

Cornish Nation

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Five Mebyon Kernow members elected to Cornwall Council

Stunning election victory in the St Mewan & Grampound
division / News from Scotland and Wales / Tributes to
Richard Clark, David Muirhead and Neil Plummer

Our team for Cornwall

Cornish Nation would like to thank all those Mebyon Kernow members and supporters who played an active part in the recent local election campaign and / or backed MK's efforts with financial assistance.

It was a difficult climate for an election, taking place during lockdown restrictions because of the pandemic, with physical campaigning outlawed in the preceding months.

Nonetheless, MK had a very positive election. Prior to 6th May, MK had four councillors on the 123-strong Cornwall Council. All four were re-elected to serve larger divisions on the authority, which will now only have 87 elected members, while Michael Bunney snatched a fifth seat for MK with a victory in St Mewan & Grampound.

In addition, 23 MK members were elected, as official party candidates, onto town and parish councils.

The full list of MK councillors is as follows:

Cornwall Council

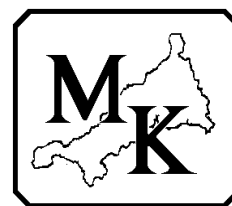
Callington & St Dominic – Andrew Long
Crowan, Sithney & Wendron – Loveday Jenkin
Penwithick & Boscoppa – Matt Luke
St Dennis & St Enoder – Dick Cole
St Mewan & Grampound – Michael Bunney

Town and Parish Councils

Callington Town Council – Maria Coakley, Andrew Long, Brenig Morgan and Mark Smith
Camborne Town Council (Roskear) – Ryan Congdon and Chris Lawrence
Camborne Town Council (Trelowarren) – Zoe Fox
Camborne Town Council (Treswithian) – Phil Mills
Camborne Town Council (Troon) – Rhisiart Tal-e-bot
Crowan Parish Council – Loveday Jenkin
Hayle Town Council (West) – Emily Brown
Lanner Parish Council – Sam Richards
Mevagissey Parish Council – Matt Facey and Charlotte Tonks
Redruth Town Council – Lee Collins
Sithney Parish Council – Mike Tresidder
St Agnes Parish Council (Mount Hawke) – Alan Sanders
St Austell Town Council (Poltair & Mount Charles) – Julie Fox
St Enoder Parish Council – Dick Cole
St Goran Parish Council – Michael Bunney and Matthew Fox
St Mewan Parish Council – David Holman
Treverbyn Parish Council (Penwithick) – Matt Luke

We would also like to thank those retiring individuals who represented MK on local town and parish councils for all or part of the last four years: John Gibbs (Bodmin), Debbie Smith (Callington), Jane Barclay and John Gillingham (Camborne), Matt Blewett (Lanner), Spencer Wilding (Newquay), Rob Simmons (Penzance), Dave Floyd (Pillaton), Brian Higman (Roche), Roy Gill (St Day) and Rod Toms (St Newlyn East). We are most grateful for the contributions to the work of the Party for Cornwall.

It is now extremely important that MK builds on this progress and, in particular, encourages more and more members to stand for town and parish councils when the opportunity arises.



Contents

Report on 2021 local elections in Cornwall	3–6
Five MK candidates elected to the unitary authority	3
MK members elected to 23 town and parish councils	5
Update on parliamentary elections in Scotland and Wales	7
A tribute to fishing champion David Muirhead	8
Remembering MK councillor and campaigner Richard Clark	9
Celebrating the life of MK councillor Neil Plummer	10

Cornish Nation 85

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Membership of MK costs only £15.00 a year (£8.00 unwaged or £20.00 for a family).

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Standing up for Cornwall

In an election overshadowed by the pandemic, MK has increased its representation on Cornwall Council and 23 members have been elected onto town and parish councils

There will be great change at Cornwall Council following the local elections, in which the Conservatives won 47 of the 87 divisions. This overall majority, comprising 54% of the seats, was achieved with just 37% of the popular vote. The Conservatives certainly benefitted from the crowded nature of a large number of contests, partly due to the forced reduction in the size of the authority and the significant increase in the number of Labour and Green candidates.

The Liberal Democrats and the Independents had a particularly poor showing and went backwards at the election. In the previous poll for the larger Cornwall Council in 2017, the Liberal Democrat / Independent administration had shared 67 members, but there are now only 13 Lib Dems and 16 Independents.

At the same time, five of the 56 candidates from the Labour Party were successful, one up from 2017, while only one of the 70 Green Party candidates made it over the finishing line.

A total of 19 Mebyon Kernow candidates were nominated for seats at "Lys Kernow," the same number as four years before, although on this occasion the divisions were significantly bigger because of the reduction in councillor numbers.

The MK manifesto document prepared for the election comprised ten sections, which committed candidates to:

- Provide a strong voice for one and all.
- Fight for fair funding for Cornwall.
- Boost the Cornish economy.
- Demand control over planning.
- Fight for proper local-needs housing.
- Protect and improve public services.
- Safeguard and invest in local facilities.
- Protect the less-well-off and the vulnerable.
- Protect and enhance the environment.
- Win greater recognition for Cornwall.

There were also a total of 30 more detailed pledges, that set out the work that successful Mebyon Kernow councillors would be doing in the coming four years.



MK polled a total of 8,719 votes – up from 5,344 in 2017 – with the average vote share in contested divisions being 25%.

The highlight of the election was undoubtedly Michael Bunney's stunning victory in the St Mewan & Grampound division. Michael had originally been selected to fight a by-election for the St Mewan seat in early 2020, which had been caused by the resignation of Cheryl Mackrory following her election as the MP for Truro & Falmouth at the 2019 General Election.

The by-election was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic and Michael used the delay to significantly raise his profile across the area, attending numerous on-line meetings of local parish councils. A long-time community activist, he also coordinated community help schemes in the Gorran and St Ewe area from the very beginning of the health emergency. This certainly boosted his standing and he won considerable plaudits for how he organised the delivery of thousands of meals, set up a local food bank and managed over 100 volunteers. He even received an "unsung hero" award from the High Sheriff of Cornwall in March 2021.

By the time of the election, he had won the support of a range of prominent local people including a number of parish councillors and Bob Egerton, the retiring Independent councillor for the Grampound area.

Michael's six-week campaign was extensive and he personally spoke to hundreds of electors. Such was the vibrancy of the contest with a prominent local Conservative that the turnout was 48%. Michael polled 1,097 votes (53%), while the Tory secured the support of 958 individuals. This gain was especially impressive, given that it took place on a night when the Conservatives put in a dominant performance and were winning seats across Cornwall.

He will be one of five MK councillors on the unitary authority, with all four of the Party's sitting councillors winning re-election.

Party Leader Dick Cole polled 1,501 votes in his St Dennis & St Enoder division, ahead of Conservative and Lib Dem opponents. This was the highest personal vote of any candidate in the election. His vote share of 78% was also the highest and, incredibly, this was Dick's sixth consecutive local election in which he polled over 75% of the vote.

Elsewhere in Clay Country, Matt Luke, standing for re-election on his reputation as a “no-nonsense straight-talking councillor,” was successful in his enlarged Penwithick & Boscoppa division. He defeated his single Conservative opponent, another sitting member on the unitary authority, by 764 votes (55%) to 636.

In Crowan, Sithney & Wendron, long-standing councillor Loveday Jenkin was returned in a resounding fashion. Her proud record of service to her local area on Cornwall Council over the last ten years, reinforced by the work that she had done in recent months in providing help during the pandemic, meant that she secured considerable support from local people and businesses. She won 1,282 votes (63%), easily defeating her Tory opponent.



Andrew Long faced a particularly strong challenge from the Conservatives in his Callington & St Dominic division, but his well-earned reputation as a champion for Callington and the wider South East of Cornwall guaranteed that he was safely re-elected with 956 votes (49%). He out-pollled a Labour candidate as well.

The successful election campaigns of Cllrs Michael Bunney, Dick Cole and Matt Luke were also part of a particularly strong performance for MK in the St Austell & Newquay parliamentary constituency, where the Party's six candidates achieved more votes than both the 13 Lib Dems and the ten Labour candidates in the same area. In addition, in the China Clay Area, MK was the most popular political choice for the third consecutive local election campaign.



INTRODUCING YOUR MEBYON KERNOW CANDIDATES FOR THE CORNWALL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

MK is a political party with a difference. We are based here in Cornwall and have no political masters in London to please. Our councillors always do what we think is best for Cornwall.

 MICHAEL BUNNEY St Mewan & Grampound Michael is a dedicated community champion, involved with many local groups, who ran village help schemes during the pandemic. 07939 457590	 DICK COLE St Dennis & St Enoder An experienced councillor, Dick has worked extremely hard for his home area, Clay Country and Cornwall for over twenty years. 07791 876607	 JULIE FOX St Austell Poltair & Mount Charles Julie is a passionate campaigner and she has been involved in a number of battles against unpopular housing developments. 07814 373137	 MATT LUKE Penwithick & Boscoppa Matt has served on Cornwall Council for the last eight years. He is well-known as a no-nonsense, straight-talking councillor. 07967 129385	 CHARLOTTE TONKS Mevagissey & St Austell Bay First-time candidate, Charlotte is a mum of three and a part-time paramedic, who is keen to serve her home area on the Council. 01726 843782	 GARRY TREGIDGA Roche & Bugle Garry is very active in the community life of Clay Country, he is chair of the Rescorla Centre and is the co-director of the influential Institute of Cornish Studies. 07714 210966
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**MORE POWER FOR CORNWALL / NO TO OVER-DEVELOPMENT / FAIR FUNDING FOR CORNWALL
 GREATER SUPPORT FOR LOCAL PEOPLE / BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES / A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT**

Published by Dick Cole on behalf of Mebyon Kernow, Lanhainworth, Fraddon Hill, Fraddon, St Columb TR9 6PQ.



In Roche & Bugle, Garry Tregidga came second with 384 votes (23%) and, although he finished behind the Conservative victor, he did better than two Independents, plus Lib Dem and Labour opponents. In Mevagissey & St Austell Bay, first-time candidate Charlotte Tonks came second to a dominant Tory with 243 votes, ahead of Labour, Lib Dem and Green alternatives, while Julie Fox managed to poll 176 votes (10%) in St Austell Poltair & Mount Charles, finishing ahead of an Independent and a Green.

MK also managed two further good showings in Camborne. Experienced town councillor Zoe Fox achieved a strong second place in Camborne West & Treswithian, where she polled 469 votes (27%), finishing ahead of Labour and the Lib Dems.

Ryan Congdon in Camborne Roskear & Tuckingmill meanwhile secured 237 votes (22%), out-polling a Green candidate.

Alongside a number of long-standing party members such as Chris Lawrence (Pool & Tehidy), Alan Sanders (St Agnes), Rhisiart Tal-e-bot (Four Lanes, Beacon & Troon) and Mike Tresidder (Porthleven, Breage & Germoe), Mebyon Kernow put forward a number of very enthusiastic first-time candidates.

These included Emily Brown who achieved a fantastic 301 votes (19%) in Hayle West, out-polling an Independent and a Green, Mitch Holmes who managed 235 votes (9%) in Land's End and Phil Mills who secured 97 votes (6%) in Camborne Trelowarren ahead of a Green and a Lib Dem.

In a hard-fought election in Lanner, Stithians & Gwennap, Sam Richards meanwhile achieved 163 votes (8%), which was more than the Liberal Democrat nominee, while Sean Stratton secured 234 votes (11%) in Falmouth Arwenack, also ahead of a Lib Dem.

A total of 23 MK members were elected to town and parish councils, of which 18 were unopposed. Maria Coakley, Andrew Long, Brenig Morgan and Mark Smith were elected onto Callington Town Council without a contest; Ryan Congdon, Chris Lawrence, Phili Mills and Rhisiart Tal-e-bot likewise made it onto Camborne Town Council, while Matt Facey and Charlotte Tonks were elected to Mevagissey Parish Council. Others returned without the need for an election were Emily Brown (Hayle), Dick Cole (St Enoder), David Holman (St Mewan), Loveday Jenkin (Cowan), Matt Luke (Treverbyn), Sam Richards (Lanner), Alan Sanders (St Agnes) and Mike Tresidder (Sithney).

Seven Mebyon Kernow candidates meanwhile contested elections in multi-member town and parish council wards, of whom five were successful.

In Camborne, Zoe Fox was re-elected onto the town council in the Trelowarren ward with 472 votes (which equated to the support of 30% of electors), while her namesake Julie Fox made it onto St Austell Town Council with 533 votes (31%). First-time candidate Lee Collins was elected onto Redruth Town Council with 399 votes (34%).



In Mid Cornwall, there were 15 candidates for ten places on St Goran Parish Council and the two MK candidates achieved fantastic first and second places. Michael Bunney secured 533 votes (86%), while another first-time candidate Matthew Fox got 416 (68%).

Sadly two MK candidates missed out, but still achieved good votes. In Falmouth, Sean Stratton managed 654 votes (30%), while in Truro Conan Jenkin garnered 513 (24%).

MK's most successful election candidate, Colin Lawry (Penwith District Council 1982-2002 and Cornwall County Council 1985-2001), believes that the elections were a success. He writes:

The Cornwall Council elections of 2021 saw a good showing from MK candidates, and was encouraging for a number of reasons.

Firstly, we were able to field candidates across the whole width of Cornwall, from Andrew Long defending his seat in the new division of Callington & St Dominic to Mitch Holmes, a first-time candidate in the sprawling Land's End division.

Alongside Mitch there were a number of other first-time candidates, and we gave people the opportunity to think about voting MK in areas where such options hadn't previously occurred in council elections.

Secondly, even though some of our candidates were in fairly crowded fields, there were credible returns to be noted. As well as the seats we won, another three candidates were runners-up – and they were each in fields of between four and six candidates. For first-time candidates, contesting areas where MK hadn't been a visible or active presence for some time, to be getting support from more than 10% of voters, when the London-based parties were getting nearly all of the media coverage, was encouraging.

Thirdly, it was my experience in the areas where I was able to help with campaigning that we were well received on doorsteps. That does not always translate into votes but it is a good indicator that we are met with respect and considered worthy of consideration.

Photographs (from left and top)

Page 4

Cllr Loveday Jenkin photographed by a defibrillator that she helped to fund; an election advert in the St Austell Voice; and the Cornwall Council candidates from the St Austell & Newquay Constituency pictured at Wheal Martyn – Cllr Matt Luke, Cllr Michael Bunney, Cllr Julie Fox, Garry Tregidga, Cllr Charlotte Tonks and Cllr Dick Cole.

Page 5

MK's team of five on Camborne Town Council – Cllr Chris Lawrence, Cllr Phili Mills, Cllr Ryan Congdon, Cllr Zoe Fox, and Cllr Rhisiart Tal-e-bot; MK's team of four on Callington Town Council – Cllr Brenig Morgan, Cllr Maria Coakley and Cllr Andrew Long, plus Cllr Mark Smith.

It is important that if we want to build on the support gained this time, and to turn that respect into better results in subsequent elections, that we maintain a visible presence in those communities. That will be helped by the number of MK town and parish councillors that were successful.

Fourthly, and most obviously, we retained the seats we were defending and gained a new seat. Having had a group of four in a Council of 123 seats, we now have five of 87 seats. My congratulations to Dick, Loveday, Andrew, Matt and Michael.

Fifthly, the campaign literature which we produced, certainly from the examples which I've seen, was as good as anything being put out by other parties. We certainly punch above our weight in that regard, and it does play a big part in how well we do. Obviously, the better and more thorough the distribution then the more impact that will have.

Finally, I want to most sincerely thank all of you who stood for the Council elections as MK candidates. It can be a daunting experience, but ultimately it is always encouraging to see that so many people in our communities are willing to place their trust in us to be their representatives. Even if you weren't successful on this occasion, you were part of a team which made progress. I hope you found it rewarding enough to be worth repeating and building on in the future.

Photographs (from left and top)

Tom Raikes and Connor Bussell delivering leaflets for Cllr Matt Luke in Boscoppa; Cllr Charlotte Tonks, elected onto Mevagissey Parish Council, on the campaign trail in Tregrehan; Cllr Matthew Fox who has been elected to St Goran Parish Council; Cllr Lee Collin's election flyer for his successful campaign for Redruth Town Council; Cornwall Council candidate Sam Richards, who is now a Lanner Parish Councillor; a Michael Bunney poster in St Ewe; Joel Carne-Mead with Mitch Holmes out leafletting St Just in the heart of the Land's End division; Cllr Emily Brown with her daughter outside a polling station in Hayle, where she is now a town councillor; Garry Tregidga with Jo Rusbridge and Natasha Ann Coleman at an Easter egg hunt organised by Bugle Youth Club and Bugle Library of Things Community Share Shop; and Sean Stratton, who stood for MK in the Falmouth Arwenack division of the unitary authority.



Election updates

Cornish Nation reports on how Mebyon Kernow's sister parties fared in the elections to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd in Wales

At May's elections, the Scottish National Party won a historic fourth term in the Scottish Parliament with the election of 64 MSPs. It was an amazing achievement, especially given that the "additional member" electoral system, was specifically put in place to prevent a single political party from being dominant. The re-elected First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has rightly pledged that "the task of building a better Scotland for everyone who lives here will be my priority every single day."

The SNP polled 47.7% of the vote in the constituency contests, up from 46.5% in 2016, winning 62 of the ++73 first-past-the-post seats. This was the second Scottish Parliament election in which the SNP secured over one million constituency votes. This time, the total was 1,291,204 votes – up from 1,059,897 in 2016. Of the remaining 11 constituencies, five were won by the Conservative Party, four by the Liberal Democrats and two by the Labour Party that, prior to 2007, had dominated Scottish politics.

For the second election running, the SNP polled more votes than Labour and the Tories combined, and also managed a clean sweep in six of Scotland's seven cities: Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness, Stirling and Perth.

The Scottish National Party secured two additional seats in the Parliament, via the regional lists, through which the Conservatives, Labour and the Scottish Greens secured most or all of their representation. The Conservatives finished the election with a total of 31 MSPs, Labour with 22, the Greens with eight and the Lib Dems with four.

In Wales, the Labour Party did well to win 30 of the Senedd's 60 seats, with the Conservative Party taking 16 and Plaid Cymru 13. Labour topped the poll in 27 of the 40 individual constituency contests with 39.9% of the overall vote and secured a further three elected members through the regional lists. The Conservative representation came equally from constituency successes and the regional lists, while a single Liberal Democrat made it into the Cardiff legislature via one of the lists.



Plaid Cymru gained an extra seat, but did not make as much progress as it had hoped.

In the constituency contests, Plaid secured 225,376 votes, which equated to 20.3% of votes cast. The total number of votes was up from 209,376 in 2016, though the vote share slipped slightly. It was down by 0.2%.

Plaid successfully defended the five constituencies in their heartlands in West Wales, with one new face being Mabon ap Gwynfor – the grandson of Plaid Cymru's first MP Gwynfor Evans – who is the new MS for Dwyfor Meirionnydd.

One big disappointment for Plaid was that former leader Leanne Wood was unable to retain her home seat of the Rhondda that she had won in 2016.

Plaid also secured 230,161 votes (20.7%) on the regional lists, up from 211,548 in 2016, which secured the election of a further eight parliamentarians – six of whom will be new to Cardiff Bay. A handful of list votes in North Wales would have delivered an additional MS.

Speaking after the election, Party Leader Adam Price said Wales was now entering a "critical period of transition" out of the pandemic and that the actions the Labour Welsh Government will take will "define our nation's future for the next generation."

Announcing the responsibilities for his team at the Senedd, he added: "I am proud to lead a united team with the skills, experience and fresh ideas needed to hold the Labour Welsh Government to account, constructively but forensically ... where there is common ground, Plaid Cymru will always work with others for the benefit of our nation but when there is a lack of urgency and delivery, we will hold the government's feet to the fire and demand better for Wales."

In the local elections across England, a number of regional parties also put forward candidates. The North East Party secured four seats on the 126-strong Durham County Council – a gain of one councillor – while the Yorkshire Party did extremely well in the contest to be the mayor of West Yorkshire. Party Leader Bob Buxton polled 58,851 votes (9.7%) to come third, ahead of the Greens, Lib Dems, Reform UK and the English Democrats.

We would like to thank the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Helston Rugby Club, Plaid Cymru and numerous MK candidates and supporters for photographs used in this magazine.

David Muirhead

Looking back at the life of a much-loved Cornishman, who was a great champion for the Cornish fishing industry

Long-standing MK member, David “Tatty” Muirhead, died on 24th February 2021. He was in his early 70s.



A very proud Celt of Cornish and Scottish descent, he was brought up in Budock Water, where his family had been heavily involved with the commercial development of the wider area including Penryn.

A champion for the Cornish fishing industry, David was one of the longest serving members of the Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee (SFC) and its successor committee known as the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

A tribute from Cornwall Council stated that he was “the Vice-chairman and then Chairman of Cornwall SFC for many years and brought to the roles his extensive knowledge of inshore fishing, as well as his warmth, humour and his undeniable love of fishing and of Cornwall. He gave his time tirelessly to advocate on behalf of Cornish fishermen and the fishing industry in general and was an active member of countless organisations relating to fishing, most notably the South West Handline Fishermen’s Association which he helped to establish. He also served as Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Association of Sea

Fisheries Committees, providing input to numerous parliamentary committees and directly to Fisheries Ministers, always with his unique combination of knowledge, tact and personal anecdotes drawn from a richly lived life as a fisherman and a Cornishman.”

He certainly loved the sea and was also involved with the Helston Marine Conservation Group, the Cadgwith, Helford and District Fishermen’s Society, and even found time to be Chairman of the Cornwall Gig Rowing Association. As well as being a successful commercial fisherman, who sometimes landed his catch at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club in Falmouth, he took part in yacht racing.

His advocacy for the fishing industry was further helped by the fact that he put himself through law school in London as a mature student, after which he took up a position with a firm in Helston.

In 2008, he was awarded an MBE for his work in supporting Cornish fishermen and two years later became a bard of Gorsedh Kernow. He took the fitting bardic name Morwas – “seafarer.”

But to many people in Cornwall, he will be remembered as a great singer. The *Falmouth Packet* described him as one of Cornwall’s “greatest characters” who was the “life and soul” of any event that he was involved with. He so often helped to lead the singing at maritime events and also performed with the Cadgwith Singers for many years.

In addition, David was a very powerful rugby player. A back row forward, he played for Falmouth and Helston (pictured below with cup). A tribute from the rugby club at Falmouth recalled that he “captained the successful Falmouth side of the mid to late seventies, arguably Falmouth’s greatest ever team,” while a representative of the Helston club described him as a “true club legend ... one of the finest to ever wear the Helston RFC shirt.”

When studying in London, he also turned out for the London Cornish RFC, and was especially proud to secure 17 caps for the “black and gold” between 1975 and 1979 – putting his body on the line for the Cornwall that meant so much to him.



Richard Clark

Remembering a former Mebyon Kernow councillor, who was an innovator in the world of printing and publishing

Richard Clark, a stalwart supporter of greater powers for Cornwall, passed away on 11th March at the age of 74.



Born in Stockport in 1947, Richard showed great academic aptitude at primary school and won a scholarship to Manchester Grammar School. This had a profound influence on his life and he secured a university place at Oxford. He studied history for his undergraduate degree and during a postgraduate year in the city he competed with Rhodes Scholar Bill Clinton to be president of the postgraduate common room. Richard won that election over the future US President!

Richard also secured a Diploma in Social Sciences from the University of Bristol and he then went to Lancaster University, where he interviewed participants from the First World War and recorded their voices on tape. Around this time, he began to stretch his political legs and became a councillor for the Labour Party.

Away from academia, he became the Director of the Playhouse and Film Theatre in Bradford, where he met his wife Lucia Crothall, who interviewed him for an arts magazine. He also presented a weekly film

programme on Radio Leeds and set up The Richard Clark Bookshop within a garden centre, before it moved into Bradford.

Richard and Lucia got married in Halifax in 1984 and their first son Redmond was born two years later. Around this time, Richard set up Ryburn Publishing and Typesetting, buying state-of-the-art printing presses and computer equipment to create brilliantly laid out books for commercial customers. He worked with academics from all over the world to create what were and are still likely to be the finest editions of some key works.

Richard's second son Ruskin was born in 1990. Soon after the family moved to Staffordshire, as Richard had sold Ryburn Publishing to become an imprint of Keele University Press. Still involved with the enterprise, he published more academic books but he didn't always agree with certain practices adopted by the new management team. After a period, he decided to leave and set up his own business again, this time embracing the exciting new world of electronic publishing.

Often ahead of his time, linked to his new career move, Richard set up the hugely ambitious digital British Heritage Database, researching buildings of architectural and historical importance, involving architectural historians and academics from all over the UK.

His new business meant he could work from home and, in the late 1990s, Richard persuaded his family to move to Penzance, where he re-engaged with politics through the Liberal Democrats. In 2004, he stood for election to Penwith District Council and was elected to Penzance Town Council.

In 2006, he switched to MK because he had come to appreciate that the demands for a Cornish Assembly and a Cornish Development Agency were "urgent matters of practical politics which only MK were determinedly pursuing." Writing in *Cornish Nation*, Richard said: "We need to believe in ourselves and strengthen our ability to address and overcome Cornwall's deep-rooted economic and social problems, while protecting its exceptional natural environment."

He became part of an MK "gang of four" on the town council, serving alongside Frank Granger, Simon Reed and Phil Rendle. Richard again stood for election to Penwith District Council in 2006 and was re-elected to the town council in 2007. In 2008, he was chosen as Deputy Mayor of the town and he worked hard to support initiatives to help the disadvantaged. Richard's family remember that "he met, talked to and helped so many people and he loved every minute of it."

Richard was also an active campaigner against the centralisation of local government in Cornwall and played a leading role in the campaign against the imposition of a unitary authority. It was Richard who launched an online petition calling on central government to "reject Cornwall County Council's bid for unitary status" and to instead "introduce legislation for a Cornish Assembly."



It was unlucky for MK, Penzance and Cornwall, that Richard had to move to Swindon, and then Swansea, because of Lucia's employment, though he continued to actively support MK and, for a number of years, took responsibility for proof-reading *Cornish Nation* magazines prior to publication.

Paying tribute from Mebyon Kernow, Party Leader Cllr Dick Cole said: "Richard was a good friend to so many of us and he made a really significant contribution to MK's work with his insightful approach to politics. Our thoughts are with Lucia, Redmond and Ruskin at this sad time."

Neil Plummer

Celebrating the life of a long-standing MK member and councillor, who dedicated himself to building a cultural and political future for Cornwall

Neil Plummer, a powerful voice for a better Cornwall and an elected councillor across five decades, died on 22nd April 2021 at the age of only 69.



Neil was born in 1951, the same year that Mebyon Kernow was founded. His birth date was 27th June and, throughout his life, he did much to help organise events at St Keverne commemorating the Cornish heroes, Michael Joseph an Gof and Thomas Flamank, who were executed on that day in 1497.

A native of Stithians, Neil attended university in Cardiff, where he studied for a geological degree, and the promotion of Cornwall's distinct geology was a life-long passion for him. A family friend, speaking at his funeral at Penmennor Methodist Chapel, Stithians, described Neil as a "walking Cornish mining encyclopedia," and he certainly hosted many group visits to mines and minescapes. This included some Japanese students, who he even introduced to the delights of Cornish wrestling.

Neil was proud to have played a pivotal role in ensuring the continuance of the Royal Geological Society for Cornwall – the second oldest geological society in the world. He

served as its president for many years, and he was subsequently awarded its Bolitho Gold Medal in 2020 in recognition of his commitment to the Society.

Active in Mebyon Kernow from a very young age, Neil was first elected to Kerrier District Council in 1976. He was only 24, not long back from university, but already involved with many local organisations including the rugby club and the St Stythians Male Voice Choir.

Neil's success meant that he was one of the first two MK councillors elected as official party candidates to the district councils that had only been created three years before. It is noteworthy that the other successful candidate was Neil's good friend Roger Holmes, who was also a geologist and active within Cornwall's RGS (for obituary, see *Cornish Nation* no 81).

Neil was a key MK activist, particularly throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. As well as being a district councillor, he was also the election agent for Len Truran in Falmouth & Camborne at the 1979 General Election.

He reprised his agent role for Richard Jenkin in the 1983 General Election and, more than a decade later, he was Loveday Jenkin's agent in the 1994 European elections.

It was even through his activism in MK that he met his future wife, Beatrice Kernow, at a meeting at Len Truran's house in Redruth. Apparently, Neil's car had broken down and Beatrice, who herself fought a number of elections for MK in the Porthleven area, had to give him a lift back to Stithians.

A dedicated servant of his home area, he represented his community on Kerrier District Council for 33 years, all the way through to the abolition of the authority in 2009.

But Neil did not always stand as an official MK candidate. In 1984, he was elected to Cornwall County Council as an Independent. He also stood as an Independent in elections to Kerrier from 1991 onwards, though in the late 2000s he joined the Mebyon Kernow group on the authority and served alongside councillors including Loveday Jenkin, and husband and wife team Stuart and Helene Cullimore.



In 2009, Neil was elected as an Independent councillor to serve the Stithians division on the new unitary authority, though in 2010, he formally joined the MK group and worked with Cllrs Dick Cole, Stuart Cullimore, Loveday Jenkin and Andrew Long (pictured on page 10).

As a councillor, Neil helped hundreds and hundreds of local people. He had a particularly strong desire to protect the Cornwall that we all love, and he was active on planning committees. He served as Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Planning Committee on the old County Council and he was also the first Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee on Cornwall Council. Neil took the view that it was the responsibility of councillors to safeguard local communities and he worked especially hard to support affordable and self-build housing schemes to ensure that local families could continue to live in their home parishes.

In addition to his council duties, Neil worked closely with Beatrice to promote all aspects of Cornish identity and culture through a wide range of organisations. A very active member of the International Celtic Congress, he was a bard of Gorsedh Kernow and his bardic name was Gwyn ha Du – white and black – the colours of the Cornish flag.

He was a delegate to the Lorient Celtic Festival for many years, proudly carrying the banner of St Piran in the main parade on many occasions. Indeed, he was loved as much in Brittany as he was in Cornwall for his and Beatrice's enthusiasm for developing twinning links between Cornish and Breton towns and villages.

An unashamed internationalist, Neil also played an active role in the campaign which followed the loss of the motorized fishing vessel, Bugaled Breizh, off Lizard Point in January 2004. Five Breton fishermen were lost and their relatives continue to believe that the trawler was dragged underwater when a submarine became snagged in its nets.

Neil was a particularly forceful advocate for justice for the fisherman, while also pressing the authorities to deal with this issue

of maritime safety. It was something so close to Neil's heart that, at his funeral, a recording was played of Neil singing Mordros, a lament for the Bugaled Breizh, written specially for him by Julyan Holmes.

Neil was certainly a talented singer. He was a tenor and many will remember his performances at events such as Helston Flora, at rugby games and at pan-Celtic festivals or competitions. As well as solo performances, over the years he performed with St Stythians, Treverva and Marazion Apollo Male Voice Choirs.

In one debate at Cornwall County Council, Neil even made his point by bursting into song – not something that any of his contemporaries would ever contemplate doing.

Neil's time as a councillor came to an end in 2013, though he remained extremely busy with various campaigns and cultural activities.

But sadly, Neil's active life was curtailed in 2018, when he fell victim to a rare medical condition known as encephalitis. This left him hospitalised for nearly two years, though he was allowed home to his beloved Stithians several months before his death.

Paying tribute to Neil on behalf of Mebyon Kernow, Cllr Loveday Jenkin said that "wherever he went, he took the spirit of Cornwall, the flag of St Piran and his wonderful voice with him.

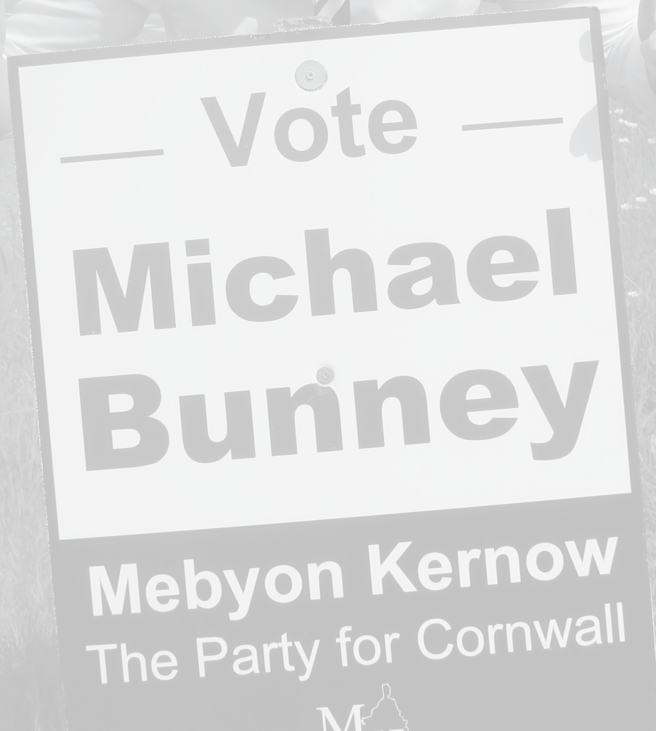
"Neil was a great ambassador for Cornwall and we should esteem him for being an excellent man of Cornwall. May his angel voice be heard in heaven.

"Neil o kannas meur rag Kernow ha ni a dal gul vri anodho rag bos Den mas a Gernow. Re bo y lev el klewes y'n nev!"





Kenedhel Gernewek





INTRODUCING YOUR MEBYON KERNOW CANDIDATES FOR THE CORNWALL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

MK is a political party with a difference. We are based here in Cornwall and have no political masters in London to please. Our councillors always do what we think is best for Cornwall.

 <p>MICHAEL BUNNEY St Mewan & Grampound</p> <p>Michael is a dedicated community champion, involved with many local groups, who ran village help schemes during the pandemic.</p> <p>07939 457590</p>	 <p>DICK COLE St Dennis & St Enoder</p> <p>An experienced councillor, Dick has worked extremely hard for his home area, Clay Country and Cornwall for over twenty years.</p> <p>07791 876607</p>	 <p>JULIE FOX St Austell Poltair & Mount Charles</p> <p>Julie is a passionate campaigner and she has been involved in a number of battles against unpopular housing developments.</p> <p>07814 373137</p>	 <p>MATT LUKE Penwithick & Boscoppa</p> <p>Matt has served on Cornwall Council for the last eight years. He is well-known as a no-nonsense, straight-talking councillor.</p> <p>07967 129385</p>	 <p>CHARLOTTE TONKS Mevagissey & St Austell Bay</p> <p>First-time candidate Charlotte is a mum of three and a part-time paramedic, who is keen to serve her home area on the Council.</p> <p>01726 843782</p>	 <p>GARRY TREGIDGA Roche & Bugle</p> <p>Garry is very active in the community life of Clay Country, he is chair of the Rescoria Centre and is the co-director of the influential Institute of Cornish Studies.</p> <p>07714 210966</p>
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**MORE POWER FOR CORNWALL / NO TO OVER-DEVELOPMENT / FAIR FUNDING FOR CORNWALL
GREATER SUPPORT FOR LOCAL PEOPLE / BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES / A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT**

Published by Dick Cole on behalf of Mebyon Kernow, Lanhainsworth, Fraddon Hill, Fraddon, St Columb TR9 6PQ.