**Cornwall Councillor Report – Mevagissey Parish - March 2022**

March has been another busy month with a lot going on.

It was good to visit Mevagissey School and catch up with Mr Gynn, the first proper visit I've had since the pandemic started in 2020.

It was brilliant to see things getting back to normal and so many familiar Meva names and faces loving learning in this warm and nurturing educational environment.

I also went to see the lovely team at Little Nippers in Mevagissey to talk about their experiences coming out of the pandemic, and look at some issues with overhanging trees from Trewinney, which Cormac have agreed to address.

As with the school, it was brilliant to see such a dedicated team working with some amazing little ones.

Speaking of Trewinney, along with Cllr Chamberlain I have arranged a litterpick in that area taking place on the morning of Saturday 26 March, meeting at the school carpark from 1000-1200, as part of Keep Britain Tidy’s Great British Spring Clean. All equipment provided courtesy of me and Clean Cornwall.

I have booked a meeting with Cornwall Council’s Cabinet Member for the Environment Martyn Alvey, the Environment Agency and the new Flood Lead at Cornwall Council, and Steve Double MP in April. I have invited Cllr Facey to attend from the Parish Council.

I have raised questions around the removal of a large number of trees along the B3273 in recent weeks. Cormac say that there were a number of tree defects identified during a driven survey of trees adjacent to the public highway. These inspections have been instructed due to the prevalence of ash die back across the county and potential safety implications to highway users. Sadly and is we have seen locally in Mevagissey too, most of the defects identified relate to ash die back, and their operational teams have removed some trees within the highway extents, but other landowners were written to and advised of defects within their land and will be expected to take action on this.

Speaking of trees, Storm Eunice saw a large number of trees come down over a relatively short space of time in the parish and kept me busy reporting them over that weekend.

In particular the B3273 was blocked twice in the same place but reopened relatively quickly by Cormac and contractors, I’ve also reported other trees down around that were blocking footpaths and these have also now been cleared.

There were several areas affected by power cuts in my division including Portmellon and parts of Mevagissey and I spent time over that weekend meeting with Western Power Distribution to understand their work and their own response to the quite unprecedented situation. They are aware of areas where they could have done better, particularly in identifying vulnerable people who might have otherwise been missed apart from the strong response from Cornwall Council and volunteer groups, and this will all be addressed in their wash-up session to ensure their response to storms like this is improved in the future.

I also went down to the MAC to volunteer when they opened up to let people use their facilities while there was no power in parts of the parish and surrounding area and would like to put on record my thanks for them for doing this.

Speaking of the MAC it is also good to see that they will be coming forward with a Mevagissey Repair Café, part of the Cornwall-wide network of similar groups, which is supported by Cornwall Council and in this case will be run by the Mevagissey Men in Sheds group.

The Highways Manager has confirmed the drainage works on Vicarage Hill in February were completed, along with some of the scraping back of the hedgerow. They are working on removing a leaning tree to allow access for a tractor with a flail to complete the rest.

I have asked for an update on the recent resurfacing work on the multi-use trail around Heligan and down to Pentewan, following comments made at the recent Parish Council housing meeting, and Cormac have provided the following statement:

*‘Cornwall Council’s framework contractor Cormac recently delivered a re-surfacing project along the Pentewan to Mevagissey Trail, part of the National Cycle Network and Cornish Way. This is part of a national programme of improvements Sustrans is partnering with local Authorities to deliver.*

*This particular stretch of Trail has shown a dramatic increase in use over the last few years, along with the associated safety and maintenance issues. For this reason it was prioritised for improvement works and upgraded to a sealed surface. This is a process we are following on many of our busier Trails across the county in a bid to improve safety and accessibility for all users as well as reduce ongoing maintenance costs.*

*This project should have been communicated to Cornwall and local Councillors at the time of design via the Community Link Officer, but due to recent changes in staff, Councillors and ward areas the message may have been lost. For this we can only apologise. However I can assure you that all relevant wildlife surveys, risk assessments and mitigation were carried out to ensure habitat disturbance was kept to an absolute minimum.*

*“In 2018, Sustrans, as custodians of the National Cycle Network completed a review of the 16,500+ miles of the network.*

*This review set out to create a new long-term vision for the Network, audit its condition and define a strategy for improving it.* [*https://www.sustrans.org.uk/about-us/paths-for-everyone*](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/about-us/paths-for-everyone)

*We have two priorities – to make the Network safer and more accessible for everyone. We want to increase all trips on the Network. Not just by*

*the people who use it already, but by those who want to but can’t. We want to help those who face mobility challenges or are less physically active.*

*The Network is used by many people – who walk (for over half of journeys) and cycle, as well as run, use a wheelchair or horse ride, but there is a lot more we can do to make it safe and accessible for everyone.*

*We want to create a safe and accessible traffic-free Network. A Network that could be used by a sensible 12-year-old travelling alone. Currently only a third of the Network is traffic-free, but we know that these are the most valued routes, providing safe spaces to move and be.*

*The Network is for everyone, not only for those cycling – indeed, more than half of journeys are made on foot. Our shared vision for the Network speaks to all users, and in particular those who face mobility challenges and the less physically active. Traffic-free paths designed for cycling are ideal for pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters. The unique nature of these mostly quiet spaces connecting countryside with towns and cities makes them useful for those traveling in ways where separation from traffic is welcome, or even life-changing.”*

*Sustrans has published a quality standard for the network.*

*The National Cycle Network Design Principles set out the key factors that make the Network distinctive and that need to be considered during the design process*

*1. Be traffic-free or quiet-way*

*2. Be wide enough to comfortably accommodate all users*

*3. Be designed to minimise Maintenance*

*4. Be signed clearly and consistently*

*5. Have a smooth surface that is well drained*

*6. Be fully accessible to all legitimate users*

*7. Feel like a safe place to be*

*8. Enable all users to cross roads safely and step-free*

*9. Be attractive and interesting*

*When Sustrans approached Cornwall Council about the potential for schemes that met these design principles, the NCN 3 between Pentewan and Mevagissey met the priority scoring criteria and, following a competitive process, were awarded funding from by the Department for Transport (DfT) to deliver these improvements.” ‘*

Personally I am keen to see our trails as accessible as possible for everyone, and I believe these works have accomplished this. However we must all keep a close eye on them to ensure they are not abused by vehicular activity, and if this happens, then we need appropriate measures in place to stop them accessing the trail.

Finally, I want to promote the extraordinary fundraising efforts of the Fishermen’s Mission to bring the amazing Salty Cover about the people of Mevagissey to print. I have seen first hand the hard work put in by a number of local volunteers in bringing this project to life over the past three years, and they are now looking to raise £7,500 to bring this vision to life. They have already raised several thousand pounds but there is still more to go.

Please visit <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/mevagissey-fundraising-book> to donate and you can even pre-order a copy of the book and it will go towards the fundraising target!