

Cornwall Councillor Report – St Austell Bay Parish - March 2026

I hope you are all well as we go through March.

I am really pleased to see that following discussions with myself and stakeholders that Cormac have brought forward their start time to repair and restore the ramp at Porthpean Beach, with the works starting on Monday 9th March.

This will hopefully bring forward the completion date to April/May, although as I am sure people will appreciate, weather and sea conditions will play a big role in this.

Last week I went down to Porthpean Beach to meet with the guys from Cormac who are cracking on with repair of the slipway.

It's being done over several phases, with the first one being to bash away at all the damaged concrete to a level several feet down from current ground level, before bringing in new materials to create the new base of the ramp afterwards.

Very noisy and naturally limited working times due to the tidal nature of the site, but it is good to see work starting earlier than originally anticipated!

Pedestrian access to the beach remains in place from both ends.

I am pleased to see some of the really nasty potholes that have been reported in recent weeks now being sorted.

Cornwall Councillors were recently told that due to the really wet weather, a backlog had developed and as of the beginning of March there were nearly 5,200 reported pothole defects on the network, with an average of 517 being reported each day.

Cormac have up to 50 gangs dealing with this, and are repairing 358 each day, but this means the number of individual potholes continued to rise.

They do normally fix potholes pretty quickly once reported, and the delay in fixing them over the past few months has been noticeable.

As the weather continues to improve, they are hoping to see these numbers reduce, and the fixing of these potholes seems to show that this is heading in the right direction.

There is also an issue around the materials and method used to fill the potholes, and myself and a number of other Cornwall Councillors are in the process of raising this with the powers that be.

There remain significant concerns from the local business community about upcoming changes to business rates and how they will impact the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

While the Government did do a partial u-turn and pause some of their plans for pubs and music venues, there are still many other businesses in these areas facing significant increases to their business rates from April.

Combined with increased costs elsewhere, from wage costs, employer national insurance contributions, and the general increase in price of utilities and goods in general, the situation is becoming incredibly challenging for many.

I have recently corresponded and met with a number of business owners from Mevagissey and Charlestown to discuss some of these concerns and what we can do to raise this issue with both the local business community, and the decision-makers in central government.

I am very grateful to them for taking the time to explain exactly what these changes mean to her businesses and other like them, setting their case out in a very logical and understandable way.

I look forward to working with them to highlight these issues and do what we can to support our local businesses going forward during these challenging times. Watch this space.

I recently put Charlestown Primary School and Duporth Development CIC in touch with excellent team at Forest for Cornwall, who in turn facilitated the delivery of a load of saplings for the school grounds and Duporth Woods.

Last week I was delighted to pop down and help Mrs Lee-Elkins and her brilliant team, along with some incredibly enthusiastic and hard-working students, plant the trees - I look forward to seeing them grow in the years to come!

It was great to go along with St Austell Cornwall Councillor colleagues and have an update from Laetitia and some of her brilliant team at Cornwall College's St Austell campus.

While I have a wider role with The Cornwall College Group, it is such that I don't often get to see all the great stuff that is going on right under my nose in St Austell, and today's visit was a really useful one.

It is clear that there is tremendous amount of positive work being done at St Austell College as well as exciting plans for this iconic site in the future, with the incredibly welcome return of A Level provision in the town for local students in further education as just one example.

I look forward to continuing to work with Laetitia and her team in the college's journey as a key and positive player for St Austell and its surrounding communities.

I have been working with my St Austell Tidy Up Team volunteer group as part of the ongoing Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean.

We have had dozens of volunteers out and about taking part in three organised weekly litter picks over the past three weekends, picking up 55 sacks of waste and numerous larger items and fly tips reported.

Thanks to everyone who came out and helped, as well as Biffa for the equipment and Easter Eggs!

Up at County Hall, at a recent scrutiny committee meeting I put on record my question about unnecessary journeys across the Duchy for Cormac , such as we saw recently where the guys clearing a landslide in Mevagissey had to wait ages for a van to go to Penryn from Mevagissey and back again, because apparently Penryn is the only site licensed to take the soil. Surely the other HWRC sites can be licensed in order to avoid officers having to make lengthy trips like this! I will be getting a written response, which I await with interest....

As ever, should you need my assistance with anything, please get in touch at 07885 277670 or on cllr.james.mustoe@cornwall.gov.uk and I will be happy to help.