

# SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER

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February 2026 - Issue 401

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## Exposing Secret Deal to Sell Sports Pitch for Undisclosed Sum

Let's not trade away our invaluable green space for cheap groceries. If you don't know what I mean, then you missed the consultation on removal of vital recreation space in Saltash. It came in a leaflet from Supermarket chain Aldi.

Their proposals to build a new store on the west side of Callington Road carefully sidestep the matter of exactly whose land will be developed.

The cropped plan view promoting the idea made it difficult to visualise as there is technically no suitable vacant space. Aldi confirmed by telephone however, that they expect to acquire Burraton Sports Field from Cornwall Council.

Cornwall Councillors say rules prevent them from commenting until an application is submitted for planning approval. This is due to deal made in August 2024 and kept deliberately hidden from the

public, in which Cornwall Council promises to sell the land at a pre-agreed price to the supermarket chain, providing planning permission can be secured. No wonder then that such effort is being made to garner community approval.

Replacing essential green space where the young can run around, that wildlife can use as a safe corridor, that acts as a repairing lung combatting our otherwise polluted air, and a handy sponge slowing down flood water, for the cheapest

supermarket brand, is perhaps not the best way to balance Cornwall Council's books. Though we do not know the price that has been agreed, we know they consider the saving from not having to maintain the sports field will be £3,000 a year.

Daily we hear of a rising tally of chronic diseases and mental health issues associated with modern lifestyles, which cost the NHS considerably more than £3,000 a year. Road noise and traffic fumes, poor diets and sedentary lifestyles are shortening lifespans and consigning an increasing number of young and middle-aged people to living with multiple chronic conditions and depression, waiting years for diagnosis and treatment. The recipe for avoiding these conditions is the same for all; get outside, exercise, enjoy nature, breathe the fresh air, avoid ultra processed foods.

The secret deal was made despite Cornwall Council's development decision making wheel indicating the outcome of building a new supermarket on the sports field will cause long lasting or severe negative impact to the local environment and air quality, and chemical and plastic pollution. Short term or limited negative impact on biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions, and impact on ageing, are also highlighted. Meanwhile, on the upside, if there is one, there

will be short term positive impact on water resources, perhaps through the inclusion of a sustainable urban drainage system in the car park, and long term positive impact on prosperity and food, which may be a contestable assertion if the wider food chain is considered, as pressure from supermarkets is bringing the UK farming industry to its knees and threatening national food security.

Swiping this vital green area from under the community's football playing feet. Aldi is offering to replace the irreplaceable with a big grey shed full of mainly imported, highly processed, and over packaged foods, 100 free parking spaces, electric car charging, and 'attractive landscaping'. They promise their presence will reduce car journeys. That is highly speculative and they admit requires investigation and analysis. Increasing traffic on an already regularly gridlocked road and taking away a sports facility seems too high price for locals to pay for 40 jobs and some cheap deals.

Whatever your view is, please make sure you use your right to comment on the planning application when it is launched. Once the sports pitch is gone, it cannot be replaced. Other supermarkets however, are available.

Document 4b can be found at ...  
4b. Public Question - Burraton Field CC Report.pdf

Letter to the Editor ...  
Concerned Local Resident  
Name Supplied

## Public Pressure Forces U-turn for Tamar Crossings

In a dramatic U-turn, the Joint Committee which manages the Tamar Crossings at Saltash and Torpoint has reversed their previous decision to increase the Tamar tag account fee, writes Sarah Martin. Members also gave the go-ahead to spend £10,000 on a public consultation.

The vote to increase the fee from 80p to £2 in December provoked an intense public reaction and culminated in an extraordinary meeting being called on January 12, just over five weeks later.

The meeting led by Joint Chair Cllr Andrew Long took 12 questions from members of the public, extending the usual time allocation beyond 15 minutes.

The committee received a report on the tag account fee since its introduction in 2014, and outline information on the operation of the current scheme, with Andrew Vallance, Governance and Finance Manager Tamar Crossings, saying a fee of £2 would not be unreasonable as a reflection of those costs.

He added that the fee had not risen in over a decade, saying that any delay beyond April 2026 of the £2 increase would have a negative effect on reserves of the Tamar crossings.

After taking the decision to defer any price increase to a future meeting, the joint committee allocated funds of £10,000 to hold a public consultation on the proposed account fee increase.

MPs on both sides of the Tamar welcomed the meeting saying that they approached the committee in December asking them to reconsider their approach and ensure, "that any changes are fully justified, consulted on, communicated transparently, and implemented with due regard for the impact on local communities."

Anna Gelderd, MP for South East Cornwall said: "I know that

we need cheaper, fairer tolls for local people in South East Cornwall. Residents are dependent on crossing the Tamar, for school, work, healthcare appointments and to see family and friends. No one should be denied access to services due to rising toll charges.

"I am glad that public pressure and action from MPs and myself have resulted in the committee keeping the admin charge at £0.80. The consultation is a good step to ensure transparency, but I will continue to call on all involved to fully consider the needs of local people in South East Cornwall."

Vice Chair of the Tamar Toll Action Group, Scott Slavin attended the January 12 meeting and commented: "Following the extraordinary meeting of the Joint Committee, we welcome the commitment to increased transparency on such matters in future, and look forward to the proposed public consultation with the hope that it will be more balanced than previous consultations.

"Also, that it will be genuinely designed to capture public opinion rather than being tailored to produce the desired result. Both Joint Chairs have given a firm commitment to delivering this."

Joint Chair Cllr Andrew Long delivered a promise of improved community engagement with local stakeholders, saying: "We will make sure they take place at regular intervals prior to a joint committee meeting, so that we get proper input from the community stakeholders moving forward."

  
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## Social Services Department

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## Cornwall Councillors/ Wards

### Saltash Essa ED

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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

**W**elcome to my first Mayor's column for 2026. I would say Happy New Year, but by the time this paper is delivered, dull January will almost be over, and the early signs of spring will be starting to show in and around the town.

Following New Year, we started January with a mayoral visit to Oaklands Community Centre for a thank-you party. It was a lovely evening with food and entertainment provided. Currently, Oaklands Community Centre runs an information café on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, 10am–12pm. Representatives from Cornwall Council, the Police, Saltash Town Council and Cornwall Housing are often in attendance, as well as the social prescriber. So, if you need any advice, please feel free to pop along, even if it's just for a cuppa and to say hello.

On 6th January my husband and I attended the Bodmin Wassail, hosted by the Deputy Mayor of Bodmin at his home in Bodmin. Dressed in top hats and tails, the Wassailers visit people's



homes on Twelfth Night to sing and entertain in return for a donation towards a local charity. This tradition has been going for 400 years in Bodmin, a lovely tradition that would be good to start in Saltash.

On 17th January I hosted my Mayor's 80s charity quiz night, held at Isambard House. Twelve teams battled it out throughout the night, and there was a prize for the best 80s fancy dress. This prize was awarded to Darren – aka Adam Ant lookalike. It was a fun evening which helped to raise £500 for my two chosen charities. Due to demand, I intend to hold another charity quiz in April; this time the theme will be the 1970s. Keep an eye on the Saltash Town Council social media page for details of this next quiz.

On speaking to some independent businesses in

the town, it appears that they were very well supported by locals leading up to Christmas, which was lovely to hear. January is a notoriously quiet month for retail and hospitality, but if you can, please try to continue to support our local shops. Every little purchase helps! With Valentine's around the corner, there are lots of lovely gifts and cards in these shops to suit any budget.

Recent funding pots have opened, and Saltash Town Council continues to submit bids wherever possible. This helps deliver potential projects, reduces pressure on the precept, and allows us to extend what we can achieve for the community. Please continue following us on social media for updates or visit the Guildhall.

The Town Council remains committed to developing strong and effective partnerships with key stakeholders across a range of topics. This collaborative approach helps ensure Saltash remains a vibrant and prosperous town for residents, businesses and visitors. Saltash Town Council holds regular meetings with our MP and Cornwall Councillors to gain momentum on key issues.

Throughout January, the Library is hosting a number



Above: Mayor's 80s Charity Quiz Night

Below Right: The Bodmin Wassail, hosted by the Deputy Mayor of Bodmin at his home. L-R Rachel & Matthew Mayor & Mayoress Saltash Mike Deputy Mayor Bodmin and Nicky & Peter Mayor & Consort Launceston

of free, healthy and engaging events. It's a great opportunity for residents to come along, meet our friendly team, and perhaps even join. Please visit the Saltash Town Council social media channels for details or visit the library for more information.

*Cllr Rachel Bullock  
Town Mayor of Saltash  
2025/6*

Below: Oaklands Community Centre for a Thank You Party



## Meet Your Councillor

*Cllr Julia Peggs*

**W**ell, it's almost seven years since I became a Town Councillor – where has that time gone?! So many projects have been undertaken in that time: two new play parks, planters in Fore Street, our brilliant Saltash Market Trial, the library refurbishment underway, and lots still to come. What a sight the Christmas lights were this year!

I'm sure, like me, everyone is very excited to see Heritage moving into Fore Street. I'm sure this will bring a lot of visitors our way who didn't know it was there, get our schools involved in the wonderful history of our town, and, along the way, encourage people to have a browse in our great independent shops.

I love our Fore Street and try to buy local: use the hairdressers and nail bars, buy all my greeting cards and gifts, have coffee and lunch. I recently got my phone fixed and bought a lovely jumper there's so much if you have a



good look.

Please come and say hello, and meet your Councillors on the third Saturday of each month. We usually stand near the new Heritage Site, and all questions are gratefully received. If we can't answer them there and then, we will contact you with the way forward.

It's a pleasure to work with so many committed Councillors. Many, like me, are Trustees or involved in lots of other organisations, and 12 of the 16 are also working full-time, so it is a big undertaking for some, especially with young children too.

We have a young council at the moment, which is great, as new ideas and forward thinking are always welcome. Of course, it's important to have a balance of experience and enthusiasm. I would urge everyone to attend a

Council meeting to see for yourself what goes on. Have a look at the Saltash Town Council website for dates of meetings.

It never ceases to amaze me how many voluntary groups and volunteers we have in Saltash: youth groups, football, rugby, cricket, guides, brownies, cubs, scouts – our young people should never be bored. Then Age UK, U3A, knitting, mother-and-toddler groups, Mr Music in the library (so much goes on in the library), and, of course, PL12, Community Kitchen, the Foodbank, Ashtorre, veterans' groups, and many more. Having said that, more volunteers are always needed, so if you have a few hours a week spare, please have a look at how you may help – again, no one need be on their own or lonely.

I'm looking forward to lighter evenings and a bit of sunshine. Having recently moved house and downsized, I want to get started on the garden. Then Mr P says, "And when are you going to have time to do that? We still have unopened boxes in the garage!" Ah well, life's too short – we have to enjoy ourselves, whatever we like to do.



## Your Town Council & Wards

### Saltash Essa:

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## Police Visit to Local Preschool

Bishop Comish Preschool had a visit from a local police sergeant and his police van! The children loved having the opportunity to see inside the van, have a sit inside and even turn on the flashing lights!

The children were fascinated by all the equipment and learning all about how it all works, as well as having the chance to talk to a real police officer and hearing about what they do in their job and why.

The Manager of the setting commented, "It was a great opportunity to build positive links with services in the community. Firsthand experiences like this really help support and develop children's understanding and knowledge for the roles of people who help us and build foundations of respect for those around us."



## An Update by Tamar Toll Action Group

"As our campaign for change is soon to enter its fourth year, I thought it worth repeating our goals," writes Scott Slavin, Vice Chair of Tamar Toll Action Group.

"When signing our constitution in 2022, we set four goals: the abolition of the toll to cross the Tamar; to progress actions for the benefit of bridge and ferry users alike; to push for efficiencies and effectiveness of service, and to work with the crossings management and Joint Committee in the interests of all users.

"In practice, the need for a fifth goal soon became apparent. Improve the levels of understanding of how the crossings - owned jointly by Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council - are managed, and what legislation they are

governed by.

"We have been pressuring MPs in the region to act for change, and asking the public to do likewise. There is clear recognition from all three MPs that this is an important issue, but unclear that they recognise just how badly Southeast Cornwall is impacted.

"Also unclear is what the detail of their "Cheaper Tolls for Locals" policy is. Without a clear understanding of what constitutes a 'local', TAG ownership will proliferate, which risks decreasing the overall income. This plan from our MPs requires a clear understanding of what it aims to deliver, how and when.

"For goal two we have been pushing for change at all levels, and in October 2024 delivered what one Joint Committee member described as "the strongest case he'd ever seen against a toll revision application".

"Sadly, we all know how that ended. So, if the strongest case ever is not enough, then what is?

"For goal three our attention has focused on highlighting the difference between spending that is mandatory (maintenance and legislative requirements), and that which is discretionary.

## Happy 2026 from the Girls at Newell's Travel Saltash

As we step into the new year, the travel industry is entering one of its busiest and most exciting periods. The early months of the year are traditionally prime booking season and many tour operators are currently offering excellent early booking discounts. At Newell's Travel we work with a wide range of tour operators, including TUI, Jet2, EasyJet among many others. Please don't assume that booking locally costs more this is

"TTAG considers that toll users' money should be invested in the core task only of getting people from one side of the river safely and cost effectively.

"And finally, goal four. We developed a good working relationship of mutual respect with the previous Joint Chair, former Cornwall Cllr Martin Worth, but a productive relationship with senior crossings staff was harder to achieve.

"We understand why they would not welcome a level of public scrutiny that they'd not been subjected to before, but these are the times we live in, and the ever-rising cost to local users was always going to result in push back eventually.

"Looking to the future, we have established a good rapport with the two new Joint Chairs, Cllr Andrew Long, (Callington & St Dominic) and Cllr Anne Freeman, (Devonport Ward). At a recent meeting it was agreed that they would meet with us prior to each Joint Committee meeting to discuss any public concerns or issues.

"In parallel we look forward to dialogue with Philip Robinson, the new Chief Officer. He has already reached out to us, and we are encouraged by his seeming recognition of why this issue is a problem for so many, and why change is so badly needed."

absolutely not the case, give us a go! We are always happy to be compared, and our service comes with added peace of mind. From finding the right holiday to checking you in and printing your boarding passes, we take care of all the details so that you can relax.

Looking further ahead, holidays are now available to book for 2027, 2028 and even 2029. Flexible payment plans make those once in a lifetime trip far more manageable and we are also seeing continued popularity in cruises with transport included directly from Saltash - a convenient option that has become very popular.

Our team continues to expand their first hand knowledge. Faye has recently returned from her honeymoon in New Zealand, having explored Noth and South Islands, while Rachel enjoyed a five star river cruise along the

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Rhine and Mosel Rivers last October. If either destination is on your wish list, we would be delighted to share our insights and advise.

We have a busy year planned with a range of customer events, including a Canada day, as well as presentations on Japan, solo holidays and River

cruising. Please get in touch to register your interest or to find out more.

We look forward to welcoming you into the shop soon and helping you plan your next dream trip.

Best Wishes, Rachel, Sarh, Faye and Robyn Newell's Travel Saltash



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## Sue Hooper Charitable Foundation: Celebrating 25 Years of Service (2000-2025)

The Sue Hooper Charitable Foundation proudly celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2025. A joyful milestone in a journey defined by generosity, creativity, and community spirit. Founded in 2000 by Sue Hooper MBE, the Foundation was established to encourage and support young people in the arts, helping them realise their talents and ambitions across music, drama, dance, and creative performance.

Over the past quarter of a century, the Foundation has awarded countless grants and sponsorships, offering opportunities that have transformed lives. Many recipients have gone on to distinguished careers on national and international stages, while others have carried the confidence and discipline gained through the arts into every aspect of their lives.

On behalf of the Trustees, Sue and reflecting on this special anniversary, Sue said:

"It has been very satisfying to see young people flourish

through the arts. Their success, passion, and creativity are the Foundation's greatest reward."

The Foundation's work extends well beyond individual awards. Through concerts, educational projects, and community partnerships, it has enriched cultural life throughout Saltash and parts of Cornwall, demonstrating the trustees' steadfast belief that the arts are vital to community well-being and social cohesion.

None of this would have been possible without the dedicated trustees, volunteers, patrons, sponsors and supporters whose generosity



and faith have sustained the Foundation from its earliest days.

Looking ahead, the Sue Hooper Charitable Foundation remains committed to expanding its outreach, supporting schools and local arts initiatives, and continuing to champion creativity for all. As it celebrates this 25-year milestone, the Foundation does so with gratitude, pride, and a renewed sense of purpose, lighting the way for the next generation of talent.

For more information, visit [www.suehcf.org.uk](http://www.suehcf.org.uk).

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### Jo Beer - Acclaimed and Accomplished Portrait Artist Makes her mark in London

A well-known and much admired Saltash Portrait artist Jo Beer, has been selected for the prestigious 2026 Royal Society of British Artists Annual Exhibition at Mall Galleries London from February 28th until March 7th a significant achievement within the contemporary British art world.

Jo's work is largely self-taught, having trained to A level standard at Saltash Community School some decades ago, under the guidance of her art teacher Vincent Wilson, before developing her practice independently over several years.

Despite being offered a place at Falmouth College in the 1980's to study Fashion Design, circumstances meant she was unable to attend art college.

Since then, her work has evolved at its own pace driven by a strong instinct for character and human presence. "I like to paint people who for one reason makes me feel 'wow' Jo says. "Sometimes people are remarkable and don't even realise it. I hope that by painting them not only will they realise it, but everyone else will too."

Jo's work has been recognised at some of the highest levels of portraiture in the UK. A major career highlight was being selected for the National Portrait Gallery's annual portrait exhibition where her work was displayed for four months as what is widely regarded as the most prestigious portrait exhibition in the country.

Moreover, Jo's other proud exhibitions include 2013 and 2016 Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the year (Cardiff and London). 2014,2016,2018 and 2020 solo exhibitions in the Theatre Royal Plymouth. 2024 Women in Art exhibition at Mall Galleries London. 2025 Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer Portrait Award at the London Portrait Gallery. 2026 Royal Society of British Artists annual exhibition at Mall Galleries London.

Selection for the Royal Society of British Artists annual exhibitions is particularly significant as artists must be selected for four consecutive annual exhibitions before they are eligible to apply for membership, a demanding and highly competitive process.

The portrait shown in this article was chosen for the 2026 exhibition and depicts a young Ukrainian woman who has been living with a Host family in the South Hams since the outbreak of the War in Ukraine. Jo has painted her several times and the work reflects her ongoing interest in people whose quiet resilience and presence leave a lasting impression.

"Getting work seen at this level is extremely difficult" Jo says. "These high-profile exhibitions are essential. They don't always translate into sales, but they matter enormously and I hope that things will continue to build."

More details of Jo and her work can be found on her website [JoBeer@jobeerart](http://JoBeer@jobeerart)

By Sue Hooper



## Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy Inspires Young Minds with Aspiration Day

Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy recently welcomed parents and members of the local Saltash community into school for a highly successful Aspiration Day, designed to raise pupils' ambitions and broaden their understanding of the world of work.

Fourteen volunteers generously gave up their time to talk to pupils about their occupations, sharing personal journeys, experiences and advice. The visitors represented a wide range of careers, including firefighters, police officers, police dog handlers, artists, karate instructors, housing officers, engineers and members of the medical profession, just to name a few.

Throughout the day, pupils took part in interactive talks, demonstrations and question-and-answer sessions, giving them the opportunity to learn first-hand what different jobs involve and the skills and determination needed to succeed. The event aimed to help children see the wide range of possibilities open to them in the future, regardless of their background.

One pupil spoke enthusiastically about the experience, saying:

"My favourite part was meeting the police dog handler. I didn't know there were so many different jobs in the police, and it made me think about what I might like to do when I'm older."

Headteacher Darren Woolner praised both the impact of the day and the continued support of the local community. He said:

"Aspiration Day was incredibly powerful for our pupils. Seeing and speaking to real people from our community about their careers helps children believe that anything is possible. We

are so incredibly grateful to the parents and community members who always support our school so willingly. Their time, enthusiasm and commitment make a real difference to the lives of our children."

Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy places great importance on working closely with families and the wider community to enrich

learning and inspire ambition. Aspiration Day is just one of the many ways the school ensures pupils are encouraged to dream big and develop confidence in their future pathways.

The school looks forward to building on the success of the day and continuing to strengthen its strong community links in the years ahead.



## Pete's Point of View ...

Having lived in Cornwall for several years now, I perceive there has been a change during that time in the way that the Duchy both perceives and promotes itself. More street name signs appear with both English and Cornish lettering, it is increasingly common to exchange greetings in Cornish, having been wished Nadelik Lowen on many occasions back in December, rather than the alternative of Merry Christmas.

It seems that we are shaking off the mistaken image of being the most south-westerly county of England and are now more prepared to challenge that assumption of those across the Tamar. I just love the wayfinder signpost in Fore Street with arms that point to various destinations in Saltash, plus the one arm that roughly aligns with the bridge and points to 'England'. I'm not sure whose idea that was, but full marks from me!

There are some that might point out that I am an 'incomer' not born in Cornwall, although I do have claim to some Cornish ancestry. But I find myself singing 'Trelawny' with increasing conviction, even though I might be a little quieter when we get to the bit about London Wall, having grown up just five minutes walk from there. But I am certainly proud to be part of the local community which I serve in various ways.

It did put a smile on my face when talking a while back to a local resident of many years standing, when I raised the question as to whether Trelawny did live or die, as referred to in the Song of the Western Men. I was delighted to inform the uncertain resident that Bishop Sir Jonathan Trelawny did live, was acquitted and went on to become Bishop of Winchester.

Whilst the future for Cornwall might look promising and the idea of an administrative union with Devon and beyond seemingly abandoned, we must not be complacent, as there are always challenges to the lifestyle and wellbeing of local residents. We risk being sucked in to ageist policies that appear to be promulgated from Westminster, where those of pensionable age are now apparently regarded as less value to society than

## Essa Voices



Councillor Hilary Frank  
c1lr.hilary.frank@cornwall.gov.uk

## Balancing the Books in an Unbalanced System

With a gross budget of around £1.6 billion, Cornwall is one of the largest unitary councils in the country. That scale brings both responsibility and complexity. Careful planning allowed us to produce a balanced draft budget in early December, but balancing the books is never straightforward, and it becomes even harder when national funding systems are working against us.

For many years, councils across the country have argued that the way government funding is allocated does not properly reflect real need or rurality. Those debates were paused during Covid, but taken up again through the new government's review of council funding.

When the initial findings were published last summer, we were cautiously optimistic. The review recognised remoteness as a genuine cost pressure, and early calculations suggested that rural areas like Cornwall would finally see long-standing funding imbalances begin to be addressed.

Since then, though, the picture has changed as the balance of influence has shifted back to urban areas. When the final funding details were published in mid-December, remoteness was recognised in adult social care, but stripped out everywhere else.

For a large, rural area like Cornwall, with rising costs in services like transport and children's social care, the consequences are immediate and serious. Cornwall now faces an additional £13 million funding gap for next year alone, on top of cuts already built into our draft budget. In total, we are now having to make around £67 million of cuts in 2026/27, and more than £155 million over the next three years.

Alongside this sits the long-standing unfairness in



education funding. Cornwall's children are being short-changed by a funding system stuck in the past as we remain one of the lowest-funded areas in the country for mainstream schools. We have comparable levels of need, but the outdated National Funding Formula means our schools receive £5,000 less per pupil than the highest-funded authorities, all of which are urban. That gap forces difficult choices year after year and places real strain on school communities.

To strengthen Cornwall's voice in national funding debates, I've recently joined the Executive Committee of f40, a nationwide cross-party group campaigning for fairness in education funding. One of the group's vice chairs is Jayne Kirkham, a Labour MP in Cornwall, who worked

with the f40 Executive Committee to arrange a drop-in session for MPs at Portcullis House in January. Like many Cornish campaigners before me, I made the journey to London, where I had the opportunity to speak directly with MPs. It was encouraging to hear consistent recognition that the scale of the current funding gap goes well beyond what any fair system should produce.

That recognition matters, but agreement on the scale of the problem is not enough to balance budgets or fund schools. Cornwall Council has done what government asked: we planned carefully, set a balanced budget, and prepared responsibly. National funding systems should support that effort, not work against rural areas like Cornwall.

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## Get Control of Your Finances in 2026: Create a Budget

First of all, happy New Year to all our lovely readers and may I wish you all a prosperous 2026!

Sadly, January can be one of those months when we struggle with our finances. We're living with the aftermath of Christmas, but we have a whole year ahead of us to look forward to – or not in many cases, we'd love to go on holidays and look forward to better times, but we constantly hear talks of an ongoing Cost of Living crisis and we question what we can afford and plan for.

I strongly believe that if you get control of your finances, you can look at your situation both honestly and realistically. You'll achieve a better understanding of what you can afford and what's left for the future. There have been times in my life when our family has been able to afford a nice holiday, but there have also been plenty of years when we've had to tighten our belts and do the best we can with limited finances.

So, where do you start when creating a budget? First, make a list of where your money comes from and how often. Then, work out your monthly income amount.

So, if you're on benefits that are paid 4-weekly, you can simply multiply the 4-weekly amount by 13 and then divide by 12 to get the monthly equivalent. If you have a weekly income, multiply the weekly amount by 52 and then divide by 12. Finally, add up your total income for the month – you shouldn't spend more than this total – it's all that you receive!

Secondly, make a list of needs and wants. Your needs should include all key areas of expenditure; household bills, food and all those items that are essential in life. Your wants are things you could do without but are nice to have. Please be realistic. Some needs and wants are the same for all of us, but others will be very personal. Looking over your bank statement line by line for a month will help make sure you don't overlook regular payments, but think too about cash payments and one-offs – they quickly add up.

Deducting your spending from your income will hopefully leave you with a credit balance still – if not, you will have to reduce your spending in some way. My column in next month's issue will give some tips.

In the meantime, if you are struggling to put a budget together yourself, please email me at [timsquires@capuk.org](mailto:timsquires@capuk.org). I am happy to meet up with you and help.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK charity working with over 1,000 affiliated churches to deliver debt help, budgeting guidance, support to find work, life skills education and more. Visit [capuk.org](http://capuk.org) to find out more.

## Tamar Tolls, Treledan, and Transport Priorities for 2026

The importance of the Tamar Bridge is strongly felt in Saltash. For many in our community, the toll is more than a charge; it feels like an unofficial tax. People cross the bridge for work, healthcare, education and to care for loved ones. My very first action when I was elected as your MP was to write to the Secretary of State for Transport about this very issue. I objected to the last toll rise at the Public Inquiry, and I continue to meet with decision makers in Westminster, Cornwall and Plymouth to call for cheaper tolls for local people.

Currently, the TamarTag scheme offers the most practical way to reduce costs. That's why I was disappointed by the Committee's proposal to raise the monthly admin fee from 80p to £2. These are not optional journeys. They are about accessing basic services.

In December, alongside Luke Pollard MP and Fred Thomas MP, I wrote to the Committee, calling for the decision to be reconsidered. Thanks to public pressure, including from councillors and groups like the Tamar Toll Action Group, an extraordinary meeting was held on 12th January, and I'm pleased that the Committee agreed to keep the fee at 80p and confirmed that a public consultation would be held on future changes.

That consultation is a vital opportunity to ensure local views shape the outcome. I'll continue to call for those views to be properly considered and for a fair deal for South East Cornwall. I want to thank local people who contacted me, the Tamar Crossings and the Joint Committee of Cornwall and Plymouth Councillors for



their engagement with me and other local MPs. There are no easy answers, but I know we have a shared commitment to ensuring the best possible outcome for local residents.

Elsewhere in Saltash, I recently visited the Treledan Housing Development to raise concerns constituents had shared with me, particularly around infrastructure and road safety. I've asked the developers to keep community access and pedestrian safety front of mind, especially for residents in Hatt and Botus Fleming.

I'm encouraged by a planning application in progress for a pedestrian and cycle bridge across the main road between Latchbrook and Treledan, which is a project I'll be following closely.

Nationally, the Government has launched a new Road Safety Strategy aiming to reduce deaths and serious injuries by 65% by 2035. I'll continue looking at where local improvements could be made and if you have suggestions, please get in touch.

I'm grateful for the collaboration I've seen across the constituency from residents, councillors, and campaigners alike. Whether it's tolls, transport, or healthcare, your voices shape the work I do.

Anna Gelderd MP SE Cornwall

### We are Recruiting for our Delivery Team - Do you Like to Walk?

Every month over the last thirty three years (including through Covid lockdown the Saltash and District Observer has been welcomed as it drops through the letter boxes throughout the town and beyond, bringing with it its unique blend of truly local news and promotion of local businesses.

This would not be possible without our loyal and well appreciated dedicated delivery team, many of whom have been with us over most of these 33 years, some for all of them.

However, some of the team need to move on when school leavers move away for further education, leaving a gap which we seek to fill.

If you would like to spend a few hours each month outside enjoying healthy exercise while bringing a much welcomed and appreciated truly local newspaper to each door, there is room in the team for you. Please contact Editor Mary on details below.

To Deliver Monthly "The Saltash Observer" In the Saltash Area Call Mary Crawford on M: 07971 484872 Or email details to: [maryecrawford@hotmail.com](mailto:maryecrawford@hotmail.com)

If you are very enthusiastic & enjoy getting your daily exercise, it's healthy as well as rewarding... call me!

## Sustainable Saltash

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

Every year, the winter solstice passes and my spirits begin to rise at the thought of lengthening days and warmer weather. I itch to get out in the garden and start browsing seeds and plants in readiness. The last few years have definitely seen my enthusiasm tempered by a slight apprehension.

The near 40-degree heat of a couple of years ago was no fun at all in this house. Perched on a hill with half the windows facing east, we roasted for several weeks. Sleep was aspirational, nerves frayed and there was a general feeling of claustrophobia. The latter I think was a consequence of the inescapability of heat. The only place under 28 degrees was the cupboard under the stairs; on one occasion I did go and sit there.

A study by the Royal Meteorological Society last year concluded that we are now 20 times more likely to experience such heat than we were in the 1960s, making the probability of another record summer in the coming decade

around 50%. It will routinely be slightly hotter than before.

Some families in the East of the country are fitting air conditioners. Understandable perhaps- it is significantly hotter on that side of the country. Hugely expensive to install and run, these units are problematic in terms of emissions. There is also the issue of comfort- as anyone who has been dried out in a hotel with windows that won't open will recognise. We are perhaps not ready for that here and I pray we never will be.

How best to manage in future without breaking the bank? I have some ideas I'll try. The first is keeping heat out. I think most of us now know that shutting windows is advised in the hottest part of the day, but even with curtains closed the heat pours in. In warmer climates people use external shutters. I am experimenting with heat reflective suction cup shades on the hot side of the house. These can be fitted outside where accessible, or inside. Outside is preferable as it

keeps the heat from reaching the room.

Further into the future, we are considering a small pergola against the back of the house. It has been shown that shading from foliage is superior to shading from engineered materials. This is the reason for the urban heat islands that plague some US cities. Tree-lined avenues in wealthy areas are vastly cooler than their concrete counterparts. Plants around a door, a well-placed tree of an appropriate species or climbers such as honeysuckle, clematis and hardenbergia will do the same job. Such climbing plants don't cling by themselves, making them easier to manage.

If you want to know more, Shade the UK and the British Red Cross have a fantastic pamphlet- 'Overheating Adaptation Guide for Homes'. It is available online and lists dozens of solutions, breaking them into short, medium and long term measures. If you have had success in keeping cool, particularly on a budget, get in touch. **Marc Bramham**

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](mailto:sustainable.saltash@protonmail.com)

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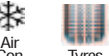
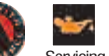
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## Tamar Reflections

### The Saltash Cornish Cross

(A project conceived over 25 years ago)

At the eastern end of the Saltash Tamar Bridge, within the upper gardens of the beautifully regenerated Elwell Woods, stands a striking monument that serves as the gateway to Cornwall: the Cornish Cross. Rising twenty metres into the sky above the treeline, this aquamarine sculpture has become a symbol of Cornish pride, heritage and community determination.

#### Origins of a Millennium Dream

The story of the Cornish Cross began in the late 1990s, when I was Mayor of Saltash. In 1997, when I initiated the Saltash 1998/99/2000 Committee of 30 personnel from local organisations and all walks of life, to stage a trilogy of projects designed to mark three significant occasions: the Tall Ships Race in West Cornwall in 1998, the Total Eclipse in



1999, and the Millennium in 2000; from there the committee organised over 50 events, festivals and projects.

It was at one of our early meetings that the idea for a Cornish Cross emerged.

Representatives from Saltash Churches Together, voiced through Gordon Banks and the late Brian Bliss, proposed that our Millennium project should take the form of a Cornish Cross somewhere in the town. The committee embraced the



The actual unveiling of the cross May 10th 2013 - Richard and Judy and the Mayor and Mayoress of Saltash - the late Martin Gee and Mrs Maggie Gee

idea enthusiastically, and the late Saltash Town Councillor Pip Miller was appointed to lead the project.

What followed was three years of dedicated fundraising and a worldwide design competition. The entries were exhibited at various venues for public consultation—a lengthy process that yielded dozens of impressive submissions. From eighty-three entrants around the world, Devon-based sculptor Simon Thomas emerged as the winner with his striking modernistic design.

The public were also invited to suggest suitable sites around Saltash. After careful consideration, the committee selected the A38 roundabout at Carkeel and applied for planning permission. Sadly, after a long and laborious process, strong objections from Cornwall and National Highways led to the application being refused. With planning permission denied, the pledged funding fell away, and by early 2000 the project was reluctantly put on hold.

#### A Project Reborn

Ten years later, the dream was revived. Led by the late Saltash Town Councillor Joe Ellison and ably assisted by the late Liam Bradley, our Millennium project found new life in late 2010. Adopted and managed by the Saltash Waterside Residents' Association, the

revitalised endeavour would ultimately cost just over £650,000.

Funding came from the Community Spaces Lottery programme as a flagship grant, with supplementary Community Spaces develop-

classic Second World War aircraft including Spitfires, Hurricanes and Mustangs. The construction took place in a disused Tornado hangar.

The base of the Cross, which conceals structural piling and a stainless steel bracket and bolt system, is built in the form of a traditional Cornish stone hedge—a fitting foundation that connects this contemporary structure to Cornwall's ancient landscape.

Getting the Cross to its final location proved an adventure in itself. Because the structure was too long to navigate the twisting A38 route through the Glynn Valley, it travelled from St Mawgan via an indirect route through Exeter. In a spectacular overnight operation on 21st April 2013, two giant cranes erected the Cross after the last bus had crossed the Tamar Bridge, minimising traffic disruption.

#### A Symbol for Cornwall

Cornwall is extraordinarily rich in Celtic and Cornish crosses. According to the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, more than four hundred complete Celtic stone crosses stand in the county. Yet the Saltash Cornish Cross is unique—different from any other in Cornwall.

The Cross is not intended to represent Christianity alone, but rather to symbolise Cornwall's heritage on many levels. For sculptor Simon Thomas, it is also an exploration of the dynamic and mysterious relationship between spirit and matter—a subject close to his heart throughout his artistic career.

The giant Cross was officially unveiled by television personalities Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan, on May 10th, 2013. The new funding had made possible not only the sculpture but also the regeneration of the two-acre Elwell Woods where it now stands. It is a public artwork of national significance.

As we cross the Tamar Bridge, above the meandering River Tamar into Saltash today you will see it above the trees: an impressive sculpture standing tall, vibrant and welcoming. The Cornish Cross represents a forward-looking,

ment awards, grants and match funding from Cornwall Council and Saltash Town Council, and generous financial assistance from the Duchy of Cornwall.

Simon Thomas's original award-winning design was readopted. His maquette Cornish Cross had remained at the town's Guildhall throughout those intervening years—a germ of an idea waiting to take flight.

#### Engineering Marvel

The Cornish Cross is a remarkable feat of modern engineering. Standing twenty metres (sixty-six feet) high yet weighing less than three tonnes, it is constructed entirely from lightweight space-age composite materials. The main structural longitudinal spars are carbon fibre, similar to those used in an Airbus A380 wing. The blockwork of the main shaft is glass fibre, treated with copper powder in the resin to give the appearance and weathering characteristics of copper—designed to develop a beautiful verdigris (a bright bluish green patina) over time.

The Cross was built using advanced resin infusion technology at RAF St Mawgan (now Newquay Airport) by Gate Guards Ltd, a company better known for building full-size replicas of

## Local Short Mat Bowls Teams Rally for The Core, Saltash in Fundraising Event



A successful community short mat bowls event has raised £200 for The Core, thanks to the efforts of teams and organisers from across the area.

Teams travelled from Dobwalls, Callington, St Newlyn East, Torpoint and Luxulyan to take part in what organiser Ian Crossett

described as a "great day," with strong competition and a positive atmosphere throughout.

After a closely fought contest, the team from Callington emerged as the eventual winners, taking top honours ahead of stiff opposition from the other participating sides.

The event not only show-

cased local short mat bowls talent and teamwork but also highlighted the strength of community support for charitable causes. Funds raised will go directly to The Core, supporting its ongoing work.

Organisers thanked all teams, supporters and volunteers for contributing to the success of the day

spirited county, proud of its heritage and open to its future. It stands as a beacon of pride and proof of the willingness and determination of local people, past and present, to create something lasting. This remarkable monument, celebrating the Millennium at last, shines a light on Cornwall's past, present and future for all who view it.

Entry into the Cornish Cross site is via the top of Elwell

Road - abutting the 335 (Saltash) Air Cadets Centre.

Saltash Town Council is now the guardian of the Cornish Cross, preserving it on behalf of our local

community and visitors alike. Sue Hooper MBE Former Mayor of Saltash and Freeman of the town  
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## Just Thinking Aloud ...

Three cheers for Piglets! Yes, I know Christmas is behind us, and some will be heaving a sigh of relief, but I just wanted to acknowledge the hard work put in by all manner of folk to make it joyful. Special thanks from me to Mrs Wellington, whose shop window stands out for reminding us every December of what we really should be celebrating!

I note also from our winter Observer the contributions

over many years of a couple of remarkable women to the lives of children at Brunel School (formerly Saltash Juniors). I wish to add two more, both recently gone to their eternal rest. Dot Spurling and Ursula Davey will be remembered by several generations of Saltash youth for their selfless input to the work of youth organisations. As a parent the Duke of Edinburgh Award system springs to my mind. I have children who still recall them with gratitude and affection.

Back to our main street: Saltash Heritage will relocate

from 17 Lower Fore St to 54 Fore St at some point this year. As a former chairperson of said body I look forward keenly to that. I remain a member and commend it to anyone who has yet to experience its contribution to the life of fair Esse. Don't wait, check them out at no.17 while they are still there. Lizzy Sharpe-Asprey is the secretary (tel: 847800). I've just enjoyed the 93rd edition of its Journal, which includes a fascinating article on the life and times of Betty Pearce, scribed by Sue Hooper.

A few issues ago I looked into my crystal ball to forecast what might happen to the leadership of the party which (for the time being) governs us. I think I looked at the possibility of Keir being supplanted in May by Lucy. Well, one never knows. That said, I have been impressed recently by the media inputs of a certain Pat McFadden. He just seems to me to be a quietly sensible sort of socialist minister. In another issue, I cast doubt on the ability of Anna Gelderd to retain her seat whenever the general election comes. I still

hold to that, but Ms Gelderd impresses me more than somewhat by her clearly honest and thoughtful commitment to the wellbeing of her constituents. I wish her well in whatever her future brings.

Interest in local and national politics is one of my things. On the street, in my club (the Essa if you really want to know), coming in or out of church, or just chattering on WhatsApp en famille – it doesn't take too much for me to start a discussion. But I do have my limits, dear reader. For instance, I explode instantly at the mere mention of that Trump person, and remaining calm about him in debate is currently beyond me!

**Thought for the month: Our best friends don't just seek the path to success for themselves – they pave it and illuminate it for us.**

Bob Munro

## Letter to the Editor ...

Dear Mary,

Thank you very much for publishing my letter in the previous edition regarding private parking fines at Carkeel.

I am pleased to share some positive news: my parking fine has now been withdrawn.

After my initial appeal was rejected by UK Parking Control Ltd, I escalated the matter to POPLA, the independent adjudicator. I was determined to challenge what I believed to be an entirely unfair charge – a "parking" fine issued while I was sitting in my car for just 2 minutes and 16 seconds, waiting for a space to become available. I was adamant that I would not pay anything, as I had done nothing wrong.

To support my appeal, I gathered extensive evidence, including video footage and

### ADVANCE WARNING

Roads closed for:  
Saltash May Fair 2026  
& Saltash Half Marathon 2026

<b>SAT 2ND MAY 2026</b>	<b>06:30 - 19:00</b>
A39 Sliproad (south lane of south offslip) Fore Street (full length) Wesley Road (full length)	
Victoria Road (King Edward Road TO Wesley Road) - Eastbound only Belie Vue Road (Car Park junction TO Fore Street) King Edward Road (Essa Road TO Victoria Road) - Northbound only	
<b>SAT 2ND MAY 2026</b>	<b>10:00 - 10:15</b>
Callington Road (Fore Street Roundabout) St Stephens Road (Fore Street Roundabout) King Edward Road (Fore Street Roundabout)	
SUN 3RD MAY 2026	
For two 15 minute periods between <b>09:20 - 10:45</b>	
Callington Road (Church Road TO Glebe Avenue)	

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### Parking Restrictions

<b>SAT 2ND MAY 2026</b>	<b>06:30 - 19:00</b>
St Stephens Road (Essa Road TO Fore Street) King Edward Road (Wesley Lane TO Fore Street) Callington Road (Fore Street TO Glebe Avenue) Glebe Avenue (Callington Road TO North Road) Longstone Car Park is the only carpark affected.	
<b>SUN 3RD MAY 2026</b>	<b>09:30 - 13:00</b>
Callington Road (Glebe Avenue TO Plougastel Drive)	

photographs of the car park and its excessively high signage, a McDonald's receipt showing the time of my purchase, a witness statement from a friend I met inside McDonald's, and relevant case law and legal definitions of what constitutes "parking." I also made clear my intention to request all data held about my vehicle under the Data Protection Act 2018, as UK Parking Control had failed to provide the requested photographs, disclosing only a single image that did not demonstrate that my vehicle had been parked in the roadway.

I remain extremely angry that I was forced to invest so much time and effort to have this charge overturned. The POPLA website was wholly

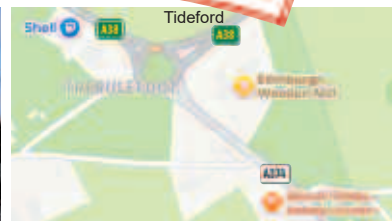
inadequate and it took hours to upload my evidence. Additionally, I received threatening messages from the parking company suggesting that my licence could be revoked and that the matter could affect my credit rating.

I cannot help but wonder how many others in our community have been pressured into paying similar unfair fines simply to avoid the anxiety and hassle. These companies rely on fear to make money from innocent people. It is time we stood together and asked whether retailers and landowners are truly aware of how their customers are being treated.

Yours sincerely,  
Natalie Horner

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