

## **PENZANCE TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL – 19 JANUARY 2026**

### **1. Policing, ASB and community safety**

In response to concerns raised by members of the public at the previous Penzance Council meeting, and to information received by the Town Clerk about lack of cover in the Neighbourhood Policing team and the resulting strain being put on the Penzance Council-funded ASB caseworker and street marshals, I wrote to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez, requesting clarification and calling for a response.

This led to my being contacted by Chief Supt Scott Bradley, who had recently taken on a role as commander of the Neighbourhood Policing teams across Cornwall. He agreed to meet with myself and the Town Clerk, along with representatives from Hayle and St Ives Town Councils (which are covered by the same inspector).

At the meeting, held on 12 December 2025, the Town Clerk gave a short presentation highlighting the amount spent by Penzance Council on community safety (over £120,000: ASB caseworker, street marshals, CCTV and related infrastructure). He also shared details of some of the issues that had caused concern, such as the arson incidents at the bus station and the Savoy Cinema.

Chief Supt Bradley explained some of the operational challenges he was facing, including the overriding need to maintain patrol teams at the required level to respond to 999 calls, which meant that officers were often abstracted from neighbourhood policing to plug gaps in patrol coverage. There can also be difficulties filling gaps in the West Cornwall sector with officers from other sectors, given that we are literally at the end of the line – so there is a limited pool of other sector areas that can provide extra resources (unlike sectors further up the line, who can draw in officers from many surrounding areas).

He also said that there had been longstanding issues with recruitment, retention and sickness dating back to the Covid period, which he was addressing with changes in hiring strategies with the aim of getting back up to the required number of officers by April 2026. Meanwhile, he would seek to ensure that the West Cornwall area was given a high priority in resource allocation, and there has indeed been an increase in visible police patrols in Penzance town centre.

This was a helpful meeting and established a very useful point of contact in Chief Supt Bradley, who encouraged all three councils to keep in touch and to contact him directly should the need arise.

The regular Safer Penzance meetings attended by the Town Clerk, myself and other members of Penzance Council will provide an opportunity for us to track future progress on policing in the Penzance parish, in terms of both police presence and reported crime.

### **2. Mounts Bay Coastal Resilience Strategy**

Cornwall Council have issued a Briefing Note on the Mounts Bay Coastal Resilience Strategy (covering the coastline from Marazion to Mousehole), identifying a preferred strategy to address the risk of coastal erosion and sea level rise. The strategy is due to go out to public consultation in the near future, and the Town Clerk and I have been invited to join the panel on a forthcoming public webinar hosted by the CC Environmental Resilience Team; we will share details when we get them. This process will also feed into the future Coastal Change Management Plan (CCMP), which will

contain policies that would apply to development proposals within the coastal strip. The principle of a CCMP was supported in the Penzance Neighbourhood Plan, and Penzance Council would act as the sponsoring body in the CCMP drafting and consultation process.

### **3. Penwith Community Area Partnership (CAP)**

I attended the regular quarterly meeting of the Penwith CAP at St Johns Hall on Wednesday 7th January. The main agenda items were:

- A presentation/discussion on the Cornwall Council Priorities Plan 2026-2030.

The document includes the aim of “*working with Town and Parish Councils to identify opportunities for shared services or to support local delivery of services where they are better placed to do so*”. During the discussion, I raised the question of what this would actually look like in practice, and proposed a further meeting with towns and parishes to share experiences and suggest practical ways of working together. The CC Community Link Officer) was amenable, but explained that organising additional meetings is difficult because resources are stretched in the Localism team at Cornwall Council – which is potentially a concern for an authority apparently committed to partnership working with local councils. One alternative option would be for Penzance Council to proactively arrange a Teams meeting with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Localism (Cllr Sarah Preece) to map out the way forward; I will be liaising with the Town Clerk.

The Priorities Plan is available here: <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/priorities>

- Public Health Annual Report.

The CC Director of Public Health, gave a presentation focused on child poverty in Cornwall, including testimony from young people themselves about the impact on their lives. One of the key issues raised in the group discussion was affordable and social housing (also addressed in the Priorities Plan); I made the point that in drafting the new Cornwall Local Plan, it was vital that the genuine concerns about health, well-being, child poverty and affordable housing reflected in the thinking of the current CC administration are embedded in the approach to development, especially as the new Local Plan will in theory run to 2050 and so affect the lives of an entire generation.

- Smartphone Free Childhood.

Members will recall that in September 2025, Penzance Council unanimously approved a motion to approach local school leaders so as to facilitate progress towards a smartphone free schools policy. The member of the public from Smartphone Free Childhood Cornwall & IoS, who addressed the Council meeting last September, also spoke to the Penwith CAP meeting – as did a member of Cornwall Youth Council, who acknowledged both sides of the argument while also expressing concerns about the potential impact on young people.

As regards Penzance Council’s decision, I explained in the meeting that our intention is to facilitate discussion and encourage schools to move towards a smartphone free policy, but that we had no power or desire to mandate any

such change. Overall, the town and parish representatives were broadly supportive of our action.

I will now be following up on this initiative with our officer team to set up initial meetings, and potentially bring neighbouring parishes into the conversation given that their primaries are feeders into the secondary schools in the Penzance parish. We will also check in with Newquay Town Council, who pioneered the smartphone free schools approach last year.

#### **4. Planning Committee**

There are three active planning applications on which Penzance Council has made objections and which are expected to go to Committee at Cornwall Council in the New Year. In each case, the Penzance Council Planning Committee has appointed either myself or Cllr Jan Power (as Chair of the Planning Committee) to represent Penzance Council and present our position at the meeting. The three applications are:

PA25/04955 (Penzance Heliport): application to vary conditions on existing consent, mainly to increase permitted noise levels.

PA25/00085: Outline planning application for the development of up to 140 dwellings at Castle Horneck.

PA25/03633 (Old Lidl site, Wherry Town): Redevelopment for retirement living accommodation for older people comprising 56 retirement apartments and six retirement cottages including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping.

No dates have yet been set for when these applications will be heard in committee.

#### **5. Larger Councils Committee of CALC**

The next regular meeting of the Larger Councils Committee of CALC (Cornwall Association of Local Councils) is being held in St Ives on 22nd January, and the Town Clerk and I will be in attendance on behalf of Penzance Council. The meeting will be joined by Claire Hurley, Cornwall Council's Head of Business (Economy Regeneration and Assets), and the portfolio holder for Tourism, Localism and Planning (Cllr Sarah Preece). The presentation topic, and subsequent Q & A session, will focus on clear next steps to support the Cornish visitor economy following the dissolution of Visit Cornwall.

#### **6. Mayors Forum**

Towards the end of 2025 I hosted the first meeting (via Teams) of the informal Mayors Forum, to which all Cornish mayors are invited. Much of the discussion focused on issues around crime, ASB and policing, and it was a good opportunity to compare experiences across different parts of Cornwall in terms of relationships with neighbourhood policing teams and sector inspectors. Other topics included youth provision, grant funding policies, community engagement, twinning associations, and future precepting arrangements. A further online meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

#### **7. Penzance Regeneration Company (PZRC)**

Contractors are on site at all three regeneration projects: Market House, the old Poundstretcher building at 94 Market Jew Street, and the old Lou's Shoes at 38-30 Market Place. Alongside oversight of the ongoing refurbishment and construction work, the volunteer Board of Directors is also starting to focus on fine-tuning the operating model for the Market House, well in advance of the projected opening date in the spring of 2027.

The Town Clerk and myself continue to attend the regular Board meetings, as well as a series of workshops and working group meetings around various aspects of the projects.

### **8. Penzance Town Deal Board**

All Town Deal projects are now either complete, or well into the delivery phase. The most recent Town Deal Board meeting (26th November 2025) agreed to extend the life of the Town Deal Board for a further nine months until the end of 2026, to ensure continued oversight of the various live projects during the residual duration of the Town Deal programme.

### **9. Penzance/Concarneau Twinning Association**

The Association continues to have a very busy programme of events, including a successful trip to the Concarneau Christmas Market in December 2025 by five members of the Association (including Cllr Bonnie Jackson) and a Twelfth Night social at the Cricket Club.

The next major event will be a visit from another group of school students from Concarneau to Penzance in Easter 2026.

### **10. Penzance/Cuxhaven Twinning Association**

The Chair of the Association has been approached by a representative of the Cuxhaven's Elbe 1 light vessel with a view to arranging a visit to Penzance Harbour in July 2027. The vessel last visited Penzance in 2005, when it aroused a lot of interest. I will be liaising with the Town Clerk and the Penzance Harbourmaster about this planned visit.

Note: all reports valid as of the date of writing (8th January). A verbal update will be provided at the Council meeting on 19 January if any significant new matters arise.

Cllr Stephen Reynolds  
Penzance Town Mayor  
8 January 2025