

Report from Cornwall Councillor John Thomas MBE

Lanner, Stithians and Gwennap

1. United Downs Waste Facility

As you know, I have been in regular contact with Paul Daddow regarding the ongoing and serious situation at the United Downs Waste Facility.

I will continue to press for a more robust and effective solution to address the dangerous traffic conditions caused by queuing vehicles. The proposed booking system appears to be taking an excessive amount of time to implement, leaving visitors to the site exposed to unacceptable safety risks. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

Whilst Loic Rich, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, must assess the suitability of a booking system at each individual site, United Downs is almost unique in its local setting and circumstances. It should not simply be assessed against general criteria without proper consideration of its specific problems.

I will continue to push for a solution along the lines of the more comprehensive arrangements originally proposed.

2. Goongumpas/Crofthandy Highway Safety Works

The continuing delay to the Goongumpas/Crofthandy safety works is extremely concerning.

Funding for the scheme was agreed some time ago. Following a face-to-face discussion with Helen Kneale, I subsequently received confirmation by email, in response to my query about the scheme's approval, that it would be included in the 2026/27 highways programme.

I was therefore concerned to see a comment in an email from Jack Thomas suggesting that the works might not take place until after the next local elections.

I will be extremely disappointed if the approved funding has been overspent or if the grant contribution allocated to this scheme is no longer available. I will contact Helen today to clarify the position and establish whether I have misunderstood the earlier correspondence.

3. Community Speedwatch (CSW)

I have had further contact with the relevant team through Exeter and was advised that your Parish Council is very keen to support the establishment of this important local safety scheme. I am happy to assist with its organisation and development.

I also have some surplus high-visibility jackets available to help equip volunteers.

Stithians Parish Council has requested to borrow the equipment on 19 October 2026. Following its return, the equipment will be available to me in my capacity as CSW Coordinator for Lanner and Stithians.

Now that the scheme is progressing, I can arrange to meet locally to assess any highway safety concerns on site. Although Highways have indicated that they have no identified issues, they remain supportive of initiatives aimed at reducing vehicle speeds, including additional Mobile Speed Assessment Signs (MSAS).

This is an issue I have supported for some time, and I remain fully committed to progressing practical measures to improve road safety.

4. Treviskey Central Refuge and Speed Limit

Like Gwennap Parish Council, I remain concerned about the delay to the proposed additional central refuge at Treviskey and the associated reduction in the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph.

I have made enquiries about the delay but have yet to receive a clear explanation of the reasons for the hold-up. I will continue to monitor the situation and seek clarification.

5. Flooding at Comford House and Point Mill, Bissoe

I am once again pursuing complaints and concerns regarding flooding at Comford House. This longstanding problem appears to have arisen when Cormac reinstated a granite post and damaged or crushed the drainage pipe that carries water from the main road into the river.

I have renewed the pressure on Highways to address this issue. I remain concerned about the lack of progress on this and other serious highway-related matters.

The situation at Point Mill, Bissoe, is similarly concerning, with several cottages having experienced flooding. As previously reported, I have met with affected residents and an adjoining landowner who has already assisted by allowing emergency grips to drain water onto their land.

Despite repeated attempts to arrange an urgent site meeting with Highways officers, I have received no satisfactory response. I subsequently referred the matter to Andy James, Head of Cormac, who instructed officers to meet me on site urgently to address the need for permanent, deeper drainage grips.

Despite further chasing, I have still received no response or confirmation of when this work will take place. This lack of progress is unacceptable, particularly where private properties are at risk and effective highway drainage measures are required.

I have again contacted Loic Rich, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, and Dan Rogerson to seek their assistance in securing action from Cormac.

I will discuss the situation further with residents today and will probably visit the affected area again to provide an update and reassurance.

6. 20's Plenty – Churchtown, Gwennap

I have consulted the original group responsible for promoting the 20's Plenty initiative and explained the circumstances at Churchtown, Gwennap.

They have reviewed the location using Google Street View and have confirmed that, in their assessment, the area meets the relevant criteria and would benefit from a permanent 20mph scheme.

They will contact me again once their consideration has progressed further, but the initial response is encouraging.

I have passed this update on to the residents of Churchtown who originally raised concerns and will continue to keep them informed of developments.

7. Planning – PA26/06955, Bissoe Valley

I have attended several planning application sites to gain a better understanding of the individual circumstances.

One application of particular interest is PA26/06955 at Bissoe Valley. I made arrangements to meet the applicant again and held discussions with the case officer and team leader to explore an acceptable way forward.

The application is on your agenda this evening, and I hope the Parish Council may feel able to support it.

Following negotiations, there appears to be some agreement that the applicant's requested changes could help support this valued rural business.

The applicant has requested an extension to the permitted period from 28 days to 42 days, reflecting requests received from recent visitors. They have also requested that the wording be changed from “owner” to “owner/manager”, which did not appear to raise any immediate concerns during discussions with officers.

In addition, the applicant has offered to tie the residential accommodation to the business site, preventing it from being used or sold separately.

This is an established local business that provides valuable support to Bissoe Bike Hire and other local trades. I believe its contribution to the local economy should be recognised, and I would encourage the Parish Council to consider supporting the application.

8. Civic Duties and Other Commitments

I continue to be kept very busy with civic functions, committee meetings and other duties, travelling throughout Cornwall and occasionally across the Tamar into Plymouth.

Once again, please accept my best wishes to you and all Members. I apologise for being unable to attend this evening's meeting, but I remain conscious of my responsibilities to Gwennap Parish Council and its residents.

Kind regards,

John T

Vice-Chairman, Cornwall Council

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