

25/04/2025

Hello, North Cornwall! With the Cornwall Council local elections coming up this week (polling day Thursday 1st May!), I couldn't be prouder of the outstanding Liberal Democrat candidates we have standing right across North Cornwall. Across the Duchy, our team of candidates is made up of real community champions - the kind of people who knock on doors day-in, day-out, listen carefully to constituents, and are ready to get things done. After years of Tory mismanagement at County Hall, with millions of public funds wasted and controversy after controversy, we finally have a real chance for real change.

On 1st May - this coming Thursday - we can begin to clean up the mess and start building a Cornwall that puts residents first. So many important issues have been raised with me and with our candidates, from the potential closure of Boscastle's toilets, to developers building on public footpaths in Wadebridge and Polzeath, among many others. If elected, I know our candidates will work very hard to see real progress on these fronts.

And on that note, one of the biggest issues raised with me time and time again on the doorstep - and one we can make real progress with - is the housing crisis. Here in Cornwall, we currently have more than 22,000 families on the housing wait list, while at the same time, we have 16,000 second homes, many of which sit empty for much of the year. This growing inequality is exactly why I entered politics as a teenager, and now as North Cornwall's MP, I've been working hard to make change happen. My proposed 'AirBnB Bill' would close the loophole that allows second homeowners here in Cornwall to avoid paying council tax altogether, by pretending their properties are holiday lets. It's about time we restore some fairness to the system, and give young local families a fighting chance to get onto the housing ladder and be able to stay in the same communities they grew up in.

This week I've also submitted a number of official Written Parliamentary Questions (WPs) to Ministers, specifically on the state of affordable and social housing in rural areas like North Cornwall, and on the ongoing delays to much-needed upgrades at North Devon District Hospital. That hospital serves a vast region that includes parts of North Cornwall up in areas like Bude, and with critical care and operating theatre facilities now nearing the end of their operational life, this delay is unacceptable. We could be looking at delays of up to 15 years before work even gets started. As such, I was very proud to stand with my Devon Lib Dem colleagues Ian Roome MP and Rachel Gilmour MP in demanding urgent action NOW for our communities - who deserve healthcare facilities that are fit for purpose.

I've also continued to keep the pressure on South West Water this week, whose record of sewage dumping remains nothing short of an absolute disgrace. Cornwall has recently had 36 beaches with active sewage discharges on the same day, and while bills continue to soar, the service standards continue to nosedive. I'll be submitting my own response to DEFRA's call for evidence, and I urge everyone else to do the same.

On a lighter note, a big congratulations to Steve Heard Quality Butchers in Camelford, who were recently crowned South West Butcher Champion. It's brilliant to see our local businesses getting the recognition they deserve, and I'd like to take the time to congratulate the entire team on for their hard work and quality, local produce.

Finally, I'd like to quickly remind everyone to vote in the local elections on Thursday, and to make sure you bring photo ID with you. The future of Cornwall is in your hands!

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