


Cornish Nation

No. 83 September 2020

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MK opposes planning changes

Looking back at MK
election campaigns

Tributes to Woody Wood
and Craig Weatherhill

Cornish news and views

Planning White Paper will be a disaster for Cornwall

The image on the front cover of this edition of *Cornish Nation* is the so-called “eco-town” or “garden village,” which is being built near Penwithick.

In so many ways, this development represents what is wrong with the present planning system. It was first imposed on Cornwall by a Labour Government, while subsequent Coalition and Conservative administrations continued to push the scheme forward – ignoring concerted opposition from MK and hundreds of local residents.



The “eco-town” could also be a precursor of things to come with the publication of the Government’s White Paper, which seeks to further dismantle the planning system.

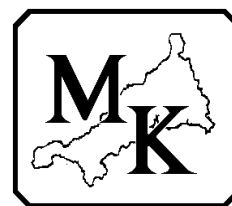
The proposed planning changes do not make any sense and they have certainly not been influenced by councils, elected members and local communities.

The changes have actually been founded on a report titled “Rethinking the Planning System for the 21st Century” from a secretive and unaccountable thinktank called Policy Exchange

It proposed that the “planning system should not try to systematically control” what happens on “individual land plots,” and criticized Councils for working to projections of “need” for housing and commercial land. They described such projections to be fallacious, and argued that there should be no cap on the amount of development happening.

In one section, headlined “streamlining the role of local politicians,” they even argued that councillors should agree a set of local planning rules, but should have “no say over deciding applications for new developments.” They want planning to be a “purely administrative exercise” for “checking the proposal conforms to local rules.”

It is important that we do not stand by and let such changes become a reality.



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MPs fail to oppose “Devonwall”

Cornish Nation reports on how MPs and peers have been debating the Parliamentary Boundaries Bill

On 19th May 2020, the UK Government brought forward a new Parliamentary Constituencies Bill in the House of Commons, which seeks to set regulations for future reviews into the boundaries of Westminster seats. It maintains the number of MPs at 650 and specifies that the electorates for individual constituencies must be within 5% of the average seat size – unless an area is named as an exception in the legislation. It also states that fresh reviews should take place at least once a decade.

The territorial integrity of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are protected in the Bill, but this is not the case for Cornwall and the possibility of a cross-Tamar “Devonwall” constituency has not been ruled out.

Research by Mebyon Kernow shows that the next review, anticipated to commence in 2021 or 2022, will almost certainly come to the conclusion that Cornwall should continue to have six constituencies wholly within its boundaries (including the Isles of Scilly).

But projections show that this might not be the case in the future. Statistics from the Office of National Statistics state that Cornwall’s population / electorate is anticipated to rise much faster than that of the United Kingdom as a whole. And because the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill will only allow a 5% divergence from the average constituency size – it means that by 2030 it could be statistically impossible to Keep Cornwall Whole.

One Cornish MP spoke in the debate. She made a number of key points ... but it was all tokenistic, because Cornwall’s MPs had declined to attempt to actually change the legislation!

MK submitted evidence to the Public Bill Committee and formally requested that MPs ensure the Cornish border – in existence for more than one thousand years – be respected in all future boundary reviews so that Cornwall’s territoriality is not breached.

The Committee considered the Bill between 23rd and 30th June and one committee member, Plaid Cymru’s Ben Lake, was particularly supportive of the representations from Cornwall. The key debate in the House of Commons was the Report Stage / Third Reading, which took place on 14th July.

Campaigners were anticipating that Cornwall’s six members of the Westminster Parliament would take the opportunity to table an amendment to safeguard Cornwall’s territorial integrity and were dumbfounded when they failed to do this. One Cornish MP, Cheryl Mackrory (see below), spoke in the debate.

She made a number of key points, such as the undesirability of a “Devonwall” seat and that the Bill failed to comply with the Framework for the Protection of National Minorities. But it was all tokenistic, because Cornwall’s MPs had declined to attempt to actually change the legislation!

The Bill then moved to the House of Lords and Mebyon Kernow’s leadership team stepped up its lobbying of senior peers in the second chamber. At the second reading of the Bill on 27th July, the former Liberal Democrat MP for North Cornwall, Paul Tyler, the former Conservative Minister for Faith and Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Wales, Nick Bourne, and former Plaid Cymru MP, Dafydd Wigley, all spoke up for Cornwall (via video conferencing links).

Lord Tyler, spoke of “the historic boundary which gives unrivalled integrity to Cornwall” adding that “the river Tamar provides a much better boundary with England than either Wales or Scotland enjoys ...”

He later tabled a “probing” amendment to the Committee Stage to ensure that issues around Cornwall’s territoriality would be considered. It was also sponsored by Lord Bourne, Lord Teverson and Baroness Jolly, and was debated on Tuesday 15th September.

At this time, Lord Bourne spoke about how the Tamar was an “effective natural boundary” and added that Cornwall “has its own cultural attributes, its own language, its own national minority, and I think there is a very powerful compelling case that we should act differently in relation to Cornwall.” He also asked that the Minister protect “in legislation the unity of Cornwall.”

As *Cornish Nation* went to press, campaigners were informed that an amendment to safeguard Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as an electoral area had been tabled for the next phase of deliberations in the House of Lords, known as the Report Stage.



MK condemns planning changes

Outrage as UK Government announces proposal to build more than 81,000 housing units in Cornwall over the next twenty years

The publication of the Government's "Planning for the Future" White Paper – which would dismantle the existing planning system and hand even more power over to developers – was met with widespread condemnation in Cornwall.

The document makes numerous claims. It talks about dealing with climate change, supporting "sustainable, beautiful, safe and useful development" and giving communities a "greater say over what gets built" in their areas. But the reality is very, very different.

The White Paper (and an associated set of "technical changes") is proposing a top-down "standard method for establishing housing requirement figures," which would be imposed on councils. Calculations already undertaken show that Cornwall would be expected to accommodate 4,054 new properties each and every year.

This means that the unitary authority's next Local Plan would have to include a ridiculous target of 81,000 housing units over the next two decades – irrespective of what councillors and residents might think is appropriate for Cornwall. This would be significantly up from the existing, already excessive, housing target of 52,500.

The adverse impact of such unsustainable high levels of growth on Cornwall's environment and public services cannot be overstated.

Proposals in the White Paper would further centralise the planning process in Whitehall and take more decision-making powers away from councils. It states that key "development management" policies will be "established at national scale" and the policy development capabilities of local authorities will therefore be greatly reduced.

Many communities have worked hard to produce Neighbourhood Plans, which will shamefully be left worthless by these planning changes.

The Government plans to bring forward zoning. All land will have to be placed in one of three categories in new Local Plans. These are described as "growth areas suitable for substantial development, renewal areas

suitable for development, and areas that are protected." The White Paper adds that growth areas, once identified, "would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development" while "automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types" in other areas suitable for building."

Ministers also want to extend "permission in principle" to large housing proposals, which would allow developers to bypass meaningful democratic scrutiny. They have even brought forward proposals to allow developers to build less affordable housing.

Mebyon Kernow leader Cllr Dick Cole co-authored a motion to September's meeting of Cornwall Council, which set out far-reaching objections to the planning changes. A total of 63 members supported the motion, which was opposed by just three Conservative councillors. There were also thirty abstentions – all Tory.

In his opening remarks in the debate, Cllr Cole said: "Cornwall is a very special place. And as elected councillors on the unitary authority, we must see ourselves as custodians of Cornwall.

"We have a duty to do our very best for the people and the communities of our historic land. For this, we need a fair and balanced planning system that protects the Cornish countryside, while allowing appropriate developments to go forward. But the proposed planning changes in the White Paper, and the associated consultation document on more immediate changes, if implemented, would be a disaster for Cornwall."

In addition to the Planning White Paper, the Government has already brought in damaging alterations to its "permitted development rights."

PDRs set out what developments can be carried out without the need for planning permission and the new "rights" will allow the construction of additional storeys on existing residential or commercial premises, the demolition and re-development of freestanding blocks of flats, and the conversion of commercial buildings into residential units. In late September, MPs debated three motions to stop these retrograde changes but, sadly, the votes were all lost and the PDRs will continue to stay in force.



An Gwir rag Annedh

Kaskyrghoryon a Gembra, Alban, Iwerdhon, Manow ha Kernow a dheuth warbarth rag vatalyas erbyn an goredhom

Ha'n Governans Ruwvaneth Unys ow tri war-rag moy chanjow kiskus dhe'n kevreyth towlennans yn Kernow, kaskyrghoryon an broyow Keltek a dheuth war-barth dhe dhemondya gwrians rag dhigelmi an kevreyth towlennans terrys ha'n marghas anedhyans diweythresel.

An Muvyans Yeth Kembrek, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, re lonchys Chartour Anedhyans henwys "Yr Hawl I Gartref" po "An Gwir rag Annedh." I a gows orth an goredhom anedhyans neb a wra kisyans meur dhe randiryow le may kewsis yethow Keltek hag an kowethas re wrug ynweth gwydheo lies-yethek gans tus strik a-dhyworth Kernow, Alban, Iwerdhon ha Manow. Y'ga mysk yma kevrow a-dhyworth Loveday Jenkin, konselores Mebyon Kernow.

An Chartour a wovyn orth tus politek ha governansow dhe:

- gorra lett an gansran a jiow nessa ha havosow y'n kemeneth;
- chanjya deskriptions annedhans affordyadow ha menystra prisyow gobrena rag y vos affordyadow a bobel orth gober leel;
- mos pella gans rewlys ha gorra toll kessydha war chioh usys yn brassa ran po yn tien rag AirBnB;
- displegya towlen stratejek adro annedhans ha tornyaseth yn leow powek dhe vos konter an feth bos lies chi kemmeres mes an kreun annedhans leel;
- digresenni gallosow towlennans, yn aga mysk settya amkanow annedhans, dhe'n nivel leel an moyha wiw, ha gul arghadow towlennans yeth;
- degea pub gwander po tardhell y'n lagha neb a as tollow dhe vos gohelys;
- laghys-kerthow rag rewlya prisyow, skodhyansow komparek rag kowsoryon yethow minoritya dhe driga hwath yn aga kemenethow ha dhe surhe an devnydh a jiow gwag hag an huni gwrys seulabrys kyns bos displegyansow nowydh gwrys;
- daskor keun annedhans kowethasel a berghenogeth poblek, daskor keun annedhans heb devnydh a berghenogeth poblek, hag oll "dreheviansow nowydh" dhe gompredya rann veur a berghenogeth poblek;

- toll war budh perghenogyon dhe gevarghewi yn chioh gwag ha chioh nessa dh'aga dehvel a dhevnydh kemenethow ha'n re a bew ha gweyth ynnu;
- kentrynow dhe nowydhhe ha / po drehevi annedhans sostenadow yn rann daffar ha fordh drehevians;
- spalyow rag skonya gobrena kerthow orth eseli kemenethow anlesek kepar ha tremenysi po fowesigyon.



While the United Kingdom Government is bringing forward further damaging changes to the planning system in Cornwall, campaigners in the Celtic nations have come together to demand action to tackle the already broken planning system and dysfunctional housing market.

The Welsh Language Movement, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, has launched a Housing Charter titled "Yr Hawl I Gartref" or "The Right to a Home." It addresses the housing crisis that is doing great damage to Celtic language-speaking areas and the organisation has also produced a short multi-lingual video with activists from Cornwall, Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man. It includes a contribution

in Cornish from Mebyon Kernow councillor Loveday Jenkin.

The Charter demands that politicians and governments:

- cap the percentage of second or holiday homes within a community;
- change the definition of affordable housing and manage rent prices so that they are affordable to people on local wages;
- further regulate and introduce a punitive tax on the use of houses primarily or exclusively for AirBnB;
- develop a strategic plan for housing and tourism in rural areas to counter the fact that many houses have been taken out of the locally available housing stock;
- devolve planning powers, including setting housing targets, to the most appropriate local level, and require that language planning is mandatory;
- close any weaknesses or loopholes in the law that allow taxes to be avoided;
- introduce property legislation to control prices, specific supports for minority language speakers to remain in their communities and to ensure the use of empty and existing housing before new development is undertaken;
- return social housing stock to public ownership, return underused stock to public ownership, and all "new builds" to include a major element of public ownership;
- tax landlords' profits to invest in bringing empty and second homes back into use for communities and those who live and work in them;
- provide incentives to renovate and / or build sustainable housing in terms of material and method of construction;
- introduce penalties for refusal to let property to members of disadvantaged communities such as travellers or refugees.

We would like to thank Chris Bowden, Cllr Michael Bunney, Cllr Dick Cole, the House of Commons, Ann Reynolds and Tom Tremewan for photographs used in this magazine.

Election memories

As the Party for Cornwall looks ahead to next year's elections to the unitary authority, Cornish Nation reviews some of MK past campaigns

When did MK achieve its highest vote?

Unsurprisingly, MK's highest votes came in elections to the European Parliament.

No. 1 2009 European elections

In this year, Mebyon Kernow put forward a list of six candidates for the multi-member constituency covering Cornwall, SW England and Gibraltar. The candidates were **Dick Cole, Conan Jenkin, Loveday Jenkin, Simon Reed, Glenn Renshaw** and **Joanie Willett**. In total, 14,922 people voted for MK, of which 11,534 were Cornish residents.

No. 2 1979 European elections

Richard Jenkin (pictured below), who was MK Chairman between 1973 and 1983, contested the Cornwall and Plymouth seat in the first elections to the European Parliament. He secured 10,205 votes.



No. 3 1989 European elections

Colin Lawry, who was a councillor on both Penwith District Council and Cornwall County Council, stood in the Cornwall and Plymouth seat in 1989. He managed 4,224 votes.

Who has contested the most elections at principal council level and above?

Five MK members have fought ten or more such elections as official party candidates.

Joint no. 1 Dick Cole & Loveday Jenkin

Sitting Cornwall Councillors Dick and Loveday have both contested 14 elections.

Dick headed Mebyon Kernow's list in the 2009 European poll and has contested Westminster seats on four occasions (North Cornwall in 2005 and St Austell & Newquay in 2010, 2015 and 2019). He first fought a council seat in 1993 and was elected onto Restormel Borough Council in 1999. After the abolition of Restormel in 2009, he was elected on to the new unitary authority. Loveday stood in the 1994 Euro-elections, was part of the list for the 2009 Euros, and contested the Camborne & Redruth Westminster seat in 2010 and 2015. She has been a council candidate ten times. She served on Kerrier District Council between 1995 and 2009, and Cornwall Council since 2011. She continues to represent the parishes of Crowan and Wendron.

No. 3 Colin Lawry

Colin first stood for election in 1981 at the tender age of 21, when he came second in a three-way fight for a Penzance seat on Cornwall County Council. In 1982, he was elected onto Penwith District Council and in 1985 he made it onto Cornwall County Council. He served on Penwith for 20 years and the County Council for 16. All in all, he fought 12 council elections and a European parliamentary election in 1989.

No. 4 Pedyr Prior

Between 1977 and 1989, Pedyr stood in ten council elections in Porthleven and St Ives for seats on Cornwall County Council, Kerrier District Council and Penwith District Council. He was also Mebyon Kernow's nominee in the 1983 General Election in the St Ives constituency. From the 1990s onwards, he was active in the Labour Party and contested a number of elections for them as well.

No. 5 Roger Holmes

Roger fought his first election as a 22-year-old in 1968, when he was elected to Liskeard Rural District Council. He fought a total of eight council elections for MK and served on Caradon District Council between 1973 and 1983. He stood in the South East Cornwall seat in the 1979 and 2010 General Elections. Roger also fought a number of council elections as an independent candidate, plus

one for the breakaway Cornish National Party in 1970.

Who has secured the most votes in a council election?

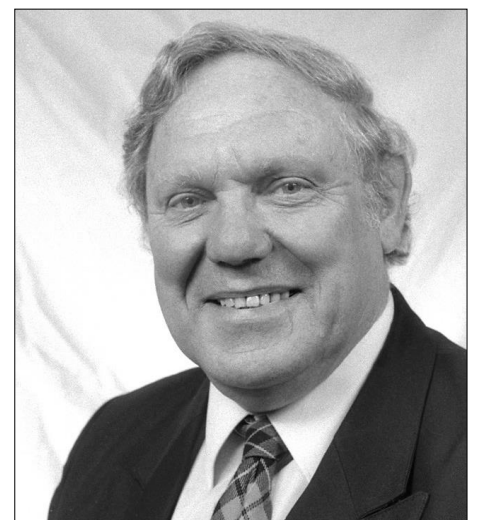
Mebyon Kernow's two highest votes in council elections were achieved when the contests took place on the same day as a General Election, which significantly increased the number people participating in the democratic process.

No. 1 Colin Lawry

Defending his Penzance South seat on Cornwall County Council in 1997, Colin achieved 2,606 votes ahead of his Conservative opponent on 1,088.

No. 2 John Bolitho

Standing in the two-seat division of Bude on Cornwall County Council in 2005, John (pictured below) managed 2,329 votes. In spite of this strong showing, John was not elected and came third out of the four candidates. He did however serve on North Cornwall District Council between 1991 and 1995, and between 1999 and 2005.



No. 3 Colin Lawry

The second time that Colin successfully defended his Penzance South seat on Cornwall County Council was in 1993. He achieved 1,548 votes ahead of the Conservative candidate on 1,034.

Who has been MK's most successful candidate?

No. 1 Colin Lawry

The Party for Cornwall's most successful candidate is undoubtedly Colin Lawry (pictured below), who was an elected Mebyon Kernow councillor between 1982 and 2002. He won nine of his 12 local government contests – a success rate of 75%.



Who achieved the highest vote share in an election?

Three times in council elections, Mebyon Kernow candidates have polled over 80% of the vote.

No. 1 Dick Cole

In 2013, defending his Cornwall Council seat, which covered his home parish of St Enoder, Dick secured 87% over a single independent candidate.

No. 2 Dick Cole

Dick again retained his seat against Conservative and Liberal Democrat opponents in 2017. This time he managed 83%.

No. 3 Colin Lawry

Having been a councillor for 12 years, Colin secured 81% of the vote when he successfully defended his Penzance Central seat on Penwith District Council seat in 1994 against a single Conservative opponent.

In which years did MK put forward the most local council candidates?

No. 1 2009

In this year, Mebyon Kernow nominated 33 candidates in the first elections to the new unitary authority. Three were successful.

Joint no. 2 1999 and 2013

In 1999, MK put forward 24 candidates to the six district councils. Three were successful. In that year, members also fought two Cornwall County Council by-elections. In the second set of elections to Cornwall Council in 2013, there were 26 candidates. Four were successful.

No. 4 2003

A total of 25 candidates stood in the 2003 round of district council elections. Five were successful.

No. 5 2007

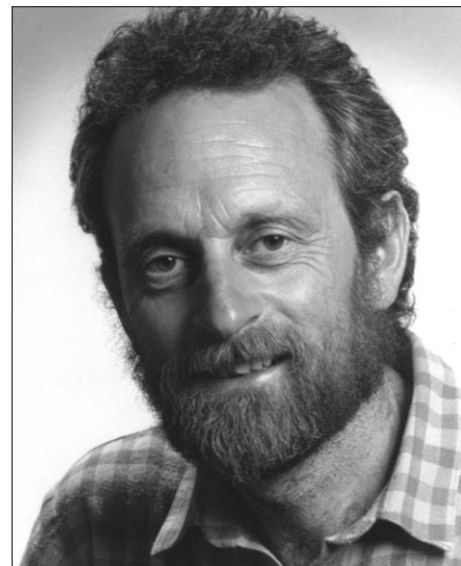
A total of 24 candidates were nominated in the final round of district council elections. It was MK's most successful election. Seven MK members were elected though sadly they were abolished when the unitary authority was imposed on Cornwall two years later.

Has Mebyon Kernow won any principal council by-elections?

MK has won four by-elections to secure seats on principal authorities.

No. 1 Colin Murley

Colin won Mebyon Kernow's first seat on Cornwall County Council in 1967. He won the St Day & Lanner division by a margin of only three votes – 420 votes to the 417 of the sitting independent.



No. 2 Tom Tremewan

In 1994, Tom (pictured above) outpolled Conservative and Liberal Democrat opponents to win his home seat of Perranporth on Carrick District Council. Re-elected with an increased vote in the following year, he served five years on the authority before standing down undefeated in 1999.

No. 3 Jane Acton

Jane won the Porthleven & Sithney seat on Kerrier District Council in 2004, outpolling Conservative, Independent, Liberal Democrat and UKIP opponents. She became the fourth member of an all-female group on the council, who are pictured below (from left to right) – Audrey Metcalfe, Loveday Jenkin, Jane Acton and Helene Cullimore.

No. 4 Loveday Jenkin

Long-serving Loveday won her seat on Cornwall Council in a 2011 by-election. In a five-way contest, she defeated Liberal Democrat, Conservative, Independent and Labour opponents to become the fifth member of the MK Group at Lys Kernow (joining Dick Cole, Stuart Cullmore, Andrew Long and Neil Plummer).

Cornish news and views

Covid-19 update

Efforts to combat Covid-19 have continued to dominate life across Cornwall and the wider world in recent months and many Mebyon Kernow activists have played an important role in assisting people in their communities. We would like to thank everyone who has stepped up and done their bit for local residents.



Cllr Michael Bunney has been especially busy. He was the main organiser of a very comprehensive volunteer effort around the parishes of St Ewe and St Goran. The scheme included the delivery of prescriptions and hot meals – cooked at the local school – to those in need (see above photograph of socially distanced helpers), a community Whatsapp group, a voucher scheme for a couple of local shops, the collection of donations for the vulnerable, the conversion of a telephone box into a foodbank and even fun activities such as a teddy bear hunt.



Mebyon Kernow leader Cllr Dick Cole meanwhile organised a team to deliver prescriptions to shielding and vulnerable individuals from the St Columb Road Surgery in his home parish. More than a thousand prescriptions were dispensed over a five month period.



Another White Paper?

Early in July, the Housing Secretary confirmed that the UK Government would be bringing out a new “Recovery and Devolution” White Paper for “England,” though subsequent reports appear to suggest that there will be little about real devolution in the document.

There has been talk of a “placed-based regional economic strategy,” and plenty of speculation about the centralisation of local government through the forced merger of councils into unitary authorities, possible “combined authorities” over a range of local government areas and “metro mayors.”

Commenting on behalf of Mebyon Kernow, Party Leader Cllr Dick Cole said: “Once again, it seems that the new White Paper will be a top-down instruction from central government and we can have little hope that there will be any good news for Cornwall.”

Call-in denied

In July, the Lib Dem / Independent Cabinet at Cornwall Council voted to award a high value 30-year contract to Mears Ltd to operate extra care housing. The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee on the unitary authority would usually have had the opportunity to consider the matter before a decision was made by the ruling Cabinet. This did not happen because of the coronavirus crisis and MK’s Cllr Loveday Jenkin was among three

councillors who attempted to challenge the decision by seeking a “call-in” of the verdict. But the attempt was not allowed by senior officers on the authority and councillors are now attempting to get the constitution of the unitary authority changed so that elected members cannot be sidelined in this way. (22nd–31st July 2020)

Language fears

In a new report from the Council of Europe, the UK Government has been criticized for failing to fully meet its obligations to the Cornish language.

While the Council noted progress in the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Wales and Scotland, it was less impressed with the support being afforded to Cornish by Westminster politicians.

The Council censured the UK Government for failing to (i) promote the teaching of Cornish at all appropriate levels, (ii) promote research into Cornish at universities and to (iii) encourage the mass media to show appropriate respect for the language and its usage. The report also expressed the view that promotion of the language is hampered because responsibility for it had not been devolved to Cornwall. (9th September 2020)

No money for Cornish

Only a matter of days after the Council of Europe’s criticism of the United Kingdom Government for its lack of support for Cornish, the unitary authority received a letter in response to a request for financial support for the language.

Without any sense of irony, the letter said: “This will not be the news you were hoping for in regard to the funding of specific projects” but claimed that the Government wanted to reiterate its “commitment to continuing to support and promote Cornish language and heritage under both the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.”

MK’s spokesperson for the Cornish language, Cllr Loveday Jenkin, described the announcement as a “dereliction of duty towards Cornwall’s culture and identity.” (16th September 2020)

No to “Great South West”

Mebyon Kernow members have also been at the forefront of opposition to the suggestion by a Conservative MP that a “combined authority” should be created to cover an area branded as the “Great South West.”

Speaking to the BBC’s Martyn Oates, Gary Streeter MP spoke about how Tory MPs, council leaders and various unelected bodies had been “championing the concept of the Great South West – Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset together forming a coherent region,” adding that “I think that is the way forward and I think the Government is halfway to agreeing with us. We will see what happens over the next couple of months.”



Disturbingly, in response to another MP, Anthony Mangnall (Totnes), in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister said he shared this “vision of a Great South West.”

Mebyon Kernow leader Cllr Dick Cole poured scorn on the proposal. He said: “This so-called ‘Great South West’ is not a coherent region or entity. We must stand together to protect the historic nation of Cornwall and oppose any top-down regionalisation that ignores the unique culture, heritage and identity of Cornwall.”

“We need to continue to make the case for a National Assembly or Parliament for Cornwall at every opportunity.” (7th–16th September 2020)

Lib Dem federalism

The failure of the Westminster political parties to acknowledge Cornwall was evident at the Liberal Democrat’s virtual 2020 Conference,

where a new policy on federalism was agreed. It noted the “inadequacies of current constitutional arrangements” and the “growing support for reform across our nations and regions,” while calling for a “truly federal UK.” It was moved by Wendy Chamberlain MP (Spokesperson for Political and Constitutional Reform, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), and specifically ignored the nation of Cornwall. (26th September 2020)

Funding control?

Cornwall Council and partners have submitted an ask of £700m (over seven years) to central government’s Comprehensive Spending Review for a “fully devolved pot of funding for economic development” to replace the EU structural funding that Cornwall will no longer receive.

There has been little clarity from the Conservatives about what Cornwall can expect from the oft-promised “Shared Prosperity Fund” and also worryingly political journalists have been briefed that any “regional funds” could be controlled through a “Great South West” set-up or an even larger block that also includes the equally artificial “Western Gateway” area based around Bristol, Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. (30th September 2020)

Economic woes

The unitary authority has warned that Cornwall’s economy may not return to pre-coronavirus levels until at least 2025, because of the very highest take-up of the furlough scheme, which sought to protect jobs during the Covid-19 lockdown and subsequent period.

Data shows that, at the peak of the lockdown, about 84,300 jobs in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were being supported by the government’s job retention scheme. Constituency by constituency, the numbers were St Austell & Newquay (18,300), Truro & Falmouth (14,400), North Cornwall (13,600), Camborne & Redruth (13,500), St Ives (12,300) and South East Cornwall (11,300). In total, 37% of all eligible jobs were furloughed.

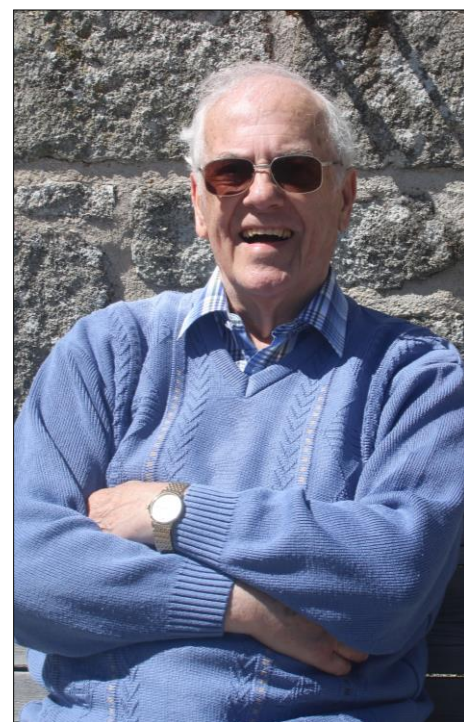
In addition, a self-employment income support scheme saw 77% of eligible people signing up – again one of the highest rates in the UK – and there had also been a rise in the number of people claiming benefits, with a 95% rise in universal credit claims in Cornwall

from March to June. In March there had been 24,876 claimants in Cornwall but by June that had jumped to 48,458.

Mebyon Kernow economy spokesperson Cllr Andrew Long said: “These statistics show that Cornwall faces a very difficult time and it is pressing that central government boosts support for key sectors to protect jobs and safeguard the prospects of so many Cornish residents.” (26th September 2020)

Long-standing campaigner against the waste incinerator that was built near St Dennis, Ken Rickard, has published a booklet titled *Our Health and Air Quality: The True Facts*.

Mr Rickard, who has twice attended the Royal Courts of Justice in London as part of the fight against the Mid Cornwall plant and worked with many anti-incinerator activists around the United Kingdom, seeks to highlight the impact of polluted air on people and communities.



Copies of the booklet can be ordered from Mr Rickard at 12 Trelavour, St Dennis, St Austell, PL26 8AR. Please send two pounds to cover the cost of publication, plus postage and packing.

Woody Wood

Cornish Nation *remembers the life of a committed campaigner for devolution to the English regions*

Much-loved radical activist Bruce Arthur Wood, known to all as Woody, died in June at the age of 84.

Born in London in 1935, Woody had an unorthodox upbringing. After his father's building business went bankrupt, his parents worked at the Windmill Theatre. Renowned for the Windmill Girls who posed naked in on-stage tableaux, the young Woody would wait in the wings, standing on a stool, to drape dressing gowns around the young women as they came off-stage.

During the Second World War, he spent some time at a boarding school, from where he could see bombs going off over London where his parents were working. His family recall that Woody didn't shine in his schooling and left formal education at 15 to work as a farm labourer, though two years later he was called up for national service with the British Army.

He enjoyed military life and signed up for a further ten years, training first as a draughtsman and then an electrical engineer. His initial posting abroad was on the Rhine in West Germany though he was later seconded to assist the army in Ghana, where he helped build a new airstrip and operate a small power station. He was even made an honorary member of the Dagomba tribe who he lived with.

Of paramount importance to Woody were his commitments to equality, social justice, localism and living down.

Woody married his first wife Anne in 1960 and had two daughters, Melanie and Susie. On his return to civilian life, he worked as a power station engineer in the Medway area, but his marriage ended in divorce and he moved away and sadly lost touch with his daughters for many years.

He became politicised in the army, largely because of his experiences in Ghana where he became aware of the enormous differences in wealth and power between people and groups, largely as a legacy of British colonialism.

When he began to explore political ideas, he soon realised that conventional party politics was not for him. He joined the "alternative society" and spent some time with the Burnley group, People in Common, in the 1970s. In 1978, he was a founder member of "Some People in Leicester," which developed into a housing and workers' co-operative, as well as an income and car sharing group.

Woody worked as an electrician in the Alternative Services Co-operative, and later as a plumber. He also helped to run Little Thorn Books, a radical bookshop. He met Mandy Taverner in the housing co-op. She became his partner for 16 years and, in 1988, their daughter Hertha was born. Being part of a shared child-care group, Woody helped to bring up not only Hertha but also her close friend Hazel.

In later life, Woody was delighted to be reunited with his two older daughters, and getting to know them again brought him much joy, as did the birth of his grandson Merlin in November 2018.

He was a community activist in Leicester, where he was involved with the South Highfields Neighbours, originally called HART (Highfields Association of Residents and Tenants), helping out at a People's Centre on Evington Road, the helpdesk at Sparkenhoe School and Stoneygate Youth Club.

Of paramount importance to Woody were his commitments to equality, social justice, localism and living down. He expressed this through his lifestyle politics, while also being active in organisations pushing for direct democracy and regional government.

He helped co-found the Movement for Middle England with Mandy Taverner and Ray Trader in 1988, and was an influential friend to a number of other groups around England. MFME later evolved into an organisation known as Devolve, which attempted to promote devolved governance.

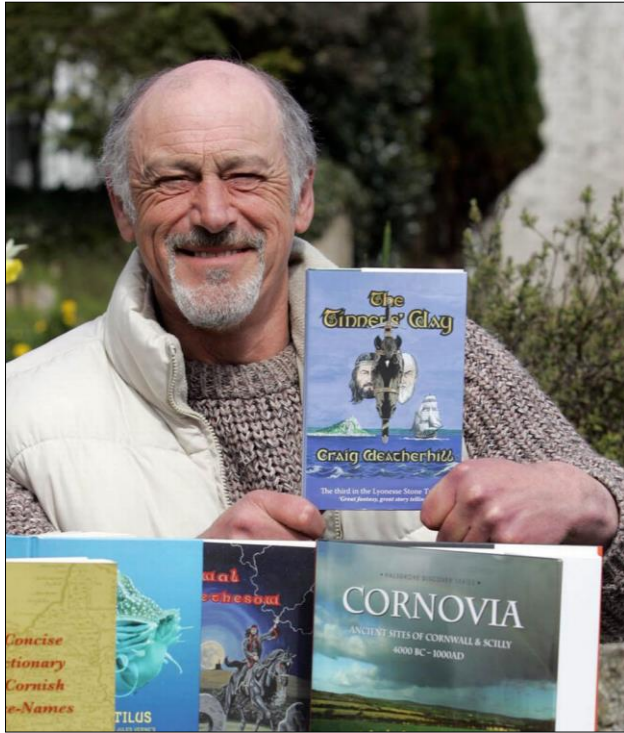
He was also very supportive of Mebyon Kernow and attended some events in Cornwall, including Mebyon Kernow Conferences (see left). He also co-organised "Whose Region" conferences in 1998 and 2000.

Paying tribute to Woody on behalf of the Party for Cornwall, Dick Cole said: "It was a real pleasure to know Woody and to enjoy time in his company. A great enthusiast for humanity, community, culture, environment and democracy, the world will be a much poorer place for his passing."



Craig Weatherhill

Cornish Nation celebrates the life and achievements of one of Cornwall's most well-known cultural activists



Respected writer, archaeologist, folklorist and Cornish language expert, Craig Weatherhill, passed away in July at the age of 69.

Brought up in Cornwall, partly in St Just, Craig was very much shaped by his surroundings. At the age of eight, he was given a copy of *Cornish Legends* by Robert Hunt, written in around 1880, and Craig has written about how he explored the moors and cliffs of West Penwith as a young man.

In his memoirs on the www.artcornwall.org website, he noted: "I kept coming across circles of upright stones, big mounds with stone chambers in them, and didn't know what they were. So I asked my teachers. They knew nothing either, but I was determined to find out and spent hours in local libraries and, of course, all was revealed. So, that's how and when it all started, and I never, ever, stopped! I found that the archaeology and the legends were interlinked and, later, that language and place-names were all part of the same story, too. The more I learn, the more I realise there's still a lot more to learn, and, of course, that's the fascination that keeps the interest going."

He served with the RAF for two years from 1972 to 1974, when he trained to be a cartographer, building on his existing skills as a draughtsman. Invalided out of the forces because of a serious back injury, he returned to Cornwall and got a job as a draughtsman in the Architects' Section of Carrick District Council, based in Falmouth where his family lived at the time. This began his 25-year local government career, which ended with Penwith District Council.

He soon after commenced work on a series of archaeological surveys, mostly in the West Penwith area, which he did in his spare time for many years.

Such work underpinned a number of very important publications including *The Principal Antiquities of the Land's End District* with Peter Pool and Charles Thomas, *Belerion: Ancient Sites of Land's End* and *Cornovia: Ancient Sites of Cornwall and Scilly*.

A much-published author, he also wrote books about Cornish legends, the Cornish language and place-names, the 1595 Spanish raid on Mounts Bay, as well as four novels. His last book, *The Promontory People, An Early History of the Cornish* was particularly well-received. It was described by Bert Biscoe as a "historical polemic driven by his narrative style, detailed and incontrovertible – not just his swansong, but a bringing together of the many facets of his life's work in a work of seminal power and beauty."

Craig was barded at Nance, Illogan, in 1981. He took the name Delynyer Hendhyscans ("draughtsman of archaeology") and, shortly before his death, Gorsedh Kernow awarded him an Awen Community Medal for his "outstanding contribution to Penwith and to broader Cornish culture."

"Craig was a truly great Cornishman who was respected, admired and loved. A giant in his fields of expertise, and one who spoke with passion, unquestionable knowledge and dignity."

His death was followed by a very large number of tributes, with an especially heartfelt one coming from the Kernow Matters campaign group.

They said: "Craig was so many things to so very many of us. A humble man, but firmly and proudly Cornish, Craig was a widely published and award-winning author of bestselling historical and other reference books as well as novels, a retired planning officer and architect, a former semi-professional footballer, a Bard of Gorsedh Kernow, a practised and accomplished horseman, a recognised expert on Cornwall's archaeology and history, an expert on Cornwall's place-names, a Cornish language speaker and life member of Agan Tavas – the society for the promotion and protection of the Cornish language, an inspirational and truthful campaigner for Cornish matters, a musician, a friend and an absolute authority on all things Cornish and relating to Cornwall. This list is far from exhaustive and could go on so much more.

"Craig was a truly great Cornishman who was respected, admired and loved. A giant in his fields of expertise, and one who spoke with passion, unquestionable knowledge and dignity.

"To him, Kernow truly mattered. His presence touched the lives of so very many and his death leaves an enormous vacuum. We are in deep mourning for this son of Cornwall."



Kenedhel Gernewek

