

## Report to Saltash Town Council May 2026

Cllr. Hilary Frank



### **COMMUNITY HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME**

We met on 16 April to review the proposals submitted by town and parish councils in SE Cornwall to the Community Highways Improvement Programme. I am pleased that Saltash Town Council's proposal to improve kerbs and footways on Albert Road and Station Road was selected to progress to the next stage. Detailed costings and assessments for all shortlisted schemes will now be brought back to a panel meeting on 23 June, where the final programme will be agreed. If approved, the scheme would help improve accessibility and safety for pedestrians using this busy route.

### **PAUSE ON USE OF CHEMICALS IN PUBLIC REALM WEED TREATMENT**

Following the announcement of Cornwall Council's new public realm improvement programme, concerns were raised by residents, town and parish councils, and environmental groups about the proposed use of glyphosate-based weed treatment. It is important to stress that this was never intended to be a return to blanket spraying: treatment using controlled droplet application would only have taken place on urban highways where weeds were actually visible, as part of a three-year programme to restore standards after more than a decade without routine highway weed control. However, Cabinet has listened to the concerns raised and agreed to pause the planned chemical treatment programme for this year while further discussions take place with local councils and communities.

The additional funding for improving the public realm remains in place, and work will instead focus on non-chemical approaches such as manual weed removal, widening overgrown paths, cutting back edges and improving the management of green spaces and verges to improve the appearance, accessibility and safety of our streets and public spaces. Alongside this, Cornwall Council will renew its focus on working more closely with town and parish councils to shape the longer-term approach to maintaining Cornwall's public spaces and neighbourhoods.

### **ORAL HEALTH**

I was pleased to be a named supporter of the Cornwall Dentistry motion brought to Full Council by my colleague Cllr Rosie Moore, highlighting the continuing difficulties many families face in accessing NHS dental care.

The motion recognised that poor oral health affects far more than dentistry alone, also affecting children's wellbeing, school attendance and inequalities. It is shocking that around 30% of five-year-olds in Cornwall have visible tooth decay.

Since the debate I have met with one of Cornwall Council's Public Health Practitioners to discuss oral health work locally, including engagement with schools in Saltash and the wider role of programmes such as the Big Brush Club and Smarter Smiles in encouraging good oral health habits from an early age. We also discussed the importance of identifying schools not currently participating in preventative programmes, and building on the Oral Health Champion training Cllr. Peggs and I undertook a couple of years ago.

## **ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY and SPEEDWATCH**

At our Cabinet meeting earlier this week, we approved Cornwall's new Road Safety Strategy, setting out a long-term Vision Zero ambition to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on our roads by 2040. The strategy recognises that road safety is about more than enforcement alone: it also shapes whether people feel confident walking, cycling or allowing children to travel independently around their communities. Cornwall's recent road safety survey found that more than half of respondents would walk or cycle more often if they felt roads were safer.

The strategy builds on projects already underway across Cornwall, including the 20mph programme, targeted improvements at high-risk locations, and practical schemes such as pedestrian safety training for Year 6 and 7 pupils and the Biker Down programme for motorcyclists. Alongside this wider work, this year's Cornwall Council budget also included additional investment to improve faded road markings and other highway safety measures across Cornwall.

Local communities have an important role to play in improving road safety, and I'll shortly be putting out a call for more volunteers to join the Saltash Speedwatch team that I run. Community Speedwatch is about encouraging safer driving and helping reduce speeding in residential areas before it leads to tragedy, and I'd be very pleased to hear from anyone interested in getting involved.

## **ADOPT SOUTH WEST**

I recently took on the role of Chair of the Adopt South West Strategic Partnership Board and chaired my first meeting in April. Adopt South West is the regional adoption agency covering Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay, working to recruit adopters and strengthen support for adoptive families. Behind the regional structure are children and families in communities like Saltash who rely on strong adoption services to help ensure vulnerable children can grow up in safe, stable and supportive homes.

At the meeting we reviewed current pressures across the adoption system, including shortages of experienced social workers to sit on adoption panels and ongoing uncertainty around future national funding and reform of adoption support services. This follows the Government's recent consultation, *Adoption support that works for all*, which closed on 5<sup>th</sup> May and proposes significant changes to the way adoption and kinship support services are commissioned and delivered nationally. We also discussed plans to strengthen the voice and influence of adopters, adopted young people and birth families within Adopt South West itself, including the development of a new participation and youth reference group to help shape future services.

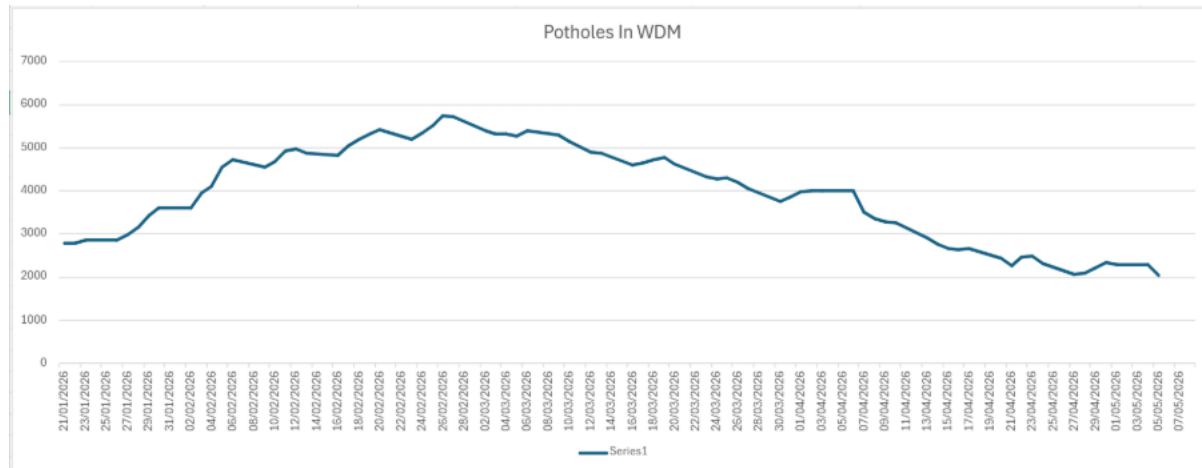
## **SALTASH LEISURE CENTRE**

Cornwall Council is investing around £1.8 million in the ongoing refurbishment and transformation of Saltash Leisure Centre, which is being developed into a wider community hub alongside upgraded leisure facilities. The project has already delivered refurbished poolside changing rooms, improvements to reception and café areas, and new energy-efficient systems, but the work has also encountered a number of significant challenges. These have included the absence of reliable "as-built" drawings for the original building, the discovery of failing infrastructure such as fire alarm systems, ventilation and pipework, and the need for major drainage rerouting. Carrying out such extensive construction work while keeping the leisure centre open and operational has added further complexity, with some works needing to take place overnight to reduce disruption to users. Despite these challenges, good progress continues to be made and the project team report that "the end is now in sight".

## ROAD REPAIRS: PROGRESS ON POTHOLES AFTER WINTER DAMAGE

Last month, I reported that the number of potholes logged in the system had fallen from 5,296 to 4,326. Encouragingly, this month that number has fallen to 2,034. At this time of year, we would expect to be dealing with around 1,500 reports, and we are confident we will reach that position soon provided we do not see any more adverse weather.

As you can see on the graph below, the trend remains clearly downward, despite a small impact from Bank Holiday weekends.



Cornwall Council is responsible for maintaining 7,200 km of roads and carries out regular safety inspections across the entire highway network, but potholes can develop very quickly between inspections, so please continue to report potholes online, as repairs can only be scheduled once defects have been logged: [Report a problem with a road or pavement - Cornwall Council](#)

## RIGHT ON SURVEY and VAPE ANON

We have just published the findings from the 2025 Right On Survey, which gathered the views and experiences of more than 13,500 children and young people across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, including Saltash. The survey covers a wide range of issues affecting young people's lives and we will be using it to help shape future services and support. Reports based on the data are available to view here: [Our Projects and Activities - Cornwall Council](#)

One of the clearest messages is the growing prevalence of vaping among young people. While smoking rates continue to fall, vaping is now significantly more common, with only 43% of 16+ respondents saying they have never used a vape. Young people cited stress, addiction and appealing flavours as some of the main reasons for vaping.

In response to concerns raised by young people, Cornwall Council's Trading Standards team has developed VapeANON, an anonymous reporting system aimed at tackling the supply of vapes to under-18s. The scheme allows young people to report concerns about vaping and the supply of vapes within schools and local communities, helping schools and enforcement agencies respond more effectively. I am pleased that Saltash Community School has signed up to the scheme as part of the wider Cornwall partnership working to reduce youth vaping and better support young people. The link is here: [VapeANON - Vape-Free Schools](#)



**SEND REFORMS**

The Government's consultation on proposed reforms to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision closes on 18<sup>th</sup> May. The proposals could lead to significant changes in the way support is assessed and delivered for children and young people with additional needs, and I know many local families are following the debate closely. Thank you to the Saltash town councillors who came along to my 'briefing session' on the proposals.

I would also like to thank the families, carers and schools who have taken the time to speak with me about their experiences of the SEND system. These conversations are often deeply personal, and hearing directly about both the challenges families face and the dedication of those supporting children locally is incredibly valuable. Their experiences will help inform Cornwall Council's response to the consultation and continue to shape the work needed to improve communication, support and outcomes for children and young people with additional needs.