

## Councillor's Report

### **Combined Sewage Outlets**

I have been lead member in a study of cleaner beaches and the reduction of sewage outfall discharges onto our beaches. The outcome of this, and something I feel I must pass onto the reader is that the problem (and by default blame) is not that solely of the water companies. Every new home, every changed road junction and every patio which we lay puts a huge strain on the sewage handling systems. The extra runoff in times of heavy rain means the water treatment works have a choice either to contain the influx and risk backflow into properties or release backflow into the combined sewage outlets. The sewage works simply cannot be expected to handle whatever volume of combined runoff and sewage comes to them, responsibility has to lay also with the planning dept, the highways and home owners. A group consisting these groups and the Environment Agency, Surfers Against Sewage, some heath agencies and others is now in place to reduce outfall emissions by increasing bunds and water retention systems to slow down rainwater runoff further. The planning dept will be recommending using special paving which hold water for a time and communication of outfall emissions will be better communicated. There is great understanding and cooperation between the agencies and user groups and fantastic progress has come from this work. The results are that the beaches will be cleaner and users will be better informed.

### **Housing**

I am a member of a housing group which seeks to improve the quality, insulation and standards of provision of both owned and rented properties in Cornwall. The lead member is Derris Watson from St Cleer and we have made good progress in rectifying a criticism of the old County Council. We have looked at and made recommendations of extra care provision, bringing empty homes back into use, helping people stay in the community with help from supporting people and alleviating fuel poverty which is being suffered by so many with the huge increases in oil and other fuel prices. I am very pleased to be part of this group but the workload is huge as the remit covers just about every facet of living in a house.

### **Leisure**

I was very concerned about the issues raised during the budget process regarding leisure, sport and wellbeing. It was evident that the council needed a

more robust strategy for working with sports groups, communities and partners such as doctors surgeries and primary care trusts. I am therefore now the lead member of a group of three looking at a leisure strategy which will be as inclusive as possible to all ages of the community and work better with partners and sports clubs. The group was formed recently and we will identify better how more people can be involved in leisure pursuits and gain fitness through doing things they enjoy.

### **Waste Collections**

You may be aware that there is a survey happening at present to look at whether Cornwall Council should collect black bag waste weekly or fortnightly. There is information in the leaflet which came with the Council Tax bill. You still have time to have your say either on line or in the post. There was not one Conservative on the panel who supported anything but weekly. We know how important weekly collections are to the community. Unfortunately there were more from other parties who wanted to change the system. It was decided to put the question to the people of Cornwall to ask how strongly they felt. The budget caters for weekly collection of black bag waste and while I am sure some people would happily move to fortnightly collection there are some people who live in flats and houses without gardens who would find it difficult to store the waste. Please find time to go online or write in and ask for weekly collections. As I said weekly collection is in the budget so please support weekly collections.

### **Planning**

I have had so many issues with planning officers recently. It seems if the community broadly support something then the officers want to turn it down or make it difficult. If the community is against something wholeheartedly then the planning officers want to approve it. If the community are most adamant they don't like something the planners seem more supportive. I have said that I feel the default position should be committee and then devolved from there.

*Phil Tucker*