

November 2010.

To all members of the Cornish Constitutional Convention

Dear Members,

On November 20th at 10am in Truro City Council chamber we will hold our 10th Annual General Meeting. I think the best way of briefly reviewing the year for you is to describe an incident that occurred a few weeks ago at Cornwall Council when Kevin Lavery addressed a room crowded with Councillors anxious about budget strategy, service cuts and the future of the Council itself. He said:

'This Council often feels like it is a small district council. That's got to stop. We need to look at what we do, what we want and who we influence from the perspective of being the Cornwall State Government'.

I thought to myself: *'We've come a long way from Launceston Town Hall in 2000, and the 'promise' of absorption into a southwest region'.*

Earlier, in July, Mr Lavery joined Mike German, former Deputy First Minister of the Welsh Assembly, Dick Cole and Andrew George MP at a summer conference. Mike German told us that it is vital to believe that we will achieve our ambition. *'If you believe it, and stick with it, it will happen!'* He said.

The new Government has moved quickly to introduce the Parliamentary Voting and Constituencies Bill, and the threat of a constituency straddling the Tamar has galvanised Cornish opinion. Yet again, at the beginning of a new government, the Cornish flag has been raised and our values and objectives clearly stated. Adam Killeya, Mayor of Saltash, has emerged as the astute and inspiring leader of the campaign to prevent this outrage from occurring, and he is our guest at the AGM. I hope you will come along to hear him.

Cornwall now has 6 MPs in the ruling coalition. I suspect this is a unique situation. We have seen all 6 meet David Cameron recently and act together. There is a strong degree of consensus between them, and that is an asset for us, if we are measured and intelligently radical in our approach. We are seeing powers returned and downloaded. A Cornish Assembly will run public services in Cornwall, and there are interesting developments in the health service and police that the Council is working hard to bring under its umbrella – out of such evolution will our Assembly be built piece by piece, as much as through structural change.

We should not forget that the arrangement for the unitary council includes a democratic structure which is capable, with little alteration (other than in the numbers of elected representatives), of being adapted to meet the needs of the Assembly – the basis of a cost effective transition.

In the New Year, the Convention will assist Dan Rogerson MP in tailoring his Government of Cornwall Bill to become fit-for-purpose. A pre-election meeting showed what a big job this will be. The Group is willing and able. If you want to help, please call.

I believe it is important for the Convention to take advantage of the shift in attitude of the new Council towards achieving the Cornish Assembly, to alter the role of the Convention to that of a constitutional think-tank. The campaign needs to bring people together to think through the realities of what it will be, and how it can be done. I hope you will continue to support the Convention in its long-term task, and that you will try and recruit friends and family to carry the work forward.

With best wishes

