

Dear Councillors

I hope you have managed to stay out of danger and none of you or your family and friends have caught the dreaded covid. Or if you have, it was mild and maybe you may now enjoy some immunity

It is unlikely that there has been an interruption of Parish business on this scale throughout its history but thanks to our faithful and efficient clerk of some 25 years, Roger Calfe, more than the mere essentials have been attended to. And whilst we may not be meeting for our AGM, I hope you all feel united via the internet and looking forward to getting together again as soon as we can.

We were in an advantageous position to respond to the crisis and look after our parishoners thanks to our former chairman and councillor Brian Baker establishing an Emergency Plan and I thank him for that as well as handing over the chairmanship of a parish council in good order, working within its budgets and having a healthy amount of money in the kitty without raising the precept for two years now.

As a Parish we have followed the guidance and made a consistent effort to be in touch with the vulnerable making it more obvious via volunteers, posters put up, as well as postings on the website. So with any luck, we will come through the crisis without any casualties.

The Remembrance Sunday service was well attended and the steps and area around the memorial cross had been scrubbed up, weeded and the granite bleached by members of the Parish Council so that it looked respectable. A younger member of the parish played the bugle and another read a lesson. Wreaths were duly laid and during the church service the readings were made by Councillors.

This echoes a closer working relationship with our parish church, perhaps the central symbol of the parish. Father Ross Bridger attended a meeting to introduce himself and give an idea of what the church does for the parish and what the Parish Council might do for the church. One such example was the beautiful Christmas light display along the church wall between the school room and west gate, proving very popular with the priest and people. For these and a spectacular display of lights throughout the parish we thank Cllrs Rule and Thomas who carefully invested £xx for additional strings this year.

We have had some successes and some disappointments with planning applications. After two hearings at committee level where our ward County Councillor Sue Nicholas and myself spoke against the application for a Traveller camp in New Road it was refused (although of course the applicant may appeal). However, after unanimously refusing the new houses in Churchtown, these were approved as were the barn conversions at Penberthy Cross and Trewellha Lane which again we had refused. We continue to question the system whereby localism is encouraged yet apparently ignored.

Making our own decisions about planning will be easier and more consistent, in theory, when we have completed the NDP. After that, we will have more power to direct planning, ideally within agreed 'settlement boundaries' and what it should look like, according to an agreed design statement. Much progress has been made on the NDP and there is a brighter light at the end of a shorter tunnel. Councillor Howells has been successful in obtaining as much grant assistance as is available (about £5K) and this has largely been spent on our new consultant, 'Gain' run by Colette Beckham. She has been advising the very active Steering Group -which meets almost fortnightly and

to whom we are most grateful- on what additional information we need to gather and the public consultations required. We hope to put the plan to a referendum within months after the restrictions are lifted.

The restrictions have also put the Governance Review on hold. This was perhaps our most challenging issue of the year as Marazion Town Council and Perranuthnoe Parish Council both took it upon themselves to take over very considerable areas of St Hilary Parish without consulting us first. Marazion's proposal was to adopt the settlements of Gwallon, Trenujack and Plain an Gwarry with large areas of undeveloped farmland. Perranuthnoe's proposal included Trevaybyn Farm and the houses North of Gear's La. It is their opinion that the households and land affected would be better run by them than by us, but consultation with these households proved a healthy loyalty to St Hilary. After an emergency meeting of all councillors held at the Institute and after submitting our representations, the Review Panel voted not to support Marazion's proposal. In the case of Perranuthnoe, the area they wanted to annex was considerably reduced but we may have to concede a clutch of residences to the north of Gears La.

That said, both proposals are still 'on the table' so we will continue to make our objections to these apparently unnecessary and random changes.

You may think that this would put us at odds with our neighbouring parishes and even our ward County Councillor who appeared to favour the proposals. There were some fraught meetings but St Hilary PC is on good terms with the Mayor of Marazion and Chairman of Perran, the latter recently attending one of our meetings to support our objection to the application for a campsite in Nanturras Valley on our borders.

And of course friendly exchanges were cordially made during the annual Marazion Parade which we attended. There are some very fancy chains to be seen compared to our rather modest version, but it is my opinion that we have the inner strength of a strong council and no need of fancy outward show!

This strength relies on all of us attending as many meetings as we possibly can and I thank you all for all the time you give up working on behalf of the Parish and attending the meetings and especially to Roger Calfe for organising them all and running the Council so efficiently. I look forward to seeing you in the schoolroom again, albeit it at a safe distance and hopefully unmasked!