

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Since notice of the review was announced in December 2018, this council has maintained a continuous dialogue of consultation with its residents. Complete details of 34 individual engagement opportunities are listed in Appendix 3. At an Extraordinary Meeting of the parish council held on 15 July 2019, councillors resolved to accept the recommendations of its own CGR Working Group and find that there is no case for a change in the parish boundary, the parish name or the number of parish councillors.

This resolution accurately reflects the views of the parish's residents, who in their recent opinion survey were 92%¹ against any changes in the historic boundary.

1.2 The parish of Menheniot covers an area of approximately 7,500 acres with a population of 1,716² and an electorate of 1402³. The parish council has a full complement of 11 councillors, set a precept⁴ of £20,000 for the year 2019/20 and is supported by the Parish Clerk who is a .3 FTE.

1.3 Councillors welcome this opportunity to review its parish governance and to ensure that it is fit for purpose for the future.⁵ This submission will demonstrate and evidence how the parish council's governance reflects the identities and interests of its community. The council notes the electoral forecasts provided by the CCGR, and includes its own forecast for the five year period to 2024 which it believes provide a better basis for assessing growth in the electorate and for measuring its impact on electoral equality⁶.

1.4 The residents' survey has demonstrated that the people of Menheniot have very high levels of satisfaction about the place in which they live; they trust their parish council and believe that it gives them value for money for the precept it levies; delivers services that are valued and overall represents their best interests to a high degree.

Along with being a trusted council⁷, councillors are mindful that dialogue and consultation raise expectations of how their performance needs to constantly improve. Residents have increasingly higher expectations for how their representatives will work for them.⁸ The council's training policy⁹ encourages its representatives to improve and develop their skills.

1.5 Menheniot Parish Council received its LCAS Foundation Award in 2018, ranking alongside Liskeard and Newquay¹⁰, in recognition of its sound management and governance.

1.6 This submission will also examine the 'viability test'¹¹ and show that the current precept, and the council's working methods actively and effectively promote the well-being of its residents and allow for the provision of services in an economic and efficient manner. It

¹ We are Menheniot Q11

² 2011 Census <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04011486>

³ CCGR dataset 2019

⁴ Menheniot Parish Council public meeting 15 November 2018 and residents briefing note

http://www.menheniotparish.org.uk/mp_live/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/MPC-BN-Parish-Precept-2019-2020.pdf

⁵ Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance on community governance reviews para 80 March 2010 & CCGR ToR para 47.

⁶ LGBC Electoral Forecasts A Guide for Practitioners October 2011

⁷ We are Menheniot Q5

⁸ We are Menheniot Q8 35% of residents say the council's work has improved, and 45% expect it to improve over the next 12 months.

⁹ www.menheniotparish.org.uk/mp_live/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/MPC-Training-Policy.pdf

¹⁰ http://www.menheniotparish.org.uk/mp_live/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/List-of-Accredited-Councils-Nov-2018.pdf

¹¹ CCGR ToR para 18

will include forecasts to demonstrate the future impact of changes in the population on the finances of the parish council and how it will manage its predicted growth.¹²

¹² Growth in Menheniot Appendix 2

2.0 Executive Summary

2.1 Menheniot Parish Council believes that it provides effective and convenient local government in three ways:

Section 3 Electoral Equality

Councillors are elected and co-opted to represent an appropriate number of electors. This section explains how the council proposes to maintain electoral equality.

Section 4 Planning

This is one of three examples of how the parish council reflects the interests of the community. This section demonstrates how the council uses the planning system as a means of promoting community engagement.

Section 5 Procurement

The parish council believes that it must offer value for money and added *social* value in its procurement. This section describes how it achieves these aims.

Section 6 Grants & Donations

This section describes how windfall funding is used to extend the range of services that the parish council provides and simultaneously builds community cohesion.

Section 7 Financial Viability

The parish council intends to continue support its VCSE, and has a forward plan to maintain its income using the future precept income from Tencreek Farm.

Section 8 Community Identity

Menheniot Primary School sits at the heart of the community and is located in the village centre. The governors of the school have submitted this section and explain how shared parenting and shared childhood create a local community.

Appendix 1

- We are Menheniot
- Opinion survey among residents of Menheniot taken in May 2019 to examine attitudes towards the parish and parish council.

Appendix 2

- Shopper's Survey 2019
- Survey undertaken among visitors to The Bubble Retail Park and Liskeard Tavern conducted in June 2019.

Appendix 3

- Schedule of 34 events of consultation and engagement carried out by the parish council to inform residents and provide opportunities for them to feedback on their opinions of the governance review.

3.0 Electoral Equality¹³

3.1 Parish councillors recognise that there is no set ratio of councillors to electors, but would not wish to see new residents to the parish disadvantaged in their electoral

¹³ New electoral arrangements for Cornwall Council LGBCE December 2018 page 5 para 4

representation. In our residents' survey, a clear 83%¹⁴ of respondents felt that their parish council acted on their behalf a great deal (or fair amount) compared to a national figure of 56%. This council believes that any growth in the electorate will be properly and effectively represented by the current number of councillors, working as they do in collaboration with residents.

3.2 In 2018, the Local Government Boundary Commission delivered its final report to remap the divisional boundaries of Cornwall, and set out its three main considerations. Their first consideration was:

Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors¹⁵ that each councillor represents.

Menheniot Parish Council also regards this as a prime consideration for review under the CCGR and its Terms of Reference,

... to consider whether it is appropriate to make changes to parish areas and parish electoral arrangements . . .¹⁶ Not to be used to build artificially large parishes¹⁷

3.3 The tables below show the ratio of councillors to electorate for the parish, taking account of the five-year period between 2019 and 2024 with an upward adjustment made for the low forecast made by officers managing the Polling Place Review¹⁸

Table 1

December 2018 All Cornwall		
Electorate	Councillors	Per cllr
421679	2051	206

Table 2

Menheniot December 2018		
Electorate	Councillors	Per cllr
1402	11	127

Table 3

CC Polling Places Review 2023		
Electorate	Councillors	Per cllr
1456	11	132

Table 4¹⁹

Menheniot PC Forecast 2023		
Electorate	Councillors	Per cllr
1908	11	173

- The average Elector: Councillor Ratio for all Cornwall is 1: 206 (Table 1)
- Menheniot parish has a comparable ratio of 1:127 (Table 2) which is 38% better.
- Forecasts to 2023 (Table 3) by officers conducting the Polling District and Polling Places Review show a marginal increase of just 54 electors which we believe underestimates the impact of the Ten creek Farm development will have on the parish.
- The parish council has produced its own forward estimates of electoral growth (Table 4) using LG BCE methodology, taking the maximum number of dwellings with outline planning consent for Ten creek Farm (275) and upscaling it with the average household size for a new development (2.1 persons per household), and reducing the figure to account for the estimated number of people under 18 (22%) not eligible to register for voting.

¹⁴ We are Menheniot May 2019 Q3

¹⁵ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

¹⁶ CCGR Terms of Reference para 2

¹⁷ Malcolm Brown presentation at CALC conference 16 February 2019 Slide 15

¹⁸ Parish Council data for Liskeard & Looe CNA

¹⁹ LGBC Electoral Forecasts A guide for Practitioners October 2011

- The average ratio of 1:173 in Menheniot remains below the county average, and significantly lower than that of its nearest neighbouring town ward (minimum ratio 1:849).
- The trusting relationship between parish councillors and its electors is evidenced by the results of its recent survey that showed 93%²⁰ of residents have a great deal (or a fair amount) of trust towards their parish council. Nationally, the comparable figure is 57%

3.4 The parish councillors at Menheniot have worked hard to create a culture of active engagement with all its stakeholders. This is demonstrated by its open approach to consultation with its residents on matters that have a direct impact on their lives (for example, where it has conducted surveys about grants & donations, road safety, allotment allocations) and by being transparent in the way it manages the business of the parish in its public meetings.

Stakeholders who are known to have an interest in an agenda topic are personally invited to attend; all reports and briefing notes that councillors use to base their decision making on are published in full, in advance on the council's website; the Chair has (with the full agreement of his council) adopted a flexible approach to including interventions from residents outside of public participation (permitted under Standing Orders 3e and 3f). No debate is ever closed down because it is 'uncomfortable'.

4.0 Planning

4.1 The council's attitude to planning is a clear demonstration of its proficient approach to community engagement and open & transparent governance.

4.2 The parish of Menheniot shares its boundary with six other parishes (Liskeard, St Ives, Quethiock, St Germans, Morval and Dobwalls & Trewidland). Parish councillors are mindful of the responsibility that brings when considering issues that may be of common concern because of the proximity of a common boundary. Using the parish council's engagement structures that encourage community representation, this means that:

- Public meetings are always held in accessible venues to support community engagement and participation.
- Cornwall Council's Weekly Summary of Planning Reports is scrutinised for applications that may impact on us or that ours may impact on them.
- The parish council publishes its own weekly summary of applications and decisions which is distributed via its parish noticeboard, website and Facebook page.
- The council's website hosts a dedicated page of information for residents and applicants who may have queries about planning²¹
- Applicants for proposed planning developments are always invited to attend the public meeting and contribute to the discussions.
- People invited are given a copy of the council's own 'Attending a council meeting' leaflet which explains how meetings are conducted, and how they can participate.
- Adjacent parish councils and stakeholders who may be impacted by Menheniot's planning decisions are invited to attend the public meeting or comment beforehand directly to the council.

²⁰ We are Menheniot Q5

²¹ <http://www.menheniotparish.org.uk/the-council/planning-3/>

- Menheniot councillors have evolved a method of assessing planning applications that is based on the strict application of material considerations, and is applied rigorously to ensure consistency of scrutiny.
- The public meeting uses a projection screen to exhibit the location and associated drawings for every planning application. Councillors who visit an applicant take photographs that are incorporated into the presentation. By using this system of display, every councillor and every member of the public attending has the same opportunity to view the basis for decision making.
- Decisions made and supporting commentary is fed back into the public domain via the parish council's website and the planning portal, and our notice boards in Menheniot and Merrymeet.
- Open Public Meetings are held when an application is of major scale or concern in the locality (typically solar farms and wind turbines).
- During the period 2018/19, Menheniot achieved a 100% score in the project success measure used by the Planning & Sustainable Development Team which matches its planning decisions to those of towns and parishes.

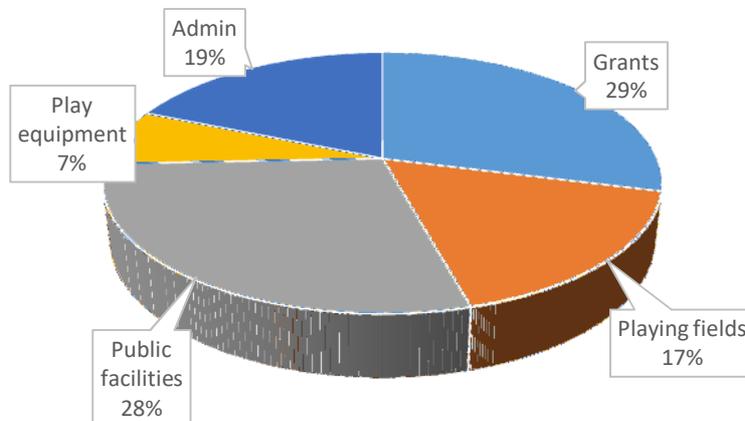
4.3 Menheniot Parish Council has engaged with its immediately adjacent neighbour, Liskeard Town Council, on these most recent planning applications:

- London Metric (Costa Coffee) PA18/03238
- Ten creek Farm planning development PA15/09821
- B&M Stores license to sell food and drink PA15/00054
- Clemo Road housing development PA17/04823

5.0 Procurement

5.1 The size of the Menheniot parish council taxbase has produced a precept that is historically low (see Section 7 Financial Viability 7.3). This partly due to its support for the VCSE in the delivery additional services and facilities, but also to the way it manages its expenditure to obtain value for money whilst promoting community engagement and social value.

5.2 In the financial year 2018/19, the parish council's expenditure (net of clerk's salary) was £21,256. This chart shows how the money was spent:



The key item that received the highest satisfaction rating of 95%²² in our resident's survey was the playing fields, which were gifted to the parish council in 1968, and which since then have been maintained by a local contractor at a current annual cost of £3,570. The playing fields, and its adjacent play equipment and outdoor gym, are maintained on a voluntary basis by a parish councillor, who is supported in his work by regular RoSPA training and an accredited qualification, so enabling the monthly safety checks to be carried out at a minimal cost. Maintenance work on the playing fields also includes strimming and weed control throughout the parish. This topic is included as an example of the council's purpose in reflecting the interests of the community and providing effective government.

5.3 The ground maintenance contract is overseen by the council's approach to inclusivity, value for money²³ and service provision. The council has taken on the work of footpath maintenance that was previously the responsibility of Cornwall Council, believing that it can carry out the work more cost effectively than the preferred contractor and with enhanced working methods. In 2016, Menheniot Parish Council issued tender documents for ground maintenance that set out to achieve:

- Opportunities for contractors of all sizes to compete fairly in the tendering process. This means that the areas of work were divided into three discrete sections so that small businesses could bid for small parts of the work without being disadvantaged. This helps new and emerging local contractors to compete with larger, more established companies and ensures viability in the provision of these services.
- Tender documents produced in plain English with clear instructions for their completion.
- Tender advertisements placed in the Cornish Times, Western Morning News, parish council's website and Facebook pages, parish noticeboards.
- Timetable for completion and submission
- Explicit detail as to how their tender would be evaluated
- Maps and schedules of the work to be undertaken
- Support offered in the production of risk assessments and qualifications needed
- Social Value included as a criterion for selection which enhances work outcomes and the promotion of community wellbeing.
- Applicants must comply with the council's Equalities Statement
- Applicants must comply with the council's Safeguarding Statement

6.0 Grants & Donations

6.1 With its small council status and limited capacity to employ more staff, the parish council uses its system of grants and donations to provide shared facilities whilst at the same time building the capacity of its VCSE and promoting community cohesion.

6.2 In 2015, Menheniot Parish Councillors adopted a scheme for allocating grants and donations. The reason for introducing a system was primarily to manage the outflow of funds so that all eligible organisations had an equal opportunity to make an application, and councillors would be able to make their decisions as part of a structured and considered decision making process.

²² We are Menheniot, Question 7

²³ We are Menheniot, Question 2

6.3 At a time of constraints on the precept, a simple, clear and transparent approach to making grant awards enables the parish council to extend the scope of its work, and support the local VCSE to undertake projects that councillors and clerk do not have the resources to deliver alone.

6.4 In November 2018, councillors asked their clerk to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the current scheme and make recommendations for its future²⁴. The subsequent consultation was made over an extended four month period so that stakeholders had the opportunity to speak with their own management committees before completing our survey and commenting on the conclusions.

6.5 Small donations are funded from the council's precept and larger grants from a ringfenced budget originating from a S106 windfall from 2014. Of all the council's expenses in 2018/19 (net of clerk's salary), total grants amounted to 29% of expenditure ((£6,157). Since 2015, the council has granted an average of £11,000 each year to support the work of the VCSE sector in the parish and wishes to maintain that level of support. The full report²⁵ was presented to councillors and stakeholders in May 2019, and concluded that:

- Grants are an essential part of the council's support for the VCSE in Menheniot. 64% of respondents state that their project would not have gone ahead without council support.
- The council has to balance the needs of the VCSE against its resources, and has introduced restrictions on the amount of funding it can now give. This was a difficult decision to make but was made in close consultation with all stakeholders.
- Applicants are invited to attend the decision meeting to present their case, and are very satisfied with the council's advice and final decisions (over 70%)
- Maintaining (and extending) the scope of its grants system is a critical part of the council's support for the well-being of its residents and is an efficient and cost-effective way of providing services.
- 85% of respondents to the residents' survey are very or fairly satisfied that the council supports its community with grants and donations.

7.0 Financial Viability

7.1 Residents recognise that the parish council provides value for money in its operations²⁶. This is due partly to its procurement and grants system, and partly to its forward planning so that there are no sudden increases in expenditure that have not been forecast.

7.2 Funding for its grants is currently sourced from reserves, and at the current annual rate (approximately £11,000) will exhaust those reserves within six years. Supporting the VCSE within the parish is its chosen route to providing extra services for its residents, and councillors would inevitably look to generating an income from Ten creek Farm as a way of supporting its grants and donations policy. Based on information supplied by DHA Planning, agents for the developers at Ten creek Farm, Menheniot council estimates that the precept income from the 275 dwellings would be approximately £8,107 at current precept rates, and will go a substantial way to maintaining its current programme of VCSE support.

²⁴ www.menheniotparish.org.uk/mp_live/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MPC-BN-Grants-Donations-Policy.pdf

²⁵ www.menheniotparish.org.uk/mp_live/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MPC-Grant-Review-Report-2019.pdf

²⁶ We are Menheniot Q2

7.3 Menheniot Parish Council believes that its precept has always been calculated in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the current needs of its residents, with provision being made for future developments that may impact on the locality. It is mindful of its responsibilities as a tax-levying body and publishes a simplified annual summary of its finances for residents²⁷. Quarterly outturn reports are discussed in the public meeting and published on the council's website. The recent residents survey showed that 86%²⁸ of people responding strongly or tended to agree that the parish council provided value for money in its service provision (44% national figure). Since 2013/14, this parish council's precept has reduced by 31.7%²⁹ whilst the neighbouring council of Liskeard has increased theirs by 54.3%. At a time when the Department of Housing, Communities & Local Government publishes a revised figure for precept increases across England of 4.9%³⁰, Menheniot reduced its precept by 21%.

7.4 The parish council asserts that its combination of reserve management, precept, grants to the VCSE and strict budgetary control is sufficiently robust to deliver services to its residents in an economic and efficient manner. (see Section 5 Procurement and Section 6 Grants & Donations).

7.5 Impact of Tenecreek Farm

As this development progresses, parish councillors will be able to decide if they should maintain their current budget and precept charge – potentially leading to an overall decrease in the average precept currently payable of 26% or extend their service provision of existing and new services to include Tenecreek Farm. Any change to the boundary line to move this development within Liskeard will increase the precept liability for residents of Menheniot *now*, and will put current and future residents in a financially worse off position than they would have been in if the current boundary were to remain unchanged.

7.6 The cost of maintaining the parish's playing fields and other public facilities (currently accounting for 45% of all expenditure) is expected to increase over the next five years: councillors will be assessing the phasing in of new precept income and balancing the demands of funding the VCSE against the needs of new residents.

8.0 Community Identity

8.1 Residents of Menheniot like the place they live in³¹, and have a high regard for the parish council³². A critical part of this sense of community identity is the way that the parish council informs and engages with its residents. Locally, 84% of residents believe that the council keeps them very or fairly well informed about its services,³³ compared to a national figure of 58%.

8.2 The sense of community identity is demonstrated by the number of responses to the We are Menheniot survey that have come from all parts of the parish. The survey report includes a map of the location, by postcode, of the people who do not support a change to

²⁷ www.menheniotparish.org.uk/the-council/transparency-of-parish-administration/

²⁸ We are Menheniot Q2

²⁹ Individual Parish Precepts & Band D Charges Cornwall Council Corporate Finance Resources

³⁰ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-tax-levels-set-by-local-authorities-in-england-2019-to-2020

³¹ We are Menheniot Q1

³² We are Menheniot Q2

³³ We are Menheniot Q4

the parish boundary. 88.5% of these are located outside of the originally designated area that was current at the time the survey was taken.

8.3 Menheniot Parish Council is aware that Liskeard Town Council will submit its own proposals to move our common boundary and take out approximately 300 acres (4%) of Menheniot and. It will include 11 residential properties, four commercial properties (at The Bubble Retail Park and Liskeard Tavern), a new development with outline consent for 275 dwellings (Tencreek Farm) and a privately owned farm that has the potential to be developed as an agri-hub for agriculture related businesses (Bolitho Farm).

Liskeard Town Council may reference their belief that visitors to the shopping area consider it to be a part of their town, and use this to argue that this perception is justification for moving its boundary to include properties currently located in Menheniot, in order 'to regularise the situation on paper . . . to reflect public belief'

The Parish Council has conducted its own Shopper's Survey to seek evidence for this belief. It found that 66% of visitors³⁴ to The Bubble Retail Park and the Liskeard Tavern came from outside the immediate area, and of those, 83% did not know which town or parish they were in. Overall, 89%³⁵ of respondents to the survey felt that they did not need to know which town or parish they were in.

8.4 The head teacher of Menheniot Primary School here addresses the parish's sense of identity arising from its place in the village, and its role in promoting the children's understanding of citizenship and the way in which people of all age groups work together.

8.5 We firmly believe that our school has an important role in being the centre of the community and that it plays a pivotal role within the parish. Not only do we provide an education for our pupils but the existence of the school brings people together and generates a sense of community spirit. Our School Association events, along with the village events, such as the Cherry Fayre provide a common sense of purpose and they bring all ages together in Menheniot providing opportunities for friendships to form and for links to be made between different families. We are also in a prime position to reach out to the whole parish and to promote links with other community groups. We value the opportunities we have to use the Sports Association grounds and to use the local Church for our Christmas and Harvest Services. The latter two events in particular are not only supported by the parents, but also by many community members. They offer an opportunity for people to 'catch up with other' and to enjoy the feeling of celebrating together, promoting mental wellbeing. They also offer the chance for people to share views and worries and to form links which will enable them to be in a position to support each other. Social networks are important factors in defining mental wellbeing.

It is very important to us that our pupils have a real understanding of citizenship and know what it means to be a part of the community, with the support it offers and the feeling of togetherness. As a school we echo many of the community values and we encourage the children to be kind to each other, to treat others with consideration and to demonstrate tolerance and respect. We also teach them the importance of being prepared to get involved and to actively participate in helping others. We wish them to have a sense of belonging and to know the satisfaction of being able to contribute and also the security of being able to accept help when needed. Some of the pupils that attend our school are likely to stay in the parish and indeed, some of our current parents also went to school here themselves.

³⁴ Shopper's Survey 2019 Q2

³⁵ Shopper's Survey 2019 Q5

The community to us, is also about all age groups working together and about everyone having a valuable contribution to make. The links provided by the school help to make Menheniot the tight-knit parish that it is but the community also helps to make our school the success it is. Many factors have contributed to our Outstanding status and our increase in pupil numbers and there is no doubt, the local community, the support we receive from all ages and groups within it and the friendliness and vibrancy of Menheniot have been major contributors. Prospective parents moving into the area, often say that they have particularly chosen the village of Menheniot due to the range of facilities, clubs and community events that it offers.

There is no doubt that any alterations to the boundaries will have a huge impact on the village and the surrounding area, the school and the parish. Urban areas clearly have some very different needs to rural areas. The proposed boundary change would actually have an effect on some of our current pupils and families and this could potentially reduce their feeling of belonging. We are very proud of our village and the surrounding area and do not wish to see it swallowed up by Liskeard!

Mrs A Raynham-Dobb, MEd, Headteacher, Menheniot Primary School

8.6 Menheniot Playgroup is an outstanding rated not for profit organisation in the heart of the village. It provides a vital point of contact for new mothers who may be feeling isolated and vulnerable. It is just able to survive with the current catchment area but any lessening may make it unviable. The Old School (where the playgroup is based) relies on the income from the Playgroup to keep the building open for the community. Without the Playgroup this facility is in jeopardy. Without the school the Playgroup is at severe risk of closure.

8.7 The Old School houses the weekly community coffee shop, the monthly market, the monthly cinema club and is host to a number of functions which benefit the community as a whole. It provides a meeting place for the whole community, many members of which would be more isolated and lonely without it. The school is the key to a lot more than is immediately obvious.

8.8 The Parish Council is an active partner with both schools in supporting their place in the community and improving their facilities. The Menheniot Playgroup was in danger of losing its 'Outstanding' status because of a lack of outdoor play space. Because the parish council owns the land immediately adjacent to the Old School, it was able to provide this outdoor space, and later support the playgroup through its grants system to fund essential maintenance.

The Menheniot Primary School suffers from major traffic congestion at drop-off and pick-up times for its pupils. Working with the parish council, the school has trialled an experimental scheme to use the entrance road to the council's playing fields for overflow parking. We have also worked in partnership with the school and Cornwall Council to refurbish the main public car park in the village centre in order to encourage visiting parents to park off-road during the morning and afternoon.