

Cornwall's nationally protected landscape



Cornwall
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

12 Sections – One Designation

Annual Report
2022 - 2023

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Foreword

Despite the doom and gloom surrounding us with climate change, world events and the economy, Cornwall AONB continues to be a beacon of light for our environment, helping restore our landscapes and biodiversity throughout the county.



Gill Pipkin | Chair of the Cornwall AONB Partnership

It has been a huge privilege for me to work with the Cornwall AONB team and understand the vast array of work undertaken to protect and enhance our surroundings. From saving historic structures to helping farmers invest in protecting their landscapes, from bees to beavers, peat bogs to harvesting wildflower seeds, the team work with a wide variety of partner organisations and communities on an amazing variety of projects, utilising their limited financial resources to great advantage to leverage improvements.

Cornwall AONB has high ambitions and a great track record in achievement. The future is exciting with lots of opportunity for everyone to get involved in the nature around us."



Nature



People



Place



Climate

12 Sections, 4 priorities - People, Place, Nature and Climate and a plan to safeguard Cornwall's distinctive character and natural beauty.



Introduction

I am incredibly proud of the AONB team for their commitment, passion and team spirit.

This last year has again been exciting and challenging in equal measure, the AONB Management Plan was successfully adopted by Cornwall Council Cabinet in May 2022 and is available in various formats to increase accessibility and raise the profile of the diverse and unique landscape.

The team have positively focused on delivery of the management plan, through our projects and programmes, by working creatively, collaboratively and broadly across our 12 sections with Partners, stakeholders, farmers, community groups and residents.

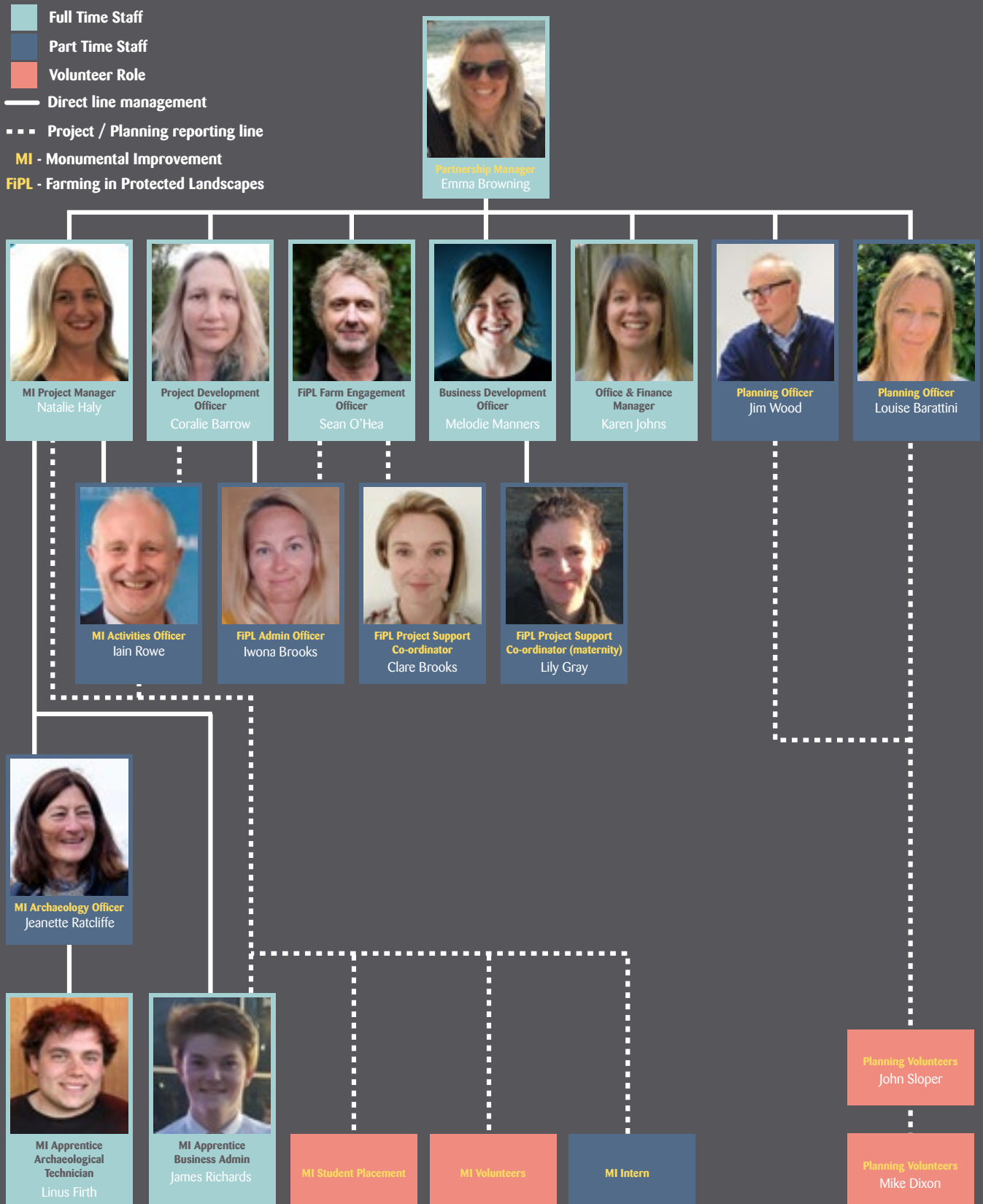


Emma Browning | Cornwall AONB
Partnership Manager



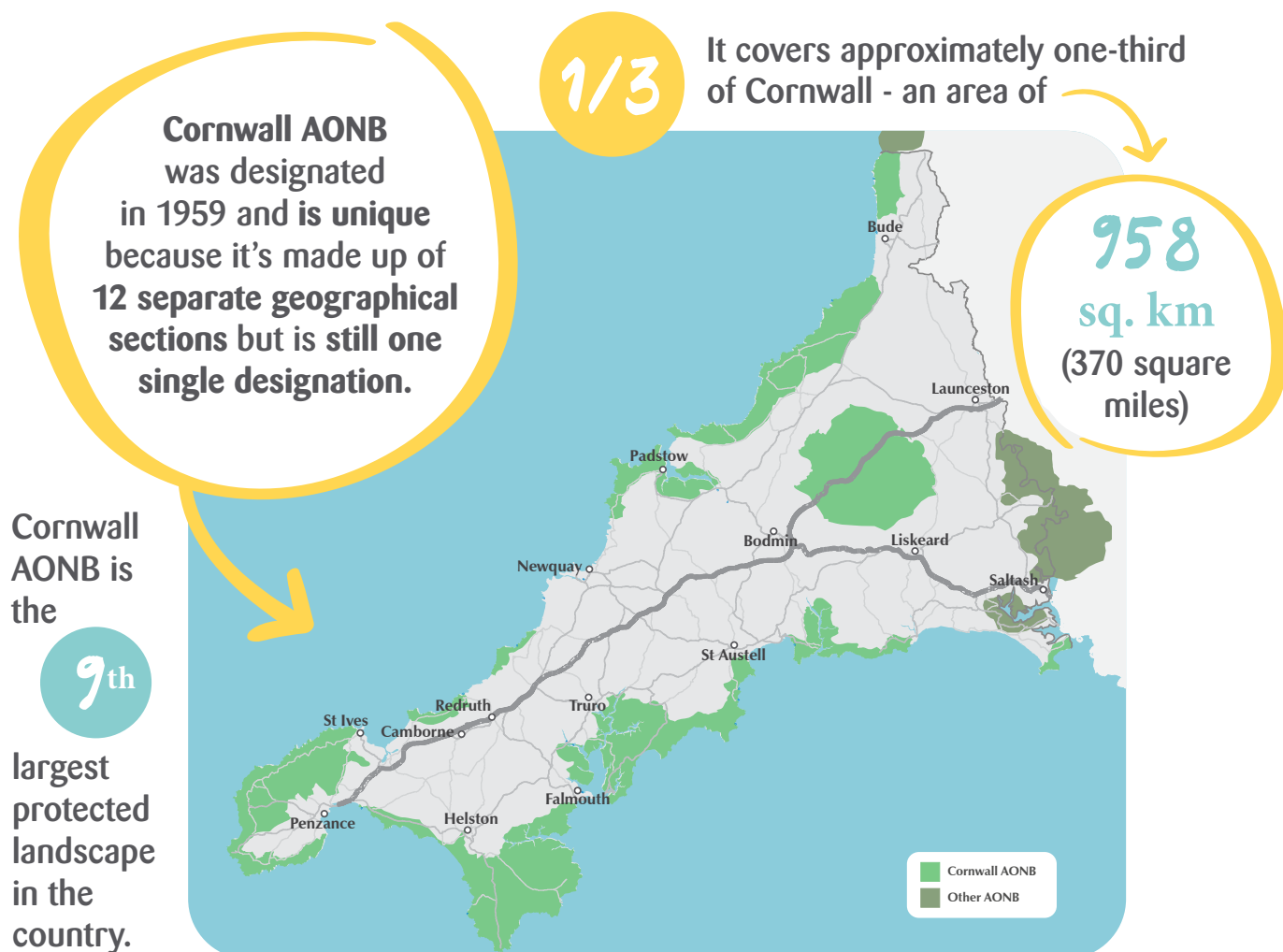
**Sunset at Trebarwith
Strand** | Myles Pinkey

Cornwall AONB – The Team

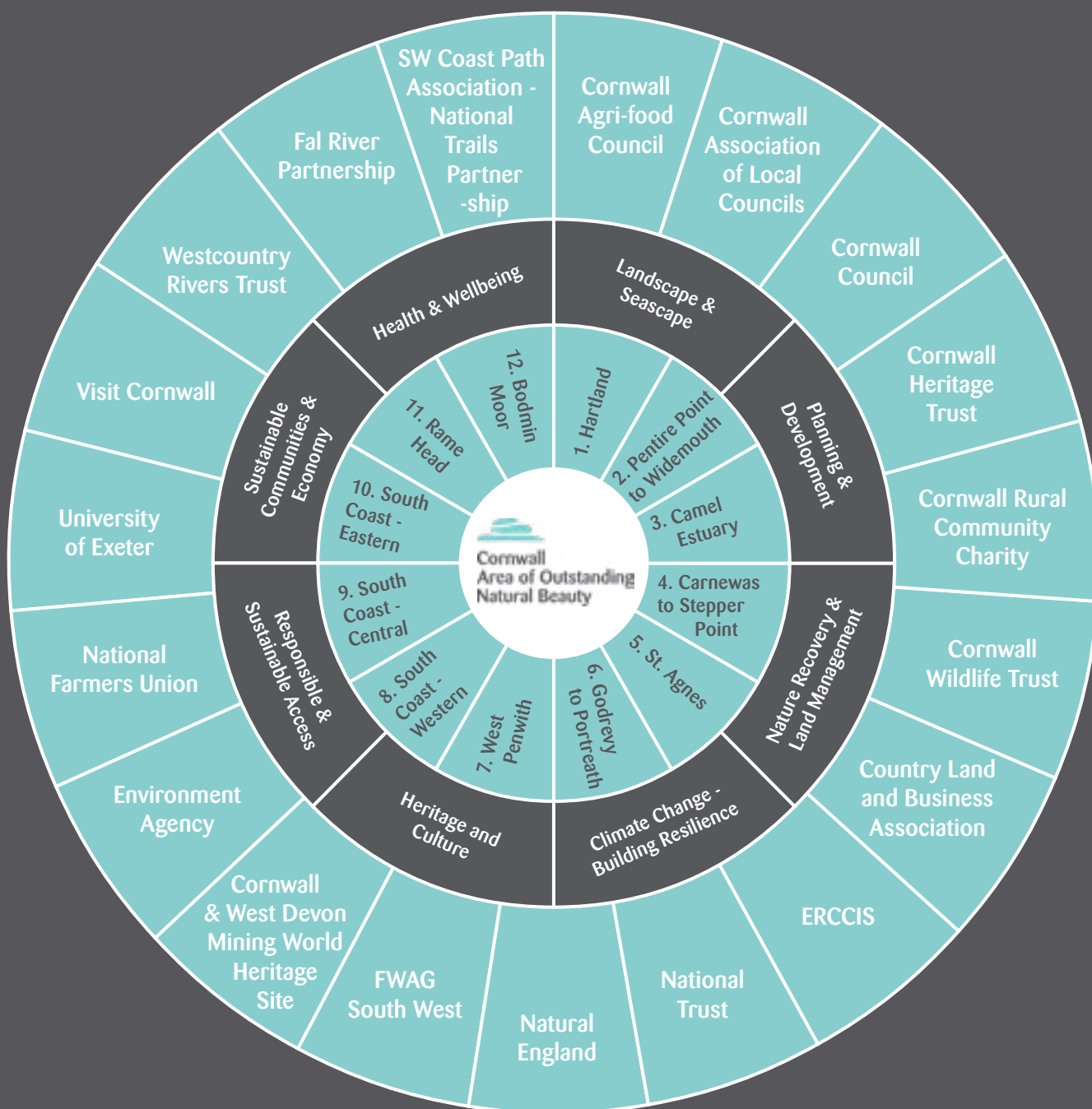


About The Cornwall AONB

Natural beauty goes well beyond scenic or aesthetic value. The natural beauty of an AONB is to do with the relationship between people and place. It encompasses everything - 'natural' and cultural - that makes an area distinctive. It includes the area's geology and landform, its climate and soils, its wildlife and ecology. It includes the rich history of human settlement and land use over the centuries, its archaeology and buildings, its cultural associations, and the people who live in it, past and present.



Cornwall AONB Partnership Wheel



Cornwall AONB | 12 Sections | 8 Aims | 20 Partners

Our partners are so important and we accomplish a lot together in order to conserve and enhance Cornwall's finest landscapes.

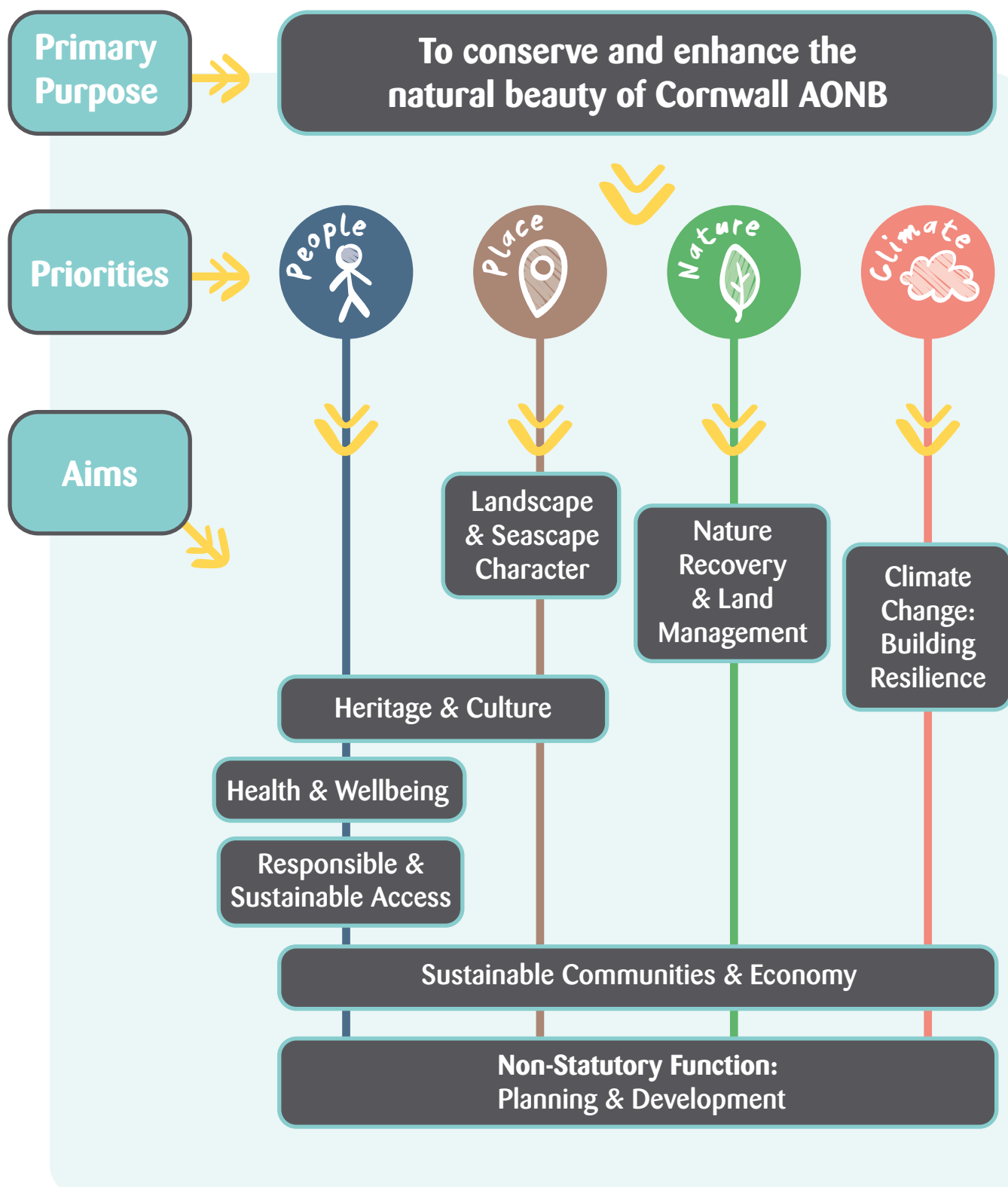
The Partnership meets three times a year to improve the management of the AONB landscape, through effective joint working. Its primary purpose is to implement the Management Plan.

As part of these meetings, the Partnership visits sites in the AONB to discuss issues with landowners and community members.

The Partnership is supported by an Executive Board which meets 3 times a year to help steer and advise on the work of the Partnership and AONB Staff Team.

Minutes of Partnership Meetings – [View minutes online \(cornwall-aonb.gov.uk\)](https://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk)

Cornwall AONB Strategy



Strategy for Cornwall AONB



St Anthony in Meneage,
looking up river | Jim Wood

The Management Plan sets out the vision of the Partnership for the Cornwall AONB and its Strategic management aims over the five-year plan period. It also incorporates the Delivery Plan detailing the projects and working groups upon which the Partnership wants to collaborate across the period.

The aims, policies and objectives provide the overall strategic approach to the management of the Cornwall AONB, please see Chapter 4 of the Management Plan for further details (pages 59 to 91)

The Aims outline the focus of the Cornwall AONB Partnership over the next 5 years and set our intention of activity and direction of travel for the duration of this Management Plan.

The Policies outline the principles on which decisions should be made on any matters or actions which affect the AONB. They provide the decision-making framework through which to achieve the AONB Management Plan purpose. The policies

have been built on an assessment of the key environmental, social and economic issues relevant to the AONB.

The Objectives provide tangible opportunities for collaboration to deliver the primary purpose, to conserve and enhance the protected landscape. The 12 Local Sections provide policies and objectives for the individual areas of the Cornwall AONB. The management plan Aims, Policies and Objectives can be found in the Strategy section of the plan



It's all part of the plan

**AONB Management Plan: this is
live and available on the AONB
website [Download here](#)**

- Downloadable PDFs
 - Summary document
 - Audio recordings of different sections of the plan
 - Audio recordings of the management plan were also communicated via our new Cornwall AONB podcast
-

Cornwall AONB has two overarching umbrella projects

1. **12 Sections One Designation**
2. **Bee Sustainable Bee Resilient**

Both of these are frameworks that represent multiple projects that the AONB deliver with Partners.

These frameworks are also directly aligned and intrinsically linked to goals set in the AONB Business Plan 2022-2027; to raise the profile of the AONB and for the AONB, Team and Partnership to be resilient and sustainable.

Please see link to the project delivery summary table within the **AONB management plan (pages 86 to 91)** .

12 Sections One Designation



More info on our current and past projects see our [Project Page](#)

Bee Sustainable Bee Resilient



More info on our current and past projects see our [Project Page](#)

The Cornwall AONB Farming in Protected Landscape programme (FiPL)

The Cornwall AONB Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) programme has continued to grow in terms of engagement with farmers and landowners, and the range of projects supported. We have provided grants to over fifty applicants delivering a huge diversity of activities under the People, Place, Nature and Climate categories – in doing so delivering on the priorities for both DEFRA and the Cornwall AONB Management Plan.

More info and case studies see [*Forming in Protected Landscapes*](#)

The graphic on the next page highlights what the programme has delivered to date against some of the key ecological and climate priorities of the moment. Through the programme we have targeted opportunities to improve soil health through a number of regenerative farming activities including mob-grazing, herbal leys and cover crops. These activities are enhancing carbon sequestration, natural flood management and wildlife habitats whilst enabling farm businesses to become more resilient when faced with global price fluctuations in fuel and fertilisers.



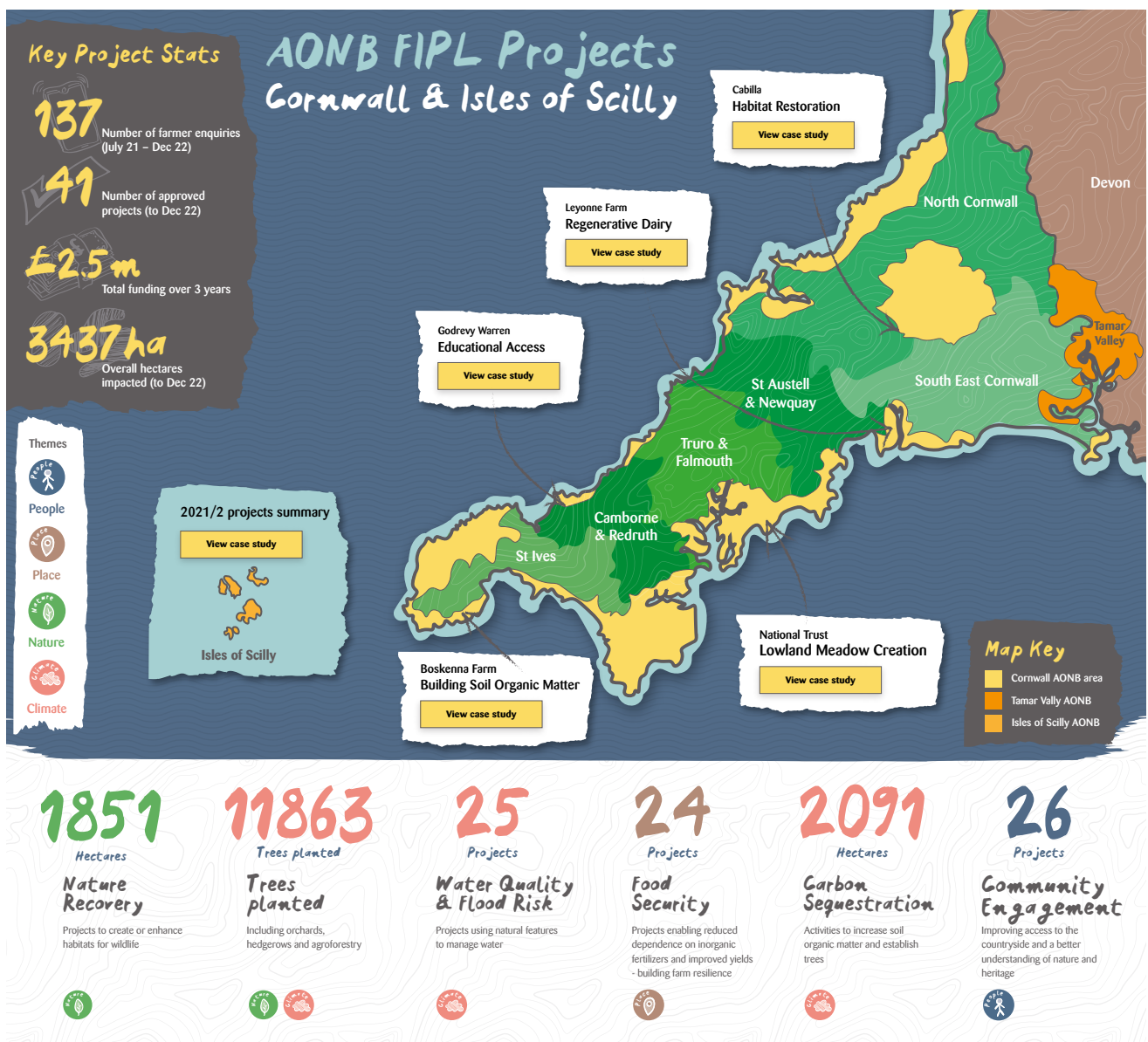
Children on a visit to a dairy farm

We've been able to support projects to conserve our rich heritage and new schemes to involve local people in training and volunteering to conserve their natural environment. During the year DEFRA have announced an extension to this scheme enabling it to continue into a fourth year.

[Link to full size interactive version](#)



Volunteers sowing wildflower seeds in Penwith



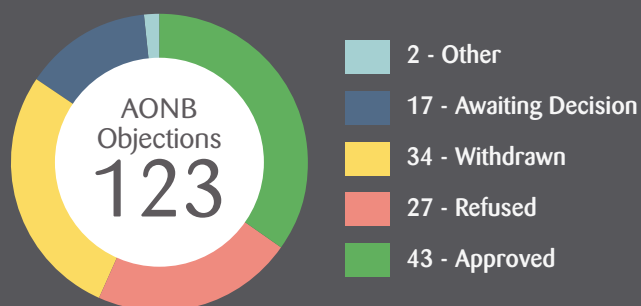
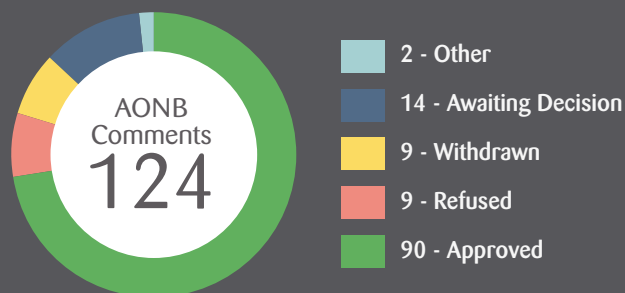
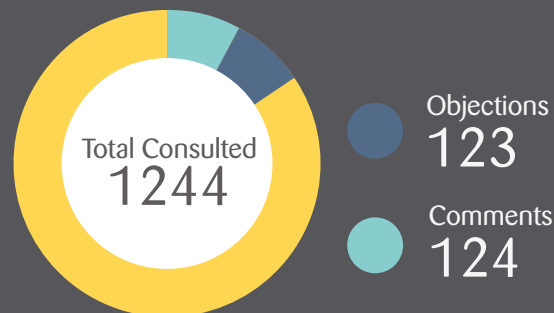
Planning and Development within Cornwall AONB in 2022

The Cornwall AONB Partnership is a non-statutory consultee on planning matters within the AONB. [View on our website](#)

In 2022 a total of 1,822 planning consultation requests were received (a decrease from 2,357 in 2021 and a 170% increase since 2017). The AONB Team provided objections to only 123 (ca 10%), whilst providing comment on a further 124 (ca 10%).

Our team was consulted on a total of 1,822 planning applications with 1,244 within the AONB in 2022

The planning outcomes of the applications we “objected to” or “commented on” are shown.



The greatest application/development pressure continues to be in 3 areas: South Coast Central, South Coast Western and West Penwith (accounting for almost two thirds of the applications within the designated landscape). There is a very strong correlation between proximity to the coast and the number of applications received.

The impact of individual and cumulative development pressure continues to be acutely felt in those areas most affected, with parts of the designated landscape suffering from appreciable change of character. Development pressure remains focused on new dwellings, “replacement” dwellings, new holiday accommodation, areas of housing provision on the periphery of villages, individual statement homes, and many opportunistic applications.

2022 saw the adoption of the new AONB Management Plan introducing the concept of a requirement for “landscape led” development. The AONB Team has provided specific training to both elected members and Area Planning Teams and continues to provide Pre-Application Consultations to help bring forward “landscape led” development proposals.

We have continued to be actively engaged in supporting Cornwall Council in the preparation of a new Landscape Character Assessment, representing the AONB and its primary purpose.

2022 has seen a very dramatic increase in woodland/forestry application consultations which has challenged resources. In response, the AONB Team has provided training for the Forest for Cornwall team and some of their consultants to facilitate their appreciation of the need for “landscape led” forestry and woodland creation within the designated landscape.

We have been fortunate to retain the services, and vital support, of two planning volunteers and secure an additional planning officer (2/5 FTE) bringing the total capacity to 1FTE.

Porthleven Pier | Matt Menhenett



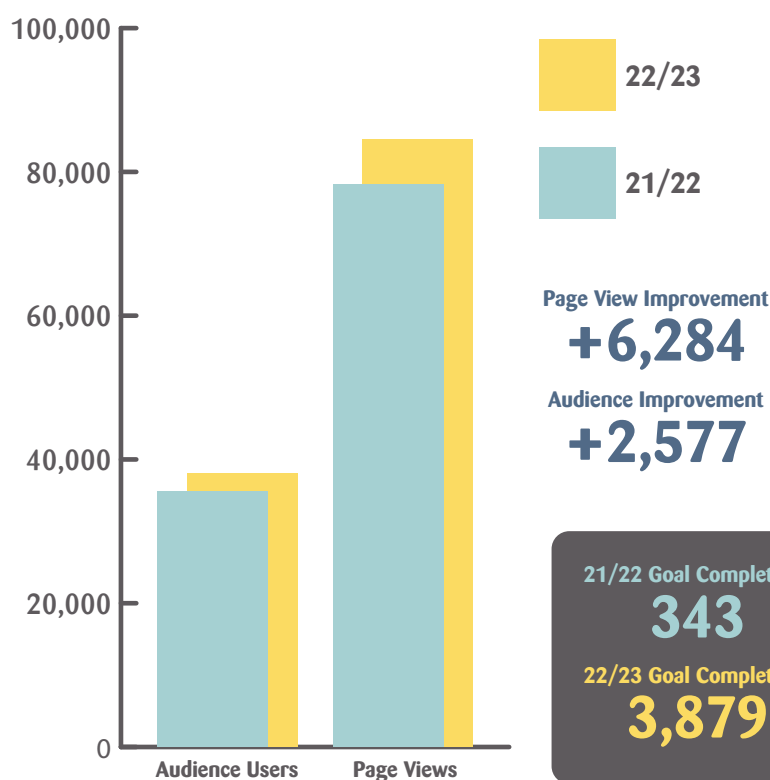
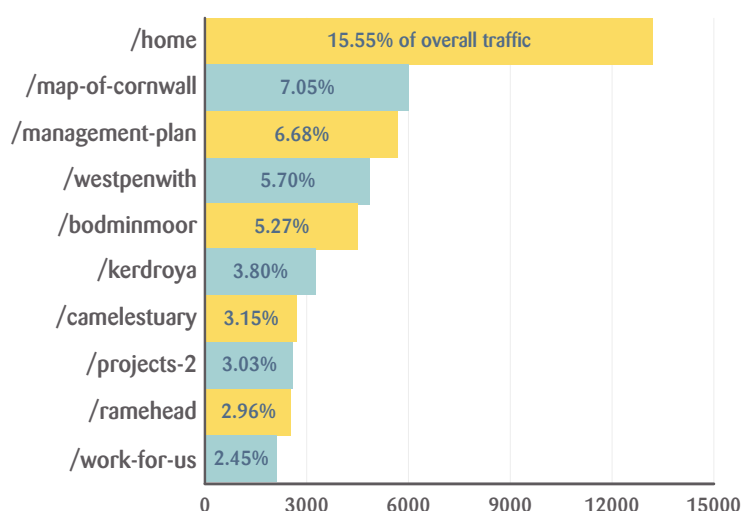
Communications – statistics and engagement

Communications – statistics and engagement

Development of AONB Communications Strategy

This year Cornwall AONB have developed a communications strategy to raise the profile of the Protected Landscape and our Partners who support us. The Communication Strategy sets out how we are going to be working across the next financial year – and beyond – and there are some great opportunities for future comms and events. The Cornwall AONB Business Development Officer will be leading on this strategy in 2023/24.

Website most viewed pages 22/23

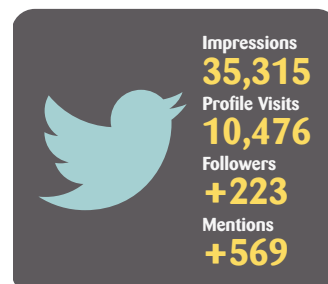
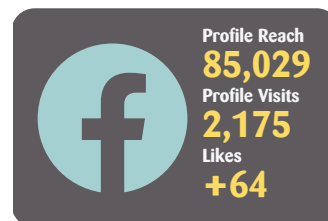
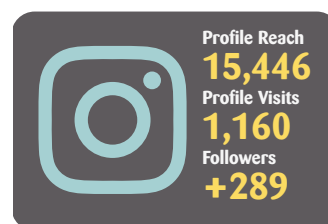


21/22 Goal Completions

343

22/23 Goal Completions

3,879



Feature Events of 2022

Cornwall AONB team's presence Royal Cornwall Show 2022



Our team at
The Royal Cornwall
Show 2022

The Cornwall AONB exhibited a stand in the Forestry Tent at the Royal Cornwall Show in June 2022. It proved really worthwhile to have a presence at the annual Show with lots of visitors to the stand and the AONB team engaged with many people during the 3 day event including farmers and landowners regarding the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme.



Feature Events of 2022

Cornwall AONB Monumental Improvement's King Arthur's Hall Event

The Cornwall AONB has continued its steadfast commitment to the preservation and enhancement of Cornwall's natural and cultural heritage, particularly the remarkable archaeological site of King Arthur's Hall.

This ancient monument, steeped in myth and history, is a captivating testament to Cornwall's past and a vital part of our local cultural landscape. In order to keep this monument in prime condition, regular maintenance activities were conducted throughout the year, including clearing vegetation and working on maintaining the surrounding paths for visitor access.

In addition to conservation efforts, the Cornwall AONB has focused on making King Arthur's Hall a dynamic hub for education and community engagement. Various activities have been held on-site, providing visitors with an immersive experience that blends history, folklore, and natural beauty. This has included guided tours, school visits, and local events, designed to foster a deeper understanding of Cornwall's heritage and the importance of preserving it. The Cornwall AONB's work at King Arthur's Hall has been a shining example of their dedication to conservation, education, and community engagement.

[View more online](#)



Day 1 of the excavation



Close up of the trench

Feature Articles of 2022

Cornwall weekly newspapers – AONB Environment page

36 CORNISH GUARDIAN WEDNESDAY MARCH 23, 2022

ENVIRONMENT COLUMN, CO-ORDINATED BY THE CORNWALL AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY UNIT

Surveying Cornwall's scheduled monuments

By LINDS FORTH AND NATALIE HALE
Cornwall AONB Monumental Improvement
Team (2022)

THROUGHOUT the early months of 2022, the Cornwall AONB Monumental Improvement project has been working with South West Archaeology to carry out a programme of geophysical surveying across seven scheduled monument sites, aiming to better identify these unique historical landmarks.

Geophysical surveys allow us to see beneath the soil and identify archaeological features to a depth of around 1.5 metres by mapping contrasts between the soil and archaeological remains.

Historic England explains that readings from specialised equipment are collected systematically using a range of instruments to measure the magnetic, electromagnetic and moisture contrasts associated with archaeological features. Magnetometers, earth resistance meters and Ground Penetrating

In Maltonians at
Lynnan Gully



Press cutting from
the Cornish Guardian

The AONB team continued to co-ordinate the Environment page articles in the weekly Cornwall newspapers which are printed in the West Briton, Cornish Guardian and The Cornishman.

Articles are written by a range of the Cornwall AONB Partnership organisations and wider Cornwall AONB stakeholders and community groups as well as the AONB team. The AONB logo appears on the page each week with the strapline 'Environment page, co-ordinated by the Cornwall AONB' so it provides excellent publicity for the AONB and the range of work and activities taking place.

Thanks to Westcountry Rivers Trust; FWAG South West; South West Coast Path Association; Cornwall Council Nature Recovery Team; Cornwall Heritage Trust; and the World Heritage Site team; who were some of the contributors to articles during the year on a range of interesting topics such as invasive species; farmland birds; pledge for nature; trailblazer walks; and preserve and strengthen Cornwall's heritage.

Some of the articles written by the Cornwall AONB team are also posted as blogs available on the website such as: [MY FIRST 6 WEEKS](#) and [BUSINESS ADMIN ADVENTURES](#)















AONB Management Plan - Monitoring & Measuring performance


























The AONB Management Plan Chapter 5 discusses the approach to monitoring and reporting on the progress of delivery.






The AONB team have conducted a complex review of the delivery of the management plan policies and objectives with the purpose of reporting progress to the Partnership and producing a gap analysis of those objectives not fully achieved or unassigned, this will then become an active element of decision making












when we review our project pipeline, to aid and ensure we are on track with full delivery of the management plan.

The following table shows the results of the first year of delivery against the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and planning measures, data collected and reported by the AONB team.

Key Performance Themes	Key Performance Indicators	5 year Target: 2022-27	Priority	Year 1 results 22/23
1. Land where natural beauty has been conserved or enhanced through the work of the AONB and in support of Cornwall's Nature Recovery Network	Hectares of habitat conserved or enhanced for biodiversity	400	 	2342.21/ 585%
	Length (metres) of Cornish Hedges conserved or enhanced (managed, gapped-up, extended or restored)	4,000	  	12974/ 324%
	Area of new habitat created (Ha)	200	 	364/ 182%
	Number of new habitat connections created	300	 	13/ 4%
	Number of small- scale initiatives to improve for nature	50		55/ 110%
	Number of Ha restored for carbon sequestration	400		3007/ 752%
2. Cultural Heritage assets where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced through the work of AONB	Number of SMs where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced	60		17/ 28%
	Number of heritage assets (non-scheduled) where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced	100		5/ 5%
	Number of cultural heritage features better interpreted or understood	60		19/ 32%

Key Performance Themes	Key Performance Indicators	5 year Target: 2022-27	Priority	Year 1 results 22/23
3. People engaged through the work of the AONB Partnership	Number of volunteers	180		185/ 103%
	Attendance at events convened / organised by AONB Teams	4,400		1146/ 26%
	Number of young people (<18yo) engaged with	120		536/ 447%
	Number of farmers/land managers engaged with	1000		244/ 4%
	Number of people engaged with Health & Wellbeing activities	530		217/ 41%
	Number of people engaged with via AONB publications; Tier Teg, Environment Page, Cornwall Life, Voice	250,000		9155/ 4%
	Number of people engaged through social prescribing	100		29/ 29%
	Number of people engaged with the AONB from under represented groups	200		37/ 19%
	Number of people engaged through social media	50,000		15908/ 32%
	Number of community groups engaged	70		28/ 40%
	Number of Schools and Youth groups engaged	30		14/ 47%
	Number of attendees at training sessions or workshops	400		817/ 204%
	Number of AONB waymarkers, & visual plaques	20	 	12/ 60%
	Number of ELF grants issued by the AONB Trust	12	   	3/ 25%
	Number of art & culture events	60	  	181/ 302%
	Number of people engaged in climate change initiatives	400	   	80/ 20%

Key Performance Themes	Key Performance Indicators	5 year Target: 2022-27	Priority	Year 1 results 22/23
4. Partnerships / initiatives influenced by the AONB to deliver AONB Management Plan objectives	Number of partnerships where the AONB Team is part of the project / team / steering group lead	8		14/ 175%
	Number of partnerships where the AONB Team is a supporting partner	12		2/ 17%
5. Total value of work delivered directly or secured by the work of AONB	Value (£) of externally funded projects substantially influenced / generated by the AONB Team	684,000		863027.444/ 126%
	Value of volunteer days: professional skills £150, SemiProfessional £100, Unskilled £50	150,000		189537.5/ 126%
6. Natural Capital and ecosystem services appraisal by the AONB	Sections of the AONB where natural capital is recorded or further understood	3		5/ 167%

Planning	Planning Measure	Measures recorded Note: Externally driven, no targets. Recorded to analyse trends over time	Priority	2022 Numbers recorded
7. Development and land management schemes appraised or developed by the AONB	Number of Major 'development schemes' appraised – LPA planning applications			1 (outside AONB)
	Number of non-Major 'development schemes' appraised – LPA planning applications			1822(of which 578 outside AONB)
	Number of applications received			1822
	Number commented on			248
	Number in which AONB concerns were listed as a reason for refusal (or even approval)			Not available
	Number of appeal decisions which uphold AONB consultation response			Not available
	AONB specific policies included in NDPs			Not available
	Pre Apps provided			11 (total value £3,625)
	Number of other 'development schemes' appraised – Highways, Environment Agency, BT, DNO, private sector, etc.			22
	Number of National Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) appraised			0
	Number of 'land management schemes' appraised – eg. woodland management			29

AONB Core Financial Summary 2022/23

Income	£
Defra (*see notes below)	216,017
Cornwall Council (*see notes below)	66,331
National Trust	1,800
Planning pre-app consultation advice	3,625
Unrestricted income	23,164
Total Income	310,937
Core costs	£
Staff Costs	231,371
Office costs	11,316
Partnership & Exec Board meetings (most online)	363
National Association of AONBs costs contribution	3,789
Management Plan costs	2,528
Communications inc. Website costs	11,120
Total Core costs	260,487
Project costs	£
Bee Healthy Bee Happy	6,000
Raise the Profile and Awareness project	400
Farm Facilitation (FiPL)	10,000
Monuments Matter	6,000
Monumental Improvements	6,000
The Lizard Farm for Nature	3,000
Kerdroya	7,000
Projects total	38,400
Total expenditure	298,887
Final Balance – paid into reserves	12,050

Note 1 - Cornwall Council provided additional funding to contribute towards the cost of living payment for salaries.

Note 2 - Defra awarded additional 'Access' funding of £83,459 which was separate to the £216,017 core grant offer and enabled additional spend on capital projects to improve access and removing barriers to the Cornwall AONB. This has not been reflected in the above figures.



Cornwall AONB Trust

I was pleased to accept the role as Chairperson of the Cornwall AONB Trust on 25th November 2022. The Trust is an independent charitable organisation that has a strategically defined relationship with the Cornwall AONB.

Hugh St Aubyn | Chair of the Cornwall AONB Trust

We are developing our strategic vision for the Trust with a clear direction of travel, aligned with the values of the Cornwall AONB Management Plan and with objectives that support the two organisations. Whilst this is in development we have been continuing with our existing objectives to take on Business Supporters and issue small grant funding via our Environment Landscape Fund (ELF).

[Click here for more information on our charity](#)

We currently have 9 Business Supporters and during 2022-23 we supported 2 ELF projects with funding - Pemboa Flower Farm and Wildlife Groundswell. We have also been involved in several projects led by the Cornwall AONB such as the **NEIRF project** and this is a way of working we are keen to keep developing”.



Peregrine falcon at Carnewas | John Johnson

Cornwall AONB Partners



**Cornwall
Wildlife Trust**



Visit
Cornwall

