

Cornwall Councillor Report – St Austell Bay Parish - February 2022

It only seems like there has been a short period of time between this meeting and our last one, so I don't have as much of an update as I usually would have.

On highways matters, I have contacted Cormac and supported the Parish Council's requests around the Community Network Highways schemes for the upcoming funding round.

I have also fed back support from residents of Porthpean Beach Road on the Parish Council's proposals.

On planning matters, I have signalled that I am happy to call in the planning application on Porthpean Beach Road that a 5 day protocol letter was issued for. I await a conversation with the planning manager, who has ultimate decision-making on whether an application can be called in, as to how this will happen.

Along with the Clerk and Chair, I have had several meetings, conversations and exchanges of correspondence with Cornwall Council in order to keep the Charlestown West SWCP on track – this is continuing to go in the right direction and I have since liaised with the excellent Cormac team who have been dealing with it and been assured that our meetings have had a 'very positive outcome'.

Ditto the section around Duporth Bay.

Regarding Charlestown East:

The following outstanding works are programmed from 21st Feb:

- remove the gravel landscaped strip from the edge of Salamander up to the anchor outside Beach Retreats
- resurface the above section with tarmac
- remove the existing key clamp that remains in position behind the new black metal fence
- install a roll over at the base of the steps past Harbour Lights to ensure all water run off is directed into the gully
- install a lockable barrier to prevent any future vehicle access of this section of coast path
- repair any damage to the concrete surface that was caused by the contractors whilst works were in progress to stabilise the cliff
- The path will need to be closed whilst certain operations are in progress, but it will be reopened when it is safe for walkers to pass during works, and during evenings and weekends.

Cormac have confirmed they will organise for wood chippings to be put down on the surface of a few sections of boggy areas around Charlestown, as a temporary measure; Including Charlestown West, Charlestown East (along the short roll back), Mill Lane and Chandlers Walk.

I met with the Environment Agency and Cornwall Council to discuss water issues including some with leats further up the valley above Tregrehan Mills, and am looking at getting a meeting with neighbouring councillor Jordan Rowse, who I met with today, and Cornwall Council, to discuss issues around the leats further shortly.

Earlier this week I was pleased to visit Charlestown School.

Charlestown School is part of the 'new' Mevagissey and St Austell Bay division and I hadn't visited before.

It was good to have a tour of the school with Co-Headteacher Mrs Poole and speak to some of the pupils and teachers (and Freddie the school learning dog!).

It was a really positive visit, great to see the engaged and inquisitive children of all ages taking part in Maths and English lessons, as well some of the technology used to help with learning, plus the fantastic outdoor classroom.

It was also helpful to have a chat about the pandemic's impact on learning and the tremendous strides the school has made in remote learning work by necessity during this difficult time.

Thanks to everyone for your warm welcome and I look forward to visiting them again in the future.

I thought it would be worth highlighting some good news that has come out around private parking, with a new code of conduct for private car parks announced earlier this week.

Fresh measures proposed in the new Code and Framework include the creation of a mandatory single Appeals Service and Appeals Charter for motorists to turn to if they are unfairly fined. Under options set out in the Appeals Charter, motorists could be able to appeal their fine and see it cancelled entirely if:

- they have a mitigating reason for overstaying their parking ticket such as their vehicle breaking down
- they have made a genuine innocent error, like keying in a digit in their number plate incorrectly
- they have a valid ticket, permit or Blue Badge but failed to display it correctly

The Code also states:

- New parking charge levels which will mirror the local authority system for publicly accessible car parks, halving parking charges for millions of motorists to £50. It will keep the current £100 cap in some circumstances such as abusing Blue Badge bays or if a motorist is trespassing on private land.
- Motorists will be offered a 50% discount if they pay within 14 days.
- Parking debt collectors will be banned from adding additional excess fees to the level of the parking charge, currently as much as £70.
- A compulsory 10-minute grace periods before firms can issue a late fine.

- A compulsory 5-minute cooling-off period in which a motorist can consider the terms and conditions and change their mind about parking.
- A crackdown on parking firms using aggressive or pseudo-legal language to intimidate motorists into paying fines.
- A requirement for parking firms to clearly display pricing and terms and conditions of parking, contact details and how to appeal a charge.

Parking issues in Charlestown and Porthpean are regularly raised with me and the parish council by local people and visitors alike, so I am pleased to see these changes coming forward.

Finally, although it isn't in the parish, on Saturday, I am running the first of my organised beach cleans of the year, on behalf of Three Bays Wildlife Group, at Crinnis, from 12pm for Love your Beach weekend. All equipment provided. Please come along and support if you fancy getting some fresh air and removing some marine litter from one of our lovely beaches.