

DRAFT Minutes of Luxulyan Parish's
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Luxulyan Memorial Institute

6.00 pm, Thursday 9th May 2024

Chaired by: Parish Council Chair, Michaela Linfoot

Present: Chair of Luxulyan Parish Council - Michaela Linfoot, and eleven members of the public.

Also Present: Christine Wilson, Clerk to the Parish Council, Lockengate Ward Member Cllr Peter Guest, Luxulyan Ward Member Cllr Colin Martin.

Apologies: None.

MINUTES:

The Chair welcomed everyone and the meeting began at 6.00 o'clock.

- 1) It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 11 May 2023 are a true and correct record of the proceedings (proposed K Bilston, seconded S Kemp) and they were duly signed by the Chair.
- 2) Reports from organisations in the parish
 - a) Gareth Hawken, Neighbourhood Beat Manager, gave a detailed report and answered questions from the public. He explained the best ways to contact the police in case of an emergency (999) or to report a crime. (See the report at Appendix 1.)
 - b) Cllr Peter Guest, Ward Member for Lockengate Ward, sent his annual report. (See the report at Appendix 2.)
 - c) Cllr Colin Martin, Ward Member for Luxulyan Ward, sent his annual report. (See the report at Appendix 3.)
 - d) The Chair of the Parish Council reported on for the last twelve months, municipal year 2023-24 (see the report at Appendix 4).
 - e) The Clerk to the Parish Council presented the Financial Report for the fiscal year 2023-24 (see the report at Appendix 5). The report will also be available on the parish council website under *Parish Council Accounts*.
 - f) No other parish organisations presented a report.
- 3) Electors of the Parish were invited to address the meeting on any topic and no other issues were introduced.
- 4) The next Annual Parish Meeting will be in May 2025. The date is to be confirmed after the County and Parish Council elections to be held on Thursday, 1st May 2025. Other Parish Meetings may be called in the meantime if needed.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 6.20 pm.

*Christine Wilson ~ Clerk to the Parish Council ~ 28 May 2024
email: clerk@luxulyanpc.co.uk ~ website: luxulyanpc.co.uk*

SIGNED:

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES.

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 1 — Police Report 2023-2024

St Austell Neighbourhood Team currently comprises 8 x Police Officers known as Neighbourhood Beat Managers (NBM), 5 X Police Community Support Officers (PCSO), and 3 Tri-Service Safety Officers (TSSO) covering 3 geographic patches of St Austell- East, Town and West teams.

Staffing changes for the last 12 months include an additional 2 NBM's to join the team over the next couple of months. Sergeant Ian Chambers has temporarily moved to an Acting Inspector role, with NBM Will Chesterfield taking over as Acting Neighbourhood Team Leader in his absence. Inspector Matthew Trevivian remains Sector Inspector for St Austell.

The team covering Luxulyan includes NBM Craig BOUNDY, NBM Dominic HUSBAND, and PCSO Graham WADE.

The 3 Tri-Service Safety Officers are based in Fowey, Lostwithiel and St Dennis Fire Stations. Their role is to provide early intervention, prevention, and an operational response. They highly trained to work collaboratively with Devon and Cornwall Police, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, and Cornwall Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

The TSSO role provides the three emergency services with a presence in otherwise hard to reach communities. The early intervention work that the TSSOs carry out reduces demand and impact on the 3 emergency services. There are plans to open further TSSO locations in the near future.

St Austell Neighbourhood Team also works closely with Cornwall Council Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team, and the ASB Caseworker Katherine James is responsible for St Austell and outlying areas, utilising the Local Authorities specific powers to work with the Police to combat Anti-Social behaviour.

Luxulyan Parish ASB data 2023-2024:

56x Crimes in total reported, with no specific trends. A number of these are linked incidents whereby additional crimes have been recorded to satisfy Home Office Counting Rules. This is a reduction from 62 crimes the previous year.

Only 1x ASB report for this period. There are no specific problem areas highlighted. Unsure if this is due to under-reporting?

Police have received 22 intelligence submissions for Luxulyan parish area during this year, and St Austell Neighbourhood Team would like to remind members of the public of the importance of reporting incidents, crimes, and submitting intelligence. Intelligence can help Devon and

Cornwall Police to build a picture on crime in the area, including organised crime groups (OCG's) and County Lines Drug Supply. Using this information from the public, Devon and Cornwall Police target known suspects and carry out proactive work to disrupt crime.

CONTACT THE POLICE. Aside from the additional methods of contacting Police, such as 101 telephone, email and webchat:

Crime Stoppers is an excellent method of reporting information via their website, or their telephone number 0800 555 111.

It is important to note that the source of the information is protected and never revealed to the subject. Crimestoppers website: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT - *Pedestrian vs Vehicle 25th April 2024*

This tragically sad incident was first reported to Police at 4:48pm on Thursday 25th April. Several officers from St Austell Police Station immediately attended to help deal with the incident, along with traffic officers from Bodmin Police Station and specialist collision investigators. Any further information which has not yet been passed to Police should be reported through the usual channels quoting occurrence number 50240098907.

SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY

St Austell Neighbourhood Operations during 2023-24

May 2023. Closure obtained at an address in St Austell following persistent ASB at the address and following an Affray involving a large knife. This court order prevents any persons from accessing the property for an initial 3-month period, whilst the housing organisation later obtained full possession of the property.

December 2023. Drug intelligence received relating to drug supply in the nighttime economy. Drug warrant obtained and executed by St Austell Neighbourhood Team, a quantity of drugs located and significant cash seized from the address.

December 2023- 'Op Limit'. This was a pro-active Traffic Operation targeting drink and drug driving during the festive season, in partnership with the No Excuses Team and Safety Camera Partnership. Numerous traffic offences observed and drivers reported. Driver arrested for drug driving.

January 2024 and March 2024. Closure Orders obtained at Cornwall Magistrates Court against 2 individual properties in St Austell due to persistent Anti-Social Behaviour. These remain closed at this time.

March 2024 'Op Scorpion' intensification week. Op Scorpion is Devon and Cornwall Police's force-wide response to drug related crime. Within St Austell, safeguarding checks were carried out to victims of cuckooing, known drug suppliers were targeted for checks, several persons were arrested for drug offences and successful drug warrants were executed in the St Austell area.

From Monday 13th May 2024, Devon and Cornwall Police will be running our annual 'Op Sceptre' operation, which involves highlighting the dangers around knife crime, and operations

targeting the unlawful carrying of bladed or pointed weapons. There will be a knife amnesty bin at St Austell Police Station, and we would urge members of the public to notify us of any intelligence relating to the potential use or unlawful carrying of knives in the community.

Appendix 2 — Annual Report for Lockengate Ward 2023-2024, Ward Member Peter Guest

Another year older, whether or not I'm another year wiser is for you to decide!

I'd like to start this report off for thanking you, the Parish Council for your hard [and often unsung] work throughout the year. It can be a thankless but also a very rewarding task, residents tend not to realise that you are volunteers serving the community in your own time.

I've kept in close contact with both the Chair and the Clerk and attended as many monthly meetings as possible. My mantra remains unchanged, please do not wait until the next meeting, if something crops up that you think I can help with, get in touch straight away.

It has been a busy year. I suppose the main item of note for this Parish is the successful roll out of the new waste collection system. Being the first area of approximately 52,000 households did bring its teething problems, but in general these were soon resolved and lessons have been learnt from us 'Guinea Pigs' which will make the current roll out in South East Cornwall much smoother.

After years of campaigning by local residents, various road safety improvements have been carried out at Reperry and we are currently monitoring the effectiveness of the new measures.

Also, within the Parish, I was pleased to get the decision to not open the Ebenezer Polling Station for the recent Police & Crime Commissioner election reversed. I did pop in at lunchtime on the day to thank the staff on duty, they said that it had been a quiet start but hoped that it would pick up later on in the day. I have asked Electoral Services for the turnout number out of curiosity, although it is irrelevant, if just one person was able to cast their vote there, it justifies having the Station in place.

Talking of elections, I was heavily involved with the Cornwall Youth Council elections and the subsequent first sitting. I am always inspired by the young people involved and their fresh outlook or different take on the issues they face. This term I will be mentoring the group dealing with feeling safe and safe spaces. We've met once so far and I have been bombarded with loads of good ideas and have been given plenty of homework!

These are exciting times within the Electoral Division. There is a lot going on and the 3 major projects that I would like to mention are: the A30 Link road to St Austell, which is now back on schedule following a delay due to the horrendous weather that we've experienced recently; the Mid Cornwall Metro Link which will deliver improvements and enhancements to both Roche and Bugle stations; and Cornish Lithium which should bring economic prosperity and jobs to the area.

The new indoor skate park [TR&] has opened in Roche and we currently have 2 grant applications going through to build a Village Hall in Whitemoor and build a new community activity park in Bugle. These projects are being funded through the shared prosperity fund and the donkey work is being done by our new Clay Country Community Area Partnership of which this Parish is a member. I would encourage you to come along to our meetings as your input is

important to us, especially if there are any local projects that you feel may benefit from funding.

Casting my net even wider, Armed Forces Day centred around Falmouth was a great success. Given my service background, it was a given that I would be heavily involved with it, and it was heartening to see Cornwall turn up in numbers to support our Armed Forces.

With my Vice Chair of Cornwall Adult Education hat on, I was pleased to meet the Minister for Education Gillian Keegan M.P. recently to discuss the devolution of the Adult Ed budget to Cornwall Council and the opportunities to offer job training and apprenticeships to our residents.

You will have been kept up to date throughout the year by my monthly reports. A lot has been achieved, but there is always so much more to do.

Once again, thank you for your efforts this year and I'm looking forward to working closely with you in the year to come.

Peter | Cllr.peter.guest@cornwall.gov.uk | 07947 826627

Appendix 3 — Annual Report for Luxulyan Ward 2023-2024, Ward Member Colin Martin

Contents:

- 1) Homelessness
- 2) Social Care
- 3) Education
- 4) Council funding
- 5) Potholes
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- 9) Localism
- 10) Climate action
- 11) Farming
- 12) Waste and recycling
- 13) Lostwithiel Car Parking
- 14) Planning enforcement
- 15) Casework Assist

Contact Details:

If you would like to discuss any issues, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

My Council email is cllr.colin.martin@cornwall.gov.uk , but I do receive a large volume of messages, so if you want a response, please also contact me by phone or WhatsApp on 07734 434 164.

Online Newsletter:

You can see my latest newsletter by scanning this QR code or visiting: <https://www.seclibdems.uk/news/article/focus-leaflet-may-2024>



There are three big issues putting Councils across the country under strain, and all three of them have a disproportionate impact on Cornwall: Homelessness, Social Care and Education.

1) Homelessness:

Cornwall Council is currently providing “temporary emergency accommodation” for around 800 families who would otherwise be homeless. The Government only provides £15 per night, and the actual costs are usually much, much higher. This issue is particularly severe in Cornwall because local people looking for a place to live are in direct competition with holidaymakers looking for a place to stay. Around 10% of all homes in Cornwall are not homes at all, they are holiday accommodation. Around half of these are “second homes” (used only by the owner and their friends and family) and the other half are “short term rentals” (used by paying customers, e.g. through Airbnb).

In 2021, I brought a motion to Cornwall Council declaring a “housing emergency”. This led to a cross-party working group agreeing a list of measures to tip the balance of the housing market in favour of residential use and away from holiday use. Interestingly all of them are policies which the Liberal Democrats called for when we ran the Council, but the Conservative Government rejected. But now that the very same ideas are being put forward by a Conservative Council, the Conservative Government has agreed to most of them (albeit with some loopholes and delays):

- **Double council tax on second homes:** The law to enable Councils to charge double council tax was passed at the end of 2023, but Councils are required to give a year’s notice to owners, so we cannot actually start charging the double tax until April 2024
- **Tighter definition of “business use”:** Business premises don’t pay Council Tax, and owners of one small business property don’t pay business rates either, thanks to “small business rate relief”, so there is an incentive for “second home” owners to pretend to be “short term rentals”. The old rule simply required a property to be “available for rent” 140 nights per year, but this requirement could be met simply by creating a web-page advertising your property for £1,000 per night (which nobody would ever pay). New rules introduced in April 2023 require owners to provide evidence that they have actually had paying customers for at least 70 nights in the past year.
- **Registration scheme:** Hotels, pubs and B&Bs have to provide certificates for insurance, gas safety, fire safety and electrical safety, as well as paying for commercial waste collection. The same rules actually apply to short-term rentals, but websites like Airbnb don’t ask for evidence, they simply tell owner to “follow local laws”. In late 2023, a new law gave Councils a duty to set up a registration scheme to ensure that short-term lets are actually following the rules. Unfortunately, no guidance has yet been provided to Councils to enable them to set up these registration schemes.
- **Creation of a new “use class” for short-term rentals:** Currently any owner can convert a residential property into an Airbnb without any requirement for planning permission. So whilst thousands of new properties are built in Cornwall each year, there is no guarantee that they will be used as homes rather than for holidays. After decades of Lib Dem campaigning, the Government has now created a new “use class” for “C5 Short-term rental” to distinguish business properties from the residential “C3 Dwellinghouse”. Unfortunately, the Government has initially made this a “permitted development right”, meaning that owners don’t need to ask for permission; they can simply notify the Council of the change. For this new use class to provide meaningful protection for Cornwall’s homes, the Council will need to issue an “Article 4 Direction” to remove the permitted development rights, so that anyone wanting to convert a “dwellinghouse” to a “short-term rental” would have to submit a planning application. Cornwall Council is unlikely to be able to do this until it re-writes its “Local Plan” in the next 2-3 years, after which Lanlivery will probably need to update its own Neighbourhood Development Plan too. **So, although this new use-class will eventually be a powerful tool to prevent homes being converted to holiday accommodation, we probably won’t be able to use it until 2028!** There is also a loophole for “second homes” which will continue to be classed as “Dwellinghouse”.
- **Small Business Rate Relief:** The Government currently pays approximately £22 million per year to Cornwall Council so that owners of short-term rentals don’t have to pay any Business Rates. The Liberal Democrats argue that taxpayers’ money shouldn’t be subsidising these businesses when there is such a shortage of homes for people to live in. We are calling for the Government to exclude short-term rentals from Small Business Rate Relief, and then give the spare £22 million to Cornwall Council. This would be revenue-neutral for the Treasury, but would help the Council to cover the cost of temporary emergency accommodation, building more affordable homes and improving household energy efficiency. Unfortunately, this policy is not currently supported by the Government, so I will be bringing a motion to Cornwall Council later this month to ask Councillors of all parties to support it.

2) Social Care:

The average age of the UK population is increasing, so the cost of providing adult social care is increasing too. Around half of those receiving care pay out of their own pockets, whilst half are funded by the Council. Because Cornwall is such a wonderful place to live, many people choose to retire here after spending decades paying their taxes to a different Council elsewhere, so the burden of funding falls harder on Cornwall Council than on many others.

The shortage of affordable housing also makes recruitment difficult, because many people simply cannot find anywhere to live in Cornwall on the low wages paid by the care sector. Anyone wanting to work as a carer can earn the same money outside Cornwall where housing costs are lower.

Most care is provided by “domiciliary care workers” who travel from house-to-house, but this is more expensive in rural Cornwall than it is in more urban areas where travel times are shorter.

When the Council cannot provide care packages, people end up stuck in hospital, which in turn creates long delays for every other part of the system, from waiting lists for planned operations, to waiting times in the Emergency Department, to response times for ambulances.

The Government has acknowledged that the Local Government funding formula discriminates against rural areas like Cornwall, and has repeatedly promised a review, but so far this has not happened.

The cost of Adult Social Care for Cornwall Council is now £240 million per year, which equates to over £1,000 out of every household’s Council Tax bill. This obviously doesn’t leave much money for anything else!

3) Education:

When a child has Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), they are entitled to an “Education, Health and Care Plan” (EHCP) which spells out the extra support they need.

Schools are required to cover the first £6,000 of these costs, and the Council is required to pay the rest. However, the amount the Council receives to cover these costs is set by central Government and does not increase in line with the increasing number of EHCPs. This has left Cornwall Council with a shortfall of approximately £30 million. Over the next three years, this figure is expected to increase to £78 million. The Government’s solution has two parts:

- 1) Create a “statutory technical override” which means this figure is excluded from our published budget. In other words, the Council has a “hidden overdraft”. This “overdraft facility” is due to expire in 2026, at which point the Council would be legally obliged to cut funding for other services to balance the books.
- 2) With this in mind, the government has given Cornwall Council £1m to spend on “identifying efficiencies and new ways of working” to close this £78m gap...

If a child’s needs cannot be met by their mainstream school, the Council is obliged to fund a place in “alternative provision” or “special school”. Places in these schools can cost in excess of £80,000 per child.

The Council also has an obligation to fund the cost of home-to-school transport for these placements. Whereas most mainstream home-to-school transport is via school buses (which can carry over 50 children each), most children in alternative and special provision travel by taxi either because they live a long way from the school or because they are unable to cope with crowded buses. The cost of home-to-school transport is putting strain on every council in the country, but again Cornwall’s rurality makes it much more expensive to provide the same basic service.

There are many theories as to why the number of SEND children is increasing:

- Social media is causing mental illness
- News about climate change and global conflicts are causing anxiety and depression
- Today’s teenagers were born in the years after Surestart children’s centres were axed

- Two years of COVID lockdowns created social anxiety
- Families struggling to cope with the cost of living are having to work longer hours so have less time to spend with their children or are living in more stress-filled households
- An increasing number of children are living in poverty or insecure accommodation, both of which are known to affect mental health
- Every secondary school in Cornwall used to have a “Clinical Associate Psychologist” who could provide prompt mental health support, so that only the most serious cases needed to be referred to NHS specialist services. Unfortunately these NHS posts are no longer funded, so there are more students on the CAMHS waiting list, meaning that everyone has to wait longer before receiving treatment.
- Mainstream schools have had their funding effectively frozen whilst teachers wages have risen, meaning that there is less money available for teaching assistants and other pastoral support which previously enabled schools to meet emerging Special Educational Needs “in house”. Without this support, more problems are building up to crisis point before they are addressed, by which point they are too severe to deal with in the mainstream setting.

4) Council funding:

The combination of these three factors has left Cornwall Council with a budget gap of £20 million in 2024/25, which will be met by using up reserves. This is not a sustainable solution, and the gap next year is projected to be £68 million. The (Conservative) Deputy Leader of the Council has written to the Secretary of State, saying ***“it is evident that Government intervention to avoid the financial abyss faced by the sector is now of critical importance and once again I implore you to take swift and decisive action to enhance the final Local Government Settlement while you still have the chance”***.

Unfortunately, in April’s budget, the Chancellor announced that overall departmental spending would increase by just 1% per year over the next five years. But the Government has also promised above-inflation increases in spending for the NHS and the Ministry of Defence. This means that “unprotected departments” (including Local Government) will actually have their budgets cut by around 4% per year.

Even more worryingly, the Labour party (which is likely to be in Government by the end of this year) has said that it will follow the same spending plans, so it looks like residents of Cornwall will continue to see their Council Taxes rise whilst services are reduced.

In 2018, the Local Government Minister (Rishi Sunak) promised that the funding formula which disadvantages rural areas like Cornwall would be reviewed by 2019. The Government has now confirmed that this will not take before the next general election.

5) Potholes:

In January, the Government announced an extra £3.5 million for Cornwall for road resurfacing and pothole repairs in the new financial year. The Council responded by cutting the amount of its own money being put into that budget by £3.5 million.

So, the grant helped to fill a fraction of the hole in the Council’s finances, but not any of the holes in our roads. The total budget for road resurfacing and potholes is £24 million. The estimated backlog of repairs is £294 million. At this rate, even if no new potholes appeared, it would still take over twelve years to repair the faults which already exist!

I believe that the lack of maintenance of gullies and drains is a major factor in the rapid deterioration of our roads. The budget for maintaining and improving highway drainage is £3.5m. The council has not even attempted to calculate how much it would cost to bring them up to spec or to upgrade them to cope with our changing climate.

6) Road safety:

Recent deaths on local roads have highlighted the lack of structure in the way serious and fatal incidents are communicated to the community. A five-year-old child lost their life on Penpillick Hill, but I have had

no contact from Council Officers. All I know is what I have heard in the media, on Facebook, and through talking to residents. I have asked officers to be more transparent and share as much information as possible about all serious accidents so that other road users are made aware of any potential hazards, and informed about what action is taken to prevent similar incidents occurring in future.

7) Grant Funding:

Funding for towns and parishes to invest in their local areas is split into a multitude of schemes, each with different criteria and administration processes (Shared Prosperity Fund, Community Capacity Fund, Community Levelling Up Fund, Community Infrastructure Levy, High Street Revitalisation Fund etc). This makes it very difficult for parishes (especially the smaller ones) to keep track of what is available, and to submit strong applications before the money is all gone. I have asked Cornwall Council's Localism team to create a single list which summarises all of the available funding so that it can be more easily understood and accessed.

8) Devolution:

Last year, after months of public debate, Cornwall Council decided not to sign up to a "Level 3" devolution deal. This would have given Cornwall more power over housing and public transport, as well as some extra funding, but all this power and money would have been put into the hands of a "Directly Elected Mayor", whilst locally elected Councillors would lose their power to hold this individual to account.

The Government decided that if we weren't prepared to accept a directly elected mayor, we could only have a "Level 2" devolution deal, which only gives us control of the Adult Education budget, a one-off grant for "Cornish Distinctiveness and Cornish Language", and the creation of a "Floating Offshore Wind Commission". Five months later I haven't heard anything from this commission. I don't know whether they have had any meetings or even appointed a chair...

After this disappointment, I have met with the leaders of all the other political groups to come up with our own "prospectus" of what we think real devolution for Cornwall should look like. This will be finalised and published in the next two months and we will call on all the national political parties to support it.

9) Localism:

In 2009 when Cornwall's district and county councils were merged to form a unitary Cornwall Council, assurances were given that local communities would not be forgotten. Nineteen "Community Network Areas" were created, and my Lostwithiel Electoral Division was part of the "St Blazey, Fowey and Lostwithiel Community Network".

This year, due to budget cuts, these nineteen networks have been replaced by twelve "Community Area Partnerships". Obviously the reduction in numbers means an increase in size, which leaves my parishes on the periphery of much larger areas. To make matters worse, my Electoral Division straddles the junction of three Community Area Partnerships:

- Lostwithiel, Lanlivery, St Winnow, St Veep, Braddock and Boconnoc are part of the "Cornwall South" partnership, which includes St Austell and Mevagissey, and stretches as far as Gorran and Grampound.
- Luxulyan is part of the "China Clay" partnership, which stretches as far as Summercourt.
- Lanreath is part of the "South East Cornwall" partnership, which runs all the way from Polruan the Fowey to the Tamar, encompassing Liskeard, Looe, Saltash and Torpoint.

Obviously covering such huge areas, the partnerships are less able to deal with local issues, so they have chosen to work on bigger topics such as affordable housing, climate change, transport connections and economic development.

One issue in particular which affects both the "Cornwall South" and "South East Cornwall" partnerships is road safety on the A390. You will probably know about serious and fatal accidents in your area, but

sadly the truth is that there have been too many deaths and injuries along the entire length of this road from Truro to Gunnislake. I am hoping that by bringing together a large number of Cornwall Councillors as well as all the nearby Towns and Parishes, we will finally get Cornwall Council to take this issue more seriously.

10) Climate action:

It is now over five years since Cornwall Council declared a “Climate Emergency” and set a target for the whole of Cornwall (not just the Council) to be completely decarbonised by 2030. This was always going to be a stretch, and could only have been achieved if the Government had drastically accelerated its own plans and given Cornwall much greater funding and powers. This has not happened, so there is zero chance that the Cornwall will meet this 2030 target. Unfortunately, I feel that the Council’s approach to Climate Change is still too tokenistic, “doing what we can with what we’ve got” rather than “telling the truth about what needs to be done”. To address this failing, I have campaigned for a “Cornwall Climate Commission” to be created, to look at the big picture of what it would really take to get Cornwall to net zero. I am delighted that this campaign has finally succeeded and the Commission is set to start work in the next few weeks.

11) Farming:

Last month Cornwall Council debated a motion on food security. The authors of the motion claimed that the proliferation of solar panels on agricultural land are a threat to our food security and our important daffodil industry. Had they bothered to do their homework, they would have known that currently just 0.3% of Cornwall’s agricultural land is occupied by solar panels, and that even in the most extreme scenarios, this is only predicted to increase to 1.2%, so solar panels really aren’t a threat to our food security. Of course, fields planted with daffodils aren’t growing food, nor are fields planted with maize for bio-energy, or fields set aside for nature. Farmers have to make a living, and the Government has made it harder to export Cornish produce to Europe; harder to hire agricultural workers; and signed trade deals with Australia and New Zealand which allow UK farmers to be undercut by cheap imports produced to standards which would be illegal here. And of course the biggest threat to our food security is climate change, which can wipe out entire harvests through droughts, floods, fires and diseases.

12) Waste and recycling collections:

New bins have been rolled out across our area and the new collection arrangements are in place. Most people seem to be getting on OK, but if there are any issues, please call 0300 1234 141.

Separating out food waste will reduce the volume of waste being sent for incineration, and reduce carbon emissions. This reduction would be even greater if there were a suitable Anaerobic Digester in Cornwall, but for the time being, all this food waste is being sent to AD plants in Devon!

The Government has now banned Councils from charging fees for certain types of waste at our Household Waste Recycling Centres (such as plasterboard, tyres and asbestos), with the aim of making it easier for people to dispose of waste responsibly, thereby reducing the likelihood of fly-tipping. But Cornwall Council has responded by refusing to accept these forms of waste altogether at six of its sites (including Connonbridge and Bodmin). So, to take advantage of this new free disposal service, residents have to drive to St Austell, Saltash or Tintagel! I have of course objected strongly to this perverse decision. I have been told that this is just a six-month trial period, so I hope that the free service will soon be made available at all thirteen sites.

13) Lostwithiel Car Parking:

The availability of car parking spaces in Lostwithiel town centre is just as important for residents of the surrounding parishes as it is for residents of the town. Those living closest have the option to walk to the shops, GP, train station or community centre, but those living further away mostly have to travel by car. I recently met with representatives of Network Rail and Lostwithiel Town Council to discuss the possibility of the land next to Lostwithiel Railway Station being converted into a car park. Network Rail are open to this idea, but are not interested in running it themselves. They are happy to lease out the

site at an affordable price, but another organisation would have to cover the cost of the development. Cornwall Council could afford to do this, but would then treat the car park as source of revenue to fill their empty coffers. Conversely, the Town Council would run it for the benefit of the community, but the cost of the development could be a big burden for a small organisation. I will do what I can to support this project in the year ahead.

14) Planning enforcement:

There continues to be widespread dissatisfaction at the time taken for planning enforcement cases to be resolved, and frustration at the lack of transparency in the process (which officers blame on GDPR rules). I have pressed senior officers to increase the number of enforcement officers, but they say they do not have the budget for this.

I have also spoken to the officers responsible for “Information Governance” and challenged them to find ways to provide more meaningful feedback to Councillors and local Councils within the constraints of the GDPR legislation.

15) Casework Assist:

Cornwall Councillors are increasingly being pressurised by senior Council officers to make all casework enquiries through the “Casework Assist” website. This is causing significant frustration and delays, as issues raised by Councillors are often marked as “closed” when a response has been issued, rather than when the problem has actually been solved.

Town and Parish Council Clerks should have access to Casework Assist, enabling them to report local issues without needing to go via a Cornwall Councillor. This should lead to swifter responses, but some Clerks are encountering the same problem described above. I (along with many other Cornwall Councillors) am pushing for improvements to the system so that all casework can be dealt with as effectively and reliably as possible.

Appendix 4 — Chairman’s Report 2023-2024

First of all, I would like to thank my fellow councillors and the Parish Clerk for their support, dedication, enthusiasm and efforts throughout the past year.

The council continues with 10 councillors, 7 from Luxulyan Ward and 3 from Lockengate Ward. The Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence.

In the twelve-month period since April 2023 there have been 12 ordinary Parish Council meetings, 1 extraordinary meeting and 1 Parish Meeting (meeting of the electors).

Luxulyan now has 2 Wards, in 2 different divisions with 2 Cornwall Councillors: Peter Guest, Ward Member for Roche & Bugle, and Colin Martin of Lostwithiel & Lanreath Division. We are lucky to have two dedicated Ward Members. We look forward to another year working closely with them. They have supported us in many projects, including the return of the polling booth to Lockengate (Thank you, Peter) and the continued work to complete the affordable houses at Beswetherick (Thank you Peter and Colin).

It is very important to the Parish Council to keep in touch with the parishioners. Our Facebook page ([@LuxulyanPC](#)) lets people know about upcoming meetings and Highways works, etc. The council continues to provide financial support to Granite Towers for

publishing costs and the cost of postage to Luxulyan residents. On the website you can find a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan and information about the Luxulyan Parish Community Fund and our own Grant Awarding Policy, etc.

The Parish Accounts for 2023/24 have been managed satisfactorily and the latest yearly Financial Briefing Note will be attached here. Other financial documents will be available on the website soon.

Once again my thanks go to all my fellow Councillors and our clerk Christine, and our Ward Members for the amount of time and effort they commit to the Council. Their efforts make the task of being Chair much easier.

Best wishes to you all for the coming year.

Appendix 5 — Financial Briefing Note for Luxulyan Parish Council, fiscal year 2023-2024

Financial Report Year End 2023-24

4 April 2024

1. Cash and Bank Reconciliation

The year-end bank reconciliation is complete and shows the year beginning with £66,844.90 in cash and ending with £ 59,010.33.

2. Reserves

The external auditor has explained that parish councils must not hold unearmarked funds. Therefore, all the cash at the end of the year is allocated into reserve funds and grant ringfenced funds. At the beginning of the year, the total was £66,844.90 and the year ended with £59,010.33.

Earmarked reserves

Luxulyan Parish Council maintains these reserves: a moderate contingency reserve for unspecified over-expenditure and an election reserve in case of a contested election. It also has reserves for its assets: a small general building reserve, and specific reserves for the public toilets, the playing field, and the cemetery. The small parish council grant reserve had not been used for some time and the council resolved to close that reserve, using the entirety for the Village Hall ceiling lights.

Each year the council budgets to top-up these reserves. In 2023-24, £1,000 was added to these reserves. During the year £5,361.90 was spent and at year end these earmarked reserves total: £21,850.90.

Grant ringfenced funds

The parish council has received grant funds which are ringfenced for grants and projects: the Bodwen Solar Park Fund, the Special Project Fund and Community Chest Grants. The Special Project fund was received as a one-off Covid grant in 2020-21 and has not been allocated to a project yet.

Payments from these reserves was £4,132.39 which included partial payment for the Village Hall ceiling lights (the other part was paid from the LPC Grant Reserve), grant for LEGGS' lease of glebe

land, and grant for the Granite Towers publication. At year end, the grant ringfenced funds total: £37,159.43.

3. Budget & Precept

The budget for 2023-24 was £29,240. It was 5.3% less than the previous year because the council felt that it had overcompensated for Covid-related inflation. The 2023-24 budget, which was agreed in November 2022, did not fully take into account the inflation related to the Ukrainian conflict (see section 4).

Precept

The Precept is a tax that parish councils charge parish taxpayers in order to meet their budget requirements. Parish Councils do not receive direct funding from central government; they must rely on their Precept and any other receipts they receive. The precept is calculated each year by subtracting projected receipts from projected payments.

Parish councils monitor the precept increase at the Band D property level. The precept tax paid by a Band D property is the total precept divided by the taxbase.

The precept for 2023-24 was £26,676, or 5.3% less than the previous year. The annual precept and Band D property level was reduced by £4.03.

4. Budget Comparison

In 2023-24, reserve top-ups of £1,000 were subtracted from the Budget (£29,240) leaving £28,240.

Total payments were £39,856.55 (without VAT) and, from this, the payments from 'earmarked reserves' and 'grant ringfenced funds' (totalling £9,494.29) must be subtracted, leaving £30,362.26.

Therefore, subtracting the budget payments (£30,362.26) from the budget (£28,240) shows the parish council is over budget by £2,122. This overspend can be attributed to a retrospective national salary award, extra grass cutting in the playing field, and a revised cleaning contract for the public toilets by Cornwall Council which could only be partially contested by the parish council.

The parish council was happy to significantly decrease the 2023-24 precept for parishioners, but unfortunately, global inflation has greatly affected everyone, including local councils. This 2024-25 fiscal year Luxulyan's precept has increased 7.4%; however, the good news is that because of increases in the taxbase, the Band D property annual payment for 2024-25 is exactly the same as 2021-22 fiscal year.

VAT

Parish councils do not take VAT into consideration for budgeting purposes because parish councils may reclaim VAT. A VAT claim for the 2023-24 fiscal year of £1,205.57 has been submitted but has not yet been paid.

5. Transparency Code and Audits

Luxulyan Parish Council voluntarily complies with the *Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities*, although its annual turnover has been over the £25,000 cut off for the last few years. In accordance with the Code, the council's financial details are published on its website and this includes a list of all payments. The Code requires a list of payments over £100 and Luxulyan publishes all payments.

External Audit and the Annual Return

In accordance with legislation for local councils with a turnover under £200K, Luxulyan Parish Council submits its Annual Return each year for a limited assurance external audit. The external auditor is *BDO LLP* and contact details are on the council's website.

Audit dates

Local councils must publish on their website their unaudited Annual Return (or AGAR – Annual Governance and Accountability Return) along with the *Notice of Period for the Exercise of Public Rights* before July.

Once the external audit is complete, the auditor's comments are also published on the website.

Internal Audit

In accordance with Audit Regulations, all parish councils have an internal audit for assurance that the council is conducting its affairs lawfully and handling its public money properly. An independent and competent internal auditor is appointed by the council each year. The internal auditor's report forms part of the Annual Return, which is published on the council's website, and any issues raised by the internal auditor must be noted by the council for future action before it completes its Annual Governance Statement for the Annual Return.

Internal audit is the public's assurance that the council is proceeding lawfully and effectively.

Christine Wilson

Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer

Luxulyan Parish Council

clerk@luxulyanpc.co.uk

END.