**Mevagissey Parish Council ward member report - May 2020**

This is strange report to be making, coming in unprecedented times.

Firstly may I put on record my thanks to everyone from the Parish Council, and the wider community volunteer and business network for everything you have been doing in keeping the village running during the COVID-19 pandemic, from assisting vulnerable people with food and prescription deliveries, to fundraising for PPE, operating social media support groups and changing work practices to be able to continue operating for the community during lockdown.

While there are many people who have gone above and beyond at this time, I feel that a special mention must be given to volunteer coordinator Alex Williams for her herculean efforts at this time – the village will remember you.

The speed and efficiency in which the COVID-19 relief efforts in Mevagissey Division got up and running and have since operated have been held up as exemplary across Cornwall and I know from my conversations with other Cornwall Councillors and council officers that we have achieved an incredible amount, and continue to do so, for our communities at this difficult time.

In terms of my own personal role, I have been restricted to the amount of actual front line work I can do due to being in a vulnerable category and living outside of the village.

While the ways in which I work as a councillor have by necessity changed during lockdown, in a number of ways I have never been so busy.

My days typically are now spent dealing with a constant stream of emails, telephone calls and messages on social media on all manner of things.

I have tried to reassure residents and businesses with queries about the COVID-19 crisis, the support available to them both nationally and through Cornwall Council, as well as using my own social media channels to quickly get the latest national and local guidance out there to enable to people to access whatever support is available as quickly as possible.

At the time of writing this, I am continuing to push Cornwall Council to bring forward detail of its discretionary support for businesses scheme, the scheme which it has to help businesses who have not previously had support from the national schemes, and which I hope to see open for applications soon.

I have given £300 to each of the parishes in the Mevagissey Division to assist in the covid-19 relief effort.

In terms of my ‘regular’ work, things have changed considerably n all sorts of areas of council life.

To highlight just a few, the planning system has temporary changes added to it with the council not allowing site visits and determining so called ‘contentious’ applications via a process that has yet to be clarified. I hope this system will be removed as soon as it is safe to do so.

With regards to Cormac and the issues I regularly work on them around the upkeep and maintenance of open spaces, verges, highways and footpaths, this work had been paused apart from emergency work, but has now restarted as of May, and I have a list of open spaces for cutting which has been passed on to Cornwall Council and is being gradually actioned. One thing to note is that there are Cormac staff who I normally work very closely with who have been furloughed for rolling periods, which makes continuity difficult.

Finally in terms of general Cornwall Council business, they have only held one formal council meeting since lockdown and still seem to be delaying on holding others. I have continued to meet informally with local councillors via Zoom, but I hope they will soon put in a formal way for us to meet properly.

These are difficult times but we will get through this by working together and continuing to prove what a strong community looks like in adversity.