05312] and the associated cable route [PA25/02936]

On 16th July, I attended a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee, which was considering the application for a solar farm at Trelion in St Stephen Parish and the associated cable route, most of which is through clay working ground and fields in St Enoder Parish. The meeting followed a site inspection meeting on 3rd July, which I also attended.

I spoke at the meeting and raised concerns brought to my attention by local residents. The solar farm application was refused, because “by reason of installing this large-scale renewable energy development onto these undeveloped fields on an elevated position in the countryside, would harm to a significant extent the distinctive undeveloped character and beauty of the application site and its setting.”

However, the application for the cable route was approved, though I managed to get changes to the wording of conditions about mitigation relating to the temporary impacts on PROWs (public rights of way) and permissive paths.

14.2 Planning in principle for three-four properties at Black Cross [PA26/01976]

St Enoder Parish Council objected to the proposal for three or four new open-market dwellings at Black Cross. The development was proposed for an area that would not have been allowed under the policies of the St Enoder Parish

Neighbourhood Plan, and it considered at a meeting of the Central Sub-Area Planning Committee on 27th July.

Councillors on the Committee approved the application because, due to top-down policy changes from central government, they are no longer giving weight to the (locational) housing policies in our NDP.

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

One application which was refused was the proposal 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). 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.

14.4 Tregonning Solar Farm [PA22/01511]

I can confirm that the revised Traffic Management Plan submitted to Cornwall Council by European Energy, who are developing the Tregonning Solar Farm in Newlyn East Parish, has been agreed with Cornwall Council. This followed representations from myself and members of St Enoder Parish Council about the undesirability of delivery lorries for the site passing through Summercourt. The

west-bound lorries will now go and turn around at the Carland Cross roundabout before accessing the site along the A3076 (from Mitchell).

15.0 Highway works

The construction of a build-out and related works outside Ridgewell Terrace in Fraddon was completed between 20th-24th July. The build-out has been placed in this location as a safety measure following a number of accidents in the recent past, when vehicles have been driven into parked cars.

Improvement works for the roundabout at the bottom of Fraddon Hill are due to commence on 10th August, though a section of cabling for the Tregonning Solar Farm is presently being laid between Barton Land and Fraddon Hill in advance of the Council's work. These works have been choreographed so that the cabling does not follow the resurfacing of the roundabout. There will not be a complete road closure for the roundabout works, but there will be three-way traffic lights.

The resurfacing of various stretches of the road between Fraddon and Scarcewater is also taking place between 2nd and 22nd August. These works were originally planned for earlier in the year, but were cancelled because of the storms and need for reactive works on the highway network.

There will be more disruption in coming weeks because of the excavation of the cable route for the Tregonning Solar Farm. This will continue from Fraddon Hill and through Indian Queens, before heading up Highgate Hill and passing under the bypass.

16.0 Local play areas

I am pleased that the small play areas / green spaces in Kingsley Court, Lindsay Fields, Penhale Gardens and St James View in Fraddon, plus Hanover Parc in Indian Queens, have been transferred from Cornwall Council to St Enoder Parish Council. It has taken a while to get to this point and hopefully, given time, we can improve these areas.

17.0 Indian Queens Pit

I am pleased to be a trustee of Indian Queens Pit and I am also vice-chairman of the Pit Committee. We are carrying out some conservation work on the monument at the moment, repairing some areas damaged by people climbing in and out the Pit. I would like to thank the volunteers who turned out to help us on 18th July.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

18.0 Advice

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