

# SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER

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July 2025 - Issue 395

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## Safe38 AGM Reports Positive Year of Changes to A38 After Period of Disappointment

**T**he last 12 months can be categorised as a continued period of surprises for the campaign following a 24-month period which was mostly defined by challenges and disappointments," said Chair of Safe38, James Millidge, at their recent Annual General Meeting.

After two years of little progress with just minor interventions by National Highways on the A38 between Carkeel and Trerulefoot, progress is now being made.

At the AGM on June 25, James told the meeting: "We started this period with many concerns about how long it would be until meaningful safety interventions were delivered following the announcement in 2023 that the whole of the A38 Carkeel to Trerulefoot safety package had been delayed until post 2030.

"Very soon after the 2024 AGM we had a general election to navigate as a campaign group, and I was pleased to be contacted by the Labour candidate ahead of the election and was asked in depth and length

about the safety campaign and what our priorities were.

"I made it clear in this conversation that the early delivery of the average speed cameras was absolutely vital for the safety of road users and for improved economic performance.

"With our key Cornwall councillors also banging that drum we were delighted and surprised when in November we were told the average speed cameras would be delivered very soon as a funding model had been found.

"We were also delighted that

the lower 30mph limit through Tideford and Landrake would also be implemented at the same time. Safe38 at this point must thank our MP Anna Gelderd, and our previous and current Cornwall councillors, Martin Worth and Cllr Kate Ewert respectively for their continued support and work to achieve this aim."

The time period also delivered long needed drainage improvements at Nottor Bridge making a huge difference to the safety and operational performance of the road in that area. James added: "This demonstrates the huge impact that engineering interventions can have in eliminating a hazard making the environment far safer for road users."

He welcomed the beginning of the works at Stoketon Cross to introduce a new roundabout, and the announcement of funding to deliver a signalised crossing in Tideford.

He closed his report by saying: "It really has been a fantastic team effort to continue the campaign for seven and a half years. I did say when we started it would be a 10 year campaign minimum, and I am very thankful for what has been achieved in the years to date.

"We have seen further west on the A30 what a dramatic improvement to the environment, safety and to the economy that that sort of investment can make.

"It is my view that only this

**F**or 25 years, Churchtown Farm has been managed by Cornwall Wildlife Trust under a lease from the landowner, Antony Estate. In that time, it has grown into a much-loved part of Saltash: a place where people walk, reflect and explore, and where nature has been given the space to thrive. So when the Trust announced earlier this year that it would not be seeking renewal of the lease, due to expire in September, it sparked widespread concern. With the future of the site suddenly uncertain, many residents feared for both public access and the protection of its rich natural habitats.

Churchtown Farm is one of the town's most treasured open spaces. Tucked between Forder, Wearde and the

## Churchtown Farm: A Shared Commitment

Tamar estuary, its network of footpaths and rich variety of habitats have made it a popular spot for dog walkers, nature watchers, families and school groups. The Wildlife Trust's careful stewardship has helped preserve its wildflower meadows and woodland, all while maintaining free public access.

So when it became clear that the Trust was stepping away, many residents were left wondering: what would happen next?

Antony Estate, which owns the land, made it clear from the outset that it wanted to see biodiversity protected and some level of public access maintained. In recent months, the Estate has been in discussion with Saltash Town Council to explore how that might be achieved. Those constructive conversations have now led to a proposal that sets out a clear way forward.

At a meeting last week, councillors agreed in principle to pay an annual fee to Antony Estate. In return, the Estate will commit to keeping Churchtown Farm accessible, with all existing marked footpaths remaining open, and to managing the land in a way that encourages wildlife. The formal agreement is still being finalised, but both parties have welcomed the progress and expressed confidence in the new arrangement.

Antony Estate has already

begun working with ecological advisers to plan future management of the land, with a focus on balancing conservation and sustainable farming. As part of the new arrangement, a portion of the Town Council's funding will support the appointment of a part-time Ranger who will be on site for half a day each week to help monitor habitats, maintain footpaths and liaise with the community.

The Town Council's involvement will ensure that the interests of the local community remain central to decisions about the site. And the Friends of Churchtown Farm are set to continue playing an active and valued role in the new arrangements. Formed at the start of the Wildlife Trust's lease, the volunteer group has acted as the eyes and ears of the reserve: reporting issues, supporting events and helping with practical conservation. As a new chapter begins, the Friends see this moment as a springboard for growing the group and encouraging even greater community involvement in nature-based activities across the site.

A formal update is expected later this summer. In the meantime, there is real cause for optimism. Churchtown Farm will remain a place to walk, breathe and enjoy nature. It will be kept welcoming and wild, and looked after by the community, for the community.

  
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## News from Saltash Town Council Konsel an dre Essa



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### Education Welfare:

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[educationwelfare@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:educationwelfare@cornwall.gov.uk)

### Housing Department

Telephone: 0300 1234 161  
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### Social Services Department

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Email: [children@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:children@cornwall.gov.uk)

### Social Services Department

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[adultcare@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:adultcare@cornwall.gov.uk)

### Highways Department

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Email: [customerrelations@cornwalllimited.co.uk](mailto:customerrelations@cornwalllimited.co.uk)

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## Cornwall Councillors/ Wards

### Saltash Essa ED

Cllr Hilary Frank  
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### Saltash Tamar ED

Cllr Keith Johnson  
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### Saltash Trematon & Landrake ED

Cllr Paul Cador  
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### Cornwall Councillors Cover such services as:

Housing – Education  
Social Services  
Highways  
Waste & Recycling  
Tamar Bridge

## From the Mayor of Saltash

Well, that's another month flown by, and what a busy one it's been!

It began with the Council co-opting three new members: Alice Ashburn (Essa Ward), Peter Nowlan (Tamar Ward), and Gordon McCaw (Trematon Ward). I warmly welcome them and I look forward to the council year ahead with the new faces around the table.

On 6th June, I attended a fascinating talk on Ann Glanville at Saltash Library, hosted by Barry Brooking with sea shanties sung by Larry, David, and Beverly. It was an enjoyable and educational morning, perfectly timed ahead of the Saltash Regatta.

The next day saw the opening of the Regatta and my first civic event as Mayor. The parade from Victoria Gardens to Brunel Green went ahead in fair weather, but the rain arrived soon after. Despite the downpour, many residents turned out to support the event, and we had lots of visitors to the Town Council stall.

## Meet Your Councillor

*Cllr Alice Ashburn*

My name is Alice, my pupils call me Mrs. Ashburn, Miss Alice or just Al... I am Cornish born and bred, from Padstow and I have lived in Saltash for nearly 7 years with my husband and 3 children. Three weeks ago, I gave my co-option speech in front of the Town Council. In my speech I talked about courageous advocacy. Courageous advocacy is not just advocacy. Being courageous demands bravery in the face of adversity, not being afraid to speak up. Courageous advocacy isn't just supporting an idea. It is the act of speaking up against an injustice, on behalf of those whose voices are not heard, becoming an agent of change and challenging our communities to be the best that they can be. I bring with me skills in public speaking, charity fundraising, an interest in education (in school as well as alternative provision) and urban planning. I hope I will be a great asset to the council and therefore the community as a whole.



Ashtorre Rock provided much-needed shelter, with refreshments and freshly made homemade treats from the Rotary Club of Saltash.

Sunday brought sunshine, and a personal highlight was taking part in the Cardboard Boat Race with Cllr Julia Peggs – dressed as Teletubbies! It was great fun, and we're already planning on returning, but the question is what will we dress as next time! Huge thanks to the Regatta organisers for another successful event despite the weather.

On 10th June, I returned to my former primary school, Brunel, for a mayoral visit. It was a joy to be back, telling the children about the mayoral role and the tradition of fruit and penny throwing. I was taken back by how polite and well



Within 48 hours of the co-option, I'd happily been roped into duties at the wonderful Saltash Regatta, a huge success this year and a day to remember for all of our residents and visitors. I've had the pleasure of attending the Mayor Making, including powerful renditions of 'Trelawny' and 'Cornwall my Home'. The penny throwing was a wonderful experience and there was a great turnout of young people, and not too many arguments over chocolate coins, thank goodness! Moving into the second year of the Strategic Business Plan I've thrown myself into learning about the crucial services provided by our local youth groups. I am looking forward to helping you to deliver services to meet local needs, give the community a voice and representation, and improve the quality of life and community wellbeing in Saltash.

behaved the children were, and they all asked me lots of interesting questions. Many of them even braved the atrocious weather to attend the fruit and penny throwing event following my Mayor Making Ceremony the next week.

My Mayor Making ceremony was a lovely event, despite the weather. This year I introduced a town crier as part of the ceremony, which was a great addition. I hope to see this tradition stay in future Mayor Makings. I'd like to say thank you to the Town Council staff for helping to organise this event.

On 19th June, we attended

the unveiling of the latest panel in the Saltash Chronicles Embroidery Project – Saltash's version of the Bayeux Tapestry. Housed in the Guildhall, the tapestry was first completed in 2017 and is regularly updated. This new panel celebrates 50 years of Saltash Rugby Club, the renovation of Isambard House, and the Coronation of King Charles III. It also honours the missing 77 servicemen from Saltash, who are now remembered on the new granite memorial benches at St Nicholas and St Faith Church. It's a stunning piece, embroidered using thread from Bayeux itself.

On 21st June, I had the pleasure of opening the new Summerfields Play Park in St Stephens. After years of being unused, the park has been beautifully restored thanks to four years of fundraising by the Friends of Summerfields Park, with support from Saltash Town Council. Set on a terraced slope and surrounded by trees, it's a fantastic spot, and if you haven't taken your children there yet, please do, it's worth a visit.

The final weekend of June saw the opening of the new clubhouse for Saltash Amateur Boxing Club, next to The Core. The facility includes a boxing ring and fitness equipment, with

sessions for juniors and adults on Wednesdays and Fridays. That same day, we joined the 10th anniversary celebrations at The Core, enjoying a lovely afternoon tea in their garden. The High Sheriff of Cornwall attended both events and planted an apple tree in The Core's garden, a fitting end to a superb month.

These events are a great reminder of the incredible community spirit in Saltash, and of all the dedicated people who make our town such a special place to live.

*Cllr Rachel Bullock  
Mayor of Saltash 2025/26*

## Your Town Council & Wards

### Saltash Essa:

1. Cllr Richard Bickford  
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3. Cllr Rachel Bullock  
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6. Cllr Alice Ashburn  
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### Saltash Tamar:

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2. Cllr Brenda Samuels  
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3. Cllr Brian Stoyel  
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4. Cllr Gordon McCaw  
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### Mayor:

Cllr Rachel Bullock

### Deputy Mayor:

Cllr Brian Stoyel

### Town Clerk:

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## Secret World of Wartime Spies Disclosed to Saltash Heritage

A riveting true life tale of counter espionage was revealed to Saltash Heritage members following their annual general meeting.

Speaker Michael Griffiths was able to disclose the secret wartime career of his father Harry who had joined the Royal Signals Regiment during World War II as 'cover' but who in actual fact worked for MI 6 as a radio operator at a 'top secret ultra' listening station in Cornwall passing information to Bletchley Park for decoding.

The talk followed the business meeting in which Chairman Brian Stoyel spoke of Saltash Heritage's reputation for 'putting together interesting exhibitions and journals' as being ever highly acclaimed. This year's exhibition on the theme 'Codes, secrets and communications' with many previously unseen exhibits from the world of secret intelligence is already proving popular especially among school and cub scout groups.

Mr Griffiths' talk entitled 'Listening to the Enemy'

based on the book of that title that he has publisheed tied in with some of the museum exhibits. He described how his father, a Liverpool GPO engineer and radio ham, was selected for intelligence work and posted to St Erth in Cornwall. Here he was able to pick up messages from U boats in the Atlantic as well as from military, navy and intelligence services in Germany and other axis powers. Indeed after the war it was found that British intelligence knew of German troop dispositions more speedily and accurately than their own high command. Surprisingly,

Mr Griffiths stated, the villagers of St Erth had a good knowledge of what was happening at the listening station, and several of them married intelligence officers, including his own mother.

Mr Griffiths also spoke of

## Christmas Festival

The Chamber is very fortunate in having the sponsorship of Saltash Scrapstore for part of the Christmas Festival and last year they arranged for some Donation Boxes to be made by Saltash Community shed. We were able to put some of these in shops in the town centre and raised some money which helped because, although the main event had to be cancelled, due to the weather, there were still financial commitments that had to be made.

The cost of the festival rises each year and although we do get a grant from Saltash Town Council the cost is becoming more and more difficult to fund. To date, since taking over the Christmas Festival from

Saltash Town Council, we have always had positive response from you, the people of Saltash/PL12, but we need more resource to ensure that we can continue to provide what you want.

With this in mind we will be placing more donation boxes in more shops in the town centre in the hope that you will help to keep the festival going. We will also undertake with the donations, if there is sufficient, to help Mayfair and Regatta.

So look out for those boxes and please help to keep the events going.

If you want to help by sponsoring an activity or raffle prize then either contact me on [peter@hilllane.co.uk](mailto:peter@hilllane.co.uk) or pop in and see our Treasurer, Doug Bond, at Saphira Jewellers at the top of Fore Street.

the counter-spies and those who were 'turned' to work for MI 6 and whose messages were also intercepted at St Erth.

After the war Harry Griffiths continued to work for intelligence including at Mount Batten and was a founder member of Saltash Amateur Radio Club.

Exhibits relating to espionage as well as the wider world of communications remain on display in Saltash museum on Saturdays and on Wednesday afternoons until December.



## Saltash Town Council Re-Adopts Strategic Business Plan as First-Year Progress Shows Strong Results

Saltash Town Council is pleased to announce the re-adoption of its Business Plan for the period 2025–2027, reaffirming its commitment to delivering meaningful outcomes for the community.

Originally developed in August 2023 and formally adopted by Full Council on 7th March 2024, the Business Plan sets out a clear vision, purpose, and strategic priorities for the Town Council's operations through to March 2027. The Plan outlines six strategic priorities, each supported by specific aims, success factors, and measurable actions, collectively known as Business Plan Deliverables. As we move into the second year of delivery, the Town Vision Sub Committee's remit is to regularly review the business plan reporting back to the relevant Committee / Sub Committees with recommendations to Full Council as required, making sure the Town Council produce deliverables that support the overall betterment of Saltash. Saltash Town Council is proud to share the achievements from the first year of implementation, demonstrating the effectiveness of their collaborative, strategic approach.

The achievements below align with the six strategic priorities of the Business Plan and highlight just a few of the Town Council's successes over the past year. Visit [www.saltash.gov.uk](http://www.saltash.gov.uk) for the full list of deliverables. "We are incredibly proud of the

progress Saltash Town Council has made in the first year of delivering our Business Plan. From upgrading much-loved play parks and launching innovative transport initiatives, to supporting our youth and promoting community wellbeing, these achievements are the result of strong partnership, clear vision, and a deep commitment to our residents. As we move into the next phase, the re-adoption of the plan ensures we stay focused, transparent, and ambitious in creating a thriving future for Saltash." Mayor Cllr Rachel Bullock.

### Honeysuckle and Grassmere Way Play Park Upgrades

Upgrades to Saltash's play parks, made possible through £75,000 in funding from Cornwall Council and an additional £20,000 from Saltash Town Council, have been a resounding success and a welcome enhancement for the local community.

These improvements have not only revitalised important recreational spaces but also provided children and families with safer, more engaging environments to enjoy, helping to foster a stronger sense of community and well-being across the town.

### Connectivity Trial

A successful connectivity trial at Waterside has paved the way for an exciting new partnership with Plymouth Boat Trips, marking a significant step forward in enhancing local transport

options.

The collaboration not only strengthens regional connectivity but also supports local tourism, making Saltash more accessible and attractive as a destination.

### Happy Plaques

Saltash Town Council has taken a proactive step toward supporting community well-being by installing Happy Plaques on Town Council benches across the area.

These plaques are designed to promote kindness, connection, and conversation, helping to create warm and inclusive public spaces. By encouraging residents and visitors alike to pause, sit, and engage in open and safe conversations, the initiative aims to foster mental health awareness, reduce loneliness, and strengthen the sense of community throughout Saltash.

### Community Support

Saltash Town Council is proud to continue investing in the wellbeing and development of their local community through a range of targeted initiatives. Within the first year, they have committed significant funding to support youth services, community events, and public spaces, reflecting their ongoing dedication to building a vibrant, inclusive, and supportive environment for all residents.

**£59,069 for professional youth work commissioning**  
**£25,000 for Community Chest and Festival Funds**  
**£20,000 for Saltash Play Park upgrades**  
**£4,726 for Saltash Youth Network**



These investments demonstrate Saltash Town Council's ongoing commitment to nurturing a stronger, more connected community for today and the future.

### Looking ahead to 2025/2026

Saltash Town Council is committed to building on its recent successes by delivering

further achievements in line with its re-adopted Business Plan and Strategic Aims and Objectives. With a clear vision and renewed focus, the Council remains dedicated to serving the community through thoughtful planning, responsible investment, and continued collaboration with local partners.

## Another Great Few Months for Newell's Travel Saltash

The girls have been busy in and out of the office, Rachel has visited Florida for a family Wedding, France to see the Normandy beaches and Bucharest for a travel conference.

Faye has been to a cruise conference and visited a P&O and Princess ship and Sarah has been onboard a Norwegian Cruise Line ship and Fred Olsen. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like any information on any cruise lines. Robyn has been to Amsterdam to visit a River Cruise ship so would be happy to share her experience; Amsterdam is a new route available from Exeter Airport.

We have had stalls at Saltash May Fair and Saltash Regatta, good to be part of the local community. We are also starting to collect children's used football boots and kits to send to Africa, please drop any unwanted items into the shop at

100 Fore St. We are still doing our Pop up Shops at Callington town hall and at Kernow Mill, please get in touch for the dates.

With school holidays approaching we have some great family deals, even some free child places still available for 2025. We are seeing many young couples booking their first holidays with us, giving them our knowledge and piece of mind that all is going to work out perfectly.

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## Seven Centuries of Tradition Followed at Cllr Rachel Bullock's Mayor Making

The first known record of a Mayor of Saltash dates from 1442, that mayor's successor Councillor Rachel Bullock announced on the occasion of her formal Mayor Making ceremony. As one who had lived in Saltash for most of her life she declared herself passionate about the town's past, present, and most importantly its future.

The bells of St Nicholas

Church rang out as visiting mayors, councillors, the mayor's proud family members and other guests assembled in the Guildhall to witness the ceremony. Already robed and chained the new mayor invested her husband Matthew as mayor's consort, their two teenage sons looking on. This was followed by newly elected Deputy Mayor Councillor Brian Stoyel investing his wife

Maxine as deputy mayor's consort.

A gathering of children had braved the drizzle to assemble below and receive the warm pennies and fruit thrown to them, according to ancient tradition, by the mayoral party. In addition, this year environmentally friendly water balloons added to the fun.

Paying tribute to her predecessor Councillor Julia Peggs, the new Mayor told of how Julia, her friend and neighbour had encouraged her to become a councillor and, last year, her deputy mayor. 'Much was achieved by Julia during her year of office, but much work remains to be done driving projects forward', stated Councillor Bullock.

Councillor Peggs spoke about looking back on 'an amazing year in which I met so many people who do such fantastic work'. Her year of office, she said, had included seeing the town's first ever business plan launched, planters enhancing Fore Street and great strides in NHS providing care closer to home.

The mayor's chaplain is to be the Reverend Laura Bushell Hawke and her two children Isabella (16) and Sebastian (12) (both keen scouts) are this year's mayor's cadets. Laura believes them to be the first mayor's cadets to be actually born in Saltash.

The Mayor announced her charities for the year to be Saltash Memory Box, caring for dementia, and Saltash Youth Network.

After the formal ceremony and photographs the mayoral party and guests adjourned to Isambard House in the station building for refreshments.

### Saltash Scrapstore & Too

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## Pete's Point of View

Just as we are all getting over the recent elections, there is another on the horizon. This time it is to fill a vacancy in the Tamar

Ward of Saltash Town Council, the election date being set for 31st July.

Whilst it is undeniable that the recent election results back in May reflected concerns of a national nature, the election of a Town Councillor is not going to halve the UK deficit or stop the boats, but it is important that we have local people with

local knowledge and a genuine interest in Saltash, willing and able to represent us and to help do their best for the Town in which we live.

We might be suffering from election fatigue at the moment, but if you live in Saltash Tamar Ward, please do get out there and vote on election day, when I understand there will be a choice of candidates representing different points of view, including some independent candidates.

Choosing who to vote for can be perplexing if you do not know who they are, or what their opinions might be, but it is always worth doing some research, not only into what each candidate might claim they wish to do, but into what they have already achieved, in recent months or years, to benefit the residents of Saltash. Have they a proven track record within a local organisation, are they already representing sections of the community in some other capacity?

A little homework might help ensure that we really do get the best candidate in the currently vacant role of Town Councillor, to join the fifteen already elected Town Councillors who are volunteers, often with varied backgrounds and skills, all looking to improve and promote Saltash for the benefit of residents and businesses alike.

Another organisation that works on behalf of the Town, is Saltash Rotary Club, where I have just finished my second term as President and I would like to express my thanks to Club members who have worked tirelessly during the past year, also to those residents and visitors to Saltash who have generously supported us in our fund-raising efforts. I wish our new Club President, Mike Phillips, every success during the coming year. Mike would love to hear from you, if you have some time to spare, as we are always looking for new members to join our small but very friendly team.

**Pete Samuels**

*Any views expressed are personal views and not that of any organisation with which Pete is associated.*

## Stay Connected

Anna Gelderd MP is really pleased that commuters in South East Cornwall will soon be able to work seamlessly and stay connected as Labour's Transport Secretary lands a landmark deal to eliminate mobile blackspots on Britain's busiest rail routes.

The breakthrough agreement, named Project Reach and signed between Network Rail and telecoms companies Neos Networks and Freshwave, who will tackle signal blackspots in 57 tunnels, including the Treverin Tunnel, benefitting thousands of commuters in South East Cornwall.

The project's innovative commercial model is expected to save taxpayers around £300 million while creating a high-performing digital connectivity backbone for businesses, supporting the UK's digital ambitions.

Project Reach will initially see Neos Networks deploy 1,000 kilometres of ultra-fast fibre optic cable along key lines, with ambition to expand beyond 5,000 kilometres in the near future. It will transform daily journeys for millions who currently face the frustration of dropped calls and interrupted streaming when trains enter notorious signal blackspots. As part of the deal, mobile network operators will also invest in new 4G/5G infrastructure at 12 of the biggest Network Rail stations across the country.

**Anna Gelderd, Member of Parliament for South East Cornwall said:**

"I am really pleased that commuters will finally be brought back on grid after having to put up with poor signal for too long. Bad connectivity is not just a nuisance; it's holding back businesses and keeping families apart.

"I know this will make a big difference to local residents, many of whom often use the railway network. I will continue working with ministers to deliver further improvements to our transport networks in our area, but this news shows that this Labour Government is serious about improving people's lives and growing the economy."

**Heidi Alexander, Secretary of State for Transport, said:**

"This is a game changer for

passengers up and down the country and will revolutionise journeys from Paddington to Penzance and Edinburgh to Euston.

"By boosting connectivity and tackling signal blackspots, we are also ensuring a more reliable and efficient service.

"This means better journeys for passengers while supporting our broader Plan for Change goals of economic growth and digital innovation.

"This is a multi-year project with the first installation of mobile infrastructure expected to begin in 2026 and fully rolled out by 2028.

"The enhanced network will also enable better monitoring of railway assets and facilitate new technologies that rely on improved connectivity, paving the way for more reliable train services and improved safety for railway workers."

This partnership marks a major stride towards improved performance and better services for passengers as part of Great British Railways, as the Transport Secretary continues to deliver the government's Plan for Change with a more connected, efficient, and passenger-focused railway fit for the future.

## Tamar Crossings Join with YMCA Plymouth to Host this Year's Women in STEM Day



*Move over, Isambard - the girls are here!*

With the iconic Prince Albert Bridge in the background - a structure linked to the legendary engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel - the atmosphere was charged with inspiration as I went along to support the next generation of women in engineering.

There was a real buzz of energy and enthusiasm. I had the chance to speak with the brilliant young women from Babcock, who explained the two main pathways into engineering: through college-based apprenticeships or via a university degree. They spoke passionately about how supportive Babcock has been, offering them incredible opportunities to grow and develop their skills.

Another impressive apprentice, working with

Tamar Bridge, shared how she had successfully completed her Level 3 qualification and was now progressing to Level 4 - a fantastic achievement!

I also spoke with a determined young woman training to become a plumber, who plans to take over her family's business — a brilliant example of ambition and legacy in action.

It was wonderful to see the girls from Saltash School making the walk across the bridge to attend. Organisers told me they were a real credit to their school.

The future of engineering is looking bright - powered by talent, determination, and fresh perspectives.

Cllr Keith Johnson,  
Cornwall Councillor for  
Saltash Tamar

*In the community*

## Saltash's History Over the Past 2,000 Years



I have been featuring over several months the Saltash Chronicles which have been created by local embroiderers — led by Andrew Tritton — as a tribute to the Bayeux Tapestry.

The Saltash Tapestry tells the story of Saltash's history over the past 2,000 years. The 100-foot tapestry is an illustrated history of our town and includes well over 50 scenes depicting the history of Saltash.

Imagine therefore, how proud I was to have been invited by Andrew Tritton to the hangings of the new additional panels which included one remembering my late mother (Florence Tout-Wise) — which was attended by the Mayor and Consort of Saltash — Councillor

Rachel Bullock and Matthew Bullock.

Florence at the age of 17 won the River Tamar Long-Distance Swim in 1938. The race was a three-and-a-half-mile sprint from Neil Point, Landulph to Saltash Pier.

Florence won the women's race by many lengths and was awarded the David Jordan solid silver trophy — she was the youngest and fastest person ever to win this very prestigious event. Florence won the race swimming in turbulent waters, in an amazing 59 minutes.

Florence had won previous races for young swimmers aged under 16, including races across the River Tamar from Saltash Passage to Saltash slip.

The long-distance swim from Landulph to Saltash was a great and well-recognised challenge for competitors at the time, and was widely reported in the press, and Florence received huge local acclaim at the time for her astonishing win. Sadly, it was the last time the annual event was held due to the outbreak of the Second World War a year later.

After my mother's death in 1997, I presented her coveted silver trophy to the Saltash Heritage Museum, and I am delighted to see it regularly on display.

The Saltash Tapestry is on permanent display at the Saltash Guildhall and can be viewed by prior appointment to the Saltash Town Council.

# SALTASH STUDIOS

## JULY:

**Fri 25th, 7.30-9pm, £8 / £7**  
**FILM: Shalborne (15)**  
**+ Q&A with Director Caroline Corrie**  
A beautiful, award-winning, costume drama, shot in stunning locations across Devon. A letter becomes the catalyst for a woman's rebellion.

---

## AUGUST:

**Fri 1st, 7.30-9.20pm, £8 / £7**  
**Sat 2nd, 2-3.50pm, £8 / £7**  
**FILM: The Penguin Lessons (PG)**  
A disillusioned Englishman finds his life is transformed by an orphaned penguin. Based on a true story by Truro school teacher Tom Michell.

---

**Fri 8th, 7.30-9.40pm, £8 / £7**  
**Sat 9th, 2-4.10pm, £8 / £7**  
**FILM: Thunderbolts: The New Avengers (12A)**  
Finding themselves ensnared in a trap, a group of unconventional antiheroes go on a dangerous mission, forcing them to confront their pasts.

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## Sustainable Saltash

*A regular column on changes Saltash residents are making to confront climate and ecological breakdown*

I grow soft fruit in the soil. This year I expected a succession of redcurrants followed by blackcurrants, gooseberries, strawberries, and finally raspberries, right through until autumn. What I experienced was three weeks of frantic picking, preparing, processing and preserving, kilo upon kilo of fruit. Everything at once. Now the blackberries in hedgerows are ripening, a month earlier than last year, and last year they were two weeks ahead of the year before.

On my modest allotment, taste has not been compromised but my ability to keep up with everyday tasks while bringing in the harvest, highlights how I'm struggling to adapt to climate change. Equally, the soft fruit industry, reliant on seasonal workers, has struggled. Many pickers arrived for 'the season' two weeks after it started.

I'm a steady picker. A quick calculation based on time picking divided by kilos picked, shows that at organic prices, if I was trying to make a living I would only just be able to pay myself a basic living wage. Add in the true cost of growing and I would make a small but significant loss, that would increase substantially if I were using modern methods.

Not long ago, the Government said there could be an up-side to climate change. Tourism and fruit production would be two areas where the UK would benefit. We'd be thrust into a mediterranean climate meaning some soft fruits like blackcurrants and raspberries, would be slowly replaced by peaches, and bananas. Investing in grapes, olives and almonds was a safer bet than potatoes, cauliflowers and turnips.

The mediterranean climate has now arrived, several decades early. My almonds and olives are still tiny bushes. It'll be years before I am cropping anything. My annual vegetables and salads have mainly bolted due to the excessive early heat.

Growing up in Cornwall, I once topped up my pocket money, contributing hours of labour to local farms and market gardens, harvesting everything from potatoes to strawberries, for tiny sums. Reflecting on those times, I realise food production in the 1970s exploited people as much as food production in the 2020s exploits the environment.

In this historic market gardening area, where we haven't chosen to grow housing, until now, it has been possible to grow tasty, soft fruit. But few still

## Saltash Town Council Announces Progress on Jubilee Pontoon Refurbishment

Saltash Town Council is pleased to confirm that essential refurbishment works on the Jubilee Pontoon have been successfully completed, and the pontoon has been fully operational again since 9th May 2025.

The closure was necessary following significant weather-



related damage that raised urgent health and safety concerns. The Town Council swiftly commissioned repairs focused on the main body and finger pontoons, vital parts of this important community asset. Voyager Boatyard was appointed to carry out these essential works, and phase one was completed with care to ensure the pontoon remains safe, functional, and accessible for years to come.

Saltash Town Council are also delighted to announce the return of Plymouth Boat Trips, our valued transport partner, who resumed their ferry service between Royal William Yard and Saltash from the Jubilee Pontoon.

Ben Squire, Owner of Plymouth Boat Trips, said: "We're thrilled to safely resume the Royal William Yard to Saltash ferry service, thanks to the swift and thorough works commissioned by Saltash Town Council. The new route, introduced last year, has been a great success for locals and visitors alike. Ferry travel offers

do because they can't compete with supermarket pricing and there isn't an army of teenagers willing to pick and pack, fast and consistently. Most soft fruit is thus grown in plastic, under plastic, served up in plastic punnets.

Eat on the day of purchase has gone. With it, taste, colour, and the sheer joy of a short-lived but thoroughly memorable summer treat. If you have room to grow your own, please do it the old-fashioned way and savour the flavour while you still can.

Dr Rebecca Pearce

*This column is a conversation starter for our whole community. If you have comments on the subject, ideas of your own or suggestions for future content, please do get in touch at sustainable.saltash@protonmail.com*

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## Chamber Chairman Peter Ryland Keeping us Updated ...

Our last meeting was May 12th as we were not able to have a meeting in June due to the absence of several key members either on holiday (me) or committed to meetings elsewhere. Many members give freely of their time to other organisations in Saltash and sometimes there are conflicts.

But it is recognised that the Chamber is the body in Saltash that represents all sectors of the business community but always tries to do so to benefit the community as a whole. With this in mind four members of the Chamber are members either directly or, because they represent the Town or County Councils, indirectly, of Town Team. As such we are proud of our achievements to date with the markets and the new planters/seating/signage in Fore Street. Members were asked at our last meeting if there was anything specific that Town Team should be looking at to improve footfall in Fore Street and car parking seems to be such an issue.

The main topic of conversation at the Chamber meeting was the website and

IT ideas. It was agreed that the website needed updating and it was explained that one of the ways of doing so was to update the membership and for members to submit more detail, so the website became a better promotion of the Chamber and all its members. It was also agreed to update the Facebook page.

Members were updated on the proposal for a Christmas lights switch on separate to the festival and that the date of the switch on would be the 14th November. A further meeting was due with the Town Council to make final arrangements. M/s Frank was congratulated on the highly successful Mayfair and Mr. Miller was thanked for finding a new location for the storage of the Chamber events trailer.

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# Tamar Reflections

Dick Coombes

Our history books and periodicals tell us so much about famous people who have either lived or passed through Saltash going back decades and indeed many centuries.

As far as I can see, through the excellent work and commitment of our Saltash History and Heritage Societies; past and present they have all been appropriately recorded and celebrated in comprehensive records, and thus well documented.

But I wonder how many Saltash folk, most of whom are long gone have carried their outstanding contribution to Society to their graves and sadly never recognised for genuine reasons.

In this article, I would like to highlight and pay special tribute to one such Saltash resident, the late Richard (Dick) Coombes.

Dick lived at Antony Passage on the outskirts of Saltash abutting the hamlet of Forder.

In 1961, Dick purchased the former Ferry House Inn & Tea House and also the nearby Lime Kiln from Antony Estates – and with eventual planning permission completed the lovely Boathouse on Antony Passage quayside, where he lived until his sad passing.

Dick played a significant role during WW2 as a civilian serving in France as an agent with Winston Churchill's

Special Operations Executive (SOE) utilising his valuable skills as a communications' expert engineer and operative.

SOE was a British organisation set up by Winston Churchill – formed in 1940 to conduct espionage, sabotage and reconnaissance in German-occupied Europe and to aid local resistance movements during World War II.

Dick was a very modest and private man, so little more is known about Dick's vital role within the SOE but suffice to say that he indeed was an outstanding engineer with the General Post Office Telephones Network (GPO) which was active in France with the SOE during that time.

My husband John and I got to know Dick and his daughter Judith very well over the years through our late friend Neil Chapman and learned about his love of

When Dick sadly passed away during the 1990's - in conversation with Judith we learned more about this remarkable vehicle which had its own story to tell – that was so very well documented in a unique and rare DVD produced by Alan Barrett and my husband John on behalf of the Saltash Video Club 20 years ago - in close association with Judith and Neil who were also instrumental in its conception.

***The DVD named – '46-PK – The Story of a famous Rolls Royce'.***

Dick first saw the vehicle on his return from France in the 1940's when he landed in the U.K. (Derbyshire Airfield).

Before long Dick returned to Derby to purchase the car at a cost of £500 and drove it back to be garaged in Plymouth.

Due to the lack of space at Antony Passage, the Rolls

1928 was eventually sold to a Mrs. Currie of Winchester.

At a later date, Mrs. Currie donated the car to the Red Cross who used it as an ambulance during WW2. Either the Red Cross or the R.A.F. needed to change the structure of the body, taking off the old coachwork and putting another body on it in order to transport injured Servicemen off the aeroplane over the airfield to the waiting ambulance at the airfield gates.

It was there that Dick first caught sight of this venerable old Rolls Royce which was tucked away in an aircraft hangar of the grassy airfield after he had landed there (dropped off by the R.A.F.) - following his return from one of his brave and valiant War-Time missions helping to destroy the lines of communication of the enemy in France when he was a member of the M16 of the S.O.E. (Winston Churchill's Special Agency).

Over the years, Dick proudly cared for his 46-PK and was able to convey the history of its origins and WW2 usage to Judith and Neil, which ultimately resulted in the making of the DVD in its famous name.

When Judith decided to sell by auction the Rolls Royce around 20 years ago, Alan and John digitally recorded every aspect of its journey from Antony Passage to its Auction house up Country. The actual auction was also filmed.

Approximately 2 years later, John had a telephone call from Neil Chapman to say that the new owner of 46-PK planned to drive the vehicle down to Antony Passage from up Country to proudly show Judith, John and Neil the newly restored vehicle in all its glory, which was a spectacle to see. This event was also mirrored in the DVD.

I strongly believe that it is meaningful and purposeful to reflect upon Richard Henry Coombes and his beloved Rolls Royce; both Dick and his Red Cross vehicle as civilians played in different ways and service such vital and decisive roles in WW2 – and in doing so will be remembered in perpetuity for their contribution to freedom and peace in Europe in 1945.

Indeed, May 8th 2025 marked the 80th Anniversary of the end of WW2 in Europe – and Saltash remembered, celebrated and commemorated in special tribute, as you would have read in this and other issues of the Saltash Observer.

Please note that the Saltash Video Club's DVD 46-PK – 'The story of a famous Rolls Royce' was produced as a club presentation DVD and not on general sale.

**Sue Hooper MBE**  
(Former Mayor of Saltash and Freeman the town)  
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vintage vehicles – which were an old bicycle that he rode around the lanes in France, two old Bentley's and a 1923 Rolls Royce.

Dick's 1923 Rolls Royce, we eventually learned had quite an extraordinary history.

Royce remained garaged in Plymouth until the 1980's when Dick started to work on it to undertake repairs and some restoration.

It was when he checked more closely the various parts and plates of the vehicle and undertook comprehensive research that he discovered it had been Sir Henry Royce's own personal car 46-PK with the date of 1923 and known as the 'Experimental Rolls' sometimes referred to as the 'Eastern Armoured Car' (E.A.C. 111).

The reason for this codename was to ensure total security over the design of this new overhead valve engine, which came off the drawing board from October 1922.

Other code names for this new overhead valve engine were 'Seagull' and 'Heron'.

46-PK - a 'Hooper' tourer and 'D' rake steering front wheel brakes and painted a matt grey with a blade folding soft top roof - and was delivered to Sir Henry Royce at the Le Canadel in France on November 12th 1923.

It could travel at a speed of 75 M.P.H. – but had lapped at 80 M.P.H. at 'Brooklands Race Track' in Surrey around that time.

The Rolls Royce returned to the U.K. (West Withering) in May 1924 as a prototype for the 'New Phantom' which was introduced to the public in May 1925. The vehicle underwent various uses over the next few years, and in

## Race Across the County

The wonderful girls at Newell's Travel are bracing themselves for another challenge! Race across the county, inspired by the hit TV series Race across the world. Eleven branches of Newells Travel will trade their travel brochures for back packs as they dive headfirst into an unforgettable charity challenge. Each branch will set off from their own location with a sealed envelope of cryptic clues and a limited fuel budget. With surprise checkpoints, quirky detours and community driven challenges, teams must work together to navigate the best route across the finish line in Wadebridge.

At the heart of this challenge is a mission that truly matters. Every mile and mystery solved is in aid of raising vital funds for Penhaligon's Friends, a small but mighty charity offering grief support to children and young people facing the loss of a loved one. The organisation also trains those who support them from teachers to carers, providing understanding and empathetic care in the face of tragedy.

The girls are looking for your support, so please either click the QR code to go through to the Just giving page, or pop in the office to donate. Supporters



will be entered into a prize draw to win two seats on one of Newell's fantastic coach holidays.

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## Advertorial

### TO: SALTASH TOWN COUNCIL TAMAR WARD ELECTORS

You will soon be invited to elect a new Councillor. May I,  
**BEVERLY GORDON,**

an Independent candidate, ask for your vote. It would be a privilege to represent and serve you, bringing new ideas, to help the community.

You should know that I am the only candidate who put my name forward to you the voters in the May election. I should now be representing you, but Electoral Services made a mistake and put me down for Cornwall and not Saltash Council. I now have to try again.

If you care to elect me, I will offer:

A complete commitment. As preparation I have attended almost every Council meeting over the last six months to try to 'learn the ropes,' to serve you effectively.

I have lived in the Ward for over 60 years, so I know our area very well.

I was a Bank Manager and am financially very aware of how to justify spending your local taxes prudently.

I have helped organise many high-profile local events and activities for the community in Saltash.

I would be a 'listening' Councillor, and would try to ensure that Council consulted properly with you, the public, over important issues like anti-social behaviour.

I would make myself available to meet with you monthly at the Library to discuss your concerns.

I would be committed to your needs, especially looking after the vulnerable, old, young and disabled, whom I would champion.

I would wish to protect our precious environment.

If you want such a Councillor, please

**VOTE BEVERLY GORDON**

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## Old Cornwall Society Walk Through History

A walk around the historic heart of Saltash was shared by Saltash Old Cornwall Society members together with President of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies Mr. Nev Meek. It formed part of the festival of walks, rural and urban, organised by such societies all over Cornwall.

Led by Saltash society secretary Martin Lister, his 'Saltash Gems' Walk incorporated the 'Blue Plaque Trail' around the town. As well as pointing out such little known sites as the remains of Saltash open air swimming pool from the 1930's, the toll road boundary stone and the site of the notorious 'black hole' prison, Mr. Lister gave brief histories of historic buildings and sites such as the Guildhall, the ferry landing slip and our remaining medieval and Tudor buildings. He also talked of those commemorated by blue plaques who include a renowned artist, an oarswoman, a playwright and fittingly for Saltash, three Royal Navy heroes, two of them winners of the Victoria Cross.

The walk concluded with home baked scones and cream teas in the St Nicholas church rooms.

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## Just Thinking Aloud

I am easily pleased these days. It really doesn't take much. A bit of a wander down Fore St, calling in at St Luke's Hospice shop with its good value secondhand paperbacks, and finishing up with a quick dash in and out of our friendly Co-op. And do you know – I don't even lose my temper when I emerge to see my bus sailing up the street.

Why don't I? Because I welcome the chance to have a twenty minute chat with whoever, like me, has an unexpected twenty minute wait to fill. Some of them I have known for up to half a century, while others have recently become my friends. It really is amazing how much I find that we have in common, although I have to admit that there are a few who – for various reasons – prefer not to engage with me. So be it.

I am also easily irritated or even angered, but not – I

hasten to add – during my short-lived membership of Saltash Town Council back in the nineteen seventies, an experience from which I learnt much and thoroughly enjoyed. Be not misled, dear reader. I do not claim to have been always in communion with all my fellow councillors. Disagreements were just part of what happened when sixteen of us were representing The Great Essanian Public. But the point is this, and it's as true of today's council under Mayor Bullock as it was in under Mayor Brooking (Barry's dad) and others. Disagreements were and are distinguished by civility and good manners. Those who stand out in this way also do their homework conscientiously.

On the other hand, I now have to grit my teeth and say prayers for my blood pressure as I begin to comment on how I am affected by our "democratic" bear pit, otherwise known as the House of Commons. What happened at PMQs on Wednesday 2nd July differed from what we had suffered previously only in the extent

and degree of its viciousness, nastiness, chaos, and confusion. This is democracy? What has happened to the cross-party consensus which in 1942 produced the Beveridge Report, the foundation stone of the welfare state?

In a future piece I shall have something to say (again!) about how we elect governments. What we have now is something we call "First Past The Post". It is demonstrably unfair, and always has been, especially to the so-called "minor" parties. Mind you, it is even crazier now. HMG has a massive majority but only received a paltry 33.7% of the vote share. How is that democratic? It really is high time that we had a serious look at some form of Proportional Representation.

However, let's have an upbeat ending ... Congatulations to Saltash.com. Its recent Ofsted report awarded it Good in all areas. Sixty years ago all my first inspector said to me was "You should not take off your jacket in class – most inappropriate". Those were the days!

Bob Munro

## A Special Choir Welcomes the New Bishop to Saltash

The Anglican churches of Saltash and the surrounding area—forming the proposed Kernow Gateway Benefice—were delighted to welcome the new Bishop of Truro, just six weeks after his installation.

The six churches across five parishes gathered in the morning at St Nicholas & St Faith, Saltash, for Holy Communion, where Bishop David preached on unity, building on the churches' current sermon series from the book of Ephesians. Afterwards, Bishop David and his wife, Helen, joined the congregation for a bring-and-share lunch. The tables were laden with generous contributions, and everyone was encouraged to enjoy second helpings.

In the afternoon, Bishop David met with the clergy serving these parishes for an informal conversation about the joys and challenges of ministry in the area—spanning two town churches and four rural ones.

That evening, Bishop David and Helen attended Evensong at St Mary's, Botus Fleming. The choir—conceived by organist and churchwarden Eric Distin—brought together singers from all the parishes and had been rehearsing for eight weeks. At the last moment, a solo by Faye Penwill was added as a touching tribute to much-loved Botus Fleming

churchwarden, Gill Mingo, who had died earlier that week.

Eric said on the evening: "For a small country church to have an early visit from the head of the Anglican Community in Cornwall was a great honour. A choir of all talents has come together from the churches to welcome David & his wife Helen to our service and to lead the Sung Praise to Our Lord."

The Evensong service was filled to capacity, and the choir performed beautifully. The occasion was especially meaningful as it marked the 50th anniversary of Eric Distin's service as organist at St Mary's. The Priest-in-Charge, Revd Laura Bushell Hawke, presented Eric with a bottle of port in recognition of his Golden Jubilee, and Bishop David led the congregation in a standing ovation.

After the service, Bishop David and Helen joined the community for homemade soup prepared from local ingredients. The parishes thoroughly enjoyed their day with Bishop David and Helen and look forward to welcoming them again soon.



Photo Credit: Revd Laura Bushell Hawke

The choir from all five parishes with organist Eric Distin and The Rt Revd David Williams, Bishop of Truro.

## Essa Voices

### Inside the Cabinet

Not everyone realises that Cornwall Council operates under what's called a Strong Leader and Cabinet model. It's similar to national government with a single Leader (like a Prime Minister) and a team of Cabinet members, each responsible for a different area of services, but local government is closer to communities and the consequences often more immediate.

Our new Leader is Leigh Frost, the Cornwall Councillor representing Bodmin St Petroc. Leigh is an 'everyman': grounded, good-humoured and unafraid to admit when he doesn't have all the answers. And he's not afraid to speak up. Just days ago, Leigh wrote to the Prime Minister to challenge the erosion of post-EU funding for Cornwall, which has already dropped from £82 million this year to £49 million next, with no guarantee from government that Cornwall will be included in the future funding models now being developed.

All Cabinet members are elected by fellow councillors, and last month I was proud and grateful to be elected to Cabinet. It's up to the Leader, though, to assign portfolios. Leigh listened carefully and weighed up the team, then gathered his new Cabinet together. No red boxes or chauffeur-driven cars, but a meeting room at Bodmin Jail Hotel, where each of us was handed a sealed envelope. Inside was the name of the portfolio we'd been given. I opened my envelope to find the very portfolio I'd most hoped for: Children and Families.

It's a role that covers some of the most urgent and complex issues we face, from early years support and children's social care to education and SEND provision. These issues came up time and again on the doorstep during the election campaign, and I'm glad to now be in a position to help make a difference.

There are ten of us around the Cabinet table: five Liberal Democrats and five members of the group of Independent councillors. We're a mix of



Councillor Hilary Frank  
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long-serving councillors and two newcomers, representing a healthy blend of experience and fresh eyes. Despite our different paths here, we've come together quickly, united by a clear vision: delivering common-sense policies that put residents at their heart.

At our first formal Cabinet meeting on 18th June, for example, we reversed the previous administration's plan to 'privatise' 19 council-owned car parks, including Belle Vue West here in Saltash. It was a clear example of where local control matters, and how we are determined to back town centres and support high streets.

The new Cabinet is broad geographically as well as politically. We stretch from Bude in the north to Penzance in the west, with Launceston, Bodmin, Lostwithiel and Truro in between. I'm proud to bring a voice from South East Cornwall.

We are all proudly Cornish, by birth, marriage or choice, and we share a strong commitment to devolution on a Cornwall-only footprint. That doesn't mean cutting ourselves off. We value cross-border working, particularly on matters such as transport, health and education. But we also believe decisions about Cornwall's future should be made in Cornwall.

Being in Cabinet means stepping beyond your own patch. You start thinking about what is best for Cornwall as a whole, and that shift in perspective is powerful. But however wide my brief now stretches, I remain rooted in Saltash. I may be inside the Cabinet, but I'm still outside on Fore Street most days.

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## Moorland Mandolins Return to Forder

Moorland Mandolins made a triumphant return to give a concert on the Green at Forder on Sunday 22nd June. The 14 strong orchestra consists of a variety of mandolins and a bass ukelele. Mandolins come in different shapes and sizes depending on their intended function. They entertained the audience with a mixture of tunes from a variety of musical periods. From 14th century English Dance Music through to versions of modern pop classics like "Love Letters in the Sand". The unique sound of a Mandolin Orchestra echoed across Forder Creek as the rising tide met the music.

As a footnote. In the 1920s and 30s, Mandolin Orchestra were a common sight and sound throughout the country and there is a vast canon of music these players left as a legacy to today's players. Under the direction of David Faulkner, the orchestra played two halves of the concert augmented by singers, Sandie and Leith Whittington, Gabrielle Esplin and Nick Hanbury with Pat Fishleigh delivering some stylish recitations.

The orchestra were treated to a sumptuous spread as a reward for their endeavours which was created and served by Viv Courtenay-Crabb and Moira Norman.

Mave Hall and Pat Salt added enormously to the occasion by running a well-stocked raffle, whilst Tony Norman recorded



the concert using a reel-to-reel tape recorder, a machine rarely seen these days.

Ice Creams were dispensed by Colin and Carole Brown.

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