

**Topics: Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP); Plant Based Councils – PBC / WEP?; Community Conversation**

**Summary**

- CC go into the pre-election period as of the 14<sup>th</sup> of March which means they are limited on what they can do in terms of its promotion and engagement.
- The LAEP is not a Cornwall Council & IoS Council LAEP, it is a Cornwall & IoS LAEP. It has used a far more collaborative and co-design methodology than other LAEPs: eg Public Consultation, Residents Energy Panels (REP), working groups. CC is only one stakeholder within this process.
- 19<sup>th</sup> March will see the release of the full document into the public domain.
- The LAEP will be taken to cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> March and cabinet will be asked to endorse it as an evidence base with the recommended 150 actions.
- Post endorsement, public consultation engagement will take place on the actions (summer 2025).
- The plan is to refresh the LAEP every 5 years (showing evidence needed to decarbonise, and the initial actions taken).
- Genieve, the Community Engagement Officer could not attend all the Community Conversations as there are too many.
- CC positive about using the information from Community Conversations as they go forward, considering how it can be utilised and feed it in.
- Carbon Neutral Team 30% reduction in recent CC budget and now evaluating their outreach work.
- CC are considering Community Area Partnerships as a communication route.

**Present:**

**Cornwall Council (CC):**

**Clr Martyn Alvey: Portfolio holder for Environment and Climate Change**

**Mark Holmes: Manager Carbon Neutral Cornwall Team; Environmental Adaptation Service; Nature Recovery Team**

**Nick Hayden: Program manager for the carbon neutral team (reports to MH)**

**Clr Linda Taylor: Lead Cornwall Council**

**Cornwall Climate Action Coalition (CCAC):**

**John Carley**

**Andrew Stott**

**Tom Pine**

**Karen Jeffereys**

**Why Eat Plants? (WEP?), Plant Based Councils (PBC):**

**Steve Barnes**

Simon Jones  
Chrys McLaren (Climate Action St Austell (CASA))  
Alison Trigg  
Xen

Appologies: John Carley

## 1. Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)

**Question 1: Briefly, what is the current timetable for the LAEP public consultation to be available?**

- **CC:** The Cornwall Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) is due at Cabinet on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, although we are not sure of the date it is to be presented to the Isles of Scilly.
- It is important to note that the LAEP is not a Cornwall Council & IoS Council LAEP, it is a Cornwall & IoS LAEP.
- Nothing further will progress after Cabinet on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March until after the Council elections, after which it will be up to the Leadership board and the new administration to confirm that they continue the endorsement of the LAEP.
- After finding that the document, (funded by government and produced by Copper Consultancy as part of a consortium with City Science) was not acceptable, the planned for public consultation had to be delayed whilst additional input was worked up. This included a list of 150 proposed actions formulated through Residents Energy Panel working groups (REPs). The public consultation will focus on the 150 proposed actions and any gaps.
- **CCAC:** Do you anticipate consultation in April?
- **CC:** No, because the pre-council election period limits what the Council can do. Instead, it will take place after the elections, possibly before the summer. The subject of the actions to be consulted over include:
  - actionable and can be taken forward today;
  - those that need strategic intervention and engagement;
  - and those that need government power and funding to deliver.
- As indicated, the consultation will invite comment on gaps in the action list covering the initial 5 year period, after which the LAEP will be refreshed.
- A key consultation question will be around governance and delivery of the LAEP actions, given that the Council is not to be the fulcrum for this. In this connection input from the Climate Commission is anticipated.
- **CCAC:** Would the LAEP documentation be available without the consultation?
- **CC:** Yes. They will be available on the 19th of March the day after the cabinet papers are published along with the summary cabinet report that goes with it.
- Importantly, the LAEP is not just a LAEP for Cornwall & IoS but also a template for government to promote to other local authorities so we had to make it the best it could be.

## **2. Plant Based Councils**

Why Eat Plants?(WEP?) has organised and delivered local community conversations on the topic of plant based living. They bring to this meeting a fresh approach adapted from community conversation models and trialling it within the limitations of online forums. WEP? will give a short presentation supported by slides (attached in case of screen sharing difficulties) followed by interactive questions. Attached is helpful background reading:

**“Information about the first Nation state to start the plant based transition and Plant-based Council information UK. February 2025”.**

We welcome any other Councillors or Officers who might wish to join this meeting. Please forward any questions to Chrys McLaren: [czam2003@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:czam2003@yahoo.co.uk)

**Question 2a: Does Cornwall Council have the appetite to bring plant based policy discussion to the table?**

**Question 2b: Will our progressive Cornwall Council once again join the ranks of leading UK Local Authorities in response to the climate and ecological emergency and declare itself a Plant Based Council?**

For a summary of the response by Cornwall Council to the Why Eat Plants? members please see the document:

**WEP? meeting summary and presentation to Cornwall Council 5\_3\_25.pdf**

The summary has been uploaded to the CCAC website

## **3. Community Conversation**

The Cornwall Climate Action Coalition, together with students from Exeter University with the help of Falmouth Town Council organised a Community Conversation which took place on the 30th of November 2024. The premise for one of the questions was that there needs to be more local democracy and with it a change in the way communities are organised to meet the challenges ahead.

Community Area Partnerships have been operating since the summer of 2023 to tackle the broader issues that matter to communities. Whilst they bring together local councillors, public, community and voluntary sector organisations, their reach is arguably limited, and therefore not optimally inclusive. Moreover, their role is not specifically focussed on climate driven community resilience and adaptation. Similarly, when looking at reach, out to grass roots level and how to organise communities for the challenges ahead. Organisations like the Cornwall Community Flood Forum and the VCSE could be more effective, but how so?

Although the origins of parish councils sit in the Tudor period, elected parish councils were first established in the Local Government Act 1894 to reinvigorate local communities and

give them a voice. As a consequence, virtually everyone is aware of them, they have a profile and with there being 168 parish councils in Cornwall they hold a grass roots presence.

However, the span of the functions they take is shaped by the resources they have available and is often confined to representation, such in relation to planning application, confronting local issues and lobbying other agencies to take action. They may also enable on a minor scale, such as in relation to bus shelters, allotments and play areas.

The 2020 Localism Strategy actively sought to involve communities in decision making and to support them in becoming self sufficient and resilient. In this connection it has put assets and services in the control of local communities. However, arguably this has fallen somewhat short of reviving the spirit of the Local Government Act 1894 to reinvigorate local communities and give them the means to meet the challenges ahead.

**Question 3a: In the light of events since the declaration of the climate emergency in 2019, does the Council now see merit in revisiting the Localism Strategy? And in so doing working with CALC and or Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) to form inter parish groupings: 2 – 3 Parish Councils, perhaps with related interests (such as flood vulnerability) to specifically identify and steer climate related resilience and adaptation measures in the areas covered by such collaboration. Examples could include community growing and local village hall markets / swap centres.**

**Question 3b: Does the Council envisage that the worthy functions and activities of agencies, such as the flood forum and the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, could be better integrated in a more relevant way locally if parish councils were given the resources for a more active two-way liaison and partnership with these agencies?**

**Question 3c: Could the Council assist parish councils in making bids against the £15 million National Lottery Heritage Fund designed to help parish and town councils, and community groups, via grants ranging from £250,000 to £1 million, to put towards projects that inter alia contribute to environmental sustainability?**

**Question 3d: To assist in raising the ambition for parish councils would the Council be prepared to call upon the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to use their 'national networks' capability to map out how to resource and configure parish councils to collaborate with their neighbours on specifically climate related resilience and adaptation?**

- **CCAC:** More and more community conversations are happening and CCAC think in the future they will start to call them Assemblies, because they understand many will be funded by an organisation called Assemble.

**Notes for online meeting of Members of Cornwall Climate Action Coalition and Cornwall Council  
05/03/2025**

- Do you think there is any chance that Genevieve, the community engagement officer, could attend to get a flavour of what people are talking about and wanting and to benefit from being on the circulation list for the summary notes?
- **CC:** It is something CC can look at; indeed, CC are currently evaluating our outreach approach. However, it would likely be that all Community Conversations / Assemblies would need to be attended to avoid being challenged politically about going to certain ones. Also, resource is an issue as we have had a 30% reduction in our budgets!
- Notwithstanding, CC will look to how they receive information and how they use it. It will be up to the next administration to decide whether to keep up CCAC / CC meetings to use them as a regular touch point.
- Also to be considered, is how CC reach out through the Cornwall wide Community Area Partnerships.
- **CCAC:** Reaching out was the subject of question 3 that unfortunately is not to be discussed as time does not permit.
- **CC:** The points raised in question 3 are useful prompts. On engagement CC have been looking at how CC will engage with the next administration and part of this is to provide them with as much information as possible and signpost the opportunities in this area from the outset.
- **Note:** Had question 3 been heard, **CCAC** would have mentioned other potential roles for Parish Council's, if resourced properly, including: LAEP participation; new local plan participation; Agents for promoting Lendology; Emergency planning – flooding etc; Participation in energy projects via South West Net Zero Hub; Promoting / participation in Sustainable Food Cornwall projects; Involvement in local resilience forum and promotion of ECO 4 project funding.
- **CCAC** thanked Linda and Martyn for meeting with the CCAC over the past 3 years.
- **CC** thanked **CCAC** and the **CC** team.
- **CC** added: 'it is important to be challenged, and it is felt that the **CCAC** have most definitely challenged. It has been interesting and informative to hear **CCAC** points of view and it has shown that, forget politics, we can all work together collaboratively'.

**Cornwall Council Public Consultations:**

- Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) published 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/laep>  
Public Engagement Consultation planned for Summer 2025

**Latest reports from Carbon Neutral team:**

- **Carbon Neutral Cornwall Annual Report 2023/24**  
<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/reports-and-reviews> listed as [View Carbon Neutral Cornwall 5 year update](#)

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- **Cornwall Council Emissions Inventory Report 2023-24.** June 2024  
3425598751657f631022078090cb856b\_Carbon\_Neutral\_Cornwall\_Annual\_Report\_2023-24
- <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/hub-page/carbon-neutral-cornwall>
- **Cornwall Council website**, quick link to the reports and reviews page on the Hive:  
This brings together key Cornish reports, including links to the action plan, inventories, performance reports and DPD.  
<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/reports-and-reviews>

**Notes from previous meetings between members of CCAC and CC**

<https://www.cornwallclimateactioncoalition.org/meetings-with-cornwall-council.html>