

Town Mayor Report to Penzance Council

Penzance Council Meeting 20 July 2026

Introduction

This is my first Report to Penzance Council, since being elected as Town Mayor on 18 May. Given that, as I begin to write this report, I have only been in this role for barely two months, I hope you will forgive me if this report constitutes less a report on work streams and tasks successfully completed and more a “positioning paper” stating some of my plans and aspirations, as well as setting out my stall as to the kind of Mayor I intend to be.

If I have any mantras for my life, beliefs and values, they lie in something an important Mentor said to me once:

“It’s not **who** you are that holds any importance, it’s **how** you are”

This will underpin my Mayorship.

Being a new Mayor, every day is a school day. I have a lot to learn and a great deal to take in and understand. I have now met with nearly every single Councillor one to one and face to face, mainly in The Coach House Café as it is important I support this new and exciting venture (their cheese scones are amazing). It has been a real pleasure listening to the views of Councillors and it is abundantly clear that we have an amazing team of committed, dedicated, skilled and experienced Councillors, passionate about this place. It is also clear to me that we have a bit of work to do to ensure that **all** Councillors who wish to:

- have increased opportunities to offer their skills, experiences and talents for the benefits of the people we serve
- have increased opportunities to turn community priorities into Motions on which we can agree
- have increased opportunities to **directly** shape policy and action

I am actively looking at processes and systems in the Council that could be changed and built on, to deliver these commitments. My emerging ideas have been fully shaped by the creative conversations I have had with individual Councillors.

Work Streams

Food Provider Forum/Climate Action Fund

In May 2025, I formed the Food Provider Forum (FPF), involving the PZ Foodbank; Food for Families; Growing Links; Whole Again Communities and Trellya. The purpose of the FPF was to coordinate food offerings to ensure adequate coverage and avoid duplication; share best practice and increase communication and collaboration. Out of this Forum emerged October 2025’s Community Action Festival a co-production with Andrew George’s Office, resulting in a day-long community event at Humphry Davy School, featuring around 40 community agency providers, focusing on food poverty, energy poverty, finances & debt and health and well-being.

Out of the FPF has now come an incredibly exciting and challenging opportunity. The National Lottery has committed to a funding stream called the Climate Action Fund (CAF). This fund pot of money is designed to support local partnerships and national organisations in developing the ways and means of totally transforming our food system to reduce food insecurity for people and communities and developing ways of producing enough healthy, affordable food without harming the planet. This expects us to work with nature to create resilient, sustainable and equitable food systems (agroecology) and address the root cause of long-term problems, not just the symptoms (systems change).

We will be bidding for funds potentially up to 5 million pounds over a 7 year period. We have developed a core partnership comprising : Food Providers Forum; Growing Links; Gardeners House; Bosavern Community Farm; Kernow Gleaners; Young Farmers Association. This partnership will be meeting in mid-July to discuss a format for an initial Expression of Interest. The Core Partnership will be supported and advised by a number of expert agencies in the field.

Youth Services Provider Forum

Building on my experience in setting up the Food provider Forum, I have had initial discussions with several agencies in Penzance providing direct services to young people, including PZ and Newlyn Youth; the Sea Cadets; A Band of Brothers and Penzance YMCA. There seems to be a universal interest in setting up a Forum for agencies whose core business is providing direct services to young people. The Forum would be for sharing best practice; combining resources and assets; ensuring service coverage and avoiding duplication and potentially bidding for local/national funding. A long-term aim might be to set up some kind of representative "Youth Advisory Board" to advise and support Penzance Council. The High Sheriff of Cornwall Harriet Hills was very interested to hear of these fledgling plans and has stated that she would love to visit Penzance to see the youth provision there is here as youth services are a key priority for her. I have been offered support in developing this project from Councillor Peter Lapin.

Love our Streets

I am in the very early stages (and I must emphasise, **very** early!) of developing an outline plan to develop and support, small teams of community volunteers across the Parish, focusing on looking after a street, or two or three streets, including weeding, litter-picking, tidying, monitoring potholes, ASB etc. The community volunteers would also focus on developing supportive, compassionate, community social connections and would include the establishment of street parties. This would be a pilot project, with the aspiration of rolling it out, to develop multiple, small, local compassionate communities right across the Parish. Since street-weeding would be a central part of this project, L&A would need to be crucial partners. I have already met with Ben Brosnall to talk through my ideas and I have already met, or am meeting, with Volunteer Cornwall; Lea Thomas from Cormac and Sustainable PZ. Councillor Penny Osborne has been active in identifying similar projects in Falmouth, St Ives and St Just, as we don't want to re-invent the wheel. I have been offered support in developing this project from Councillor David Smight-Knight who is keen on contributing to the thinking and planning of community development.

Mayor's Diary

You have already had two editions of this, one for May and the other for June. If I may ask you to indulge me, I would like to re-iterate the purpose of this Diary which is not simply about

information-sharing and accountability. Much more importantly, it is about giving you all the opportunity to see if you can be more involved in areas of work I am involved in on my own. It may be, for example, that I am attending an external network to which you have the skills, aptitude, interest or experience to contribute – perhaps even more effectively than I can! – and that I would be able to bring you along next time. I only have a limited skill-set and all of you will have skill-sets that I lack. Whenever possible, I want to work alongside Councillors, bringing in skills and experience that I don't have. Obviously, there will always be meetings, networks, events, that only I am invited to and to which I cannot invite others. So....please read the Mayor's Diary and contact me if you would like to be involved in issues I am dealing with; I really need you alongside me!

Finally.....thanks

As the newly-elected Town Mayor, I would like to express my genuine and heart-felt thanks to:

- All Councillors who voted for me as Mayor and (hopefully) have the faith and confidence in me that I will do a good enough job.
- Councillor Stephen Reynolds, who spent a lot of his time helping me to take up this role and continues to provide me with mentorship, advice and guidance
- James Hardy, our fantastic Town Clerk, whose passion and vision for this Parish are inspirational
- Penzance Council staff, whose amazing work is at the very heart of what we do and achieve and which can go unnoticed, as it's so routine.

I am very aware of the honour and privilege I have been granted, to serve the people of the Parish of Penzance for 2026/2027 and the over 400 years of history invested in this office of Mayor of Penzance, established under the Penzance Charter of incorporation of 1614 granted by James I. I will do everything I can to continue to make the people of Penzance proud of where they live and work.