

Chairman's Report

We were pleased to begin the new year with face-to-face meetings although we remain vigilant about the very high levels Covid-19 throughout Cornwall. I must however thank everyone, councillors and members of the public alike, for ensuring that we were able to continue to 'enjoy' full and frank discussions on all parish business remotely where necessary over the previous year.

We were delighted to begin the year by welcoming three new councillors: Jackie Bull, Sandie Bailey and Mike Norris. While Sandie is new to the role, both Jackie and Mike are very experienced. Jackie is an ex-Cornwall Councillor and has immense experience including as Chair of the Central Planning Committee for Cornwall Council, while Mike was on the group which became the Temporary Parish Council and later, in 2009, the St Austell Bay Parish Council at the time of Cornwall Council becoming a Unitary Authority. Very sadly Mike has recently resigned from the council for personal family reasons – we wish him well and thank him for his time with us.

As I mentioned in my 2021 Report, Cllr Tom French also retired, and we have been pleased to welcome the new Ward member for our parish: James Mustoe.

James has already proved himself a very hard working and effective Cornwall Councillor and we look forward to working with him in the coming year.

A major achievement of the council this year has been the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan and its adoption by Cornwall Council. This is a significant document which has legal force and will guide planning and development in our parish for many years to come. I place on record my thanks to the Strategic Group who led the initiative, wrote the plan, and recorded the process, and to all other councillors past and present and the many members of the public who made major contributions and without whose help we could not have completed the task.

I also report with great pleasure that the parish council has been successful in gaining a Lottery grant to support our Queen's Jubilee celebrations. We have established an extensive programme of activities including the planting of jubilee trees and the provision of jubilee seats in all three wards, finance towards street parties, a Jubilee Beacon with firework display and a torchlight procession. We do hope that you will be able to join with us in celebrating what should be a truly wonderful occasion.

Over the year your council has considered 31 planning applications, and while some were straightforward others have been quite controversial, producing some difficult decisions for members. It should always be remembered that in all applications any possible harm that might be foreseen in an application should always be outweighed by the gain that it

produces for the parish. In considering such applications the role of a councillor is to put aside any personal considerations in favour of the wider benefit to the parish.

I should report that the council is increasingly concerned about the many developments in Lower Porthpean which have been approved by planners against the wishes of the parish council and are now in danger of changing the character of the village.

We have conducted two whole parish consultations, both delivered by hand to all houses throughout the parish, the first about an offer by Wainhomes to provide various community benefits in exchange for the council support of two possible small housing developments and the second about the ongoing traffic problems of the parish, particularly in terms of parking. Work is ongoing on both, and both will be brought to an open meeting of the council in the fullness of time.

Likewise, the closure of the South West Coastal Path continues to be a source of frustration to residents and to Cornwall Council. We can only hope that the existing holdups can be overcome before it is closed and a new route is over roads instead of the clifftop.

I am pleased to report the Charlestown History Group have set up their archive in the meeting room at the Hall and they are now running a public drop-in session on Tuesday mornings 10.00-12.00. Why not pop in and have a look?

Less happily, we are sorry that the Post Office has reduced its time at the Hall to one afternoon per week, partly due to lack of use. Please use it or we will lose it!

Our Working Groups

The short accounts below record the excellent work that these groups have carried out over the past year.

1 Regatta Working Party

Members: Cllr Bill Leach, Terry Butler, Cllr Richard Hallows, Cllr Jackie Bull, Sue Facey, John Fowler

On a very positive note, I am delighted to report the completion of the new paths to the Regatta Field toddlers' play area with all the new equipment – already much used and I am told by mums, dads and children is 'great!'

Additionally, we have planted trees in the Regatta Field as part of The Queens's Green Canopy which is particularly pertinent given that it is also the 50th anniversary of the revival of the Regatta.

Still on the environment, my thanks to the 'Diggers and Doers' for all their initiatives to improve and tidy up around the field and the wider parish – you are stars!

Less happily, on the Regatta field we remain very concerned about the ongoing flooding issues on the field and we are continuing our discussions with Cornwall Council and the Duchy.

Cllr Bill Leach, Chairman, Regatta Working Party

2 Traffic Working Party

Members: Cllr Jackie Bull; Lauren Holley; Helen Childs; Janice Powell; Cllr Richard Hallows; Cllr Nick Foster

Highway issues both large and small were observed by the Parish Council itself as well as raised by many residents following the busy tourism season of Summer 2021. Highway issues, particularly parking related, are dominant in St Austell Bay Parish since it covers an entirely beautiful, historic and well-visited coastal area.

Following a meeting on one particular issue, attended by the Area's Highway Manager, it was agreed at the Parish Council meeting of September 2021 to form a Traffic Working Party which would advise and make recommendations to the main Parish Council. This was seen as particularly necessary since the Area Highway Manager had underlined a need to take an holistic view of the Parish rather than addressing isolated issues, stressing the import of understanding all problems in any area before action because solving a problem in one area can simply displace to another. The group was made up of a mixture of Cllrs and residents.

After its first meeting the Working Party decided to address highway issues in two steps, firstly by collating the information already received, understood and discussed with the Highway Manager, areas with greatest problems, those being Charlestown, Church and Duporth Roads where both parking and speeding were of great concern, a request to join the twenty is plenty project had already been submitted. There was a desire that work could begin at Cornwall Council, on solutions, as quickly as possible for our Parish so a member of the Working Party collated all information currently held and necessary to be forwarded to the Highway team as well as the Cornwall Councillor and that was sent on its way.

The second step, to garner information on other problems around the Parish was then taken and a questionnaire circulated to all houses asking for concerns and suggestions on highway issues large and small.

156 forms were returned with the majority outlining more than one problem, many with suggested solutions. This information has been recorded on a spreadsheet by one member of the working group with another member checking that no information has been missed.

As we approach the April 2022 meeting, the spreadsheet, in full, has been circulated to the Working Party, Cornwall Cllr, Highway Manager and Parish Council in order that work can begin.

The Traffic Working Party's next step will involve considering each issue raised in detail and potential solution to advise and recommend action which maybe taken by both the Parish and Cornwall Council.

I would like to thank all involved in this project. Huge amounts of work have been undertaken by members of the Working Party and the Parish Clerk.

Cllr Jackie Bull, Chair, Traffic Working Party

3 (i). Environment and Climate Crisis Working Party

Members; Trudy Reynolds, Jackie Bull and Nigel Chatterjee - Parish Council and Pat Smith.

We have undergone a minor re-branding this year to include the environment within our title and to emphasise the seriousness of the situation we, along with many others, realise that climate change has become a climate crisis.

The working party has updated the St Austell Bay Parish Council's Climate Crisis Action Plan. It has also produced a Planning Checklist to assist parish councillors when discussing planning applications. The checklist, which works in conjunction with the approved Neighbourhood Plan, puts the environment and climate change policies as material considerations in our decision making.

We have also obtained a Carbon Footprint Report for the parish based on data provided by the University of Exeter and the Centre for Sustainable Energy based in Bristol. Our carbon footprint is disappointingly high in comparison to both the Cornwall average and the GB average. We are about to start work to find out why this is and what we can do to reduce it.

The group has also been producing monthly posters for the noticeboards and the parish website to highlight current topics such as recycling, saving energy, green spring cleaning etc. We are also hoping to circulate these on some of the parish's other social media channels.

Purchases made by the parish are locally sourced wherever possible. Suppliers are checked for their environmental credentials. Single use plastics are avoided.

We have set up a Diggers and Doers group to improve the environment of the parish by tree planting, bulb planting, creating wildflower areas and general tidying of hedgerows and footpaths. There are ongoing projects at The Battery, the Regatta Field and Carrickowel Point. We have a small core of volunteers which I would like to sincerely thank for their efforts, with particular mention to the two keenest members from Carlyon Parish. If you can spare the odd hour or two please come and join us. Details are on the website. You will be more than welcome and will help our parish and our planet!

Cllr Trudy Reynolds

3 (ii) Tree Warden

Long ago in the autumn of 2020 the Parish Council obtained free saplings from The Woodland Trust. Most were planted during the winter of 2020/21. I have been monitoring these during the year and thankfully the majority are surviving. The remaining 152 saplings were planted in November 2021 along the new footpath to the Battery. The details have been sent to the Forest for Cornwall Team and will be recorded on the "Tree Log" on the parish website.

We were not quite so successful with some of the trees planted in The Regatta Field in Charlestown with vandals destroying several at the bottom end of the field. The orchard area at the top and the beech saplings along the roadside are doing well.

I have been working with the Charlestown History Group to identify trees at the Battery, which can be removed or pruned as part of their project to enhance this historic area of Charlestown. Planning approval has been granted and work will commence in the autumn.

We have been given one free Landmark tree from Cornwall Council to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Parish Council has purchased two further trees so there will be one in each ward. A small leaved lime has been planted in the Regatta Field in Charlestown, a beech in Duporth and a whitebeam at Carrickowel Point in Porthpean. All will have commemorative plaques.

I have been working with local landowners to try to secure new areas for tree planting. I have also queried potential unauthorised work on trees and hedges in the parish. Unfortunately decisions on felling do not always have the outcome the parish council would wish. We are often not even consulted during the process and this is an issue our County Councillor will be raising with the relevant authorities.

But to finish on a positive note with a quote from Lucy Larcom. "He who plants a tree, plants a hope."

Cllr Trudy Reynolds, Tree Officer

4 History Working Party

Members: Andy Trudgian; Sue Facey; (Charlestown History Group); Cllr Nick Foster; Cllr Richard Hallows; Cllr Trudy Reynolds.

The following is a summary of the work that the History Working Party has been busy with in the past 12 months.

Listings

Two sites were submitted for listing, The Old Sunday School Room at Porthpean was not accepted but the Rashleigh Arms Car Park has been listed Grade 2. This is the last remaining extensive example of an ore floor in Charlestown, and it is good to see that its' historic importance has warranted additional protection.

Historic England has decided to review the listing of the Harbour as the current listing is outdated and vague. It needs to be updated to be far more specific in line with current listing expectations. It is currently being assessed.

South Polmear Mine

The estimate from the Cornwall Archaeological Unit for a full survey of the surviving features at Polmear Mine is just under £5,000.00. The CHG has explored various funding options but raising the required funds is going to be very difficult. As such it has been decided that the site will initially be surveyed by volunteers.

The Battery

The clearing of the Battery site has started with help from local resident volunteers. Ivy and other vegetation have been removed from the Battery wall and other areas, and a wild-flower area has been planted.

Following two successful planning applications work will continue to help save the site from further deterioration and to open up the area for more locals and visitors. The ongoing work involves some further tree felling, reinstating the flagpole and installing a replica cannon. The aim is to tie-in the re-opening of the site with the bicentenary of Rashleigh's death in March 2023. The CHG hopes to obtain National Lottery and other funding to help with this.

Other Projects

The CHG has been working on a pilot Local Listing Project run by Cornwall Council. This will list local assets which are of historical importance to the village such as the water niches and the clay chutes and will work alongside the list of Locally Important Heritage Assets in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is not formal 'Listing' but would still have to be taken note of when Planning Applications are assessed.

The deterioration of the leat system continues to cause concern. Councillor James Mustoe is working with Cornwall Council to work out where any operational liabilities lie.

A presentation was given by the Cornwall AONB about their project 'A Monumental Improvement' and it is hoped that the Parish Council and HWP will be able to support this work at Black Head.

Future HWP projects will focus on an Information Board for Charlestown incorporating a QR code system. This will provide information to users and benefit their understanding of the village, the harbour and the changing industries through Charlestown's history. We have also begun to develop the idea of creating walking booklets for walks around the parish.

Finally, we are looking for a volunteer to join the group from Duporth, Porthpean or Trenarren to increase representation of those areas. Please contact the clerk for further information.

Cllr Nick Foster, St Austell Bay Parish Council

Report from Devon and Cornwall Police – PCSO Yasmin Barrott and PCSO Steve Tibbles

PCSO Barrott reported that there has been a decrease in the number of Police Community Support Workers in the Neighbourhood Team in the past 12 months. There are currently vacancies for 2 beat officers in the area. Sgt Ian Chambers is the new Sergeant in St Austell – he has transferred from Liskeard. There is now a facility on the Devon and Cornwall Police website to contact the St Austell Police Station <https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/your-area/teams/St-Austell-Rural/Overview> . She reported that there are now 3 tri-service officers, based in Lostwithiel, Fowey and St Dennis and a further officer will be based in Mevagissey.

Reported crimes in the St Austell area have increased by 31.6% but this is due to the relaxing of lockdown rules. There has been an increase in burglaries recently, particularly in sheds and outhouses. Residents were asked to be vigilant as these crimes are being committed by opportunist criminals. There has been a 56.9% decrease in anti-social behaviour which is encouraging (there were 25 reports of ASB in the St Austell area in the past 12 months).

Cllr Mustoe mentioned that some crimes are being reported on Facebook but not to the Police. PCSO Barrott said that Facebook can hinder Police investigations and reports should not be posted on social media until matters have been reported to the Police.

Cornwall Councillor James Mustoe's Report

I am pleased to have completed my first year as divisional member for St Austell Bay Parish and would like to thank the Parish Council, and residents and businesses in general for your warm welcome.

I am pleased to have got stuck in on a variety of local issues since my election last May and in all areas like to work closely with my parish councils to achieve real positive change and help address longstanding issues.

To focus on several in particular, I am pleased to have worked with Cornwall Council and the Parish Council to get the Parish Council's top priority put through for the Community Network Area Highways Schemes.

I have worked with and joined in with local residents and the parish council on a number of initiatives to both improve community amenity space, including the Charlestown Battery, and land on the bank behind the coast path on Porthpean Beach.

I also continue to include the Parish in my regular ongoing litter pick and beach clean schedule.

Regarding Porthpean Beach in particular, I have worked with Cornwall Council and Cormac to refresh various things on and around the beach, and working with the parish council on the benches that will hopefully be installed behind the coastpath, it is hoped that the beach will be looking great as we head into summer this year.

Turning to the coastpath, and various rights of way around the parish, this has been a continued frustration due to the various closures caused by cliff falls and subsequent diversions that have needed to be put in place. This appears to have dragged on for many years, and I have asked our officers to work at pace with all concerned to get them reopen as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so. That being said, Cormac has worked very hard on both these issues and others around the coastpath and other footpaths in the area and I would like to thank them for their efforts, going above and beyond to ensure our footpaths are accessible and maintained wherever possible.

Porthpean Outdoor Education Centre has also been a big issue for the area, and I was pleased to see the council firstly commit to keeping it open until 31 July, when I pushed them on this back in November last year, and that they are now in negotiations to appoint a new contractor from 31 July, hopefully to keep the service open going forward.

Finally planning and enforcement concerns continue to be an issue for Charlestown in particular. While there are undeniable issues within the national planning system, I was pleased to get an additional planning and enforcement officer in place for the Charlestown area, which regardless of what you think about the planning system, is still an additional pair of hands looking at issues in the area when there was not one before.

Away from the Parish Council, I am also a member of the CIC that looks after the 'new' Duporth estate and it has been good to get stuck in on helping the CIC and residents with various issues that come up in that area.

I have continued to get out and about, meeting local residents, organisations, including Charlestown School, and businesses and always try my best to represent your issues and interests at County Hall.

There are always loads of local casework issues ongoing, particularly regarding potholes and verge trimming – I do my best to get a speedy and positive response once I get involved.

I was pleased to spend some of my community chest monies locally, including:

Charlestown History Project, Battery Recharge Project Phase 2 £200

Radio St Austell Bay, Improvements to radio signal and coverage £113.77

Charlestown Regatta, Duncan Powell Memorial Podium £200

Finally, on a Cornwall-wide note, at Cornwall Council over the past year, I have been pleased to have led on motions removing charges for people purchasing affordable homes, on Cornwall Council declaring an ecological emergency, and most recently, a declaration of solidarity between Cornwall Council and Ukraine.

I would like to congratulate the Parish Council on their excellent work and positive approach and attitude. You are a pleasure to work with and I always look forward to coming to the monthly meetings.

Finances

	2020/21	2021/22
Income		
Precept	£41,238.48	£44,822.11
Pattern Hall	£3,692.75	£4,175.05
Public conveniences	£5,782.66	£8,811.46
VAT refund	£3,575.36	£12,910.15
Bank interest	£166.12	£32.42
CIL	£0.00	£11,721.51
Other income ¹	£21,159.75	£54,754.80
	£75,615.12	£137,227.50
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	£30,329.21	£33,107.85
Training	£203.00	£327.00
Administration ³	£6,106.58	£8,034.66
Chairman's Allowance/Councillor Allowance	£0.00	£0.00
Parish maintenance	£3,638.24	£4,709.16
Grants	£250.00	£600.00
Projects	£5,474.58	£8,194.89
Public conveniences	£7,766.58	£14,134.19
Pattern Hall	£4,770.55	£3,506.14
Regatta Playing Field	£863.29	£45,297.17
Election costs	£0.00	£765.00
Neighbourhood Plan ²	£2,168.30	£448.11
	£61,570.33	£119,124.17

¹ The Parish Council received s106 money from Cornwall Council towards play equipment in the Regatta Field and a Lottery grant towards The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The Parish Council received the Government's Small Business Grant amounting to £10,000 to cover loss of rental income during the Covid pandemic in 2020

² A Lottery Fund Grant for £9,845 was received in December 2018 towards the cost of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. A grant was obtained from Locality in 2020 for £2,883.00

Before I close, I must record our thanks to our staff: Roy Rodriguez, Laura Byers, to Keith Carter our caretaker (who is so much more than just that!) and to our indefatigable clerk, Julie Larter who puts up with us with a smile, keeps us in order, faithfully records our efforts, ensures that we are financially prudent – none of this easy!

Thank you, Julie, and my very best wishes to all members of the parish,

Cllr Bill Leach
Chairman, St Austell Bay Parish Council
21 April 2022

ST AUSTELL BAY | PARISH COUNCIL

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY, PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE
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