

Lostwithiel Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 16th May 2024

Lostwithiel's Annual Parish Meeting was held in the Community Centre on Thursday 16th May 2024 at 6.30pm.

Welcome

The Mayor of Lostwithiel Councillor Karin Henderson welcomed the seventeen members of the public and five councillors at the meeting in her opening address.

Apologies

Councillor Berryman, Councillor Guy, Councillor Ross,
Councillor Townsend, Councillor Wisdom
Maureen Adams – Methodist Church
Revd Beynon – St Bartholomew's Church
Ian Sheer – Rotary Club
Elaine Badger - Lostwithiel School
Luke Humphries - Duchy of Cornwall
Penny Philp - Lostwithiel Bowling Club

Minutes Tuesday 30th May 2023

It was proposed by Deputy Mayor Guiterman and seconded by Mayor Henderson that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 30 May 2023 are signed as a true and correct record.

Votes – 9 votes in favour, 1 Abstention.

Tri -Service Officer Report

Not present

Annual Report from Cornwall Councillor Colin Martin

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Contact Details:

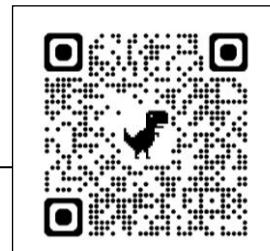
If you would like to discuss any issues, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

My Council email is cllr.colin.martin@cornwall.gov.uk, but I do receive a large volume of messages, so if you want a response, please also contact me by phone or WhatsApp on 07734 434 164.

Online Newsletter:

You can see my latest newsletter by scanning this QR code or visiting:

<https://www.seclibdems.uk/news/article/focus-leaflet-may-2024>



There are three big issues putting Councils across the country under strain, and all three of them have a disproportionate impact on Cornwall: Homelessness, Social Care and Education.

Homelessness:

Cornwall Council is currently providing “temporary emergency accommodation” for around 800 families who would otherwise be homeless. The Government only provides £15 per night, and the actual costs are usually much, much higher. This issue is particularly severe in Cornwall because local people looking for a place to live are in direct competition with holidaymakers looking for a place to stay. Around 10% of all homes in Cornwall are not homes at all, they are holiday accommodation. Around half of these are “second homes” (used only by the owner and their friends and family) and the other half are “short term rentals” (used by paying customers, e.g. through Airbnb).

In 2021, I brought a motion to Cornwall Council declaring a “housing emergency”. This led to a cross-party working group agreeing a list of measures to tip the balance of the housing market in favour of residential use and away from holiday use. Interestingly all of them

are policies which the Liberal Democrats called for when we ran the Council, but the Conservative Government rejected. But now that the very same ideas are being put forward by a Conservative Council, the Conservative Government has agreed to most of them (albeit with some loopholes and delays):

- **Double council tax on second homes:** The law to enable Councils to charge double council tax was passed at the end of 2023, but Councils are required to give a year's notice to owners, so we cannot actually start charging the double tax until April 2024
- **Tighter definition of "business use":** Business premises don't pay Council Tax, and owners of one small business property don't pay business rates either, thanks to "small business rate relief", so there is an incentive for "second home" owners to pretend to be "short term rentals". The old rule simply required a property to be "available for rent" 140 nights per year, but this requirement could be met simply by creating a web-page advertising your property for £1,000 per night (which nobody would ever pay). New rules introduced in April 2023 require owners to provide evidence that they have actually had paying customers for at least 70 nights in the past year.
- **Registration scheme:** Hotels, pubs and B&Bs have to provide certificates for insurance, gas safety, fire safety and electrical safety, as well as paying for commercial waste collection. The same rules actually apply to short-term rentals, but websites like Airbnb don't ask for evidence, they simply tell owner to "follow local laws". In late 2023, a new law gave Councils a duty to set up a registration scheme to ensure that short-term lets are actually following the rules. Unfortunately, no guidance has yet been provided to Councils to enable them to set up these registration schemes.
- **Creation of a new "use class" for short-term rentals:** Currently any owner can convert a residential property into an Airbnb without any requirement for planning permission. So whilst thousands of new properties are built in Cornwall each year, there is no guarantee that they will be used as homes rather than for holidays. After decades of Lib Dem campaigning, the

Government has now created a new “use class” for “C5 Short-term rental” to distinguish business properties from the residential “C3 Dwellinghouse”. Unfortunately, the Government has initially made this a “permitted development right”, meaning that owners don’t need to ask for permission; they can simply notify the Council of the change. For this new use class to provide meaningful protection for Cornwall’s homes, the Council will need to issue an “Article 4 Direction” to remove the permitted development rights, so that anyone wanting to convert a “dwellinghouse” to a “short-term rental” would have to submit a planning application. Cornwall Council is unlikely to be able to do this until it re-writes its “Local Plan” in the next 2-3 years, after which Lanlivery will probably need to update its own Neighbourhood Development Plan too. **So, although this new use-class will eventually be a powerful tool to prevent homes being converted to holiday accommodation, we probably won’t be able to use it until 2028!** There is also a loophole for “second homes” which will continue to be classed as “Dwellinghouse”.

- **Small Business Rate Relief:** The Government currently pays approximately £22 million per year to Cornwall Council so that owners of short-term rentals don’t have to pay any Business Rates. The Liberal Democrats argue that taxpayers’ money shouldn’t be subsidising these businesses when there is such a shortage of homes for people to live in. We are calling for the Government to exclude short-term rentals from Small Business Rate Relief, and then give the spare £22 million to Cornwall Council. This would be revenue-neutral for the Treasury, but would help the Council to cover the cost of temporary emergency accommodation, building more affordable homes and improving household energy efficiency. Unfortunately, this policy is not currently supported by the Government, so I will be bringing a motion to Cornwall Council later this month to ask Councillors of all parties to support it.

Social Care:

The average age of the UK population is increasing, so the cost of providing adult social care is increasing too. Around half of those

receiving care pay out of their own pockets, whilst half are funded by the Council. Because Cornwall is such a wonderful place to live, many people choose to retire here after spending decades paying their taxes to a different Council elsewhere, so the burden of funding falls harder on Cornwall Council than on many others.

The shortage of affordable housing also makes recruitment difficult, because many people simply cannot find anywhere to live in Cornwall on the low wages paid by the care sector. Anyone wanting to work as a carer can earn the same money outside Cornwall where housing costs are lower.

Most care is provided by “domiciliary care workers” who travel from house-to-house, but this is more expensive in rural Cornwall than it is in more urban areas where travel times are shorter.

When the Council cannot provide care packages, people end up stuck in hospital, which in turn creates long delays for every other part of the system, from waiting lists for planned operations, to waiting times in the Emergency Department, to response times for ambulances.

The Government has acknowledged that the Local Government funding formula discriminates against rural areas like Cornwall, and has repeatedly promised a review, but so far this has not happened. The cost of Adult Social Care for Cornwall Council is now £240 million per year, which equates to over £1,000 out of every household’s Council Tax bill. This obviously doesn’t leave much money for anything else!

Education:

When a child has Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), they are entitled to an “Education, Health and Care Plan” (EHCP) which spells out the extra support they need.

Schools are required to cover the first £6,000 of these costs, and the Council is required to pay the rest. However, the amount the Council receives to cover these costs is set by central Government and does not increase in line with the increasing number of EHCPs. This has left Cornwall Council with a shortfall of approximately £30 million. Over the next three years, this figure is expected to increase to £78 million. The Government’s solution has two parts:

- 1) Create a “statutory technical override” which means this figure is excluded from our published budget. In other words, the Council has a “hidden overdraft”. This “overdraft facility” is due to expire in 2026, at which point the Council would be legally obliged to cut funding for other services to balance the books.
- 2) With this in mind, the government has given Cornwall Council £1m to spend on “identifying efficiencies and new ways of working” to close this £78m gap...

If a child’s needs cannot be met by their mainstream school, the Council is obliged to fund a place in “alternative provision” or “special school”. Places in these schools can cost in excess of £80,000 per child.

The Council also has an obligation to fund the cost of home-to-school transport for these placements. Whereas most mainstream home-to-school transport is via school buses (which can carry over 50 children each), most children in alternative and special provision travel by taxi either because they live a long way from the school or because they are unable to cope with crowded buses. The cost of home-to-school transport is putting strain on every council in the country, but again Cornwall’s rurality makes it much more expensive to provide the same basic service.

There are many theories as to why the number of SEND children is increasing:

- Social media is causing mental illness
- News about climate change and global conflicts are causing anxiety and depression
- Today’s teenagers were born in the years after Surestart children’s centres were axed
- Two years of COVID lockdowns created social anxiety
- Families struggling to cope with the cost of living are having to work longer hours so have less time to spend with their children or are living in more stress-filled households
- An increasing number of children are living in poverty or insecure accommodation, both of which are known to affect mental health
- Every secondary school in Cornwall used to have a “Clinical Associate Psychologist” who could provide prompt mental

health support, so that only the most serious cases needed to be referred to NHS specialist services. Unfortunately these NHS posts are no longer funded, so there are more students on the CAMHS waiting list, meaning that everyone has to wait longer before receiving treatment.

- Mainstream schools have had their funding effectively frozen whilst teachers wages have risen, meaning that there is less money available for teaching assistants and other pastoral support which previously enabled schools to meet emerging Special Educational Needs “in house”. Without this support, more problems are building up to crisis point before they are addressed, by which point they are too severe to deal with in the mainstream setting.

Council funding:

The combination of these three factors has left Cornwall Council with a budget gap of £20 million in 2024/25, which will be met by using up reserves. This is not a sustainable solution, and the gap next year is projected to be £68 million. The (Conservative) Deputy Leader of the Council has written to the Secretary of State, saying ***“it is evident that Government intervention to avoid the financial abyss faced by the sector is now of critical importance and once again I implore you to take swift and decisive action to enhance the final Local Government Settlement while you still have the chance”***.

Unfortunately, in April’s budget, the Chancellor announced that overall departmental spending would increase by just 1% per year over the next five years. But the Government has also promised above-inflation increases in spending for the NHS and the Ministry of Defence. This means that “unprotected departments” (including Local Government) will actually have their budgets cut by around 4% per year.

Even more worryingly, the Labour party (which is likely to be in Government by the end of this year) has said that it will follow the same spending plans, so it looks like residents of Cornwall will continue to see their Council Taxes rise whilst services are reduced. In 2018, the Local Government Minister (Rishi Sunak) promised that the funding formula which disadvantages rural areas like Cornwall

would be reviewed by 2019. The Government has now confirmed that this will not take before the next general election.

Potholes:

In January, the Government announced an extra £3.5 million for Cornwall for road resurfacing and pothole repairs in the new financial year. The Council responded by cutting the amount of its own money being put into that budget by £3.5 million.

So, the grant helped to fill a fraction of the hole in the Council's finances, but not any of the holes in our roads. The total budget for road resurfacing and potholes is £24 million. The estimated backlog of repairs is £294 million. At this rate, even if no new potholes appeared, it would still take over twelve years to repair the faults which already exist!

I believe that the lack of maintenance of gullies and drains is a major factor in the rapid deterioration of our roads. The budget for maintaining and improving highway drainage is £3.5m. The council has not even attempted to calculate how much it would cost to bring them up to spec or to upgrade them to cope with our changing climate.

Road safety:

Recent deaths on local roads have highlighted the lack of structure in the way serious and fatal incidents are communicated to the community. A five-year-old child lost their life on Penpillick Hill, but I have had no contact from Council Officers. All I know is what I have heard in the media, on Facebook, and through talking to residents. I have asked officers to be more transparent and share as much information as possible about all serious accidents so that other road users are made aware of any potential hazards, and informed about what action is taken to prevent similar incidents occurring in future.

Grant Funding:

Funding for towns and parishes to invest in their local areas is split into a multitude of schemes, each with different criteria and administration processes (Shared Prosperity Fund, Community Capacity Fund, Community Levelling Up Fund, Community Infrastructure Levy, High Street Revitalisation Fund etc). This makes it very difficult for parishes (especially the smaller ones) to keep track

of what is available, and to submit strong applications before the money is all gone. I have asked Cornwall Council's Localism team to create a single list which summarises all of the available funding so that it can be more easily understood and accessed.

Devolution:

Last year, after months of public debate, Cornwall Council decided not to sign up to a "Level 3" devolution deal. This would have given Cornwall more power over housing and public transport, as well as some extra funding, but all this power and money would have been put into the hands of a "Directly Elected Mayor", whilst locally elected Councillors would lose their power to hold this individual to account.

The Government decided that if we weren't prepared to accept a directly elected mayor, we could only have a "Level 2" devolution deal, which only gives us control of the Adult Education budget, a one-off grant for "Cornish Distinctiveness and Cornish Language", and the creation of a "Floating Offshore Wind Commission". Five months later I haven't heard anything from this commission. I don't know whether they have had any meetings or even appointed a chair...

After this disappointment, I have met with the leaders of all the other political groups to come up with our own "prospectus" of what we think real devolution for Cornwall should look like. This will be finalised and published in the next two months and we will call on all the national political parties to support it.

Localism:

In 2009 when Cornwall's district and county councils were merged to form a unitary Cornwall Council, assurances were given that local communities would not be forgotten. Nineteen "Community Network Areas" were created, and my Lostwithiel Electoral Division was part of the "St Blazey, Fowey and Lostwithiel Community Network".

This year, due to budget cuts, these nineteen networks have been replaced by twelve "Community Area Partnerships". Obviously the reduction in numbers means an increase in size, which leaves my parishes on the periphery of much larger areas. To make matters

worse, my Electoral Division straddles the junction of three Community Area Partnerships:

- Lostwithiel, Lanlivery, St Winnow, St Veep, Braddock and Boconnoc are part of the “Cornwall South” partnership, which includes St Austell and Mevagissey, and stretches as far as Gorran and Grampound.
- Luxulyan is part of the “China Clay” partnership, which stretches as far as Summercourt.
- Lanreath is part of the “South East Cornwall” partnership, which runs all the way from Polruan the Fowey to the Tamar, encompassing Liskeard, Looe, Saltash and Torpoint.

Obviously covering such huge areas, the partnerships are less able to deal with local issues, so they have chosen to work on bigger topics such as affordable housing, climate change, transport connections and economic development.

One issue in particular which affects both the “Cornwall South” and “South East Cornwall” partnerships is road safety on the A390. You will probably know about serious and fatal accidents in your area, but sadly the truth is that there have been too many deaths and injuries along the entire length of this road from Truro to Gunnislake. I am hoping that by bringing together a large number of Cornwall Councillors as well as all the nearby Towns and Parishes, we will finally get Cornwall Council to take this issue more seriously.

Climate action:

It is now over five years since Cornwall Council declared a “Climate Emergency” and set a target for the whole of Cornwall (not just the Council) to be completely decarbonised by 2030. This was always going to be a stretch, and could only have been achieved if the Government had drastically accelerated its own plans and given Cornwall much greater funding and powers. This has not happened, so there is zero chance that the Cornwall will meet this 2030 target. Unfortunately, I feel that the Council’s approach to Climate Change is still too tokenistic, “doing what we can with what we’ve got” rather than “telling the truth about what needs to be done”. To address this failing, I have campaigned for a “Cornwall Climate Commission” to be created, to look at the big picture of what it would really take to get Cornwall to net zero. I am delighted that this campaign has finally

succeeded and the Commission is set to start work in the next few weeks.

Farming:

Last month Cornwall Council debated a motion on food security. The authors of the motion claimed that the proliferation of solar panels on agricultural land are a threat to our food security and our important daffodil industry. Had they bothered to do their homework, they would have known that currently just 0.3% of Cornwall's agricultural land is occupied by solar panels, and that even in the most extreme scenarios, this is only predicted to increase to 1.2%, so solar panels really aren't a threat to our food security. Of course, fields planted with daffodils aren't growing food, nor are fields planted with maize for bio-energy, or fields set aside for nature. Farmers have to make a living, and the Government has made it harder to export Cornish produce to Europe; harder to hire agricultural workers; and signed trade deals with Australia and New Zealand which allow UK farmers to be undercut by cheap imports produced to standards which would be illegal here. And of course the biggest threat to our food security is climate change, which can wipe out entire harvests through droughts, floods, fires and diseases.

Waste and recycling collections:

New bins have been rolled out across our area and the new collection arrangements are in place. Most people seem to be getting on OK, but if there are any issues, please call 0300 1234 141. Separating out food waste will reduce the volume of waste being sent for incineration, and reduce carbon emissions. This reduction would be even greater if there were a suitable Anaerobic Digester in Cornwall, but for the time being, all this food waste is being sent to AD plants in Devon!

The Government has now banned Councils from charging fees for certain types of waste at our Household Waste Recycling Centres (such as plasterboard, tyres and asbestos), with the aim of making it easier for people to dispose of waste responsibly, thereby reducing the likelihood of fly-tipping. But Cornwall Council has responded by refusing to accept these forms of waste altogether at six of its sites (including Connonbridge and Bodmin). So, to take advantage of this new free disposal service, residents have to drive to St Austell,

Saltash or Tintagel! I have of course objected strongly to this perverse decision. I have been told that this is just a six-month trial period, so I hope that the free service will soon be made available at all thirteen sites.

Lostwithiel Car Parking:

The availability of car parking spaces in Lostwithiel town centre is just as important for residents of the surrounding parishes as it is for residents of the town. Those living closest have the option to walk to the shops, GP, train station or community centre, but those living further away mostly have to travel by car. I recently met with representatives of Network Rail and Lostwithiel Town Council to discuss the possibility of the land next to Lostwithiel Railway Station being converted into a car park. Network Rail are open to this idea, but are not interested in running it themselves. They are happy to lease out the site at an affordable price, but another organisation would have to cover the cost of the development. Cornwall Council could afford to do this, but would then treat the car park as source of revenue to fill their empty coffers. Conversely, the Town Council would run it for the benefit of the community, but the cost of the development could be a big burden for a small organisation. I will do what I can to support this project in the year ahead.

Planning enforcement:

There continues to be widespread dissatisfaction at the time taken for planning enforcement cases to be resolved, and frustration at the lack of transparency in the process (which officers blame on GDPR rules). I have pressed senior officers to increase the number of enforcement officers, but they say they do not have the budget for this.

I have also spoken to the officers responsible for “Information Governance” and challenged them to find ways to provide more meaningful feedback to Councillors and local Councils within the constraints of the GDPR legislation.

Casework Assist:

Cornwall Councillors are increasingly being pressurised by senior Council officers to make all casework enquiries through the “Casework Assist” website. This is causing significant frustration and delays, as issues raised by Councillors are often marked as “closed”

when a response has been issued, rather than when the problem has actually been solved.

Town and Parish Council Clerks should have access to Casework Assist, enabling them to report local issues without needing to go via a Cornwall Councillor. This should lead to swifter responses, but some Clerks are encountering the same problem described above. I (along with many other Cornwall Councillors) am pushing for improvements to the system so that all casework can be dealt with as effectively and reliably as possible.

Cornwall Council Community Link Officer

Not present

Duchy of Cornwall Report

Councillor Henderson read out the following report on behalf of Luke Humphries, Land Steward Cornwall

Good evening residents of Lostwithiel,

It is my pleasure to be able to share some of the Duchy Estate's activities over the last 12 months and I am grateful to the Town Council for extending the opportunity to do so. I am very sorry that I can't be with you in person this evening, but hope you find this summary of interest.

There are multiple workstreams which touch upon the Restormel Estate and so I will focus particularly on those, but also try to give a flavour of what's going on within the wider Duchy Estate.

Natural Capital

You will have perhaps noticed more standing water in the valley bottom particularly at the southern end of the estate, north of the road bridge. This is a result of deliberate measures which aim to hold rainwater back, upstream of the town, for longer. The river where it passes through the estate has been canalised over the years and now acts more like a drainage channel rather than a natural river system. These efforts to reduce the flow will have numerous benefits:- Areas of the valley bottom will revert to their more natural floodplain state and the flora and fauna associated with that

environment will flourish – we have already started to see this; By slowing water entering the river upstream it helps to relieve the threat of flooding downstream – we don't for a moment claim to be able to resolve the flood threat to the town but every little helps! The more the river can be reconnected to it's floodplain, the more this will help to increase resilience to flooding and we continue to work with partners as we think there's more that can be done!

The next phase of planned work to hold water back is further to the north, closer to the waterworks, where we are seeking to slow the flow of rainwater down the valley sides and into the river.

We have been working with neighbouring land owners on a project to restore populations of water voles in the Fowey Valley. A period of predator monitoring has been completed and we hope that we might see water voles back in our valley later this year.

With the news of an unlicensed release of a pair of beavers, not far away on Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Helman Tor Reserve, we have begun thinking about how we can prepare for a possible arrival of the species at Restormel. We don't know when or if beavers will find their way to the Fowey Valley, but there are tweaks we can make to plans for things like tree planting to better cope with a possible future arrival.

The Duchy has invested heavily in what it calls it's 'Future Farming' team which consists of a number of ecologists, carbon assessors, and agricultural specialists, covering the whole Rural Portfolio. The Estate has a stated aim to reach net zero by 2032 and, in-line with Terra Carter, increase bio-diversity by 30%.

Woodland Creation

The main method of getting the estate to reach net zero carbon is to decarbonise the activities that take place upon it such as: farming, housing and historic draining of peatland. However, we envisage that it will not be possible to reach net zero by these means alone and there will be a low-level of emissions after all these steps have

been taken. To help off-set these emissions, the Duchy has set a goal of planting 50 hectares of new forestry per year. I should say that this target applies to the whole Rural Portfolio, not just Restormel, but we have identified areas totalling approximately 11 hectares adjoining existing forestry compartments where the land is marginal for farming and suitable to extend the woodlands. The planting mix of species is carefully planned to be resilient to known diseases and to cope with climate change giving the trees the best chance of reaching maturity.

The Duchy published its first full set of carbon accounts (including scope 3 emissions) in 2022.

Farm

As our long-standing farm tenant Stephen Hutchings considers retirement, we are planning what the next chapter of farming will look like at Restormel. We are committed to regenerative farming practices and working in harmony with nature whilst maintaining profitable farming enterprises. We will continue to work with Stephen for the foreseeable future and I'd like to say how fantastic he has been in accommodating the various initiatives at Restormel, over the years.

Nursery

The newly expanded Nursery is now fully operational with plant sales, shop and 3 separate dining areas. The outside space has been configured to cater for events and has already taken bookings for business meetings, educational visits and family celebrations.

Lostwithiel Army Cadets Report

2nd Lt Colrein – Detached Medical First Aid Training Officer explained the many benefits for Young People joining Army Cadets of which there are currently 11 cadets in Lostwithiel. It has been shown to improve communication, leadership and resilience skills leading to increased education attendance, improved mental health, obtaining higher education and leading to higher earners. That it is about fun and friendship, action and adventure, excitement and education. It's a hobby that offers young an enormous range of activities,

experiences and opportunities and also has a serious side - following a structured syllabus that can even lead to valuable vocational qualifications, recognised by employers and educational institutions alike. There are also many benefits and opportunities for volunteers within the Army Cadets, building confidence, leadership skills, aids mental wellbeing as well as being part of a supportive community.

Lostwithiel St Barts Church Report.

Mayor Henderson read out the following report on behalf of Revd Beynon;

On behalf of the congregation at St Barts, may I congratulate Mayor Henderson on her re-election, and offer her my fullest support during her tenure. It is also once again my great joy to accept her invitation to be her chaplain for her next term of office.

St Barts 2023

The challenges associated with the maintenance of a grade I listed building are ongoing. The dedication and commitment of the local congregation, coupled with the ongoing support of the community, have ensured that the worst of the financial difficulties have been overcome.

Tower Report:

At the end of this financial year, the church & community raised enough funds to cover the further remedial pointing work to the tower, including the additional sum required for scaffolding to make the undertaking safe for passersby.

It is now hoped that the tower is waterproof, as well as all mortar joints being safe and secure for many years to come.

Interior decorating remains to be carried out, and it is thought there are sufficient funds available to undertake that work.

Community Events

St Barts was pleased to open its doors and welcome the wider community into its worshipping life, and we have been delighted with the community's response:

Events held in 2023 included:

The community Dog Show

Rummage sale

Summer Fayre

Jam First Theatre

Spring Festival Fate

Autumn Fayre/Bazaar

The Johnny Cowling Charity Fundraiser with Rotary

Christmas Fayre

Christmas Tree Festival

Dickensian evening

Christingle

The Dutchy Opera Company

A varied itinerary of visiting bands, concerts, and musical events very much complimented the standard scheduling through March, April, and May, with the proceeds going towards to the tower restoration.

Civic Events:

St Barts were pleased to play its part in His Majesty's Coronation celebrations in the summer of 2023, with the church open for public screening of the service.

The Remembrance Service remains a significant and cherished feature in the life of the worshipping community. Following much conversation and planning with Mayor Henderson, I was pleased that last year's civic remembrance service managed to accommodate most, if not all of the expectations of interested parties.

This involved the laying of a wreath by the Mayor at the memorial to the fallen of WWI inside the church at 10.00. The civic act of remembrance and thanksgiving service then proceeded as usual, with most of the town's councillors present. Following a forty-five-minute service in church, the town band led the procession to the war memorial, where the official Act of Remembrance and minutes silence was observed at 11.00. It may be beneficial if some kind of record of this be made for future reference.

We were pleased to receive the incoming Mayor Henderson and the town council for her Mayor Making service in July, and hope that this might be held again this year.

Councillor Anders joined the meeting

Lostwithiel Business Group

Adam Eastham introduced himself as the new Chairman as of March 2024. The role of the group is to help support the local business community. The annual subscription to become a member of the group is £30 per year. Adam explained that the past year had been difficult and that there continued to be a big task in hand. He thanked everyone involved for the hard work that had gone on so

far, explaining that the town has been struggling since COVID as visitor numbers had dropped and that any ideas are welcome to bring them back into the town. The town's businesses need everyone's support to stay open.

The group are holding a meeting on 23rd May for local Artists and Makers and have an AGM on 17th June in the Royal Oak and would ask any local business owners to come along.

Lostwithiel Community Centre Report

Helen Fairburn updated the meeting that the trustees are looking at three areas, Finance, Improvement and Sustainability.

Finance – There is a new Treasurer and a new system which gives better visibility, the accounts passed a recent audit, that cashflow is looking better and things were looking more positive.

Improvement – The Performing Arts centre has a current application for lottery funding for repairs and the conference room is now ready to be booked out.

Sustainability – The centre is working with a Business Consultant provided by the Town Council looking at business plans and are also working with another trust to help with governance and a Roadmap identifying the funding needs.

Lostwithiel Environmental Action Forum

Councillor Martin advised that LEAF was set up in 2019 around the time that we saw sudden climate change, extinction rebellion and the declaration of the climate emergency.

The aims of the group is to help tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergency in four ways:

- 1) Providing information and evidence about what is happening to our environment and why it matters
- 2) Sharing practical suggestions and support to take individual action to reduce your own environmental impact
- 3) Coordinating community-scale action in the Lostwithiel area
- 4) Informing campaigns for larger-scale changes at a Cornwall, national and global level

Mark Pearson advised that the group is constituted and currently has 50 members, but more are always welcome. He gave thanks that the group has received local funding via the Co-operative and Community Chest money. He explained that the group run a Repair Café in the community centre every 1st Saturday of the month 10am to 1pm for people to bring along items to be repaired, with the aim of stopping things being thrown away and not becoming a throw away society. They have helped plant 2500 trees locally and are currently working with the WI and local swim club to try and gain bath water quality for the river.

Lostwithiel Flood Wardens

Flood Report

In November 2023, the Town Council had to make the difficult decision to suspend the Flood Plan due to a lack of Volunteer Wardens, this decision was not taken lightly but for safety reasons we had no choice.

Since then we have had a great response to us campaigning for volunteers and can report we currently have 6 new wardens who have attended half the training course, 7 fully trained wardens and 5 trained Town Councillors. We also have 3 volunteers willing to do the training once we have arranged a date for the next training session.

To complete the training for the 6 new wardens, we will be holding a flood test event in the very near future, so look out for us walking around town in our Hi-Viz Yellow.

If you would like to join or know anyone else who would to join please contact Cllr Ross.

A big thank you for CCFF, Cornwall Council Resilience and Environment Agency for providing excellent training to our new wardens.

Lostwithiel Library

Town Clerk Sandra Harris explained that the library is Volunteer led and that there are a number of new library volunteers. The Council is actively looking for ways to improve the book borrowing figures,

which have drastically dropped in the last few years. In July the library hopes to host an event in the library targeted at children 0-3 years, so to please keep an eye on the Council's website and Facebook page if you know of someone with a child in this age group who might be interested.

Lostwithiel Methodist Report

Councillor Rawlings read out the following report on behalf of Rev Paul Benney;

Our current minister is Rev Paul Benney, who is also the Superintendent minister.

Café Churches continue to be held every second and fourth Sunday. This is relaxed, child-friendly worship sitting around tables, drinking coffee, with videos clips, singing, sketches, a chance to talk and laugh and definitely no sermon!

Coffee Mornings are still being held on the last Thursday of the month and, although coffee is free, any donations made are given to Go Beyond, formerly CHICKS, at Tywardreath.

We were delighted to take part once again in the Rotary Christmas shoebox appeal, and have also supported the Fund for Human Need, Methodist Relief and Development, Cornwall and Devon sending love to Ukraine, Libyan Flood Disaster, Moroccan Earthquake Appeal, We support St Petroc's homeless charity, Action for Children, STAK and Foodbank on an ongoing basis.

We are pleased to share our premises with Sew What and the Music Appreciation Group and would welcome other groups who are looking for a small room in which to meet.

Our greatest desire is to share God's love with the people of Lostwithiel and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Lostwithiel Museum Report

Christine Walton (Chairman Lostwithiel Museum) thanked the Town Council for the refurbishment to the building and that it is welcoming, warm and lovely.

Christine reported on the many improvements that the museum has made and about the various books and publications the museum has for sale. The 2025 Calendar is also now on sale.

Christine advised that there are 90 minute guided walks available on Wednesdays which also allows access to Taprell House, they start at 11am. There are also alternative walks on Saturdays that are slightly shorter at 60 minutes. The Museum also has a column in the Lostwithiel monthly publication.

Lostwithiel Museum subscription is £10 for the year and includes two copies of the Museum Matters magazine and a social event.

They have been fully accredited as a small museum since 2007 and will be reapplying when it is due again in 2027.

Christine took the opportunity to thank all 57 of the current volunteers for their enthusiasm and skills and advised they are the linchpin of the museum. However, more volunteers are always needed and welcome so please get in touch if anyone would like to join.

Lostwithiel Rotary Report

Mr Geoffrey Phipps explained to the meeting why the Memory Café had closed, there were a large number of volunteers, a strong committee and were financially strong, however, despite Lostwithiel having a number of residents living with dementia, they had no guests.

Mr Phipps explained that Lostwithiel Rotary are part of a much larger organisation and that locally the action plans achieve a little bit of good and they have a lot of fun doing it.

It has bursaries for young people to help expand their experience and has a 18-30 leadership course that gives young people hands-on challenges to grow a variety of skills. Local Rotaries fund these courses within their locality.

The Rotary Club supports charity partners like Shelterbox. They have also been helping communities grow by providing loans to entrepreneurs across the world. The scheme, working with the charity Lendwithcare, has so far provided more than £1.3 million from Rotary clubs to help those fighting their way out of poverty.

They organise the Lostwithiel Carnival every year and run fundraising events throughout the year to raise funds in order to keep it a free event, any surplus money is re-distributed within the town. The carnival is short of volunteers as numbers reduced following COVID, so the club is recruiting now, the club is non-political, non-religious and it's fun.

Lostwithiel School Report

Mayor Henderson read out the following report

Our school currently has 152 pupils from Reception to Year 6 and 28 pupils on roll in our nursery. We are anticipating 21 new reception pupils in September - the transition is usually very smooth for our youngest pupils as many of them come from Tiny Trees, our nursery, so are used to our staff and the setting.

We currently have a six-class structure at the school and have been able to maintain this for the next academic year which means that mixed age teaching is kept to the absolute minimum as this can be a challenge in schools with a changing number of pupils in each year group. Our staffing structure is relatively stable, and, despite huge budgetary challenges faced by all schools, we have also been able to maintain our staffing structure for next year too.

This past year we have been focusing on ensuring that our academic curriculum is supported by a wide range of additional enrichment activities for our pupils which is known as the 'personal development curriculum'. This encompasses not only extracurricular activities such as clubs but also other opportunities such as theatre trips, archery, catapult making, surfing, yoga, musical theatre, samba band and author visits to name just a few. We have also become part of the Fowey River Youth Engagement Project and, through this, have received a generous donation from the Nathaniel Symington Trust which will enable our Year 6 pupils to go sailing before they leave us in July.

Of course, none of this is possible without the efforts of a dedicated staff team who always go 'above and beyond' to make sure our pupils have a well-rounded education and experience as much as possible whilst at our school.

Another focus of our personal development curriculum has been to make our pupils considerate and respectful future citizens. We have a school council, Team 12, who meet regularly with the Headteacher and we also have a very active Eco-Committee. Their role is to act as a voice for the pupil body and to also take the lead on projects around the school and in the community. For example, Team 12 worked with our Senior Mental Health Lead earlier this year to organise a Well Being Week for staff and pupils and, in the Spring Term, they met with the mayor about the local play areas and how they could be improved. One issue they identified was litter around the town, so they undertook a litter pick on an incredibly wet Friday afternoon and filled quite a few bin bags. Our next litter pick will be carried out by our Eco-Committee on 24th May as the children have identified that 'LostFest' may generate a lot of litter so they will be needed again. Members of our Eco-Committee have also worked tirelessly to reduce our energy consumption – the 'light patrol' who switch lights off when rooms are empty, have had a massively positive impact so far!

Being part of the Lostwithiel community is very important to our school- we are regular visitors to St. Barts and thank them for hosting our Harvest Festival and Christmas Carol services and for generously giving the school a new portable sound system that can be used in future performances. In the next academic year, we are looking forward to developing even more links with our community as we believe it is our duty to ensure that our pupils develop a sense of belonging and pride in their local area.

St Winnow School Report

Not present.

Lostwithiel Town Band Report

Jane Richards, Chairman, advised that the Town Band started around 1809 and talked about the history around its origins. The band is a registered charity and raises fees from playing at events. The Band is accessible for all and there is a small membership for adults. They have had a busy, successful year within the town and further afield.

They have a new musical director who is a music teacher and conductor and has brought renewed enthusiasm to the group, who have been training hard following COVID. The band is looking for new members from the schools. The fees are £3 per week for training and an instrument. The band continues to thrive, has strengthened its links with the Rifles Regiment and is in demand for carnivals and events this summer, but does prioritise events in Lostwithiel. It is currently busy practising for the D-Day commemorations on 4th June.

Lostwithiel Young Farmers Report

David Hoskin advised he has been Chairman since October last year and gave his thanks for the YFC invitation to the meeting. The group has 37 new members and 10 sponsors supporting and helping them this year. Their year started at Lanlivery Charity Tractor and Land-rover Run, finishing up at the gorgeous Boconnoc Estate and raising £1500 for this year's charities, Isight Cornwall, Cornwall Air Ambulance and other of the club charities. Their annual Dung Run from St Austell to Bodmin raised £1000 and the recent Annual Beer and Brains Quiz night raised over £600. They also helped out at the Lostwithiel Beer Festival, working behind the bar, but probably helping more with drinking a lot of beer! More events coming up include an auction evening with Jonny Cowling and in September they are planning on travelling from John o'Groats to Lands End in a Tuk Tuk.

Lostwithiel Bowling Club Report

Mayor Henderson read out the following report

With approximately 28 men and 12 lady members the club, which operates between April and September each year, continues to function although new members are always sought every year. We perform in both the Cornwall League structure and the East Cornwall Bowling League and always have a full programme with friendlies played predominantly at the weekend. We also host National and County games on a regular basis throughout the season. We continue to be one of the limited number of clubs left in Cornwall

whose green and surrounds are looked after by volunteers; and we hope that this continues for many years as costs of contractors can only increase. This year we also hosted a group of our French friends and showed them how to play real bowls. During the season, when Restormel Road is a very well-trodden road by both residents and also visitors to the area, people are very often taken by the beauty of site and the way it is maintained. From its former mining heritage in 1926, when the site was acquired by a newly formed group in the town to the present day, it continues to be an asset of the town and we have started to plan for 2026 when we will celebrate our centenary. It is now some 15 months since the vandalism on the bowling green when an individual started a bonfire on the playing surface which entailed extensive tender care to restore it to its previous state-thankfully now the damage is hardly noticeable to the casual observer.

Lostwithiel Really Lovely Project Report

Michelle Nineham advised that Really Lovely Projects are a direct Community Interest Company and have successfully created many popular music and arts projects. This year they plan to broaden out and it will be their biggest 12 months yet. Providing advice, lending equipment, marketing and volunteering for lots of upcoming events throughout Cornwall. They have lots going on behind the scenes. Unfortunately, things like insurance, maintaining and updating equipment etc means they are having to charge small fees, but they have a really exciting summer coming up.

Lostwithiel Town Team Report

Michelle Nineham advised the meeting that the Town Team is a committed group of 8 members, which also includes 3 Town Councillors. The Town Team was set up in order to bid for funds from Cornwall Council's Town Vitality Fund to deliver a strategy for the revitalisation of Lostwithiel Town centre, to take forward a sustainable, climate-friendly transport plan for the town and to develop proposals to secure a financially viable future for The Guildhall, Edgumbe House & Taprell House, the 3 listed buildings which Lostwithiel Town Council looks after on behalf of the community.

Further information can be seen on the dedicated Lostwithiel Town Team website .

Lostwithiel Town Councils Mayor's Report

The Mayor said that that it is both an honour and a privilege that on Tuesday 7th May 2024 Councillors nominated her for a 2nd year as Mayor and that again a number of events will be attended from Launceston to Truro promoting Lostwithiel and all we have to offer. The Mayor explained that there is one Councillor vacancy if anyone would be interested in joining the Council and to please speak to any of the Councillors present for an overview of what is involved. The Mayor went on to say that now is a very exciting time to be a Councillor in Lostwithiel and that there are a number of Council projects that are being driven forward. That grant funding for Edgcumbe and Taprell House has been applied for and that a response it awaited to see if we have been successful. The Guildhall has been repaired and decorated and just needs a few finishing touches.

There are a number of new allotment holders and have that contracts have been recently awarded to new grass cutting and tree maintenance contractors. There is a new toilet cleaning contractor and a new maintenance contract has been awarded which is a contract we have not previously had in place, but that is already making a difference around the town.

Some monies have been awarded to offer further recreational facilities in King George V playing field and to watch this space for further details soon.

Despite having to suspend the Flood Plan for a short period, some new recruits have recently been trained and after a Flood test event the hope is to have the plan up and running again before flood season.

New library volunteers have also recently been welcomed and are actively looking for ways to improve the book borrowing figures. In July it is hoped to host an event in the library targeted at children 0-3 years, please keep an eye on the Council's website and Facebook page if you know of someone with a child in this age group who might be interested.

Two new members of staff have been recruited to the Town Council, Rachel, who is currently Acting Assistant Town Clerk and Anna, Office Administrator.

Finally, the Mayor took the opportunity to thank Madam Clerk for her invaluable work that she carries out on behalf of the Town Council and the people of Lostwithiel.

Time allowed for any other Town Organisation to address the meeting

Lostfest - Deputy Mayor Guiterman explained that Lostfest was started in 2008 in order to bring people into the town, it is free and all are welcome to donate, take part, enter the raffle and buy from the various stalls and venues around the town. Deputy Mayor Guiterman went on to say that the committee for Lostfest more or less disappeared following COVID, but that the 2023 Lostfest was successful and that the pace for this year was refreshed due a new committee being in place.

Councillor Martin explained the General Power of Competence which was introduced by the Localism Act 2012. This gives Town & Parish Councils the freedom to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. However, in order for the Town Council to achieve this, at least two-thirds of the total seats on the council must be held by elected and not co-opted members. He urged for this to be considered for the next local elections in May 2025.

Open Forum – An opportunity for residents to address questions to the town organisations and Councillors present.

None

The meeting closed at 8.31pm by Mayor Henderson.

Chairman

Date