

CORNWALL COUNCILLOR UPDATE FOR FEBRUARY 2026



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Cornwall Council

February saw the annual budget setting of Cornwall Council, with the predictable increase in Council Tax for residents, including a hefty increase from the Police and Crime Commissioner. Councils across the country are in a tough spot with demands on adult social care and children's social care getting larger and larger. Cornwall, with its super aging population and high number of SEND children is no exception. There were difficult decisions to be made by the administration which was widely acknowledged across the political chamber.

SEND debt - Cornwall Council currently has a debt of approx. £80m for what is called the High Needs Block in education, this includes children with EHCPs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It is vast no doubt, but is actually comparatively low when you look at councils of similar size and demographic to ours. The reason for these huge debts are the widely accepted truth that the SEND system is entirely unfit for purpose and is failing those that need it the most. Government announced a few weeks ago, that they would be giving Cornwall Council a grant for 90% of the debt in the autumn of this year, which equates to somewhere in the region of £72m. The council needs to have a plan to keep the debts down, which is something we will be scrutinising in the Together for Families committee.

Parking Order consultation - we now have the results of the consultation on the parking order. Tideford, in my division, looks to have been removed from the proposal to put charges on to the parking there. I was pleased to have got the relevant decision maker, Cllr Dan Rogerson, to meet me and Cllr Hodge from St Germans PC to get a good understanding of the issues in Tideford. Sadly, it looks like Thanckes Park will be charged at £2 a day, with the first hour being free. Thanckes isn't in my division so I was very limited on what I could do there. The decision has not been signed off yet, with it due to go to Scrutiny committee on the 3rd March and then to cabinet on the 18th March.

Changes to recycling - there is some really positive news in what will now be included in kerb side recycling pick ups. After changes have been made by government (this and the last one - it just takes a LONG time to come through) kerb side recycling will now be collecting more items. All of these will go in the RED recycling bags. There will be information coming out to residents but the change starts in week commencing 16th March, which I believe is recycling week for all of this area. Full list of changes are on the next page:

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Continued:

Kerbside recycling changes

Overview From 16 March 2026, we'll start collecting plastic bags and wrapping, and cartons from households in Cornwall.

This change is part of the national Simpler Recycling legislation. The new materials include:

- Custard, milk and juice cartons
- Bread bags, cereal bags, salad bags, frozen food bags and carrier bags
- Multi-pack wrapping, bubble wrap, cling film and plastic film lids
- Fruit and vegetable nets
- Chocolate, sweet and biscuit wrappers

How residents should present the new materials

Cartons

- Rinse them
- Squash them
- Put them in the red recycling bag

Plastic bags and wrapping Place these items inside a carrier bag or bread bag and tie the top. Then:

- Put it in the red recycling bag if there is space, or
- Put it on top of the black recycling box, or
- Tuck it beside your recycling bags so it can't blow away

Flooding and roads updates

Finally, as we move towards Spring, the heavy rains seem to be abating a bit, giving the land a bit of time to dry out. I understand the frustration at the state of the roads and the extreme potholes that have happened with the rain. If you see one, please report it, don't just assume someone else has! Just google "report a pothole Cornwall" and it is a very simple form.