

PENZANCE TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL – 16th MARCH 2026

1. Mounts Bay Coastal Resilience Strategy

Following on from my report to the previous Full Council meeting in January, the Cornwall Council public webinar has now been scheduled for either 23rd March or 25th March (a meeting link will be sent to all councillors once the date is confirmed).

The Town Clerk and I have both agreed to join the presenting team, which will also include the CC portfolio holder for Environment & Climate Change plus representatives from Cornwall Council's Climate Resilience and Adaptation Team, the Environment Agency, and the technical consultants working on the project.

The webinar forms part of a public consultation on the strategy that is likely to last for six to eight weeks, with a view to the strategy being approved in July 2026.

The main aims are:

- firstly, to consult and agree on a preferred option for addressing coastal erosion and flood risk, with a differentiated approach and timelines for the various sections of the Mounts Bay shoreline;
- and then to use that strategy as a basis for developing detailed design solutions, and potentially securing funding from DEFRA when the next round of funding begins (provisionally from April 2027).

I would encourage members to dial into the webinar if at all possible. Our shoreline is absolutely fundamental to us as a community and it is important that we find the best solutions to address the threat from coastal erosion and flooding that we will face in the years and decades ahead.

I'm also liaising with the CC team about the possibilities of holding a face-to-face drop-in information event during the public consultation period.

2. Penzance Community Flood Plan / Community Emergency Plan

I have been contacted by a representative from the Cornwall Community Flood Forum with a view to starting to develop a **Community Flood Plan** for the Penzance parish. The aim here is to focus mainly on community resilience for vulnerable households and neighbourhoods, and on community response in the event of flooding incidents.

Our initial discussions suggested that the best approach would be to organise this mainly ward by ward or catchment by catchment (Paul/Mousehole, Newlyn Coombe, Lariggan Valley, Chyandour Brook, Ponsandane Stream), given that each watercourse has its own specific characteristics in terms of response to rainfall events and levels of threat to neighbouring properties. One or more councillors from each ward could potentially provide a focal point for developing the Flood Plan.

The representative will be at the forthcoming meeting of the **Penwith Community Area Partnership (Alverne Room, St Johns Hall, 6pm on Wednesday 1st April)**, where she will be running a "severe weather scenario exercise". This would be an

opportunity for interested councillors (or indeed interested members of the public, as the meeting is open to the public) to find out more, so please try and come if you are interested in helping your community be more resilient to flood risk. If you are unable to attend, there should be an opportunity to meet with the representative at a later date to explore how we might take this forward within the Penzance parish.

At the same Penwith CAP meeting, the Cornwall Emergency Management Manager will provide an overview of **Community Emergency Planning**. This is an issue that has shot up the agenda following the recent storms (especially Goretta), and the Town Clerk has already started to reflect on how this could happen within the Penzance parish. As with the Community Flood Plan, this is likely to be concentrated largely on community/ward level, reflecting specific risks and existing community resources.

Overall, these three events (Coast Resilience, Flood Plan and Emergency Planning) reflect the growing importance of resilience in today's world, and of harnessing community resources to provide a better, faster and more appropriate response.

3. Smartphone Free Childhood

Following on from our decision in Full Council last September to explore the possibility of a smartphone free policy in local schools, one of the Communications Officers has organised an initial meeting for school leaders and Smartphone Free Cornwall, to be held on Tuesday 10th March (after the date of writing this report), which I will be chairing.

I will provide a verbal update on this meeting to Full Council on Monday 16th March.

4. Planning Committee

There are two active planning applications on which Penzance Council has made objections and which are expected to go to Committee in the near future. In both cases, 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 two applications are:

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

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.

Meanwhile, application PA25/00085 (Outline planning application for the development of up to 140 dwellings at Castle Horneck) was discussed at the CC West Sub Area Planning Committee meeting of 2nd February 2026, at which I presented Penzance Council's objection – focusing mainly on the lack of safe

pedestrian routes and public transport links for residents, which would make the development unduly car-dependent (and potentially lead to social isolation for residents without a car). The application was approved, largely because changes in government policy (including the uplifted housing targets) mean that a “presumption in favour” of development applies. However, there will be an opportunity to revisit the accessibility concerns when the detailed application comes forward.

5. 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. Additional volunteer directors are being recruited into both the main PZRC Board and the Boards of the three entities responsible for each of the three projects, to help move the projects towards the operational phase.

6. Penzance Town Deal Board

All Town Deal projects are now either complete, or well into the delivery phase. The Town Deal Board is scheduled to hold a further two meetings this year, before it is wound up as the Town Deal programme reaches its conclusion.

With the Town Deal Board coming to an end, attention is now turning to future governance arrangements for regeneration in the Penzance area. Prior to the establishment of the Town Deal Board (as a specific vehicle to deliver and oversee the TD projects), the Penzance Regeneration Partnership provided a forum for exploring potential regeneration opportunities. The question now arises as to what a future “regeneration partnership” might look like. The Town Deal Board has set up a working group to report back on this issue, and myself and the Town Clerk are both part of that group.

I see this as an opportunity to broaden out what we mean by “regeneration” to take in not only buildings and infrastructure, but also issues that are critical to the everyday lives of local people – especially around physical and mental health and well-being. There is much valuable work going through informal bodies such as the Penwith Interagency Forum, which brings together practitioners and volunteers working across a whole range of areas in health, well-being, and family/community support. I feel it’s important that some of the key individuals in these fields are formally brought into the conversation about the future of the Penzance area.

I also feel that while the focus on town centre vitality was crucial in the first phase of regeneration, as it enabled Penzance to attract Town Deal funding, it is now time to broaden the focus out to include some of the more neglected communities in the parish (such as Gwavas, Roscadghill, Treneere or Eastern Green) that are in need of support.

The working group has been asked by the Board to “review the wider regeneration landscape, consider expanded membership and report back at the next meeting”.

7. Penzance/Concarneau Twinning Association

Main forthcoming events:

- Visit by students from Concarneau from Sunday 19th April, staying at the YHA. Activities arranged include the now traditional visit to the Fire Station; trips to St Michaels Mount and Geevor mine; visits to the Morrab Library and Gardeners House; and a day at Mounts Bay Academy. Many thanks to all who have agreed to entertain the young people during their visit.
- A delegation of six from Concarneau is due to visit for Golowan (delegations are invited to each town's summer festivals in alternate years). The current Mayor of Concarneau, Marc Bigot (who has been a great supporter of the twinning) is stepping down at this month's municipal elections, so I intend to extend an invitation to his successor to attend Golowan.
- A party of adults from Penzance will visit Concarneau 29th September-5th October.

* * *

Note: all reports valid as of the date of writing (9th March). A verbal update will be provided at the Full Council meeting on 16th March if any significant new matters arise.

Cllr Stephen Reynolds, Penzance Town Mayor

9th March 2026