

# Agan Tavas' Perspective on the Cornwall Cultural Strategy (2026–2036)

## 1. Overall Assessment

From Agan Tavas' perspective, the Strategy is **ambitious, supportive of Cornish identity, and publicly affirming of Kernewek**. However, it is also **instrumental in tone**, treating language primarily as a tool for wellbeing, participation and economic impact rather than as a cultural inheritance requiring specialist stewardship.

For a voluntary organisation whose purpose is the **study, correctness and continuity of Cornish**, this creates both recognition and risk.

---

## 2. Where the Strategy Aligns Well with Agan Tavas' Values

### 2.1 Explicit recognition of the Cornish language

The Strategy clearly commits to:

- protecting and growing Kernewek,
- supporting learning,
- expanding use in education, creative work and communities,
- embedding language in Cornwall's distinct cultural identity.

From Agan Tavas' perspective, this recognition is **welcome and long overdue**. It affirms that Cornish is not marginal or symbolic, but a living part of Cornwall's cultural nationhood.

### 2.2 Respect for tradition and heritage

The Strategy references:

- traditional culture,
- Bord Ertach Kernow,
- mining heritage,
- archives,
- festivals rooted in history and place.

This aligns with Agan Tavas' commitment to **forms of Cornish that have developed naturally in Cornwall**, rather than reinvented or superficial expressions.

## 2.3 Value placed on voluntary and community activity

The Strategy acknowledges:

- the centrality of volunteers,
- clubs and informal groups,
- community-led cultural life.

Agan Tavas would view this as recognition of the tradition it represents: language maintained by communities, not imposed by institutions.

---

## 3. Key Concerns from an Agan Tavas Perspective

### 3.1 Instrumentalisation of language

The Strategy consistently frames culture—and by extension language—as a means to:

- wellbeing outcomes,
- economic growth,
- tourism,
- regeneration,
- workforce development.

From Agan Tavas' viewpoint, this creates a risk that:

- **linguistic value becomes secondary to social or economic utility,**
- correctness, depth and tradition are undervalued if they do not produce measurable outcomes.

For a language organisation, Cornish is not primarily a tool—it is **a cultural good in its own right.**

---

### 3.2 Insufficient distinction between language stewardship and participation

The Strategy emphasises:

- access,
- inclusion,
- widening participation,
- lowering barriers.

While Agan Tavas supports access, we are concerned that:

- all forms of engagement are treated as equally valuable,
- there is little acknowledgement of the need for **expert guardianship**,
- linguistic authority and tradition are assumed rather than supported.

The Strategy **expects quality** but does not define **who safeguards it**.

---

### 3.3 Funding logic disadvantages specialist voluntary bodies

The Strategy explicitly signals:

- a move away from reliance on grants,
- expectations of mixed income,
- business models,
- investment readiness,
- sustainability metrics.

From Agan Tavas' perspective:

- this framework suits professional cultural organisations and creative industries,
- but risks marginalising voluntary language groups whose value lies in continuity, not growth.

There is limited recognition that **some cultural functions cannot be commercialised without damage**.

---

### 3.4 Language treated as delivery, not governance

The Strategy commits to Cornish language growth but largely places:

- governance,
- direction,
- funding control  
within broader cultural boards and council structures.

Agan Tavas strongly questions:

- whether language bodies have any real influence,
  - whether we continue to be consulted only as delivery partners rather than strategic voices.
-

## 4. Structural Silences That Matter to Agan Tavas

From a language-society perspective, the Strategy is notably quiet on:

- spelling consistency and standards,
- long-term linguistic research and continuity,
- protection against fragmentation or dilution,
- the risk of rapid expansion without depth.

These are not minor technicalities; they are **existential issues for a revived language**.

---

## 5. Strategic Opportunities Agan Tavas Would Urge the Council to Strengthen

Agan Tavas would likely argue that the Strategy should more clearly:

- distinguish **language stewardship** from language promotion,
- recognise volunteer language organisations as **custodians**, not just deliverers,
- formalise advisory roles for traditional language bodies,
- protect space for non-instrumental cultural work.

This would not weaken inclusion; it would **ensure credibility and sustainability**.

---

## 6. Tone and Cultural Framing

### Positive:

- Optimistic, inclusive, confident.
- Proud of Cornwall's distinctiveness.

### Concern:

- The language of growth, metrics and return on investment occasionally conflicts with the ethos of **slow, careful cultural transmission**, which voluntary language bodies embody.

From Agan Tavas' perspective, culture is not always scalable—and should not be forced to be.

---

## 7. Overall Judgement from an Agan Tavas Viewpoint

**The Strategy is broadly supportive of Cornish language, but incomplete in its understanding of how languages survive.**

- It values visibility more than depth.
- It values participation more than stewardship.
- It assumes sustainability models that do not suit all cultural functions.

Agan Tavas would likely support the Strategy **conditionally**—as a platform on which language bodies must actively assert their role, rather than as a document that fully safeguards linguistic tradition on its own.

---

### Closing Reflection

*The revival and maintenance of Cornish depends not only on access, attractiveness and impact, but on patience, accuracy, continuity and respect for inherited forms. A cultural strategy that champions Kernewek must make room for those whose task is not to grow culture quickly, but to carry it carefully.*