

Cornwall Councillor Report – St Austell Bay Parish – September 2025

I hope everyone had a productive August.

I was able to take a couple of weeks off at the beginning of the month, and combined with the lack of Cornwall Council meetings etc over the summer, I don't have as much to report for August.

When we did a beating of the bounds walk of St Austell Bay Parish a couple of weeks ago, we encountered a significantly deteriorated footbridge at the far west end of the parish on the path from Hallane up to the back road. I have asked Cormac for their plans for replacing this as it looks like it needs significant work.

I attended a meeting of St Austell Healthcare's Patient Participation Group on 31 July.

I was very pleased to write in support their campaign to retain the subcontract for Macular and Haematology services , which were or are currently under threat of being pulled back to Treliske.

St Austell area has done a great job of taking pressure off Treliske in recent years, with services like this, the Elective Surgical Hub, and upgrades to Penrice Hospital. This feels like a step backwards, and also goes against elements of the Government's own 10 Year Plan for the NHS, which specifically mentioned Cornwall as leading the way in terms of neighbourhood health services.

I was pleased to subsequently see RCHT subsequently on 18 August reconsider some of its decisions and leave the Macular services with SAHC.

I was also delighted to be elected unopposed as Chairman of the Cornwall South (Kemeneth Kernow Soth) Community Area Partnership.

Thank you to everyone who attended for voting for me.

Community Area Partnerships give a forum for Cornwall Council to work with town and parish councils, local organisations, the voluntary sector and the public.

I want to see the Kemeneth Kernow Soth Community Area Partnership become results-focussed - while the provision of Community Area Partnerships has always been part of how Cornwall Council has operated as long as I have been a councillor, we need to demonstrate their continued worth by actually making outcomes happen as a result of their work - this isn't and should not be another talking shop!

We agreed our priorities for the next year as being Community Health & Wellbeing and Economic Growth - two areas where I believe we can make a genuine difference working with local partners, as well as continuing to support the valuable work of the White River Project.

Congratulations also to my Vice Chair Cllr Jake Bonetta, and thank you to our community link officer Sarah Scoltock and Lisa Grigg for your support.

I look forward to working with all concerned to make the Cornwall South (Kemeneth Kernow Soth) Community Area Partnership the best it can be in the future.

On 22 July we had our second Full Council meeting of the new council following May's elections.

I felt it was a productive meeting. The business from the meeting that rightly took the headlines was the majority decision by council to reiterate the call for devolution to Cornwall, which included a request for Cornwall to be recognised as the UK's 'fifth nation'. This was a motion I was pleased to support. Cornwall has a rich and unique heritage, culture and history, and simply put, is not and has never been, just another county of England. Throughout my time as a councillor I have always recognised this; as well as this rich past and present, Cornwall has vast potential for the future and it is up to us as councillors and as council to do all we can to work with the government to unlock this potential.

In the meeting I was also pleased to speak on a number of other matters. I supported and spoke in favour of a motion to look at a strategy for taking more action in removing abandoned boats that litter parts of our rivers and estuaries. To me, an abandoned boat should be treated no differently than an abandoned car. In fact what it boils down to essentially is that abandoned boats left to fall into disrepair is nothing more than a major case of fly-tipping, and should be treated as such. It was good to see council vote to look at what more it can do in this area, and to work with government to better regulate it nationally.

I also spoke in favour on a motion to ban flying ring toys, cheap plastic toys which are thrown and often lost or abandoned, and can turn into yet another form of marine litter, in this case litter that can have tragic consequences for seals if they get them caught around their necks. I have recently done some work with Sue Sayer and the Seal Research Trust to raise public awareness of the issues that can arise when seals become overly familiar with people, as discussed in my report in July.

While we as an authority cannot punitively ban the sale of these rings, I encouraged the council to work proactively with members and the contacts we should have in our local areas, with groups such as Three Bays Wildlife, to amplify this message and the positive benefits this will bring.

Finally, I wanted to highlight that Cornwall Council is refreshing its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) — a ten-year strategy to enhance Public Rights of Way across Cornwall.

This plan will focus on delivering tangible benefits for people and places, supported by clear performance measures to drive continuous improvement.

As a first step, they are conducting a baseline survey to understand the current and future needs of users.

The survey is open from 30 July to 28 September 2025, and your feedback will help shape the draft RoWIP, which will be further consulted on later before finalisation. You can access this report via the link here

<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/rowip>

As ever, should people require my assistance on any matter, please get in touch on 07885 277670 or at cllr.james.mustoe@cornwall.gov.uk