

St Austell Bay Parish Council Cornwall Councillor Report – April 2022

April has been another busy month with a lot going on.

I have had several people get in touch with regards to trees being felled in the Charlestown area.

After doing some investigating I can report back on the following, which is based on indirect feedback from the Forestry Commission via a third party, and Cornwall Council.

Forestry Commission Licence for 5y was issued last year on the basis of a Tree safety report procured by the landowner. Safety concerns were based on the % of each tree affected by Ash Die Back. The works are ash removals and minor group thinning of lesser specimens to provide more space for better quality specimens to grow to full potential

The author of the report used to request the license (on behalf of the landowner) has vast industry experience and was manager of Cornwall Council's Forestry Team for more than 30 years

A separate Tree Thinning license has been granted for clearing 30% of the standing trees slightly further into the land.

Cornwall Council does not lead on these matters and any correspondence regarding decisions made should go to the Forestry Commission.

Cornwall Council is consulted, which goes via the planning department, but crucially is not done via a planning application, so there is not wider consultation. Nor is the forestry team at Cornwall Council consulted.

I will be asking for this to be tightened up in the future, and that the forestry team is included as standard when Cornwall Council is consulted.

I don't have any authority over the rest of the process, nor on getting any of the relevant documents, as they belong to the Forestry Commission.

Regarding planning matters, I was disappointed to see the planning application on Porthpean Beach Road that the parish council asked me to call in on 11 April approved by central planning committee 8-2 at their meeting, despite myself and Cllr Reynolds providing detailed planning guidance as to why it could be refused. Thank you to Cllr Reynolds for coming along and presenting.

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, which are wating restrictions on several roads around Charlestown as well as a commitment to look into residents only parking at a spot on Brick Hill.

I have now had information from Cormac regarding the temporary closure of the South West Coast Path at two places on the eastern and western approaches to Charlestown.

Cornwall Council has been in the process of adopting a new permitted right of way, which has to go through a statutory consultation process.

Frustratingly there have been two objections as part of this process, and permissive access has been withdrawn until these are resolved, leading to the current temporary closure, and a significant detour, that I am sure no one wants to see.

I am afraid that if the objections not withdrawn, then the matter will have to be decided upon by the Secretary of State, which could take a significant time to resolve.

Cornwall Council is working with those who have objected to try to resolve their objections so the permitted right of way can be finalised and the SWCP reopened.

I was pleased to help arrange and take part in beach cleans and litter picks across my division, including one on Porthpean Beach, as part of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean.

Finally, on a Cornwall-wide note, at County Hall last week, I was pleased to lead on a motion giving a declaration of solidarity between Cornwall Council and Ukraine, for which I was pleased to see unanimous cross party support for.