

St Hilary Parish Council – Chairman’s Report

2012-2013

Introduction:

As I started to write this my fourth and last Chairman’s Report I reflected not only on what has happened in the preceding year, but also in the four years since I had the privilege of becoming Chairman of St Hilary Parish Council. I don’t think it would be an exaggeration to state that during this time the Council has experienced some of the most wide-ranging and significant challenges in decades, both politically and financially.

These have taken various forms but principally during my tenure as chairman we have overseen:

- The creation of the Unitary Authority in 2009
- Wide-sweeping national financial austerity measures
- The Localism Act of 2011
- Cornwall Council’s proposed Local Plan

2012-2013 - The Last 12 months:

However before I reflect on any of that I would like to run through what has happened in the last 12 months.

This last year we have seen a number of successful projects and events come to pass namely:

We have created the St Hilary Christmas Lights Committee. Through sheer hard work, principally by Councillors Baker and Rule among others, we managed to put on the best display of Christmas lights at Relubbus Green anyone could remember for a very long time. It is planned for the imminent future that this committee will become separated from the Parish Council into its own body. It will have its own trustees and Codes of Practice and we are delighted that we have helped create this from an idea and turned it into a reality and we wish it every success for the future.

We have had the once in a lifetime moment of the Olympic torch coming through our parish and the challenges that presented.

We have also overseen the celebrations of Her Majesty the Queens 60th Jubilee with the creation of commemorative medals being donated by the Parish Council to all the children living in the parish or attending St Hilary Academy.

We have seen some of the worst flooding for years in Relubbus and we have already had a meeting with the Highways Department of Cornwall Council to raise our concerns with them about this and other issues affecting the parish, namely traffic calming measures and the general speeding.

2012-2013 - The Last 12 months: Cont/d.

We have formulated our response to the proposed Cornwall Council Local Plan and I would like to thank my Vice Chair Cllr Jane Howells for her support in producing with me what we believe is a balanced response to the proposals that has been fully endorsed by the rest of the Council.

In essence the plan calls for the building of some 42,500 new homes in Cornwall by 2030. The plan outlines the attendant social and infrastructural investment, job creation, economic development, etc. 1000+ new homes are earmarked to be built within the surrounding area of Penzance. This will inevitably include some within our Parish. We carefully considered the entire plan, all 151 pages of it in its final form, and as a Council we concluded that the plan simply isn't viable and we do not support it. It is more of a 'Developers Charter' and not a plan for economic and social growth within Cornwall - which we fully support.

We support the more realistic figure of 29,000 new homes within the time frame as proposed by COSERG (Cornwall Social & Economic Research Group)

We have posted our full response to the proposal to the website for all to see and comment on should they wish.

Finally we have also had the small matter of a full Cornwall-wide Council election for both full and parish councillors.

So its been quite a busy year!

Welcome:

St Hilary Parish Council did not need an election because of the resignation of the Councillor Andrew Thomas, due to on-going work commitments and the application of Mr Nigel Smith as his replacement.

I would like to formally recognise and thank Councillor Thomas for his contribution to the Council over the last few years and wish him every success for the future. His insight and local knowledge was invaluable and I enjoyed serving with him.

Similarly I would like to welcome Councillor Smith to the Council and I very much look forward to working with him in the future. As we are on the subject of new Councillors I would also like to officially mark the appointment of Councillor Paul Rule during this last year. He has already been serving the parish conscientiously and I am sure he will contribute to the Parish and local community for many years to come.

Finances:

Financially the Council has conducted itself wisely. We voted not to raise the precept in January this year for the second successive year and I am pleased to report that we have a cash surplus for small community projects. Details of these will be posted to the website and information boards to keep everyone aware of how the council serves the community.

Vote of Thanks:

At this point it is right and proper that I recognise the continued work of the Parish Clerk Mr Roger Calfe and how indebted we are to him. No council can perform without its Councillors or operating staff and Roger has always been a source of support and help to me as Chair.

Reflections:

As mentioned in the opening paragraph we have been faced with some unprecedented challenges during my time as Chairman of St Hilary Parish Council. I have always strived to serve the community in which I live and work and guide the Council with integrity and fairness.

Whilst I will be continuing to serve as a Councillor the fact remains that I will no longer be Chairman after this evenings meeting. I am stepping down to give my successor the reins of the Parish, and my whole-hearted support.

I would like to place on record how much of a pleasure, not-to-mention honour, it has been to be elected Chairman of St Hilary Parish Council. As far as I can ascertain possibly the first non-Cornishman to be appointed to that position!

I sincerely hope the new Chairperson they enjoys their time as much as I have enjoyed mine.

Thank you,

Stuart Taylor
Chairman