

PENZANCE COUNCIL – 20 JULY 2026**REPORT FOR INFORMATION****COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Our Culture	Our Decision Making	Our Environment	Our Money	Our People	Our Places	Our Resilience & Wellbeing
						
	✓				✓	

Background:

At its meeting held on 4 March 2024, Penzance Council resolved that the data relating to Councillors' attendance at meetings be presented to each Council meeting, for information.

The data relating to the attendance of Councillors at meetings, so far during this municipal year, is therefore set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

Appendix 1 – Councillor Attendance Data

Elliot Ridington
Democratic Services and Governance Officer

PENZANCE COUNCIL - RUNNING COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE 2026-2027

COUNCILLOR	COMMITTEES	NO. OF MEETINGS HELD(<i>incl. full Town Council</i>)	NO. OF MEETINGS ATTENDED	%
Baker, KM	F&GPs + Planning	6	6	100.00%
Broadhurst, NC	F&GPs + L&A	4	3	75.00%
Hadley, PM	A&C + L&A	3	1	33.33%
How, JM	A&C + L&A	3	3	100.00%
Jackson, B	L&A + Planning + Personnel	7	6	85.71%
Jameson, PL	A&C + L&A + Personnel	4	3	75.00%
Lapin, P	F&GPs + L&A	4	4	100.00%
Law, PA	MAYOR + Personnel	8	4	50.00%
Marrington, TS	A&C + Personnel	3	3	100.00%
McKenna, J		2	2	100.00%
Osborne, PI	DEPUTY MAYOR	7	4	57.14%
Paul DM	L&A + Planning	6	6	100.00%
Power, JS	L&A + Personnel + Planning	7	2	28.57%
Pugh, JR	A&C + F&GPs	3	0	0.00%
Reed, SJ	A&C + L&A	3	2	66.67%
Reynolds, SJ	F&GPs + Planning	7	7	100.00%
Smart Knight, D	A&C + L&A	3	1	33.33%
Trevail, PC	A&C + F&GPs	3	2	66.67%
Wilson, MA	F&GPs + Planning	6	4	66.67%
Young, P	A&C + L&A + Personnel	4	3	75.00%

Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor attend every standing committee
Please note - some absences may be due to ill health

PENZANCE COUNCIL – 20 JULY 2026**REPORT FOR INFORMATION****OUTCOME OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT RECEIVED**

Our Culture	Our Decision Making	Our Environment	Our Money	Our People	Our Places	Our Resilience & Wellbeing
						
	✓					

Background:

Penzance Council has been informed of a Code of Conduct complaint made against a Penzance Councillor. In line with Standing Order No. 16(a), the outcome of the investigation is being provided to this meeting, for information.

The Decision Notice is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

This report accords with the Council's Strategic Objective of 'Our Decision Making' as, in order to comply with Standing Orders, the outcome of any Code of Conduct complaint must be reported to Penzance Council.

Appendix 1 – Code of Conduct Decision Notice

Elliot Ridington
Democratic Services and Governance Officer



ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE

A BREACH OF THE CODE HAS BEEN FOUND

NO ACTION REQUIRED

Reference:	CCN005/26/27
Complainants:	M Thompson, M Collier, J Sincok, J Hamer, C Tiss, B Wood, T Franklin, S Carter, L Bockman, G Buttery, J Taylor, J Brooks, S Hawken.
Subject Member:	Cllr P Osborne – Penzance Town Council
Person conducting the Assessment:	Simon Mansell, Head of Governance, Elections and Democratic Services
Date of Assessment:	2 June 2026

The Decision

For the reasons set out below, the Subject Member is considered to have breached the Code but, for the reasons set out below, no further action needs to be taken.

The Complaint

Note: Given the number of complaints received, the complaint below is an amalgamation of several of these in order to ensure that the key points of all the complaints are captured.

When interviewed by BBC Spotlight, Cllr Osborne was discussing the highly contentious bridge closure in Newlyn, and the presenter asked Cllr Osborne about the number of complaints about the works planned for Newlyn.

During this interview, Cllr Osborne stated, when referring to the objectors, that there was a vocal minority who had a mob mentality.

Many people felt that the works at Newlyn were misguided, and that the comment made by Cllr Osborne was rude and disrespectful and brought Penzance Town Council into disrepute.

The Response from the Subject Member

On 19th March 2026 I was spontaneously interviewed by a BBC Radio Cornwall reporter seeking people's views on the pedestrianisation of Newlyn's Old Bridge.

The following is a transcript provided by the BBC of what I said:

"I think there is a strong vocal minority who are putting out a lot of information out on social media that is lacking in accuracy and I think that is pretty typical of social media these days. It seems to be a bit of an echo chamber for those who want their voices heard and they want to draw up a bit of a mob mentality.

"I think there is a much stronger silent majority who are not necessarily voicing their opinions online or anywhere."

Clearly, in this unedited transcript of the interview, the reference to "mob mentality" refers to social media generally, rather than to any objectors specifically: ie "It [SOCIAL MEDIA (GENERAL)] seems to be a bit of an echo chamber for those [SOME PEOPLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA (GENERAL)] who want their voices heard and they [THOSE PEOPLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA (GENERAL)] want to draw up a bit of a mob mentality.

This unedited transcript of the interview confirms that the use of the phrase "mob mentality" was not used by myself to describe local residents or those objecting to the closure of Newlyn Bridge.

One month later, on 20th April, an edited version of this interview appeared on BBC Spotlight, which cut out any reference to social media in general, thus changing the context of the use of the phrase "mob mentality".

Edited version:

"I think there is a strong vocal minority who are putting out a lot of information out on social media that is lacking in accuracy... a bit of a mob mentality.

"I think there is a much stronger silent majority."

The Views of the Independent Person

The contentious comments refer to groups rather than to individuals, but several complainants/objectors resented the thought of being put into those groups.

Councillor Osborne's contention is that her comments referred to social media not objectors, but as social media is a general term for various sites providing platforms from which contributors can publicly air their views, there is an implied criticism of those people.

It may be that Councillor Osborne could have been more selective in her comments, and by not doing so has shown a lack of respect to those whose views differ from her own. She may also, by her comments, have given the impression that she has not exhibited the high standards of conduct expected from a council member and thus bringing her office into disrepute.

However, seen in the context of differing views and opinions presented in public debate, I cannot say that the matter is, in my view, serious enough to justify any further possible breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Application of the Code of Conduct

In considering the complaint as made I am satisfied that the Subject Member was acting in their official capacity at the time of the alleged conduct and therefore was bound by the Code of Conduct.

As with all ethical standards complaints, this is assessed against the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council and the procedures for assessing complaints adopted by Cornwall Council. The information provided is assessed on the balance of probabilities; this is, would a reasonable person objectively considering all of the facts be of the view it is more likely than not that the actions of the Subject Member amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Findings of Fact

The background to this complaint is works around Newlyn which, for a variety of reasons, have been viewed as contentious.

In considering the complaints, there needs to be some consideration to the background to this as it puts the complaints into a context that allows them to be better understood.

At the onset there has been a misconception concerning several facts relating to the works:

- The local members were responsible for the decision to undertake the works – this is incorrect.
- The local members were responsible for the consultation relating to the works – this is incorrect; and
- The local members were responsible for the plans on which the works were based – this is incorrect.

There is also a misconception that any elected official has to pick a side in these matters and then to support that side, this is incorrect. It is well established that all elected members can choose which matters they wish to support and those they don't, and there is nothing within the law of the Code which can compel them to do otherwise.

It is against this that the local members then sought to ensure that all views were represented and, as often happens, the media became involved with the story. This was driven in part driven by social media, and the interview by the Subject Member which was given.

In dealing with these complaints, I have reviewed all of the complaints, and the interview with the Subject Member on several occasions and the use of the words 'mob mentality' within it.

I have also then reviewed the Subject Member's submission and in this have taken into account the way the interview was edited to exclude the words social media, but this includes the use of mob mentality. I am of the view that, no matter in which

format it was transmitted, this would have resulted in complaints being made, and in order to head off further complaints the assessment below takes into account both versions of the interview.

When considering such a complaint under the Code for a long time the Code did not extend to comments made regarding groups of people if individuals were not named. This has changed slightly in recent years, and in reviewing this complaint I have considered previous matters where a breach of the Code has been found relating to the use of the word 'nimbys' (Not In My Back Yard) when this has been directed to a group of people as opposed to an individual.

Both versions of the interview are directed towards a group of people in the area, and they do not need to be specifically named for the Code to apply to the comments.

Further, when reviewing the above facts, I do agree with the comments of the Independent Person in that the Subject Member could have been more selective in her comments, but that, at this stage of the process, it does not detract from the fact they were made.

2.1 of the Code of Conduct requires that a Councillor treats others with respect. This is a long-standing provision within the Code and because of this case law allows us to distinguish between when a breach of the Code may have occurred, and when it hasn't.

We know from case law that the Code has always allowed members to be critical and challenging, but it has never allowed members to be personal in their comments. The Code also doesn't on its own require the reasoning to show who has been offended by the comment, just that a reasonable person could find the comments to be personal.

In speaking out against the objectors in general terms, this is not a breach of the Code, and as such I do not consider that the term 'strong vocal minority' is a breach of the Code in the context of the statement as made. This terminology is moderate, and no matter what the personal views of others on the matter may be, I am satisfied that the reasonable and objective person would not view this as a breach of the Code.

Referring to others as having a 'mob mentality' does, however, cross the line between reasonable and objectionable, and because of this I am of the view that this comment fails to treat others with respect, regardless in which version of the statement it was used, and is therefore a breach of 2.1 of the Code of Conduct for Penzance Town Council.

2.10 states, you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute.

The threshold for a complaint to be found to have brought the member's Council into disrepute is very high and I do not consider on this occasion this has been passed.

However, with regards to the statement made, I do consider that the Subject Member has brought her office into disrepute and this breaches 2.10. In making this finding, I accept that the matters relating to Newlyn have been a testing time for the Subject Member but, as has already been noted, more care should have been exercised with regard to the words used in her statement.

2.5 of the Code is set in place as there is a requirement for Councils to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, and it is reasonable that councillors should be also expected to do this.

As a breach of 2.1 and 2.10 of the Code has been found it follows that the Subject Member has also failed to uphold high standards of conduct, breaching 2.5.

There are no other breaches of the Code found in this assessment.

Summary and Actions

The way a breach of the Code is required to be considered can be viewed as a blunt instrument as the requirement is that either a breach of the Code is found, or it isn't, and nothing can be considered in mitigation at this stage.

However, it is when considering whether there are any suitable actions to remedy the breach when mitigations can be taken into account.

The first of these is that, whilst it is accepted there were concerns with regard to the local works, it was due to social media that the local members became the focus of these concerns and, having noted some of the comments, it is clear that the approach by some was, at times, unnecessarily vitriolic.

As a result, the Subject Member then made the statement to the Press, the reasons the statement was made and the reasons why it was found to be a breach of the Code are also clear, although with a lot of similar complaints this was the right thing said in the wrong way.

Secondly, I am also mindful of the fact that local councillors received little or no training on dealing with the media and are therefore not more alert as to what phrases may be acceptable or not. This may not be important to the complainants; however, for elected officials this is an important skill which can be missed.

Thirdly, the Subject Member did not know how the interview may be edited.

Finally, the Code requires an objective view of the facts by a reasonable person, and I am of the opinion that the pressure exerted by social media would be something a reasonable person would take into account when reaching a decision.

Therefore, given the above, and having found a breach of the Code, I do not consider that any further action is required on this occasion, although the Subject Member is strongly advised to consider more carefully what is said to the media going forwards.

What happens now?

This decision notice is sent to the complainants, the member against whom the allegation has been made the Clerk to Penzance Town Council and a copy placed on Cornwall Council's web site.

Right of review

At the written request of the Subject Member, the Monitoring Officer can review this complaint and, if the review is successful this may result in a change to the finding made in the original assessment.

We must receive a written request from the Subject Member to review this decision within 14 days from the date of this notice, explaining in detail on what grounds the decision should be reviewed. The grounds for requesting a review must be substantive, and a re-submission of the original complaint will not be classed as substantive, and neither will a request that sets out the findings are disagreed with. There must be fresh information in the request which was not considered at assessment which is such that this may result in a different outcome.

If we receive a request for a review, we will write to all the parties mentioned above, notifying them of the request to review the decision.

Additional help

If you have difficulty reading this notice we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

We can also help if English is not your first language.