

Cornwall Councillor Report – St Austell Bay Parish – January 2026

I hope you are all well as we head through January so I am looking forward to what I am sure will be another busy year to come!

Looking back to December, we had some amazing events around my division and I was delighted to get involved and see so many people out and about enjoying the festive activities. In particular the Christmas lights in Charlestown looked amazing.

I was lucky enough to get a couple of weeks off over the Christmas period to spend some time with my family and I hope you were all able to mark the occasion how you wanted to.

At the time of writing, the first full week of the New Year has already been an extraordinarily chaotic one with schools across my patch late opening or shut on several days due to the icy weather at the beginning of the week, followed by the absolutely unprecedented Red Weather Warning of Storm Goretti, which played out over 8 and 9 January, leading to a sad loss of life elsewhere in the Duchy and huge numbers of trees falling across Cornwall, creating significant disruption to our roads being blocked, powerlines coming down and water supplies being cut off. While locally, we were not as badly affected as some down west, where power and water supplies were lost for several days, it certainly remains the most severe storm I have ever encountered in my 12 years as a councillor.

The clear up operation was massive, and I'm sure we are all grateful to everyone, emergency services, Cormac and local people who helped in getting this done as quickly and safely as possible.

In terms of specific issues for St Austell Bay, the following have come up:

- (i) The long-needed works on Duporth Road/Brick Hill which are currently ongoing, have been extended (currently due to be extended until 20th January) due to tree damage and site safety issues last week. After I got the resident parking scheme moving again after the parish council's request following your last meeting, Cormac confirmed that the works to allow this to be implemented will be done alongside the surfacing works on Duporth Hill.
- (ii) I have been in touch with Openreach after Trenarren's internet and phone lines were put out by storm damage. They have now attended but advise more work is needed here to make the infrastructure safe – I am continuing to pressure them to do this as soon as possible.
- (iii) The road to Trenarren has also been flooded due to a collapsed drain, which I have asked Cormac to urgently fix.
- (iv) The SWCP was blocked between Duporth and Porthpean after a fence collapsed. This has now been cleared.

- (v) Porthpean village was cut off with trees falling on both roads out of the village. These have now been cleared.
- (vi) Numerous trees fell in the Duporth woods area. Residents have been advised not to visit this area and access will be fenced off pending a survey of the damage.
- (vii) As of the time of writing there were still a very small number of local residents who have not had power since the weekend – National Grid have been working around the clock to restore power - as you can imagine the scope of their works across Cornwall is very large and I hope power will be restored as soon as possible.

Finally, in highways matters, and unrelated to this, the first part of Ridgewood Close's resurfacing is due to take place later in January, with the surface dressing applied when the weather is better in the summer.

In Charlestown, it's been good to see more work being done on the gate, with the walkway also now in place, and I understand these works are due to complete in February and the site fully open and operational again in April. Much welcomed I am sure.

The appeal against enforcement action on the unauthorised development on land near Lobbs Shop was thrown out on 19 December. The landowner now has until 19th June to remove their unauthorised development.

Looking forward, up at County Hall I am currently looking at putting forward a motion at January's Full Council to draw attention to the plight of our retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, who are due to be hammered by the Government's new 'reforms' to Business Rates, which in practice could see these for certain businesses double from April. These sectors, which provide a great deal of employment in my division, are already under pressure due to changes over the previous couple of years and we need to be doing all we can to support them, not put them under even more pressure, which will just lead to closure for many. At the time of writing, it looks like the Government might be u-turning (again!) on this, but I will certainly do all I can to help Cornwall Council play its part in supporting our local businesses should they not back off.

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