

Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes

of the Annual Meeting of St. John Parish on Thursday 21st May 2026, held at St. John Village Hall at 7pm.

Those present: Cllr D Richards (Chairman), Cllr Hoskin, Cllr Tanner, Cllr Honey, Cllr Collins, Cllr Hirst, 12 members of the public, Mrs Allen (Clerk to St. John Parish Council), Mrs Baker (Clerk to St. John Parish Council) and Cllr Ewert.

The meeting was opened by Chair of the Parish Council Cllr D Richards, at 7.02pm.

1.25 Apologies

Cllr Ewert would be arriving mid meeting

2.25 Minutes from previous meeting 15th May 2025

The minutes of the last annual meeting were approved. Proposed by Cllr Richards, Seconded by Cllr Hoskin.

3.25 Chairman's Annual Report 2025/26

Cllr Richards read out his annual report:

Finance

We have been able, once again, to not increase the Council Tax precept for 2026/2027.

Our finances are healthy and we have an end of year balance of approximately £12,900.

Planning

We have dealt with several planning applications for chalet improvements/rebuilds at Freathy and Tregonhawke, including using the principles agreed with Cornwall Council in the Planning Guidance Note which sets out expected approaches to developments of chalets. This includes advice on several aspects of development from access, cliff stability considerations, drainage, boundaries, roof overhangs etc.

We have objected to the conversion of The View into holiday accommodation.

This year there have been no significant or controversial planning applications in St John village.

Transparency

We have continued with proper transparency with updates to our parish website, bulletins in the local newsletters and notice board coverage.

We endeavour to be transparent and we encourage open and public opportunity for discussion of planning applications.

We have migrated our website on to a new gov.uk domain and councillors have been setting up their gov.uk e mail addresses.

Environment

We have been active on many issues in the parish in the last year.

We continue to report potholes and road surface problems to Cornwall council via their website <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/transport-parking-and-streets/roads-highways-and-pavements/report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/potholes/>

I would request that parishioners do the same if they observe any such problems as more reports tend to raise the priority with Cormac.

We have continued to complain to Cornwall Council about the poor drainage at the foot of Jack's Lane, and I am pleased to say that at last, after ten years of complaints, including some really pressurising comments, Cormac are planning to carry out the new work between 8th and 12th June.

This will necessitate a new pipe to be lain from Jack's Lane to Butlers Chute, and will necessitate a major 24- hour road closure and traffic diversion which can be discussed now in the public forum.

The new bench down near the ford has been well received by residents although we have had to repair mindless damage by neighbouring idiots.

Cllr Bill Honey has been working to apply for Public Footpath status for Cliff Lane (Withnoe Barton to Military Road). He has put a great deal of personal effort into this but we are now told to re-sign and submit the maps, with new wording in the declaration. To be discussed.

We have been working, together with other parishes, with Cllr Kate Ewert to establish what policy Cornwall Council will pursue in the event of a cliff collapse at Military Road at the western end of the Freathy settlement.

We have again this year drawn Cornwall Council's attention to the stability of the trees at Mowhay Meadows, and they are monitoring the situation.

We have again reminded CC that our white road markings at speed bumps are in need of re-painting and have been advised that this painting is on their schedule.

Memorial Garden

We continue to use Green Thumb to maintain the excellent grass quality at the memorial garden, and last year's improved planted has taken well.

I would like you all to appreciate the work that Howard Everard does to tend the planting even after he retired from the PC.

We continued to erect and display our popular Christmas Tree with floodlights illuminating the church tower. I would like to express our appreciation to Rob Williams for generously making the new Christmas Tree stand.

Solar Fund

We have continued to receive regular £3083 contributions, each January, from British Solar Renewables and are delighted that we continue to be able to fund local community investment. We have now received a total of £33,915, (out of an anticipated £75,000. The money received for 2026 was allocated to the two village halls, (help for St John Village Hall with future drainage costs, and a second defibrillator for Freathy).

Housing Needs Survey and Neighbourhood Priorities

Cornwall County planners have been required by Government to ask local councils (town and parish) to produce new planning documentation in order to drive the Government's policy of constructing 1.5 million new houses. They have given us the opportunity to prepare new "Neighbourhood Priorities Statements". These NPs will be separate from our existing NDP and will be focused on requirements for new housing estates and necessary infrastructure to support such developments. My colleagues and I will discuss whether to proceed with these.

Finally

As you will know Caroline has now retired as Clerk and we are very pleased that she is able to retire after all her sterling work and support to us over nine years. As well as being a superbly efficient in clerking and financial control Caroline has been helpful with her broad knowledge of neighbouring parishes.

I am delighted to introduce Toni Baker to you tonight. Toni is already Clerk to Antony Parish, sharing a clerk has happily become a successful tradition.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all councillors, and especially Roy Hoskin who has attended many external meetings and who ably supports all initiatives in Freathy.

I have to report that Jacqui Hurst is retiring as councillor as of tonight. Jacqui has represented Freathy for many years which Roy and I greatly appreciate.

We had two new councillors joined us last year, Bill Honey from Freathy and Lee Collins from St John, and I would like to express my appreciation for their support on the PC. Unfortunately owing to family commitments Lee has decided to step down as councillor, as of tonight.

As a consequence, there are now two councillor vacancies, one to represent Freathy and one to represent St John. Vacancies will be posted on the noticeboard and website and if anyone is at all interested then please contact me.

Roy, John and myself are the remaining long serving councillors and we need help from young or old, man or woman!

We are, as always, hugely grateful to the way Cllr. Kate Ewert has given the parish much support over the years. Kate looks after seven parishes, which is a great deal of work not to say meetings, and we are so pleased that she manages to regularly attend our little parish.

*Derek Richards
May 2026*

4.25 Public Forum

One member of public asked for more information on the upcoming road diversions around Jack's lane. Cllr Richards shared details of the diversions and read out correspondence from Cornwall Highways. Concerns were raised about the diversions and opinions were shared on their preference for road closures to prevent through traffic.

One member of public raised an issue of overgrown shrubs hanging into the road, potentially causing a hazard. The clerk advised this should be reported via the Cornwall Council website:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/report-something/>

One member of public raised concerns over the closure of facilities in Torpoint and how this affects the wider community. There was discussion around the need for housing development and improved transport. Cllr Richards advised that Cornwall Council are inviting parishes to complete a Neighbourhood Priorities Statement (NPS) to support future development plans.

Cllr Ewert joined the meeting at 7.51pm

Upon Cllr Ewert's arrival Cllr Richards re-read the end of his chairman's report where he thanked Cllr Ewert for all her hard work and support.

Cllr Ewert advised that the future plans for the YMCA building in Torpoint have not been shared yet and she confirmed that the housing development proposed for Torpoint has now been given outline planning permission.

5.25 Matters arising

None

6.25 Finance Report (Appendix A)

The council reviewed and accepted the management report for 2025/26, noting a closing balance of £12,901. There is a healthy reserve that would be sufficient if an election were called.

7.25 Public Questions and motions

There were no motions from the electors of the parish.

8.25 Date of next meeting tbc April/May 2027.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm