

Cornwall Councillors' Report for meeting of Saltash Town Council October 2020



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1. Saltash Leisure Centre

In April 2017, a social enterprise called Greenwich Leisure Limited was awarded a 25-year contract to manage the 14 leisure centres owned by Cornwall Council. This includes Saltash Leisure Centre. As Covid-19 hit, all leisure centres had to close and GLL's income reduced significantly overnight - it is now facing a financial loss of around £6m. As a charitable social enterprise, GLL has not qualified for direct government financial support, although government has funded leisure centres in other parts of the country where they are managed by a local authority.

At present only 8 of the 14 Leisure Centres managed by GLL in Cornwall have been able to reopen. Saltash Leisure Centre remains closed. Recognising the vital role leisure centres play at the heart of Cornish communities, Cornwall Councillors and officers have been working hard with GLL to figure out a financial solution that will be acceptable to all stakeholders. Saltash Leisure Centre made a loss in 2019, though, and 36% of members in Cornwall have cancelled their GLL membership since March. The situation is made even more complex as the impact of Covid means that Cornwall Council will need to make an extra £20 million of cuts in order to balance its budget. But the financial agreements between Cornwall Council and GLL will have been finalised by the time of the October meeting of Saltash Town Council, and will be a mixture of a loan, a holiday on the concession payment and grants.

2. Climate Emergency Funding

Cornwall Council has joined forces with Crowdfunder to get plans for tackling the climate emergency off the ground. There are three types of funding available: the Town and Parish Council and Community Fund; the Carbon Neutral Cornwall Fund; and the Forest for Cornwall Community Fund.

The Town and Parish Council and Community Fund is specifically for helping develop work to support local councils and community groups understand their own carbon footprints, and how they can reduce emissions and work towards carbon neutrality. Local councils and community groups can apply for a grant to match fund 50% of costs, up to £2,000. Projects will be one of the following:

- Commissioning an emissions baseline study
- Developing an action plan to reduce emissions
- Feasibility work into carbon reduction projects

For more information, visit: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/programmes/cornwall-climate-emergency>

3. Planning for the Future

The government has published a consultation document called 'Planning for the Future' that outlines proposals for new laws designed to 'modernise the planning process, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development'.

Designed to help developers across the UK "build more homes, more quickly", the government wants to help small and medium-sized builders in these difficult times. While this is a laudable aim, there are 2 proposals in particular that give Cornwall Council concern:

- i. The proposed formula for the number of new houses would require an extra 12,500 houses to be built in Cornwall over the next ten years. This is in addition to the current requirement, so the total requirement would be 4,000 new houses across Cornwall every year.
- ii. Affordable home provision could fall significantly under the proposed new rules. Currently, developers need to provide a contribution to affordable housing whenever more than 10 houses are built on a site. The consultation document proposes raising this threshold to 40 or 50 houses, a change which could mean a loss of around 300 affordable homes per year.

The consultation document can be viewed at the government's website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

The deadline for responses is 29 October. If you respond via email, please copy in Cornwall Council to help us get a better understanding of your views: haveyoursay@cornwall.gov.uk

4. Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry

The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry crossings are suffering an income loss resulting from a massive fall in traffic, which went as low as 80% below normal levels at one stage, and is still 10-20% below what would be expected at this time of year.

Tolls were suspended over the tightest lockdown period in accordance with government guidance and to support key workers using the Bridge and Ferry as well as staff at the Crossings. The suspension of tolls accounts for £900k of lost income from a total of £3.02m of estimated losses by the end of the financial year. The continuingly low traffic volume is a major concern, with no guarantee that it will ever recover.

Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council have been lobbying for funding from central government, but Whitehall has not responded positively so far. At the start of the lockdown both local authorities applied to the Local Government Income Compensation Scheme for Lost Sales, Fees and Charges which was set up by central government to help local government replace lost income. The two Chairmen of the Joint Committee along with the Cabinet members for transport for Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council have written to the government asking for confirmation that the Bridge and Ferry are eligible for the scheme.

The law requires the two crossings to be funded by users and not the general public. Further, although emergency loans might be available from Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council, the crossings are required by law to pay back any loans. Cost savings have already been made, so the only option for further savings would be to further reduce the ferry service in Torpoint. This option was debated at a joint committee meeting of councillors from Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council in the middle of September, but every councillor in the meeting agreed that this was not the right thing to do: the savings from reducing the ferry service would be too small to solve the financial problem; it would have a massive impact on the town of Torpoint; and a loss of the overnight ferry, for example, would have huge implications for the emergency services for the whole of the Rame Peninsula.

Without funding from central government, the only other way to make the crossings financially sustainable is to increase tolls. One option is to start the process now for a 20% increase in tolls and hope that funding from central government arrives before the process is complete. The other option is to wait and hope that government funding arrives before having no option but to increase tolls by 40%. The joint committee narrowly chose the first of these options, with councillors saying that if enough funding comes from the government the increase can be stopped or possibly reversed, and if there is no funding from central government then at least a bigger increase will have been avoided.

5. Back in Business Guide

Cornwall Council has developed resources to help support Cornish businesses in these Covid times. The topics covered include up-to-date government guidance for businesses as diverse as hairdressers and childcare settings as well as information on topics such as Wellbeing in the Workplace and the new Test and Trace app: <https://www.businessregulatorysupport.co.uk/recovery>

6. Cornwall Sustainability Awards 2020

Nominate a Cornwall-based business for one of the following categories:

- Green Innovation in a time of Coronavirus
- Circular Economy
- Environmental Growth
- Carbon Neutral

More details can be found on the Cornwall Sustainability Awards website, but the deadline for nominations is 30 October. The awards ceremony will be held virtually on Friday 4 December 2020.

<https://cornwallsustainabilityawards.org/>

7. #You Can Adopt

As figures show there are 3,000 children nationwide (including 22 children across Cornwall) waiting for adoptive families, Cornwall Council in its role as Regional Adoption Agency has joined the coalition of national, regional and voluntary adoption agencies across the country to launch a nationwide recruitment campaign, #YouCanAdopt, to dispel the myths of adoption.

The adoption process has evolved over the last few years; it is simpler and quicker than it has been previously and there is a lot more support available. Anyone interested in finding out more, is invited to get in touch with Cornwall Council: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/adoption> or Families for Children: <https://familiesforchildren.org.uk>.

8. Community Safety

Safer Cornwall is a virtual partnership of public, voluntary, school and community organisations that come together to do all they can to reduce crime and disorder to try and make Cornwall's communities safer. The responsible authorities include Cornwall Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, and NHS Kernow. Saltash is one of the 10 'safer towns' in Cornwall, and meetings have been taking place on a 6-weekly basis since 2018, with the participation of councillors from Saltash Town Council. From March this year, the meetings moved online and the frequency increased to once every two weeks to ensure the partnership received regular dynamic intelligence and updates about the rapidly changing nature of crime and risk across Saltash in these Covid times.

Here is a summary of the main contact details that Councillor Lennox-Boyd provided in her report to Saltash Town Council. More information can be found on the Safer Cornwall website: <https://safercornwall.co.uk/>

Report Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour covers a wide range of acts that include verbal abuse, vandalism, joyriding, criminal damage, throwing missiles, underage drinking or engaging in threatening behaviour.

Ring: 101 (Police, non-urgent crime number)

Ring: 0800 555 111 (Crimestoppers)

Ring: 0300 1234 232 (Cornwall Council ASB Team)

Report noise nuisance

Neighbour noise, such as loud music or barking dogs can constitute a statutory nuisance if it causes an unreasonable interference to the use and enjoyment of your home.

Ring: 0300 1234 212

Report Drug Litter

If you find discarded needles or drug-related litter, do not attempt to pick them up.

Ring: 0300 1234 141

Report Rubbish & Graffiti

To report graffiti, fly tipping, littering, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling please use the "Report It" pages on the Cornwall Council website www.cornwall.gov.uk/report-it

Worried about a child?

The Multi-Agency Referral Unit (MARU) provides advice and guidance about the wide range of services available to children and families in Cornwall.

Ring: 0300 123 1116

Worried about an adult?

Everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse, but not everyone can protect themselves. If you're an adult experiencing abuse or neglect:

Ring: 0300 1234 131 (Out of hours number: 01208 251300).

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Anyone can experience domestic abuse or sexual violence – it affects people of all ages, regardless of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and background. If anyone is in danger please call the police on 999. If you ring 999 but can't talk, make sure the police know you are there by coughing or tapping the handset, or by dialling 55.

Ring: 0300 777 4777

Sexual violence

For safety, support, forensic medical facilities, sexual health advice and counselling to women, men, young people and children.

Ring: 0300 303 4626

Councillor Hilary Frank

Councillor Derek Holley

Councillor Sheila Lennox-Boyd

Councillor Sam Tamlin