**Cornwall Councillor Report – Mevagissey Parish - July 2023**

As we move through July into August I first want to reflect back on what an amazing Feast Week we had, seven days of fun, friendship and community spirit in beautiful Mevagissey.

It's always brilliant to see everyone joining in, seeing old faces, reminiscing over those who aren't here any more, and meeting new people who are experiencing Feast for the first time.

A true time for locals, those who come home for the week, and visitors alike to come together to celebrate what makes Mevagissey so special.

Feast Week really is the highlight of the year, thank you so much to all those on the Feast Week Committee for making sure it happens by meticulously planning throughout the year, and all those who volunteer in the week on the events, it couldn't happen without you.

Here's to next year!

Just prior to Feast it was also great to once again help out at the annual Mevagissey Gig Regatta. This was another brilliant event, with crews coming from far and wide to take part – a real success both as a competition but also in terms of fundraising for the excellent Mevagissey Rowing Club.

On other matters, I recently met with Mevagissey Fire Station Manager Paul Pearce and one of the things we discussed was how much they are struggling to recruit additional on call/retained firefighters for Mevagissey, a really rewarding role in the heart of the community.

This role is a crucial one. If we don't have enough firemen available it could threaten the local service.

Paul was very keen to see anyone and everyone who is interested, and has said there is an open invitation for anyone who is interested to come down to the fire station on the regular practice evenings (1815-2015 on a Wednesday) and talk to him and the team about what is involved.

Spreading some more good news, I was recently pleased to attend the 30th Anniversary of the Strawberry Fair fundraising event, for Action for Children, at St Andrew’s Church in Mevagissey.

I am always delighted to come to Mevagissey and celebrate local success, particularly when cake is involved!

As well as being Cornwall Councillor for the best area in Cornwall, it is also my privilege to have a strategic role as lead scrutiny member for Children and Families across Cornwall, as Chairman of Cornwall Council’s Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As such I have dealings with and have seen first-hand, the work of Action for Children, in the past with both their Kernow Connect and Cornwall SPACE programmes, initiatives that make a really positive difference to some of our most vulnerable young people, and their families.

The St Austell fundraising events started in 1993 with a sponsored walk from Fowey culminating in tea and cakes at Charlestown Chapel with stalls there to raise funds.

When the Strawberry Fayre started, there was a team involved in the organisation;

Today, Ivy Thomas and Elaine Hendry are the only remaining original team members, and these 2 wonderful ladies have been responsible for keeping the event afloat for many years now, ably assisted by other volunteer helpers, and a special thank you should also go to Pam & John Dabbs, who have helped out for years.

Ivy had the idea of hosting a Strawberry Fayre with a pasty lunch at Mevagissey, “where the visitors come!” (and they still do!) and so the annual event was born!

Over the 30 years, just under £10,000 has been raised solely from these much-anticipated summer events.

In addition to the fayres, of course, there have been many other activities, sponsored walks, carol concerts, fashion shows, coffee mornings, “children’s trots”, late-night shopping evenings to raise funds.

There are also collection boxes for loose change, retiring collections at service and gifts and wills, these all add to the tremendous fundraising efforts for this worthwhile charity.

Lots have changed in 30 years, but the heart-warming generosity of local people in both their time and financially, remains a constant in our Cornwall and the wider Methodist movement.

Thank you all, for everything you have done.

A bit more parochially, The grotty old pink slats of the benches at Wesley Court have today been replaced following my request. Thanks to Cormac for doing the work and to the residents and Parish Councillor Matthew Facey for providing me with the evidence I needed to make the case. Cormac have now provided wood stain to coat the new slats and I will be arranging a working party to do this in the near future.

On 18 July I welcomed the new Community Link Officer, Sarah Scoltock to the division, and drove around the whole area with her. I also took her to meet the Harbour Master and the Museum team, with reference to potential Shared Prosperity Fund opportunities and am looking at running a drop-in event for the wider community to discuss these and other funding opportunities, at the MAC in September.

On wider matters, one thing I thought readers might be interested in as the Department of Health and Social Care is inviting interested organisations to register expressions of interest for its £1 million Community Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Fund, aimed at increasing the number of AEDs in public places where they are most needed and help save lives.

The funding is part of the Government’s drive to equip the health system with the right technology to ease pressures, reduce backlogs and cut waiting lists, and to improve public access to care when they need it.

As part of the grant award, applicants will be asked to demonstrate that defibrillators will be placed in areas where they are most needed, such as places with high footfall, vulnerable people, rural areas, or due to the nature of activity at the site.

Examples could include town halls, community centres, local shops, post offices and local parks, to ensure that defibrillators are evenly spread throughout communities and easily accessible if someone is experiencing an unexpected cardiac arrest.

An estimated 1,000 new defibrillators are to be provided by the fund, with the potential for this to double as successful applicants will be asked to match the funding they receive partially or fully.

Organisations who submit an expression of interest will be notified once grant applications open to the Department of Health and Social Care’s £1m Community AED Fund.

Please let me know if you are interested in applying for a defibrillator and I can provide further details on how to do so.

Finally I was delighted to support my friend and neighbouring Cornwall Councillor Michael Bunney by nominating him as Chairman of the new South Cornwall Community Area Partnership, for which he was elected unopposed and unanimously.

I was also pleased to be elected unopposed and unanimously (I think!) as Vice Chair.

Michael and I have worked well together for approaching 10 years now, across party boundaries, with the best interests of our communities and the wider area in mind at all times.

Community Area Partnerships will bring local organisations and people together. Their role is to tackle the issues that matter to communities, so everyone can start, live and age well.

The partnerships will start work in summer 2023 and replace the former Community Networks.

They will involve Cornwall Councillors and town and parish councils in each area. They will also involve other organisations that serve our communities. These include the Police, health services and voluntary and community sector.

The partnerships will be an influential voice for their communities. They will engage and involve the public. They will take action to progress community priorities and support communities to take action to help each other.

I hope to work with Michael and the wider Community Area Partnership for the good of the area, over the next year and beyond.

As ever, should anyone wish to get in touch about anything, please feel free to do so via cllr.james.mustoe@cornwall.gov.uk or at 07885 277670.