

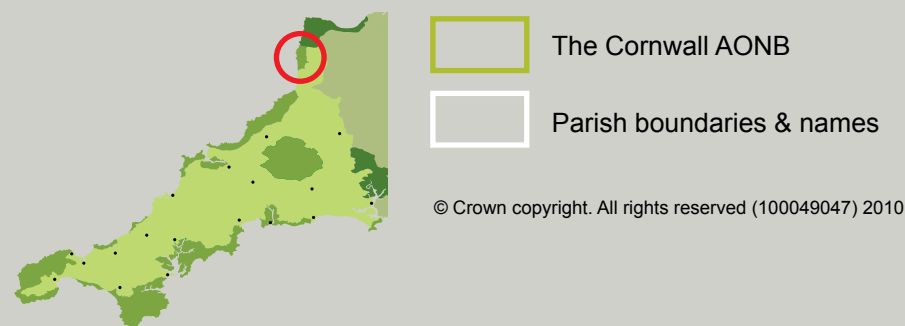


# Local Sections

“Cornish landscapes face many challenges which need to be met in ways which future generations will judge to have been far-sighted and unselfish.”

PETER MANSFIELD – CHAIR, CORNWALL AONB PARTNERSHIP





# 01 Hartland

## Location

The Hartland AONB section is located on the far north Cornish coast adjacent to the border with Devon, and includes the coastal strip from Marsland in the north to Menachurch Point in the south. It has strong links to the Hartland Peninsular which is part of the North Devon AONB.

## Extent

Approximately 2,600 hectares or just over 10 square miles forming just under 3% of the Cornwall AONB.

## Statement of Significance

The superb coastal scenery of this less visited part of Cornwall includes sheer high cliffs of creased and distorted rocks and unstable scree-covered slopes. Below these, a striking wave-cut platform is exposed at low tide exhibiting the corrugated ridges of folded rock strata. These shores are punctuated occasionally by sandy coves and beaches at the mouths of stream valleys, notably at the aptly named Sandymouth.

To the north is a high rolling plateau of strong landforms giving the cliff tops a sense of grand scale whereas toward the south the elevation of the plateau decreases forming a much lower cliff line. Inland, the topography rises gently to a ridge dissected by numerous streams in steeply incised valleys. At the cliffs these form small waterfalls that tumble to the rocky narrow beaches and boulder-strewn shoreline below.

Near the sea and on the open elevated ridges there are extensive views, but away from the coast

the valleys are secluded and intimate. Coastal heathland edges the cliff tops, particularly in the north, whilst the steep valley sides inland are often clothed in broadleaved woodlands, some ancient, for example within the Coombe and Marsland Valleys. Unimproved acidic wet pasturelands on the heavy soils of the inland plateau, known as Culm grassland, are especially important for their unique flora.

The irregular boundaries of the small to medium-sized pastoral fields reflect ancient enclosure although partial removal of hedges in the 20th century has created some larger fields. Nearer the coast, recently enclosed former rough ground is now sometimes under arable crops and in the south in particular such larger recent fields can extend almost to the cliff edge. Inland there is a significant amount of dairy farming.

With its small hamlets and isolated farmsteads this section of the Cornwall AONB is sparsely populated and sometimes the landscape seems almost empty, especially inland. Building materials include local slates, sandstones, cob and thatch. Nestled on the side of a coastal valley, Morwenstow Church is a distinctive feature which retains significant original Norman stone work. Below this on a steep-sided cliff sits Hawker's Hut now owned by the National Trust, where the Reverend Stephen Hawker, of 'Trelawney' fame, used to compose his sermons and poetry.

Narrow lanes weave up and down the steep valley sides and cross streams on numerous small stone bridges linking fields, farmsteads and isolated dwellings lending a timeless air to the countryside.



## Management

- The National Trust manages land, especially around the coastline at Morwenstow and from Duckpool to Sandymouth, and uses ponies to graze rough coastal ground.
- Kilkhampton Parish Plan was prepared in 2003.
- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative plans include support for the Atlantic Coast and Valleys project, enhancing and extending characteristic habitats such as native broadleaved valley woodlands and coastal valleys which support significant biodiversity resources and are a key component of the coastal topography.
- The Atlantic Coast and Valleys project proposed rough grazing of cliff tops and valley sides to replicate a traditional farming landscape and its associated flora and fauna including restoring habitats favourable to the return of the Large Blue butterfly.
- The Action Plan for the Hartland Peninsula has been prepared for the adjacent North Devon AONB
- The Explore the Coast sustainable tourism project supports car free access and provision of greater information about the North Devon AONB.
- Much of the AONB coast is included in the Steeple Point to Marsland SSSI.

## Condition

- CPRE's tranquility, intrusion and night blight mapping shows Hartland to be the most 'undisturbed' Cornwall AONB section
- The large structures of the Morwenstow radio station are visually intrusive and widely visible.
- The Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) report that few areas of Culm grassland now remain in North Cornwall.
- Scrub and bracken encroachment affects coastal marginal land in some places especially within coastal valleys leading to loss of biodiversity and change in the landscape.
- Sycamore has established in native broadleaved woodlands.
- The Duckpool Roman period metallurgical sites immediately above the pebble ridge are subject to natural erosion and may in time be lost.
- In parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impacts on habitat connectivity and landscape character.

## Hartland Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP01.1** Seek reduction in landscape and visual impacts and better integration of holiday sites, visitor infrastructure and signage by respecting local character in external works, landscaping, site design and layout. Pay particular attention to the increase in scale, massing and associated development for example at Duckpool, Sandymouth and Morwenstow.

**GP01.2** Support the provision of affordable housing that maintains the sparsely populated settlement pattern characteristic of this section of the Cornwall AONB and which respect the local vernacular that makes the area distinctive.

**GP01.3** Require an assessment of the landscape, visual and cumulative impacts of proposals for tall structures that are likely to have more than localised impact, and require this to be assessed within the context of the evidence base including the emerging Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document. Those proposals which have an adverse impact on natural beauty should not be supported.

**GP01.4** Promote joint working with the North Devon AONB Partnership through the action plan for the Hartland Peninsular and the 'Explore the Coast' sustainable tourism project.

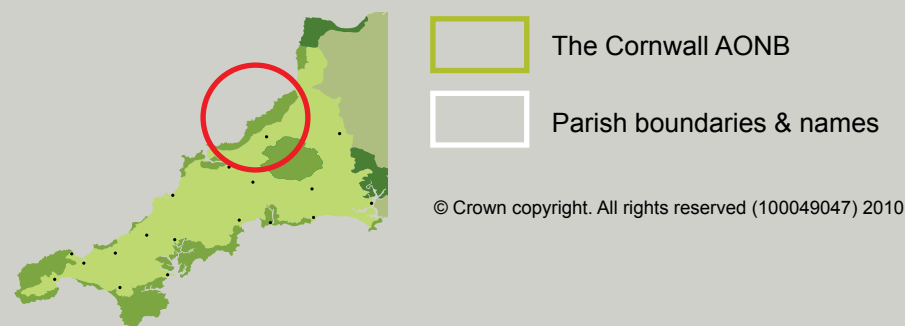


**GP01.5** Encourage the productive management of broadleaved woodlands for example at Coombe Valley, Stanbury, The Tidna, and Marsland Valley in a manner that is consistent with conserving and enhancing local landscape character and biodiversity.

**GP01.6** Support a wider landscape-scale approach to extending and connecting currently fragmented locally characteristic habitats. These include maritime cliffs and slopes, lowland heathland, species-rich grasslands and heath in coastal valleys, and the native broadleaved woodland found for example at Coombe Valley, Stanbury, The Tidna, and Marsland Valley. Consider small scale planting of local provenance native tree species such as sessile oak, hazel and alder to act as a future seed source for native woodland establishment where this is currently absent or sparse to assist subsequent natural regeneration.

**GP01.7** Encourage the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of elm disease including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more tree covered.





## 02 Pentire Point to Widemouth

### Location

This AONB section forms a coastal strip between Pentire Point in the south near Polzeath, and Widemouth in the north. Inland it is bounded by the B3314 in the south and further north by the A39.

### Extent

Approximately 11,900 hectares or 46 square miles forming just over 12% of the Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

This unspoilt rocky coast is strongly influenced throughout by the presence and power of the ocean. The rich geological interest includes folded and contorted shales, volcanic rocks and slates which form intriguing coastal features ranging from complex inlets, caves, coves, islands, and rocky stacks to blowholes and arches. Pentire Point which is made of pillow lavas is the location where the underwater origin of these rocks was first proposed. The highest cliffs in Cornwall are found at the aptly named 'High Cliff' although the coastline generally lowers further west towards Pentire Point. This rugged coast is punctuated by only a few sandy beaches.

Behind the coastline the undulating coastal plateau is cut by steep sided secluded valleys whose streams drain towards the sea. These valleys are especially deeply incised as they reach the coast at Boscastle, Crackington Haven and Millook Haven. East from Tintagel is the tranquil 'Rocky Valley' cut by the River Trevillet. This is a well known beauty spot famed for its spectacular scenery where huge slate walls tower over visitors enjoying the shady woodland walk past Bronze Age rock carvings and up to the breathtaking waterfall at St Nectan's Glen. The wild exposure of

the open coastal plateau and sloping elevated land contrasts strongly with the intimacy of the sheltered valleys. The lines of these valleys draw the eye inland across steadily rising slopes to the elevated Delabole ridge which lies parallel to the coast, physically and visually defining the inland limits of this AONB section.

Whilst windswept sculpted trees do occur occasionally in exposed farmland it is in the sheltered stream valleys where broadleaved woodland has a strong and sometimes luxuriant presence increasing the sense of enclosure. An extraordinary survival of extensive, ancient, pre-clearance coastal sessile oak woodland at Dizzard faces the full exposure from the Atlantic, clothing the cliffs with a continuous rolling canopy that conceals the unevenness of the unstable slopes below. Elsewhere, coastal heathland edges the cliffs and coastal valley mouths.

The landscape is dominated by the open expanse of green pastoral fields although some arable cropping adds variety. The strong network of small to medium sized fields with irregular boundaries overlays the rolling landform but gives way at the higher ground along the ridge to larger straight sided fields recently enclosed from former upland rough ground. The generally treeless and sparsely vegetated Cornish hedges are often built with tightly packed alternating diagonal slate courses, locally called 'curzy way'. There are remarkable survivals of Medieval open field strip farming some of which are still in active management, as at Forrabury, whilst others are preserved within later field patterns. A network of old narrow lanes meanders between the fields, sometimes sunken or edged with high hedges.

The settlement pattern is typified by hamlets and scattered farmsteads closely associated with the



pattern of medieval field enclosures lending a timeless air to much of the countryside. Small picturesque fishing villages along the coastline are now popular focal points for visitors for example at Port Quin, Port Isaac, Boscastle and Crackington Haven, some still harbouring small local fishing fleets adding colour and activity.

Around small harbours such as those at Port Quin, Port Isaac, Boscastle and Crackington Haven, larger settlements have developed and Tintagel has expanded onto the coastal plateau. Slate is the characteristic local building and hedging material varying from the mid hues of Delabole slate to the darker shades sourced at Trebarwith. The local slate industry led to the expansion of some villages such as Treknock and Trewarmett and the numerous small scale disused historic slate quarries are now a feature of the coastal landscape although slate quarrying operations continue within and near the AONB at a small number of sites.

Atop the protection of a rocky coastal promontory, the picturesque remains of the thirteenth century Tintagel Castle have a strong association with the legend of King Arthur and form an iconic north coast landmark. Adding emphasis to the historic dimension of the coast are prehistoric earthworks such as Iron Age cliff fortifications. The Rumps, at the most westerly end of the section is a promontory made of Dolerite, upon which are to be found the remains of a substantial Iron Age cliff castle, built to take advantage of the defensive benefits of the elevated coastal location.

## Management

- The National Trust manages significant stretches of the coast from Pentire Head to Port Quin and the Rocky Valley in the west, to Crackington Haven and Dizzard in the east. Ponies are used for grazing on coastal rough ground to control scrub encroachment.
- Parish Plans have been prepared for St Endellion and St Kew.
- Boscastle has recently been redeveloped after extensive flood damage using mostly locally characteristic materials including local slate and killas.
- Active quarrying operations are controlled under the terms of updated planning conditions approved under the 'Review of Old Mineral Planning Permissions'.
- Some steep valley sides typically have less intensive management and support a range of developing woodland, scrub or rough ground habitats.
- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative plans include protecting and extending coastal rough ground habitats.
- The RSPB promotes land management that supports the Corn Bunting.
- The Atlantic Coast and Valleys project proposed rough grazing of cliff tops and valley sides around Trebarwith to replicate a traditional farming landscape and its associated flora and fauna, including restoring habitats favourable to the return of the Large Blue butterfly.
- The Polzeath Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA) seeks to increase awareness, enjoyment and interest in the marine environment including its intertidal habitats and the splash zone.
- The coast from Trebarwith to Widemouth is designated SSSI.

## Condition

- Some modern housing at Boscastle and Tintagel does not respect local settlement pattern, vernacular or use of local materials.
- Wind farms including that at Delabole can have a negative visual impact.
- Some local stone quarries have not adhered to operational conditions or are poorly restored resulting in unnecessary landscape and visual impacts.
- Parts of some major roads are unnecessarily suburban in their detailing, vegetation maintenance, and roadside development.
- Overhead wirescape is visually intrusive especially in historic settlements such as Port Isaac and Tintagel.
- Areas of native broadleaved woodland characteristic of many steep sided valleys for example at Millook, Crackington and St Nectan's Glen are often unmanaged and in places colonised by sycamore.
- Some locally characteristic habitats are fragmented, e.g. coastal heathland, species rich grassland and native deciduous valley woodlands.
- Japanese Knotweed has colonised Rocky Valley and other valley systems.
- Scrub and bracken encroachment is a significant issue within coastal valleys leading to loss of biodiversity and change in the landscape.
- In parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impacts on habitat connectivity and landscape character.





# Pentire Point to Widemouth

## Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them.

Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP02.1** Seek reduction of landscape and visual impacts and better integration of existing holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, car parks and signage. Pay particular attention to the increase in scale, massing, associated development and respecting local character in external works, landscaping, site design and layout at Polzeath, Tintagel, Bossiney, Trewethett, and near Widemouth.

**GP02.2** Require an assessment of the landscape, visual and cumulative impact of proposals for tall structures that are likely to have more than localised impact, and require this to be within the context of the evidence base including the emerging Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document. Those proposals which have an adverse impact on natural beauty should not be supported.

**GP02.3** Support small scale existing slate quarries in order to allow controlled production for use in local works provided that these respect landscape character, topography and vegetation in their operation and restoration and minimise short and long term landscape and visual impacts. Support further measures to protect and enhance environmental quality when existing quarrying permissions are reviewed.

**GP02.4** Seek better landscape integration of the A39, B3314, B3263, and other major roads with their rural AONB setting by improved planting design

and management, reducing the impact of signage and lighting, use of non intrusive methods of traffic calming and characteristic use of local materials and hedging styles.

**GP02.5** Support initiatives for undergrounding visually intrusive wirescapes for example at Port Isaac and Tintagel.

**GP02.6** Seek conservation and enhancement of the undeveloped character of the coast; for example Witches Cauldron to Port Quin Bay, around High Cliff and around Dizzard in order to retain rugged and simple tranquillity and promote the enhancement of other parts of coast for example around Tintagel,

Boscastle and Port Isaac such that they return to having a more undeveloped character.

**GP02.7** Support a landscape scale approach to extending and connecting currently fragmented locally characteristic habitats. These include maritime cliffs and slopes, lowland heathland, lowland meadows, coastal native woodland as at Dizzard and native valley broadleaved woodland found for example in the Valency Valley, Millook Woods, Crackington Haven and St Nectan's Glen. Consider small scale planting of local provenance native tree species such as Sessile Oak, Hazel and Alder to act as a future seed source for native woodland establishment where this is currently absent or

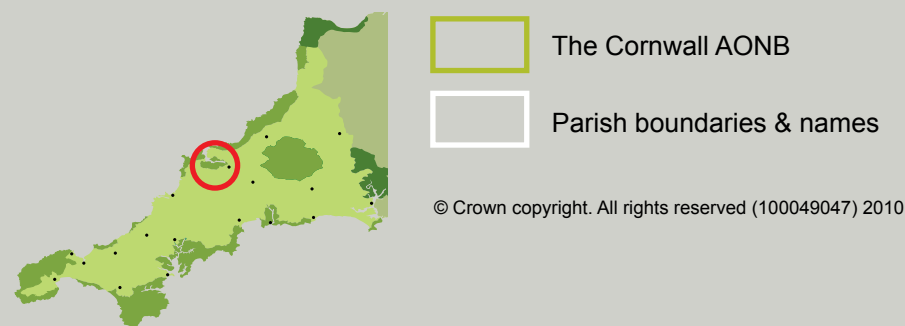
sparse to assist subsequent natural regeneration.

**GP02.8** Encourage the productive management of broadleaved woodlands, for example around Millook and Crackington, in a manner that is consistent with conserving and enhancing local landscape character and biodiversity.

**GP02.9** Encourage the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of elm disease including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more treed.







## 03 Camel Estuary

### Location

This AONB Section includes the Camel Estuary running west from Wadebridge to Padstow and the adjacent land. It is bounded by the A389 and the A39 to the south and west, and the B3314 to the north east and extends almost as far north as the edge of Rock, Splatt and Tredrizzick.

### Extent

Approximately 2,500 hectares or 9.5 square miles, forming just over 2.5% of the Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

This estuary landscape is unique on the north coast of Cornwall. At high tide the broad expanse of water, reflecting the sky, laps at banks of exposed slate bedrock whilst at low tide extensive mud flats and sandbanks are exposed in a daily cycle of changing character. The estuary is nearly a kilometre wide at the boundary of the AONB section between the fringes of Rock and Padstow and remains a broad expanse of open tidal water right up to Wadebridge. At the inland head of the main estuary near Wadebridge, the Amble Marshes form a level area where water and land intermingle giving rise to valuable salt marsh habitats that are attractive to wildlife such as wading birds.

From the waters edge the land rises gradually in gently rolling slopes that form the sides of the Camel Valley. Cant Hill however, rises sharply adjacent to the estuary forming a prominent rounded and steep sided landmark which results from the localised presence of harder underlying igneous rock. Small tributary streams incise the gentle undulating slopes to form a network of subtle shallow valleys. These tributaries gather at side waters such as Little Petherick and Pinkson Creeks, creating great variation along the estuary's edge.

The estuary gives an impression of vast openness and scale with long range views toward the sea that contrast strongly with the sheltered tranquil intimacy of the creeks and tributary valleys. The slow passage of small boats adds animation and emphasises the extent and scale of the water.

This is primarily a green pastoral landscape largely of improved grassland but with significant inclusion of arable use. Smaller fields with irregular boundaries are common, indicating medieval enclosure, but these mix with larger more recent regular shaped straight sided fields, for example north of Cant Hill, but due to the shallow slopes the overall field pattern is not dominant. The Cornish hedges enclosing fields are built of local slate and on some the bare stone work of the locally characteristic herringbone pattern can be clearly seen.

The mudflats of the sheltered creeks and the Amble Marshes support reed beds and narrow bands of native broadleaved woodlands edge the small tributary stream valleys together adding to the sense of enclosed shelter. Away from the full force of the wind hedges are topped by mature trees such as Oaks and Willows. With greater exposure to Atlantic winds close to the estuary mouth, woodlands and trees become less frequent and eventually are almost absent. The estuary sides and its mud and sand flats are home to a wide variety of birds including wildfowl such as widgeon, long tailed duck, goldeneye, divers, grebe, and heron, little egrets, cormorants, oystercatchers and gulls along with many species of waders. Migrant birds visit throughout the year. Otters frequent the Camel and have been sighted locally.

The long history of human occupation is indicated by this area having one of the highest densities of recorded cropmark sites in Cornwall, many being Romano-British rounds (settlements).



## Management

This is a sparsely populated landscape whose settlement pattern retains the dispersed medieval scatter of clustered farmsteads and hamlets where grey slate is the dominant building material. Small lanes bound by high hedges and overhung with trees are worn by long use into exposed slate bedrock as they wind around fields and lead down to dead ends at the barrier of the waters edge. There are numerous small quays around the estuary and its creeks. At the head of the estuary the Amble River is spanned by a many arched historic stone bridge which forms a prominent local landmark.

The bed of the former railway track along the southern side of the estuary now forms the popular multi use Camel Trail linking Bodmin and Padstow and lending a sometimes busy air to this otherwise tranquil and simple landscape. In 'John Betjeman's Cornwall' this now closed rail route was immortalised as "the most beautiful journey I know".

- St Minver, St Kew and Padstow Parish Plans along with Wadebridge Town Plan have been prepared.
- The 18 mile long multi use Camel Trail is managed by Cornwall Council.
- The Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative aims include: 'Coast To Coast' to link river and valley habitats including native broadleaved woodlands and wetlands from the Camel to the Fowey estuary via river valleys around Bodmin Moor in order to reinforce wildlife corridors. There are local aims to extend and enhance the Amble Marshes.
- The Amble Marshes SSSI Water Level Management Plan (WLMP) is being implemented in partnership between landowners, the Environment Agency and Natural England through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreements and in consultation with the local

community. The objective is to restore and enhance habitat conditions for wading bird species, both wintering and breeding.

- Whilst the Camel river and valley outside the AONB is designated a SAC the estuary does not have such protection.
- The Camel Estuary Initiative established in 1994 aims to enhance and maintain the natural quality of the Camel by co-ordinating effort and promoting wise use of the resource.
- The Camel Estuary Management Plan was published by the Padstow Harbour Commissioners on behalf of the many users of the estuary.
- The Camel Estuary Advisory Group has been established with representatives from bodies with a legal responsibility for the estuary.

## Condition

- CPRE's tranquillity, intrusion and night blight mapping shows the most 'disturbed' (i.e. least tranquil) section of the AONB is the Camel Estuary largely due to the proximity of major roads including the A389, B3314 and the A39 which lies partially within the AONB along with the adjacent urban settlements of Padstow, Rock and Wadebridge.
- Some historic Cornish hedges have been replaced by wire fencing although some of this is from recent division of former downland.
- Broadleaved woodlands are mostly unmanaged at present.
- In parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impacts on habitat connectivity and landscape character.





## Camel Estuary

### Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP03.1** Seek the highest standards of design consistent with local vernacular in all development within, adjacent to or visible from the AONB for example at Padstow, Rock, Splatt, Tredrizzick and Wadebridge, provided that this includes enhancement of the settlement edges and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Camel Estuary.

**GP03.2** Support settlement growth to accommodate affordable housing for example at Padstow, Rock, Wadebridge and St. Issey provided, where relevant, this includes enhancement of the settlement edges and also conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Camel Estuary.

**GP03.3** Seek reduction of impacts on landscape character and tranquillity from major roads such as the A39, A389 and B3314 by for example reduction in street lighting, reduction in signage, less intensive management of roadside vegetation, non intrusive methods of traffic calming and local hedging styles and materials in highway works.

**GP03.4** Seek retention of the quiet rural character of small lanes such as those leading from settlement edges and off major roads to the edge of the estuary.

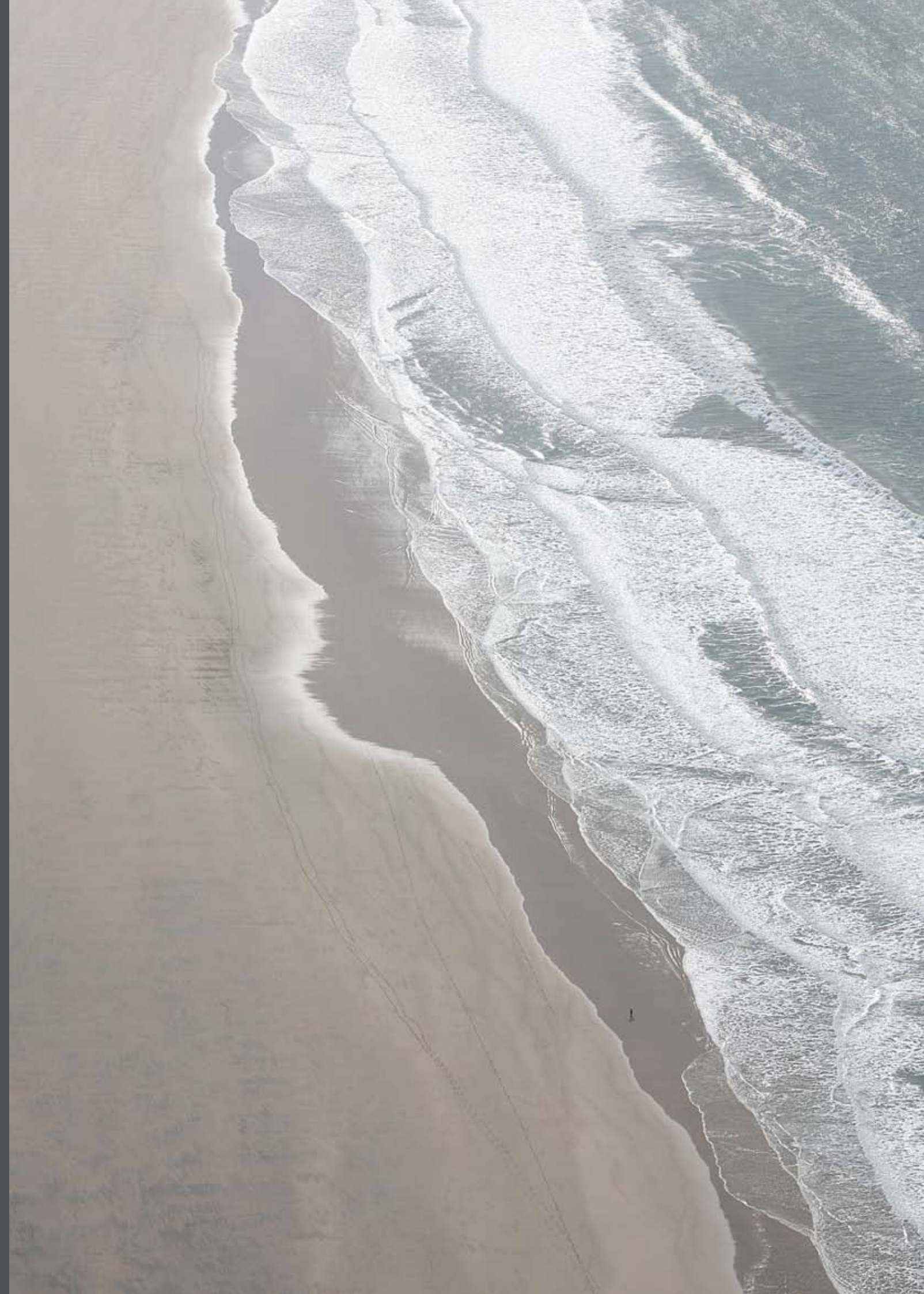
**GP03.5** Promote the co-ordinated management of the activities taking place on the Camel Trail to ensure that they do not detract from tranquillity or visual amenity to the benefit of all users.

**GP03.6** Support a reversion to marshland in the upper reaches of the Camel Estuary, for example at Amble Marshes, where drainage and agricultural improvement has taken place in order to restore to favourable condition this locally characteristic and significant habitat in the context of a landscape scale approach to the enhancement of locally significant Biodiversity Action Plan habitats

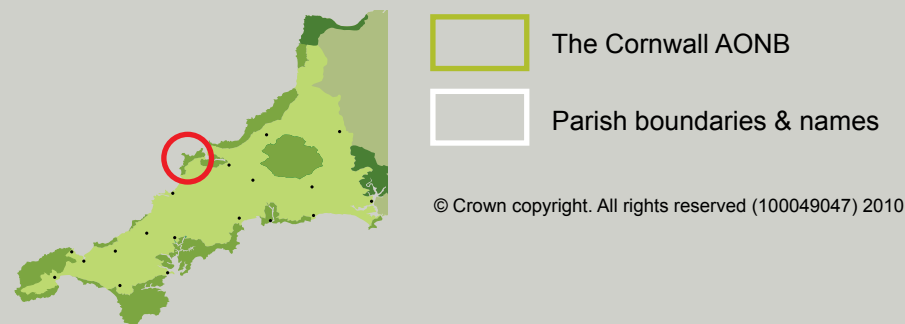
**GP03.7** Support proposals for enhanced status and protection of the Camel Estuary for its wildlife and habitats.

**GP03.8** Seek commitment to the protection of mature trees in surrounding settlements for example at the edge of Padstow, Rock, Splatt and Wadebridge in order to conserve their contribution to local landscape character.

**GP03.9** Encourage the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of Dutch Elm disease including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more treed.







## 04 Trevose Head to Stepper Point

### Location

This section of the AONB is on the north coast, running south from Stepper Point near Padstow and the mouth of the Camel Estuary to Bedruthan. It is bounded to the east inland by the B3276 running inland between Porthcothan and Padstow.

yawning expanse of the Camel Estuary. Inland, despite being low lying, subtle variations in elevation allow visual appreciation of the wider local countryside.

### Extent

Approximately 2,400 hectares or just over 9 square miles forming 2.5% of Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

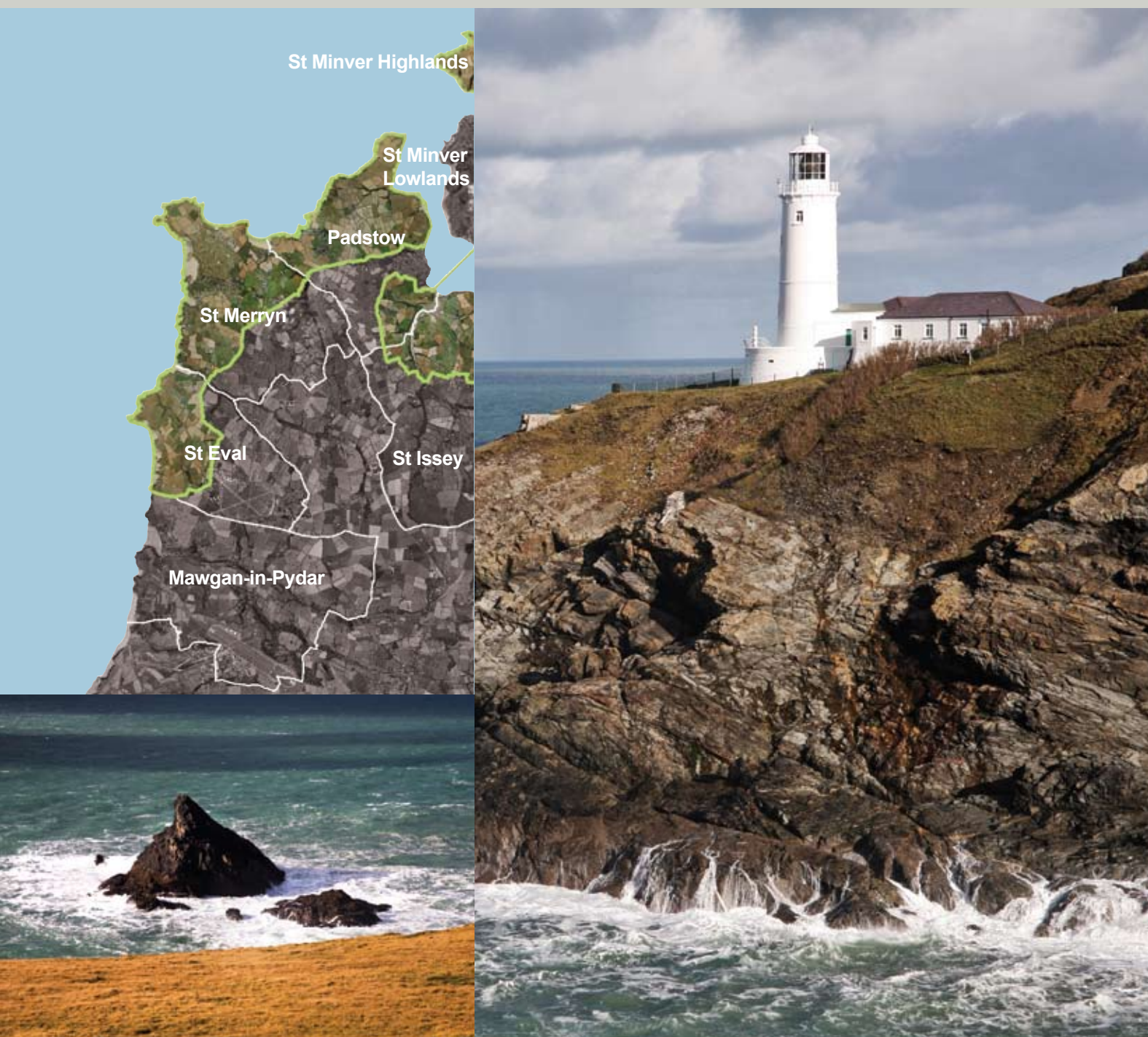
The varied coastal scenery in this section arises from diverse geology including hard greenstones which form high headlands, for example at Trevose Head and Stepper Point. The large and indented cliffs include the rocky stacks of the iconic Cornish cliffscape at Bedruthan Steps. Between these headlands readily eroded slates of varying softness give rise to numerous small coves and gentle sandy bays, such as at Porthcothan, Harlyn and Trevone. There are extensive coastal sand dunes at Constantine Bay. At Stepper Point the coast curves inland towards Padstow, past the secluded Hawker's Cove and further sand dunes at Tregirls Beach, forming the western side of the expansive mouth of the Camel Estuary.

Whilst the coastal headlands of harder rock are elevated, inland from the coast the underlying slates and siltstones form a softer low lying and gently rolling plateau stretching some distance inland before only gradually rising toward distant higher ground such as Bear Downs. Shallow valleys shape the soft landform with their slow local streams flowing quietly to meet the sea at sandy coves and bays. The high windswept headlands allow panoramic views and from Stepper Point these include the

In many locations the sparsely vegetated slate Cornish hedges display the characteristic 'Jack and Jane' herringbone pattern of alternating diagonal courses. Tamarisk, whose soft appearance belies its toughness against salt laden sea winds, tops many hedges near the coast creating shelter in an otherwise unremittingly exposed environment. Due to the exposure, there are few trees of any stature in this section; however some small stream valleys do have narrow strips of woodland along with small fens and reed beds giving nature a presence in the largely agricultural landscape.

Substantial arable farming adds seasonal changes to the otherwise dominant year round green of the improved grassland pastures of this intensively farmed landscape. Inland the pattern of mostly medium sized irregular fields has medieval origins including the pattern of medieval strip fields preserved in more recent boundaries lending unity to the landscape. Near the coast however there is a contrast in field pattern where recent enclosure of rough ground has created larger rectilinear fields often ending close to the cliff edges and in some places leaving just a narrow remaining strip of rough ground. At Bedruthan a more substantial extent of coastal heathland has survived enhancing the coast's rugged qualities. The sandhills on the upper slopes of Stepper Point, and behind Hawker's Cove, Harbour Cove and St George's Cove are covered with alkaline grassland and wildflowers, adding extra variety to the flora and fauna of the area.

The peaceful and wild nature found in much of this section contrasts sharply in places with its recreational aspects. The busy beaches of Harlyn,





Treyarnon and Constantine Bay are particularly popular for surfing with its associated paraphernalia of camper vans, surf shops and surf schools. The sand dunes at Constantine Bay are managed as a golf course and Prideaux Place on the edge of this section is registered historic parkland.

Numerous visible prehistoric features occur in the coastal strip ranging from cliff castles to barrows and inland there are many vestiges of Romano British Rounds (settlements). The current settlement pattern retains much that is typical of the Celtic west with a dispersed scatter of small farm hamlets many still named with the ancient Cornish pre-fix “Tre-”. Slate is the primary local building material and the widespread network of narrow winding lanes are either bound by slate hedges or in places cut into the bare slate bedrock further emphasising this ever present unifying local material. Larger nucleated settlements such as Constantine Bay and Trevone, and St Merryn on the boundary of the AONB, benefit from the popular local coves and beaches and busy tourist activity.

## Management

- The National Trust manages west facing coastal land at Porthcothan Bay, Park Head and Bedruthan Steps including the use of pony grazing for management of coastal rough ground.
- Padstow Town Plan and St Merryn Parish Plan have been prepared.
- The Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative aims to support RSPB targets for management to support farmland birds and Higher Level Stewardship is currently targeted at arable and grassland management to favour Corn Bunting.

- Pony grazing of coastal grazing is used in places to control scrub growth.

- The Bedruthan Steps to Park Head SSSI and the Trevose Head to Constantine Bay SSSI includes a significant part of the AONB coast.

## Condition

- Some holiday and visitor developments and infrastructure are intrusive by their location and design and cumulative effect.
- This area is subject to a large increase in summer visitors arriving by car and commercial tour vehicles causing significant peak season increase in traffic flows with associated congestion and pressures on some protected and sensitive habitats.
- Porthcothan is one of the few communities occupying a bay along this coast that has not been subject to significant commercial development.
- Some locally characteristic and protected habitats are fragmented
- Sand dunes at Constantine are subject to scrub encroachment
- Piecemeal minor additions to visitor sites have resulted in cumulative erosion of character and tranquillity at some popular locations.
- Large scale farming can have large scale impacts for example soil run off into the sea in heavy rainfall.
- Lack of grazing of coastal short grass and rough ground for example north of Porthcothan is allowing encroachment by scrub with consequent loss of biodiversity.

## Trevose Head to Stepper Point Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP04.1** Seek reduction of landscape and visual impacts and better integration of existing holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, signage and car parks. Have regard to increase in scale, massing, associated development and respecting local character in external works, landscaping, and site design for example at Mother Ivey’s Bay, Harlyn and Treyarnon.

**GP04.2** Support settlement growth to accommodate affordable housing to meet identified local needs at Padstow, Trevone, Porthcothan, Constantine Bay, St Merryn and Treyarnon provided that this enhances settlement edges, respects local vernacular including use of characteristic local materials and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB.

**GP04.3** Require an assessment of the landscape, visual and cumulative impact of future proposals for tall structures that are likely to have more than localised impact, and require this to be assessed within the context of the evidence base including the emerging Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning

Document. Those proposals which have an adverse impact on natural beauty should not be supported.

**GP04.4** Seek restoration of the quiet rural character of locally distinctive lanes, by reduced signage, lighting, noise and by traffic reduction measures for example including consideration of better routing for visitor and commercial vehicles and seek reduced car parking provision close to the coast.

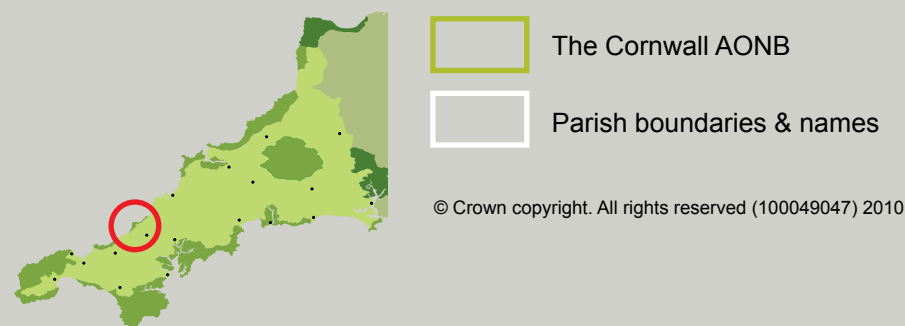
**GP04.5** Seek conservation and enhancement of the undeveloped character of the coast at Bedruthan Steps, Porthcothan Bay and Park Head and encourage the enhancement of the coast around Constantine Bay, St Merryn, Mother Ivey’s Bay, Harlyn and Treyarnon, towards having a more undeveloped character.

**GP04.6** Support a local partnership approach including the local community, Parish Councils, farmers, land owners, stakeholders and agencies toward seeking a more appropriate management balance between competing demands that impact on the rich natural environment and natural beauty.

**GP04.7** Support, through a landscape scale approach, measures to enhance and connect locally significant BAP habitats and to increase their protection from visitor pressures. These include: reed beds and rivers; lowland meadows that are favourable to birds; maritime cliffs and slopes; lowland heathland and coastal sand dunes such as Constantine Bay.







## 05 St Agnes

### Location

This section of the AONB is located near St Agnes on the north Cornwall coast. It includes a coastal strip extending from Porthtowan in the south, almost to Perranporth in the north.

### Extent

Approximately 650 hectares or just under 2.5 square miles, forming under 1% of Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

The St Agnes section of the AONB is dominated by the large granite intrusion of St Agnes Beacon rising from a surrounding undulating coastal plateau that is edged by high unstable slate cliffs. St Agnes Head stands fortress-like, surrounded by cliffs that rise sheer from the sea. The deep stream valleys that incise the plateau become especially steep sided where they emerge at coves, their streams flowing onto shallow sandy beaches expansively revealed at low tide.

The open windswept plateau affords expansive views north and south along the coast and from the Beacon there are also panoramic views far inland. The sense of exposure is emphasised by the almost unbroken extent of coastal heathland stretching behind the cliff edges and down into the sloping mouths of valleys. The heathland clad summit of the Beacon is framed and defined by an encircling network of green pastures.

Many remnants of the former mining industry including engine houses, chimneys, spoil heaps and shafts are scattered amongst heathland which has colonised much of the associated disturbed ground although large expanses of rocky bare ground,

stained rust with iron ore, still exist at Cligga Head, above Trevaunance Cove at Wheal Kitty, on Higher Bal and atop Mulgram Hill, between Chapel Porth and Porthtowan. The Wheal Coates Engine House seen against expansive coastal views and poised on the edge of the heathland clad coastal slope above Chapel Porth is widely used as an iconic image of the Cornish coast.

Fields are mainly rectilinear, of improved pasture and the numerous diminutive fields of historic miner's smallholdings, archetypical of the mining landscapes of Cornwall, are a distinctive element of the field pattern in this area. The surrounding Cornish hedges are typically of rubble stone local killas often incorporating unweathered mineralised mine spoil. Between the fields and across open heathland numerous old mining tracks are still in use providing a network of informal access.

Whilst there is a marked absence of trees in exposed areas, scrub and broadleaved woodland is developing along streams. Drainage from some old mine workings forms pools that support a wealth of wildlife. On the coastal slopes at the north edge of Porthtowan windblown sand including broken seashells supports lime-loving flowering plants that contrast with the heathland vegetation of more acidic soils.

Small villages and isolated cottages which once housed miners and their families shelter in the coastal valleys and have a rough appearance that complements the derelict engine houses. At Trevaunance Cove the huge granite blocks of a long ruined harbour are revealed at low tide lying scattered across the shore. Typical local building materials include killas walling, slate roofs and granite detailing.





Whilst mining exerts a strong historic influence, there are other visible historic remains including bronze age cairns on the beacon, an Iron Age Cliff Castle at Tubby's Head and more recently on the cliff tops east of Trevellas are the taxiways and dispersal points of a World War Two airfield now used for civilian flying.

#### Management

- National Trust managed property includes St Agnes Beacon and a strip of coastal land extending from Tubby's head through Wheal Coates, Chapel Coombe and Wheal Charlotte Moor just north of Porthtowan.

- Perranzabuloe Parish Council have developed a Management Strategy for Cligga Head.

- The Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscapes World Heritage Site includes almost all of this Cornwall AONB section

- The St Agnes Conservation Area Appraisal seeks conservation and enhancement of local settlement character and includes Trevaunance Cove inside the AONB boundary.

- Cornwall Council Historic Environment Service has prepared on behalf of the National Trust, proposals for a common approach to some areas of habitat and historic landscape management as a basis for shared agreement between stakeholders and funders.

- Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme includes most of the areas of heathland that include historic features.

- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative plans include linking up non designated habitats such as broadleaved valley woodlands.

- The St Agnes Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA) includes objectives to map, measure and survey the marine environment and its important coastal habitats.

- Most of the AONB coastline is included in the Godrevy head to St Agnes SSSI.

## Condition

- Existing development at the north side of the beach at Porthtowan is out of character in materials and form.

- Settlement expansion at St Agnes has extended onto the plateau outside the locally characteristic valley settlement pattern.

- Overhead power lines are especially intrusive in locations such as across the Beacon and around Beacon Drive.

- Perranporth airfield (partially in the AONB) includes some visually intrusive features.

- Some historic mine structures have not been stabilised hence remain vulnerable to progressive deterioration.

- Cligga Head has experienced problems with anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and use by off road vehicles.

- Footpath erosion of coastal heathland from informal routes occurs at Trevellas Coombe, Chapel Porth and Porthtowan.

- Broadleaved woodland is re-establishing in sheltered valleys but in the absence of significant locally native tree seed sources is dominated by Sycamore.

- Coastal heathland is in varying condition with some areas showing serial succession toward scrub vegetation.





## St Agnes Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP05.1** Seek reduction in landscape and visual impacts and better integration at existing holiday sites, caravan parks, holiday infrastructure, signage and car parks. Have particular regard to the increase in scale, massing and associated development and respecting local character in external works, landscaping, site design and layout at Trevellas Coombe, Trevaunance Cove, St Agnes Head, Cligga Head and Chapel Porth

**GP05.2** Support the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local need in locations with access to local services provided this respects historic settlement patterns and the local vernacular including characteristic use of local materials in buildings and external works and this conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB.

**GP05.3** Seek measures at the north side of the beach at Porthtowan to visually enhance existing development and car parking so that this becomes more in keeping with local character in materials, scale and design.

**GP05.4** Support initiatives to conserve engine houses, other mining structures and features and smallholders field patterns that are significant in the historic mining landscape. Important sites include Wheal Kitty, Wheal Charlotte, Polberro, Blue Hills and Wheal Coates.

**GP05.5** Seek reduction in the visual impact of overhead cables by undergrounding across the Beacon and around Beacon Drive.



**GP05.6** Seek conservation and enhancement of the expansive openness of the coastal plateau and Beacon to keep free from intrusive development and tall structures.

**GP05.7** Support measures to minimise footpath erosion of coastal heathland and soils at the north edge of Porthtowan, around Chapel Porth, Trevellas Coombe and Cligga Head.

**GP05.8** Support the implementation of Perranzabuloe Parish Council's Management Strategy for Cligga Head.

**GP05.9** Seek protection of the setting of St Agnes Beacon by conserving the extent and character of the surrounding farmland for example between it and the existing settlement edge of St Agnes, Goonvrea and smaller groupings of dwellings, in order to protect the landscape integrity of this key landscape feature.

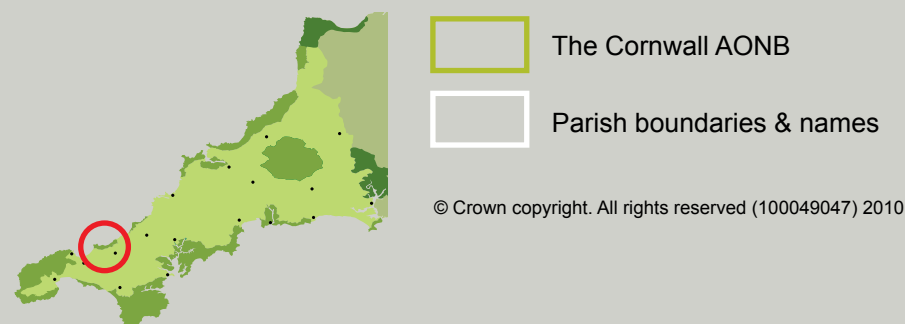
**GP05.10** Encourage the sympathetic management of Perranporth Airfield, for example by improvement of boundary features and sensitive siting and design of airfield infrastructure.

**GP05.11** Support the integrated management of historic landscape and habitats building on existing National Trust, World Heritage Site and Cornwall

Biodiversity Initiative aims. These habitats include: lowland meadows, post industrial habitats, maritime cliff and slopes, lowland heathland and native broadleaved valley woodlands.

**GP05.12** Promote regeneration of locally native tree species for example at inland and coastal valleys at Chapel Coombe, Trevaunance Cove and at Trevellas Coombe where this does not conflict with historic and World Heritage Site landscapes and heathland habitats. Consider small scale planting of local provenance native tree species such as Sessile Oak, Hazel and Alder to act when mature as a seed source for native woodland establishment to assist subsequent natural regeneration.





## 06 Godrevy to Portreath

Also known as 'North Cliffs'

### Location

North of Camborne between Navax Point in the west, the North Cliffs coast to the north, Tregea Hill to the east and the Red River to the south.

### Extent

Approximately 650 hectares or just under 2.5 square miles making up 1% of the Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

High cliffs of unstable soft Devonian slates, greywakes and siltstones are sculpted into small coves, small islands and numerous rocky stacks by the relentless pounding of the Atlantic Ocean. At Hell's Mouth and Hudder Cove precipitous drops fall sheer to the rocks and surf below. The coast at Godrevy Point however is softer in profile with a low rocky coast backed by gentle slopes just offshore of which is the low craggy outcrop of Godrevy Island topped by its landmark white lighthouse.

Behind the sharp cliff edge is a broad plateau. Unusually the land then slopes downwards away from the sea toward the valley of the Red River. This river flows parallel to the cliffs eventually emerging to cross open level ground near the coast adjacent to rounded stabilised sand dunes at Godrevy point and finally flows across the beach into the sea.

From the exposure of the open cliff tops there are panoramic views along the coast and inland that contrast with the enclosed intimacy of the valleys of the Red River and its tributaries. At Carvannel a single small local stream cascades through a notch in the cliffs to the rocky shore below.

The coastal plateau and landward slopes support mixed arable and pastoral farming. The mostly

large, recently enclosed, rectangular fields enhance the impression of expansive openness close to the cliff tops. However toward the mouth of the Red River anciently enclosed land with its much smaller irregularly shaped fields creates a distinct change in scale and character. The surrounding low stone Cornish hedges are clothed by rough vegetation mixed with occasional wind sculpted blackthorn and hawthorn.

An almost continuous belt of coastal heath interspersed with other coarse vegetation creates a varying texture that enhances the wildness of the abrupt cliff edge. Reaching close to these cliffs the woodland plantations of Tehidy are windpruned to a low sloping outer edge by the salt laden winds but gradually achieve greater stature with the progressively increasing shelter of the Red River valley. In spring the sheltered partially ancient Sessile Oakwoods woods are spectacularly carpeted with bluebells.

Along the course of the Red River and its tributaries are other areas of mixed broadleaved woodlands adding to the seclusion and shelter along the valley. The stabilised sand dunes at Godrevy include countless broken sea shells resulting in calcareous sandy soils where colourful flora such as cowslips thrive amongst the rough unenclosed grassland. The rocky coast of Godrevy Head is renowned for its readily observable and spectacular seal colonies.

Due to its geology, coastal land here is largely free of known historic mining remains unlike the adjacent AONB sections to the east and west. It is however rich in other important archaeological features including vestiges of prehistoric settlements and fortifications. Unusually it is along the course of the Red River valley that significant early industrial archaeology is found dating from the medieval period onward and possibly far earlier.



Settlement is sparse and limited to scattered dwellings and a few farmhouses. The only exception being the edge of Portreath which lies just inside the AONB boundary. Small quiet lanes and tracks connect the fields and dwellings whilst the still rural B3301 provides ready access to the numerous popular small informal car park view points adjacent to the cliff top coast path. At Tehidy the designed ornamental landscape and drives and the extensive and partially ancient sessile oak woodland is accessible by the many footpaths associated with its current use as a popular Country Park.

## Management

- The National Trust manage most of the coastal land including car parks, a café, toilets and the access road to Godrevy Head. Grazing by ponies is used to maintain coastal heathland.
- Gwinear – Gwithian Parish Plans have been prepared.
- Tehidy Country Park is managed by Cornwall Council who run educational and environmental activities.
- The Towans Partnership seeks to address local issues some of which affect the AONB.
- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative aims include linking up non designated sites – such as native broadleaved valley woodlands.
- The AONB coastline is included in the Godrevy head to St Agnes SSSI.

## Condition

- Some of the existing visitor development in the AONB at Godrevy and Hell's Mouth is out of character.
- It is anticipated that the access road to the car park at Godrevy Point will be severed by coastal erosion.
- At the Red River valley the historic environment and woodland not within Tehidy Country Park lack management.
- This section of the AONB includes the greatest proportion of SSSI land in 'favourable' condition.
- Developing broadleaved woodland along the Red River valley outside Tehidy Country Park is largely unmanaged and includes colonisation by sycamore.
- Coastal rough ground is in places subject to developing scrub growth.

## Godrevy to Portreath Guiding principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

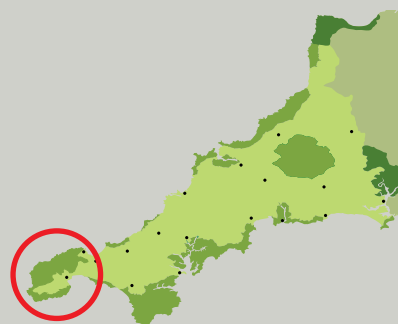
- GP06.1** Seek measures for the enhancement of the appearance of visitor developments and their setting at Godrevy and Hell's Mouth consistent with local vernacular for example, including locally characteristic use of killas in hedging and walling and granite detailing.
- GP06.2** Seek Community Infrastructure Levies and developer contributions for management initiatives within the AONB and Green Infrastructure links to the AONB from an early stage of proposals for urban expansion at Camborne, Pool, Illogan, Redruth (CPIR) and Hayle
- GP06.3** Seek protection of undeveloped and sparsely settled rural character and open views, free of tall structures.
- GP06.4** Seek conservation and enhancement of the rural character of all lanes and roads including the B3301 through the retention of hedges, narrow winding character and low levels of signage.
- GP06.5** Support relocation of the car park at Godrevy Point in the light of the anticipated future severance of the access road by the sea and restore the headland to natural coastal habitats.
- GP06.6** Seek improvement in the landscape integration of all locations used for visitor car parking including those at Godrevy and along the B3301 and North Cliffs.
- GP06.7** Seek use of locally characteristic slate in new stiles and steps and other rights of way works



in a manner consistent for example with those found near Godrevy Point in order to reinforce local character along the coast path and other footpaths. Consider new design solutions that enhance access for those with mobility impairments.

- GP06.8** Support awareness-raising and a sense of ownership and responsibility for the AONB in the communities of nearby settlements including Camborne, Pool, Redruth, Illogan, Hayle, and Portreath.
- GP06.9** Support measures to reduce anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping, fires and dumping of cars at coastal car parks such as Tehidy North Cliffs, Godrevy and smaller informal parking along the B3301.
- GP06.10** Support a landscape scale approach to the integrated management of the historic and natural environments including linking across and beyond the AONB existing habitats such as native lowland mixed deciduous and particularly Sessile Oak woodland; coastal sand dunes; rivers; maritime cliffs and slopes; lowland meadows favourable to birds; lowland heathland and reedbeds.





- The Cornwall AONB
- Parish boundaries & names

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## 07 West Penwith

### Location

This AONB section includes the most westerly part of the Cornwall peninsula. It extends westwards from the western edge of St Ives, around Cape Cornwall and inland to include the central Penwith Hills (also referred to as the downs or moors). From Sennen Cove and Land's End the AONB narrows, being bounded inland by the A30. Eastwards of this, the AONB remains mostly south of the B3315 extending to Penlee Point just east of the coastal village of Mousehole.

### Extent

Approximately 14,000 hectares or just under 54 square miles, forming nearly 15% of the Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

Unremitting exposure to the full force of the sea at this western extremity of mainland Britain has sculpted the hard granite coastline into a sequence of headlands punctuated by occasional small coves and cut by substantial chasms locally known as 'Zawns'. The cliffs along the north coast are rugged and sloping but at the south become impressively precipitous and vertical jointed. In the south west between Gwennap Head and Lands End the rocky shores form a series of especially wild bays with sea caves hewn into the tough granite by the power of the Atlantic waves whilst in the south the coast is much indented by rocky coves between precipitous headlands. There are only a few beaches, the most notable of which is at Whitesand bay, east of Sennen where the extensive white sands are backed by partially stabilised dunes.

Meeting the rocky cliffs is an elevated coastal plateau. Round the south and west coasts this is undulating rising gradually inland. Along the north coast between Morvah and Rosewall Hill however, the coastal plateau forms a narrow shelf-like band of almost imperceptible slopes bordered and defined at its inland edge by a sharp transition to the steep sides of the central hills. These downs form a spine of rounded, elevated and exposed moorland tracing an undulating horizon punctuated by prominent heavily weathered granite outcrops for example at Rosewall Hill, Zennor, Carn Galver, and Carn Kenidjack. This high ground stretches from Trencrom Hill in the East to Chapel Carn Brea in the west with its highest point midway at Watchcroft near Morvah. Due to their scale much of the higher central Hills appear open but especially at lower levels there is an extensive network of small irregular enclosures, many of prehistoric origin, showing successive modifications over the passing centuries.

Long range views over a seemingly endless ocean and exposure to the elements are typical but contrast with the intimacy and enclosure found in the shelter of secluded valleys. On a clear day, from the upper slopes of the North coastal plateau and the central Hills, the Isles of Scilly can be seen shimmering on the far horizon.

The network of tiny irregular pasture fields on the north coast bound by granite Cornish hedges are prehistoric in origin and deemed by many to be among the oldest surviving man made structures that have been in continuous use for their original purpose since they were made, many being older than the Egyptian Pyramids. Cornish hedges in West Penwith have a construction markedly different from elsewhere in Cornwall. Large granite boulders, or "grounders" act as a foundation for irregular





upper courses of varying sizes of weathered granite taken straight from the surface of the moor. Some have little vegetation other than perhaps a sparse topping of rough growth whilst others support windswept gnarled thorn bushes.

In the south, the remains of now mostly abandoned tiny terraced bulb fields occur on coastal slopes and inland to the South despite agricultural modernisation, fields remain small with markedly irregular boundaries showing their early origin, The less exposed south has much of the better agricultural land in mixed arable, pastoral and horticultural use including potato and daffodil production with their distinctive seasonal patterns and colours. The impoverished soils of the central downs were formerly important for grazing and whilst this still continues the main purpose of the grazing has moved towards conserving biodiversity.

Coastal heathland and rough ground is extensive,

adding to the air of untamed exposure and contributing sometimes breathtaking seasonal variation in colour from the yellow of gorse, the carpets of bluebells, the magenta of heather and the fresh greens of summer to the warm browns of dead bracken in autumn. Moorland vegetation has its own spectacular seasonal colours. The Western Heath includes Heathers, Western Gorse and rough grasses sometimes interspersed with small areas of wetland. Generally there are few trees on the exposed ground with occasional exceptions such as contorted wind sculpted hawthorns, and around some farmsteads isolated small groups of windswept hardy trees have been planted.

Valleys incise the slopes and coastal land. Along the north coast, these are small and shallow across the coastal plateau until they cut steep sided notches through the cliff edges forming tumbling cascades. In the west stream valleys form wide deep valleys

through the plateau as at Cot, Kenidjack and Tregaseal, whilst in the south on the shallower slopes stream valleys are markedly deeper and steeper sided especially near the coast.

In the north and west, developing scrub and woodland is establishing along open stream courses whilst in the south there is extensive well established mixed but only partially native broadleaved woodland in the deep shelter of valleys which is sometimes luxuriant in the lushness of its growth such as in the Lamorna Valley. The special and constantly varying qualities of light, colour and texture in the landscape have made Penwith popular with the many artists who are based here.

There is great time depth to this landscape with visible remains covering millennia of unbroken human occupation. The wealth of ancient features includes enigmatic standing stones, mysterious

fougous, tombs, fortifications and ancient settlements such as the well preserved examples at Chysauster and Carn Euny. Concentrated dramatically along the west coast are the impressive and numerous surviving remains and structures of the formerly extensive mining industry including old chimneys and ruined engine houses amidst disturbed bare ground that includes open shafts and spoil heaps. In the south and west in particular medieval wayside granite crosses are a locally distinctive feature.

Settlement pattern reflects the areas' culture and long history being generally dispersed as is typical of the Celtic west with scattered farmstead groups related strongly to the ancient field pattern as for example at Zennor and Rosemergy. In the west however the strong influence of mining overlays this earlier settlement pattern as shown for example by the numerous terraced granite mining cottages





at Pendeen and Boscaswell. St Just is the largest settlement, set around its twin squares, early square towered, granite church and the ancient Plen-an-Gwarry which is said to be the oldest continuously used theatre in the country. Journeying south, Sennen and Mousehole have developed around historic small stone built harbours and between these, smaller coastal communities centre on local fishing coves as at Lamorna, Penberth and Cape Cornwall. Apart from a few isolated prominent tourist destinations such as at Lands End and Sennen Cove, visitor infrastructure is almost invisible in the landscape and even Lands End aerodrome with its grass runways, its grouping of a few small scale buildings and infrequent use by light aircraft scarcely intrudes on the tranquil rural character.

Upland areas are almost devoid of settlement with dwellings mostly in the relative shelter south east of the downs. Buildings and structures are almost exclusively of local granite with slate roofing which together weather to appear almost as if they are grown from the landscape in which they are set. Near Porthcurno the open air terraced seats and stage of the Minack Theatre are set into the granite cliffs host to regular plays and performances against the expansive backdrop of Mounts Bay.

Winding between fields and farmsteads are numerous small lanes edged with Cornish Hedges or cut into the ground from centuries of continuous use. Over the central hills old tracks still exist that were used historically as drove roads for transporting livestock and goods lending a timeless quality to the landscape. The B3306 follows an ancient track route around the north coast along the foot of the hills providing one of the most popular scenic routes in Cornwall.

## Management

- The National Trust manages significant and extensive coastal and inland properties around Zennor, around St Levan and St Just (including extensive coastal mining features).
- Parish Plans are in place for: St Levan; Zennor; St Buryan; Sancreed; Sennen and Madron.
- The Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site designation includes sites such as Geevor, Botallack and Levant along the western coast.
- Active granite quarrying operations in elevated land at Castle-an-Dinas and operations at Penlee quarry (close to the AONB at Newlyn) are controlled under the terms of updated planning conditions approved under the Review of Mineral Planning Permissions. There is a proposal for a marina development at Penlee Quarry.
- The St Just Heritage Area Regeneration Project led to the successful physical regeneration of St Just town centre, stabilisation of selected prominent historic mine buildings, renovation of local fishing infrastructure at Cape Cornwall and of historic stiles.
- The Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) scheme whose main focus was preservation of the historic environment, halting the loss of heathland and improving ploughing practice is now closed to applications and will be gradually replaced with Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship schemes. The end of the ESA potentially may leave important habitats and features unprotected.
- A 'Vision for the moors and other related land in West Penwith, Cornwall' has been prepared by Natural England as a vehicle for securing agreement between stakeholders and agencies on integrated management of habitats and historic

landscapes whilst maintaining the downs as a grazed landscape.

- The 'Wild Penwith' initiative promoted by Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) is a landscape scale initiative for management of a variety of habitats and enhancing water quality across West Penwith.
- The Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative supports the objectives of the 'Vision for the moors and other related land in West Penwith, Cornwall'.
- A candidate Special Area of Conservation is proposed along the west Penwith coast from coast south of Lands End, extending past Cape Cornwall to just east of Gurnards Head. The designation is proposed for submerged reefs.



## Condition

- Whilst much visitor infrastructure is low key that at Lands End and Sennen is visually intrusive.
- Castle-an-Dinas quarry which supplies granite for road aggregate and hedging has a harsh appearance on the horizon and although operations are largely screened from external views, there are some unnatural landforms associated with tipping and stockpiles.
- Some historic mining structures have not been stabilised hence are at risk of deterioration for example at Rosewall and Ransom, Wheal Sisters, Ding Dong, Gurnard's Head, Wheal Hearle, Leswidden chimney, Spearne Consols, Carnyorth, Wheal Call, Cot Valley, Portheras, Porthmeor, Bosigran, Wheal Cleveland and Rosevale.
- In the south in particular, agricultural land has seen a localised but significant change from high quality pasture to arable - potentially creating efficiency pressures to remove some historic field hedges.
- Scrub encroachment on the moors with serial succession to bracken and woody vegetation such as gorse and willow is widespread and especially evident at locations such as Rosewall Hill and Carn Galver. In places this can impede open access.
- Unmanaged regeneration of woody vegetation along stream valleys, often in the absence of locally native tree seed sources, has significant inclusion of sycamore.
- In southern parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impact on habitat connectivity and landscape character.



## West Penwith

### Guiding Principles

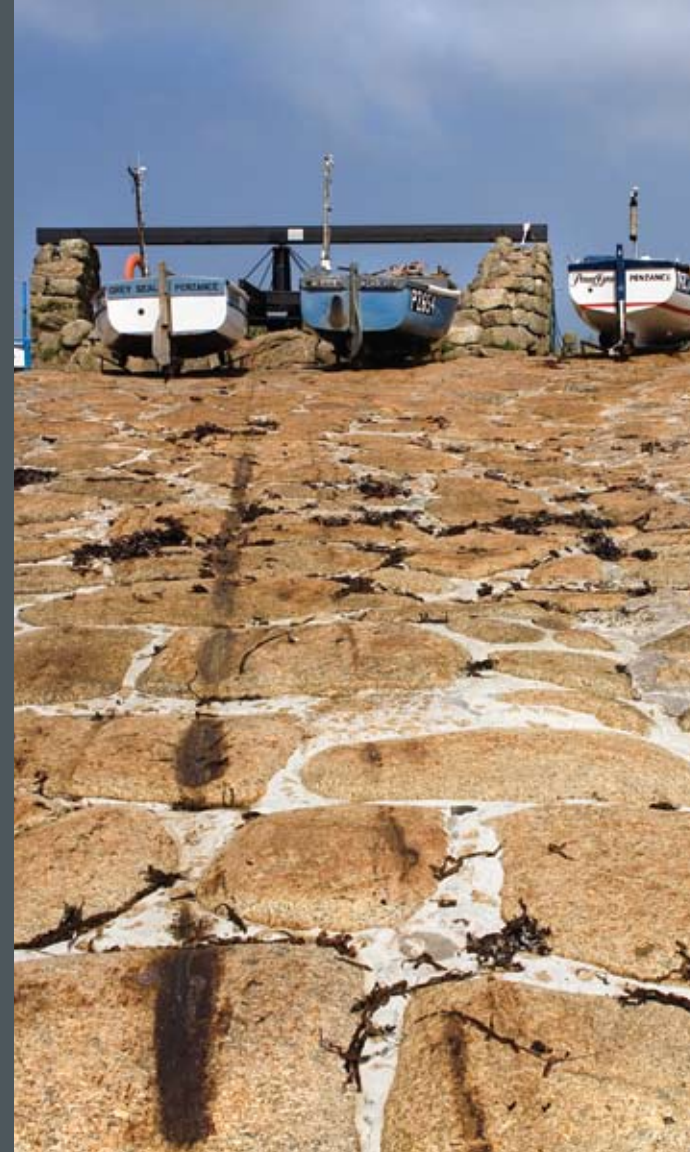
It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP07.1** Seek reduction in landscape and visual impacts and better integration at existing holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, car parks and signage. Pay particular attention to respecting local character in external works, landscaping, coastal heathland restoration and management of well used routes for example at Lands End and Sennen.

**GP07.2** Support local employment and affordable housing development in settlements with access to employment and local services provided that by location and design this fully respects historic settlement pattern and local vernacular including characteristic use of local materials in buildings and external works - for example at St Just and Pendeen. Where relevant, settlement edge enhancement should be achieved.

**GP07.3** Require an assessment of landscape, visual and cumulative impact of future proposals for tall structures such as farm scale, community and larger wind turbines, masts and utilities infrastructure and require this to be assessed within the context of the evidence base including the emerging Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document. Those proposals which have an adverse impact on natural beauty should not be supported.

**GP07.4** Encourage the sympathetic operation and progressive restoration of Castle-an-Dinas quarry in a manner that respects local landscape character,



includes appropriate vegetation, appropriate final landform and permanent restoration of completed areas at the earliest possible stages. Support further measures to protect and enhance environmental quality when existing quarrying permissions are reviewed

**GP07.5** Encourage the sympathetic management of Lands End Aerodrome and ensure that new development has appropriate regard to the rural character of the area.

**GP07.6** Seek conservation and enhancement of the existing rural character of the B3306 and other roads in this area through sensitive design and minimal use of highway infrastructure. Discourage widening, straightening, re-routing, kerbing and enclosure of currently unenclosed sections.

**GP07.7** Seek traffic reduction and management measures on the coast road between St Just and St Ives (B3306) for cars and in particular tourist coaches.

**GP07.8** Support an integrated approach to proactive management of access on open access land, with the full involvement of landowners, stakeholders including the local community, users, Cornwall Council and other relevant public bodies to ensure a long term strategy for access management, built upon consensus.

**GP07.9** Support consideration of access improvement along old drove routes and tracks across the Penwith Downs, for example consideration of the re-establishment of the Tinnars Way, in a manner that respects these route's historic origins and local landscape character based on stakeholder and community support

**GP07.10** Support the continuation of small scale sustainable fisheries in order to conserve community vibrancy and the character of local coves such as at Porthgwarra, Lamorna, Penberth and Cape Cornwall.

**GP07.11** Seek the strongest possible recognition and protection of the ancient prehistoric field systems bound by granite Cornish hedges as valuable historic landscape features and support their ongoing conservation and management. This can be for example within the Entry and Higher Level Environmental Stewardship schemes through full take up by farmers coming out of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme.

**GP07.12** Support integrated projects that include aims to stabilise engine houses and other mining structures that are significant in the landscape such as at Rosewall and Ransom, Wheal Sisters, Ding Dong, Gurnard's Head, Wheal Hearle, Leswidden chimney, Spearne Consols, Carnyorth, Wheal Call,

Cot Valley, Portheras, Porthmeor, Bosigran, Wheal Cleveland and Rosevale.

**GP07.13** Support integrated management of the biodiversity and the historic landscapes of the Penwith Downs (also known as Penwith Moors) based on stakeholder and community support, through appropriate measures building on existing National Trust and World Heritage Site management plans and Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative priorities.

**GP07.14** Encourage the productive management of woodlands for example at Lamorna, St Loy and Penberth valleys in a manner that is consistent with conserving and enhancing local landscape character and biodiversity.

**GP07.15** Support the establishment, and extension of existing and developing inland and coastal valley woodlands and favour establishment of locally native tree species such as Sessile Oak, Hazel and Alder for example within valleys in the south, north and in the west such as the Cot and Kenidjack valleys. Consider localised planting of local provenance native tree species to act as a future seed source for native woodland establishment where this is currently absent or sparse to assist subsequent natural regeneration.

**GP07.16** Encourage in the southern part of West Penwith the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of elm disease including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more treed.





08

## South Coast Western

St Michael's Mount to the Helford Estuary and the Lizard

### Location

This AONB section includes the Lizard Peninsula, extending as far as Marazion in the west, including the Helford Ria (a flooded river valley estuary) and to the outskirts of Falmouth in the east.

### Extent

Approximately 19,300 hectares or just under 75 square miles, forming 20% of Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

This beautiful and extensive section of the Cornwall AONB includes three linked but nonetheless distinctly differing areas of landscape character. These are described separately below. Firstly from St Michael's Mount to Halzephron Cliff, secondly the Lizard Peninsula and thirdly the Helford River and Estuary.

#### St Michael's Mount to Halzephron Cliff

Partially sheltered by West Penwith from the full force of Atlantic storms, the coastline of Mount's Bay has a soft profile, including extensive linear cliffs whose complex geology adds variety to the coastline. In the west, St Michael's Mount is a granite intrusion linked at low tide by an ancient cobbled causeway to the nearby shore of low earthy cliffs that in the east extend past Perranuthnoe giving way around Prussia Cove to progressively higher cliffs punctuated by rocky headlands. At Rinsey Head and Trewavas granite outcrops make the cliffs ever more sheer and rugged whilst around Porthleven and further east a complex coastal geology including folded slates displays spectacular quartz veining.

These varied cliffs are interspersed with stretches of popular gently sloping south facing sandy beaches

such as at Praa Sands, Porthleven Sands and Gunwalloe beach. An unusual feature is the broad shingle Loe Bar that is all that separates the sea from Cornwall's largest fresh water lake, the Loe Pool. Inland of the cliffs gentle south facing coastal slopes lead to a subtly rolling landscape interspersed with bold rounded valley sides between which short streams flow quietly to the coast. Extensive sweeping views around the broad arc of Mounts Bay focus awareness on the elemental qualities of the coastline, whereas inland, visual enclosure mixes with broader views across the wider landscape.

The permanent greens of improved pasture are interspersed with considerable arable use lending great seasonal variation from the textured browns of ploughed soils, rows of fresh green crops such as early potatoes and the bright yellows of daffodil fields in spring. Medium sized fields with irregular boundaries that are typical of early enclosure mix with other more recently enclosed larger straight sided fields that exaggerate a sense of openness. The sometimes bare stone faces of Cornish hedges display their link with the locally variation in the types of stone and typically are topped just by a coarse growth of turf with wild flowers and brambles. Tough feathery Tamarisk hedges are locally characteristic near some parts of the coast.

The rounded cliffs are clothed with a broad fringe of heathland and scrub adding to their rugged untamed character. Linear woodlands occur along valleys including that of the National Trust owned Penrose Estate round the Loe Pool with its extensive mixed conifer and broadleaved plantations edged by extensive waterside reed beds.

St Michael's Mount is crowned by the clustered pointed turrets and buildings of an historic priory forming a distinctive silhouette recognisable across all of Mounts Bay. A medieval house survives at



Pengersick whose fortified tower was used as a refuge from North African Barbary Pirates on slave capturing raids along this coast. Disused historic engine houses cling to the cliff slopes at Trewavas and Rinsey. The influence of mining is also noticeable inland in the west with spoil heaps, engine house remains and terraced former miners cottages that add locally to the density of the otherwise mostly rural settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets. The larger settlement at Porthleven is clustered around an historic granite harbour that once served the mining industry and recent housing has grown up at popular local beaches for example at Perranuthnoe and Praa Sands. Granite and killas are typical local building materials and settlements are linked by a network of many small lanes.

### The Lizard Peninsula

This Lizard Peninsula includes the most southerly point of mainland Britain and is framed all round by majestic high cliffs indented with slender coves. The cliffs are especially vertical and rocky at the exposed west coast but remain consistently rugged and steep elsewhere punctuated throughout by attractive sandy beaches tightly enclosed by rocky headlands. The Lizard Peninsula's unique geology includes Serpentine, Gabbro, Schists, Gneiss and Slates all exposed in the cliffs lending variety of texture, form and colour to this spectacular coastline. The serpentine formations rising out of the sands of Kynance Cove are an often depicted view representing the best of Cornwall's coastal scenery.

From the cliffs there is a marked sometimes sharp transition to the gently undulating plateau that stretches inland to the interior of the peninsula giving an overriding impression of general flatness. However there is abundant variety in the scenery of the Lizard resulting in part from local variations in geology. The undulating north originates from the soft

underlying Devonian Rocks whilst Serpentine gives rise to the almost unrelieved flatness of the central plateau at the heart of the peninsula with Gabbro and Hornblende Schists in the east generating a gently rolling landscape.

Small streams etch their narrow valleys across the plateau as they flow quietly toward the coast to cross beaches as at Church, Poldhu and Polurrian Coves in the north west, sometimes tumbling through incised channels cut through rocky cliffs further south as at Kynance Cove, Pistil Meadow and Housel Bay. In land of Church and Poldhu Coves are broad level meandering valley bottoms whereas the plateau drainage is hindered by the lack of slopes resulting in an intriguing matrix of pools and bogs.

This stunningly dramatic and rugged coast affords wide ranging views across the open seas and busy shipping lanes of the English Channel. Inland the enclosed intimacy of areas of gently undulating land contrasts with the sweeping panoramas over the open vastness of the unenclosed downland plateau where a strong sense of isolation and exposure prevails.

Farming is primarily pastoral but with some arable especially for crops such as potatoes and the widespread intricate pattern of medium sized fields with irregular boundaries indicates anciently enclosed land from the medieval period. In parts such as the south east especially small and unevenly shaped fields indicate a prehistoric origin. Traditionally the open heathland would have been used for summer grazing but larger straight sided fields around the margins of this rough ground attest to its partial recent enclosure. However significant and extensive tracts of open unenclosed rough downland remain, grazed by hardy cattle and ponies that maintain the open landscape and its nationally important flora.





The materials used in Cornish hedges reflect closely the local differences in geology lending fascinating variations in appearance but all with a rubble construction. On the hedges surviving elms have in places regrown but generally since the impact of Dutch Elm disease these no longer form dense screens. Woodland occurs as small pockets on farms, alongside streams and in sheltered valleys emphasising their courses through the landscape. The vegetation of the downs which is now subject to less regular grazing than in the past is locally progressing toward a cover of willow scrub creating a sense of enclosure on previously open ground. Inland of Church and Poldhu coves extensive reed beds snake inland drawing the eye along the wet valley bottoms. A varied and unique flora and a fauna of national significance including many rare species has established over the downs notably lowland heathland but including wet flushes and ephemeral pools. Vegetated sand dunes occur at Kennack Sands and at Church Cove where a golf course has domesticated their vast rounded profile. Mixed heathland, rough ground and scrub is extensive around most of the coast enhancing its untamed character.

Rough ground on the downs and around the coast has great time depth from the numerous visible prehistoric remains including Bronze Age barrows and other ceremonial features along with enigmatic vestiges of Iron Age coastal fortifications. At Lizard Point are the prominent twin towers of the still used historic lighthouse with its beam sweeping the surrounding countryside at night or its haunting fog horn echoing eerily through a blanket of sea fog. The large round dishes of the Goonhilly earth station dominate the downs and are frequently glimpsed over hedgerows.

A sparse pattern of farmsteads with ancient Cornish names is dispersed through the anciently enclosed land and isolated farms and cottages face gales

along the west facing coast. Villages such as Gunwalloe, Mullion, Cadgwith and Coverack have grown up around their small fishing coves otherwise inland there are just a few scattered villages and hamlets. Local stone is evidenced in the vernacular of buildings for example Serpentine in Kuggar and Gabbro in the east with limed render and thatch still evident at settlements such as Ruan Minor and Cadgwith. From the village of St Keverne, Michael An Gof led the Cornish uprising in protest against the punitive taxes levied by Henry VII.

Winding narrow local roads connect farms and open trackways cross the downs, some now little used and overgrown. Footpaths feature distinctive Serpentine stiles often polished from decades of constant use and around Lizard village there are raised footpaths along the tops of especially broad Cornish hedges.

Traditional local fishing with colourful small boats still adds interest and activity at some small coves adding animation at the heart of the local communities for example at Cadgwith and Porthoustock.

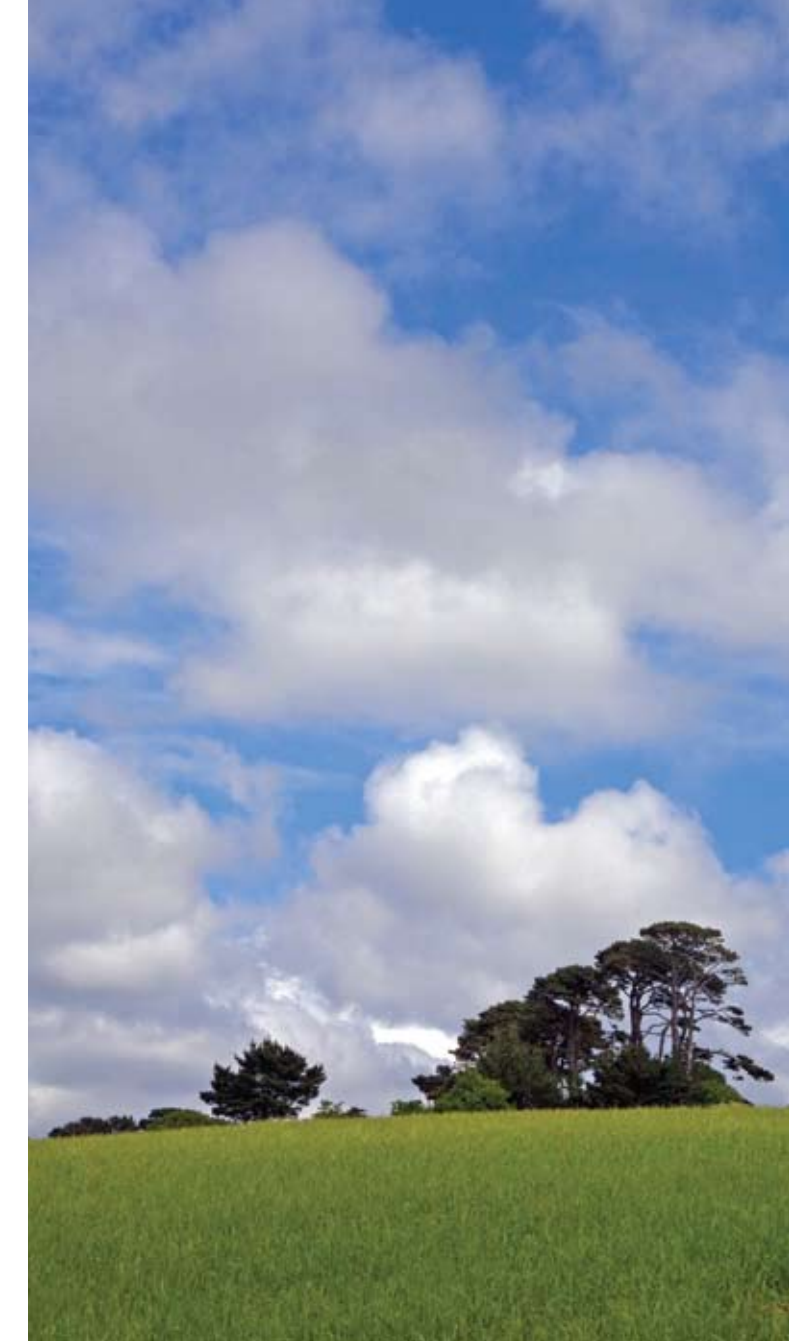
### **Helford River and Estuary**

This area offers great contrast to the often open and exposed landscape of much of the Lizard. From the numerous small sinuous creeks to the broad expanse of the main estuary the Helford dominates this area forming both a central focus and a barrier. The changing light and character as the tidal waters ebb and flow is especially noticeable in the extensive intricate branching web of side waters in their unceasing cycle between reflective water and exposed wet glistening mud around a remaining ribbon of water. The enclosing steep slopes extend from the waters edge to a higher surrounding rolling topography of convex slopes incised by the steep valleys of the innumerable small streams that drain to the creeks.

The dominant land cover enveloping the river system and its tributary valleys is dense mature often ancient sessile oak woodland extending right down to the waters edge where branches dip into the water forming a timeless world of water and trees. Despite their apparently wild and untouched appearance these woodlands had from time immemorial until recent years been managed for timber, tannin and fuel production. Distinctive stately mature ornamental pines around the mouth of the river indicate more domesticated land use and the lush ornamental and exotic vegetation of large estate gardens is especially characteristic of parts of the sheltered river banks.

This heavily wooded landscape of extraordinary enclosure, shelter and intimacy has startling contrasts where open views are glimpsed across seemingly vast stretches of open river and even across the sea to the distant Roseland coast far beyond. This contrasting openness is especially prevalent toward the mouth of the river with its low sloping cliffs that are covered in coastal heathland. Inland of the coastal rough ground to each side of the river mouth mixed pasture and arable farmland occupies much of the gentle rounded slopes. The mostly medium sized fields are bound by winding Cornish Hedges, many supporting trees.

The densely wooded Frenchman's Creek was made famous by Daphne du Maurier's novel of the same name and in such wooded side creeks and along the banks of the main river numerous almost concealed small quays can be found. On the south facing shores are the extensive Country House estates of Trebah and Glendurgan and on the north facing shore Trelowarren each with their extensive lush ornamental landscapes. Vestigial earthworks of prehistoric enclosed farmsteads on the slopes above the Helford indicate a long history of settlement and the current settlement pattern of villages clustered



at the heads of creeks dates from times when the water was the primary means of communication and transport. The more remote and less accessible southern shore is noticeably less inhabited than the north side of the river. The largest village is Gweek at the rivers navigable limit where it formerly served as a substantial port for the nearby town of Helston and its hinterland. Local buildings are characteristically small white cottages bunched together. The only link between the north and south shores is a modest passenger ferry.

Many small leisure boats find sheltered moorings in the estuary. There is some commercial activity such as oyster dredging along with boat building and repairs at Gweek where many boats are moored as dwellings.



## Management

- The National Trust manages significant and extensive properties around the coast from St Michael's Mount, Rinsey, Penrose, Mullion and Poldhu, Predannack and Kynance, Lizard Point, Cadgwith to Poltesco and Coverack and the south side of the Helford. The National Trust tackle scrub encroachment on some coastal land using grazing by ponies and cattle.
- Parish Plans are in place for: Cury; Grade Ruan; St Keverne; Manaccan and St Anthony; Mawnan; 'The Five Parishes' and Mawgan-in-Meneage.
- Active quarrying operations are controlled under the terms of updated planning conditions approved under the Review of Mineral Planning Permissions.
- The 'Linking the Lizard' initiative seeks to establish a landscape scale approach to landscape and habitat management.
- The Lizard Peninsula Heritage Trust has undertaken a survey of roadside heritage assets including milestones, fingerposts, war memorials, post-boxes, stiles etc.
- Natural England manage the Lizard National Nature Reserve which includes much of the Goonhilly Downs.
- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative aims include support for the 'Linking the Lizard' initiative and 'All of the Coast' habitat enhancements for birds.
- The ancient sessile oak woodlands around the Helford have fallen out of productive and economic management.
- The Helford Estuary is included in a candidate Special Area of Conservation, one of only two being proposed for large shallow inlets and bays, saltmarshes, intertidal mudflats and subtidal sandbanks (the other being Plymouth Sound).
- A candidate Special Area of Conservation is proposed around the Lizard coast from Gunwalloe Fishing Cove, extending round Lizard Point to Carrick Luz near Kennack Cove. The designation is proposed for submerged reefs.

## Condition

- Larger replacement wind turbines have been approved and installed at Bonython windfarm.
- Caravan sites near the coast are often visually intrusive due to location, layout, site design and poor mitigation for example near Kennack Sands.
- Large scale quarrying operations for aggregates between Dean Point and Porthallow have created extensive excavations, areas of tipping and bulk loading and transport structures along the coastline and are poorly integrated with the local landscape.
- Forecast sea level rise could affect local harbours, fisheries and beaches such as at Porthleven, Gweek, Cadgwith, Coverack and Maenporth.
- Loe Pool is affected by nutrient enrichment both from diffuse and point sources. Natural seasonal water level changes within Loe Pool are affected by the Helston flood alleviation scheme.
- Valley woodlands both inland and coastal were originally primarily Sessile Oak with Hazel with Alder – but lack of local native seed sources or lack of management is allowing Sycamore to become locally dominant in woodland regeneration.
- Establishment of the conifer plantations on the Lizard has increased their visual intrusion on the landscape.
- In parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impacts on habitat connectivity and landscape character.

## South Coast Western Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP08.1** Ensure that the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB is fully taken into account in strategies, plans and guidance produced to address development, transport and service provision in and around the AONB, for example including regard to the potential urban expansion of Falmouth. Particular care should be taken to ensure that no development is permitted outside the AONB which would damage its natural beauty, character and special qualities.

**GP08.2** Seek reduction of landscape and visual impacts and better integration at existing holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, car parks and signage. Pay particular attention to respecting local character in external works, landscaping and site design and have particular regard to increase in scale, massing and associated development for example at Marazion, Perranuthnoe, Porthleven, Praa Sands, Mullion and Kennack Sands.

**GP08.3** Support local employment and affordable housing development that meets identified local need in settlements with access to local services provided that by location and design this fully respects historic settlement pattern and local vernacular including characteristic use of local materials and that conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB.

**GP08.4** Consider the cumulative landscape and visual impact from new individual developments on local character and tranquillity for example along the shores and slopes around the Helford estuary.





**GP08.5** Require an assessment of the landscape, visual and cumulative impacts of proposals for tall structures such as wind turbines and communications infrastructure that are likely to have more than localised impact, and require this to be assessed within the context of the evidence base including the emerging Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document. Particular regard should be paid to the open plateau at Goonhilly Downs and the coast. Those proposals which have an adverse impact on natural beauty should not be supported.

**GP08.6** Seek improved phased and final restoration at West of England and Dean quarries to final landforms and vegetation communities consistent with local landscape character including at the earliest possible stages permanent appropriate restoration along coast path routes and completed working areas. Support further measures to protect and enhance environmental quality when existing quarrying permissions are reviewed.

**GP08.7** Encourage characteristic inclusion of local materials and vernacular design in new built development, public realm and highways works and rights of way infrastructure using Granite, Serpentine, Gabbro and Schists as appropriate to reflect the varied geodiversity of this section.

**GP08.8** Seek reduction in the visual impact of overhead cables by undergrounding in affected villages for example Porthleven, Mullion, St Keverne, Lizard, Gweek and Cury.

**GP08.9** Support local initiatives to protect roadside heritage assets that contribute to local character such as milestones, fingerposts, memorials and locally distinctive stiles etc.



**GP08.10** Support appropriate improvements to footpath access around the Helford River and its creeks with respect to the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 provided that this does not encourage an increase in traffic levels or the provision of further car parks and that this conserves and enhances the natural beauty.

**GP08.11** Support appropriate improvements to coastal footpath access between Godrevy Cove and Porthallow provided that this respects local landscape character and conserves and enhances the natural beauty.

**GP08.12** Support a landscape scale initiative to integrate enhancement of biodiversity with protection of historic environment and promotion of a vibrant local rural economy and community through the full involvement of local people, land managers and stakeholder organisations and build consensus for the long term management of the Lizard.

**GP08.13** Support the continuation of small scale sustainable fisheries in order to maintain community vibrancy providing that this conserves and enhances local character and natural assets for example at local coves such as at Porthleven, Mullion, Cadgwith, Coverack, Porthoustock, Porthallow and within the creeks of the Helford Estuary.

**GP08.14** Support initiatives which consider with communities the long term future of coastal areas e.g. Porthleven, Gweek, Coverack and Maenporth in respect to predicted effects of sea level rise and increased storminess and the direction for management set out within the Shoreline Management Plan.

**GP08.15** Encourage the management of mining features which are outside of the World Heritage Site, south of the A394 around Perranuthnoe, Rosudgeon, Kennegy, Praa Sands and Porthleven.

**GP08.16** Seek enhancement of the wider setting of St Michael's Mount including sea front car parking by design changes to layout, location, minimising infrastructure, enhanced boundary treatments, characteristic use of local materials in external works and appropriate vegetation.

**GP08.17** Support measures to improve water and habitat quality at Loe Pool by improved management of nutrients from diffuse sources in the catchment and the improved management of effluent from Helston and RNAS Culdrose sewage treatment works.

**GP08.18** Encourage the establishment and extension of Sessile Oak woodlands at inland and coastal valleys and around the Helford River and Loe Pool. Consider opportunities for small scale planting of local provenance native tree species such as Sessile Oak, Hazel and Alder to act as a future seed source for native woodland establishment where this is currently absent or sparse to assist subsequent appropriate natural regeneration.

**GP08.19** Support conservation and enhancement of the character of the open heathland plateau including

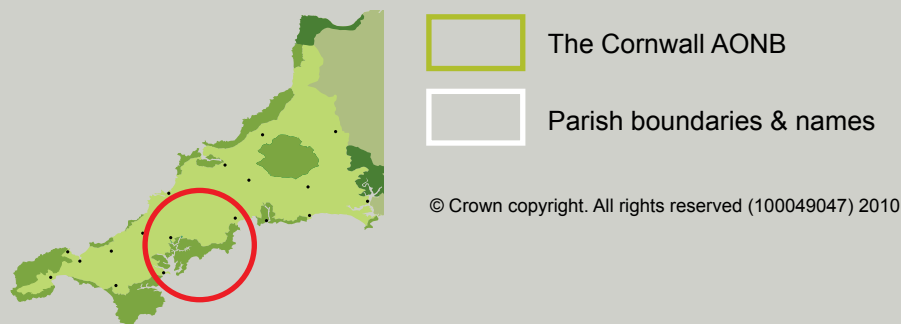
reduction of visual impacts from existing conifer plantations on Goonhilly Downs consistent with best practice. Where possible this should be achieved by felling with restoration to open habitats balanced with equal or greater productive woodland creation using appropriate sites and species selected with regard to landscape character.

**GP08.20** Encourage appropriate productive management of broadleaved woodlands for example around the Helford estuary in a manner that is consistent with conserving and enhancing local landscape character and biodiversity.

**GP08.21** Encourage the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of elm disease including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more treed.







## 09 South Coast Central

### Falmouth Bay, River and the Roseland

#### Location

This AONB section covers the south central part of the Cornish coast from Porthpean near St Austell in the east, the Roseland Peninsula, the Fal Ria including Carrick Roads to just south of the A390 near Tresillian and west to near Perranarworthal and the edge of Penryn in the west

Roads blends with the coast there are low rocky cliffs and headlands between which are sheltered sandy beaches.

The tidal extent of the rivers reaches far inland to Truro and Tresillian. At high tide the reflective water catches the colours of the sky as it laps against low banks of exposed rock. At low tide extensive mud and sand banks edge the remaining winding ribbon of water revealed in a daily cyclical rhythm of changing character. Views over the immense expanse of water at the Carrick Roads give a sense of vast scale whilst further inland the ria system feels remote and increasingly enclosed, especially in the smaller creeks.

#### Extent

Approximately 16,000 hectares or just under 62 square miles and forms just over 16% of the whole of the Cornwall AONB (including Carrick Roads upstream from Trefusis Point/St Anthony Head).

#### Statement of Significance

The two distinct yet complementary areas of landscape character of the Fal Ria and the Roseland make up this beautiful AONB section and are described separately below.

##### The Fal Ria

Whilst sharing many of the qualities of the Helford Estuary the component parts of the Fal Ria (a flooded river valley) landscape are of a significantly larger scale and extent.

The River Fal meets the open sea at the broad expanse of the Carrick Roads, an internationally important sheltered deep water harbour capable of receiving large ocean going vessels. Stretching far inland of the Carrick Roads is a winding network of intertwining creeks and river valleys that are considerably more extensive than those of the nearby Helford estuary. The rivers and creeks sit amongst their landscape of steep sided small twisting valleys between rounded ridges creating a setting of strongly rolling topography. Where the mouth of the Carrick

Visually the dominant landcover is mature often dense esturine Sessile Oak woodland cloaking the slopes along the waters edge. In places this woodland is extensive and seemingly untouched by human interference despite a long history of productive management lending a timeless primeval air to the watercourses. In other parts woodland has been partially or fully cleared where occasional large fields come right to the waters edge giving a more domesticated impression. This rich and productive farmland on the rounded convex hilltops between the creeks is a mix of pastoral and extensive arable uses giving considerable seasonal changes in colour. This seasonally changing agricultural scene is set in a constant and strong framework of Cornish hedges some of which display their construction in bare stone faces whilst many others are well vegetated and lined with mature trees strongly enclosing and defining the mostly small to medium irregular fields of medieval origin. However a proportion of larger recently enclosed straight sided fields adds variety to this overall field pattern.

In addition to the extensive Sessile Oak woodland the untamed presence of nature is further strengthened along the valleys and watercourses by a varied





range of semi-natural wetland habits including tidal saltmarsh, intertidal mudflats, reed beds, and fens whilst heathland and scrub reinforce the rugged undomesticated openness of the coastal margins.

Set amongst this strong natural framework are many distinctive landmarks and subtle historic remains. The many indications of defended Iron Age farm enclosures emphasise how long this productive land has been settled and the eye catching castles at St Mawes and its counterpart at Pendennis Castle (outside the AONB) have guarded the strategically important Carrick roads since the time of Henry VIII. St Anthony’s lighthouse is a distinct focal point marking the transition to the open sea.

Across the Carrick Roads the visually imposing extent of the towns of Penryn and Falmouth including docks, cranes and busy moorings provides a strong contrast to more tranquil locations further up river. Despite the nearby presence of large towns settlement is scattered and small in scale, especially so away from the coast and waters edge. Villages cluster at the heads of creeks and around some of the numerous small quays whilst dispersed farmsteads abound throughout the agricultural land. Estates and ornamental parklands are a feature of the countryside and waters edge most notably at Trelissick and Tegothonan and with their mature ornamental vegetation they lend an exotic yet domesticated air to the waters edge.

Many small lanes link villages and farms often densely edged on both sides with mature trees

creating enclosed leafy tunnels and at Trelissick the King Harry Ferry emerges from the wooded banks providing a link for cars and pedestrians. The waterways are now extensively used for recreational and commercial boating with many small craft moored in sheltered locations or moving slowly across the water having a strong visual presence especially in the vicinity of settlements.

**The Roseland**

Separated from the Fal Ria by a pronounced ridge that crosses the narrow strip of land inland of Gerrans Bay, the Roseland has a coastline of sweeping and extensive bays with majestic cliffs rising above rocky shores, sandy beaches and small coves all sculpted by the erosion of their soft killas rocks. Accentuating and defining the form of the bays are distinctive rocky promontories which extend from inland ridges, notably at Nare Head, Dodman Point and Black Head where the harder basalt and dolerite better withstand the power of the sea. A geologically interesting extensive raised beach at Pendower stretches all the way to Nare Hotel. Sharply intersecting the cliff line is the gently rolling topography of the inland plateau whose subtle ridges are dissected by incised stream valleys. There are far reaching panoramic views from the rugged cliff tops complementing the enclosed and peaceful farmed landscape inland.

The arable and pastoral fields are predominantly of medieval origin being medium in scale with irregular boundaries that range from bare low stone walls near the exposed coasts to being broad and well

vegetated in the sheltered valleys. These hedges support occasional surviving and regrown elms. In some locations the outlines of early strip field systems are preserved in the current field patterns. Woodland occurs on steep valley sides, alongside streams and in valley bottoms often in combination with other valuable wetland habitats such as fens and rush pasture strengthening these ribbons of semi natural vegetation that weave through the agricultural land. Coastal rough ground including scrub and bracken emphasises the wildness of the cliff tops.

This markedly tranquil landscape is relatively free of man made land marks or structures. However it is rich in discernable pre-historic features from the largest Bronze Age burial mound in Cornwall at Carne Beacon to the County’s largest prehistoric enclosure at the Iron Age cliff castle at Dodman along with numerous other traces of ancient human occupation and activity.

Estates and ornamental parklands are a feature of the countryside most notably at Caerhays and Heligan taking advantage of the sheltered valleys. Some attractive coastal villages shelter in the coves at stream mouths or have developed around picturesque small harbours as at Mevagissey and Gorran Haven. Inland apart from the churchtowns of Veryan and Gorran settlement is a sparse but even distribution of hamlets and farmsteads linked by narrow winding lanes with high hedges and blind corners. Traditional black and white painted metal finger signs are a distinctive feature amongst these rural lanes.

**Management**

- The National Trust manages significant and extensive sites around the coast of the Fal Ria at Trelissick Gardens, Turnaware Point, Nr. St Mawes, and St Anthony Head and along the exposed south facing coasts at Portscatho, Gerrans Bay, Nare Head, Dodman Point, Near Gorran Haven and Black Head.
- Parish Plans are in place at Feock, St Just-in-Roseland, Gorran and St Ewe. Parish Plans are under preparation in Mylor, Veryan and Tregony. The Parishes of Carlyon, St Austell Bay and the Pentewan Valley (along with St Austell Town Council) were created in June 2009.
- St Just-in-Roseland Parish Plan is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in the Cornwall Council Local Development Framework.
- The Truro and Threemilestone Action Plan seeks to guide development of these large settlements that lie close to the AONB.
- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative aims include ‘All of the Coast’ improvement for bird life and catchment area farming.
- The ancient sessile oak woodlands have largely fallen out of their previous long historical productive and economic management.
- The Fal Estuary is included in a candidate Special Area of Conservation, one of only two being proposed for its large shallow inlets and bays. (the other being Plymouth Sound). The designation is also for saltmarshes, intertidal mudflats and subtidal sandbanks.



## Condition

- Holiday sites around Mevagissey, Gorran Haven, and Pentewan are unnecessarily visually intrusive by their location, layout and design.
- The design and scale of some modern development for example on the fringes of Falmouth, Malpas and at other small water side settlements is visually intrusive.
- There is poor or non existent footpath access around much of the Fal Ria and Carrick Roads.
- Change is taking place at some farmland to non agricultural uses – e.g. keeping horses.
- Native deciduous woodlands of the Fal Ria and sheltered local valleys throughout the Roseland to Porthpean are generally unmanaged and in places fragmented.
- In parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impact on habitat connectivity and landscape character.

## South Coast Central Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP09.1** Ensure that the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB is fully taken into account in development proposals for expansion of Truro, Falmouth and Penryn and at waterside small settlements in order to retain the character of the Fal Ria landscape. Particular care should be taken to ensure that no development is permitted inside or outside the AONB which would damage its natural beauty, character and special qualities.

**GP09.2** Seek reduction in landscape and visual impacts and better integration of existing holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, car parks and signage. Pay particular attention to the increase in scale, massing, associated development and respecting local character in external works, landscaping, site design and layout at Mevagissey, Gorran Haven and Pentewan.

**GP09.3** Support provision of affordable housing in settlements such as St Just in Roseland; St Mawes; Gorran Haven; Mevagissey and Pentewan provided that there is access to local services, identified local need and that by location and design this fully respects historic settlement pattern and local vernacular including locally characteristic materials and that this conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB.

**GP09.4** Seek consideration of the cumulative landscape and visual impact from individual developments on local character and tranquillity for example along the shores and slopes of the Fal Ria.

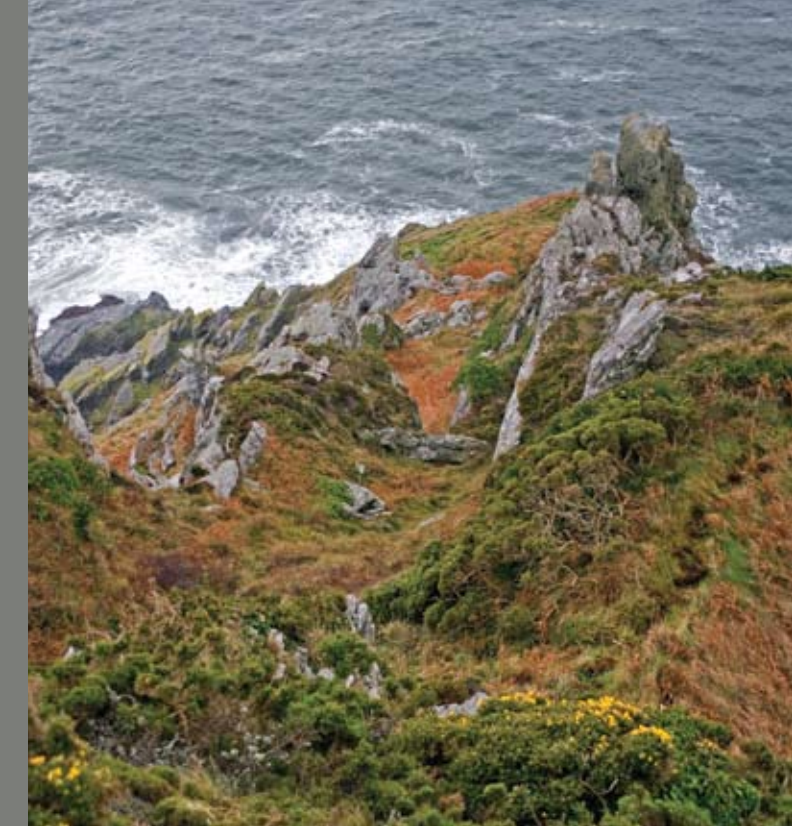
**GP09.5** Require assessment of the landscape, visual and cumulative impacts of future proposals for tall structures such as farm scale, community and commercial wind turbines along with masts and utilities infrastructure within the context of the evidence base including the emerging Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document. Those proposals which have an adverse impact on natural beauty should not be supported.

**GP09.6** Support consideration of landscape and visual impacts on the AONB landscape around the Fal Ria, Carrick Roads and associated creeks from increasing or changing patterns of water based access, leisure and commercial activity and their related infrastructure such as moorings, jetties, car parks and yards and seek conservation and enhancement of tranquillity, dark night skies and local character.

**GP09.7** Support consideration of improved car free access options including, foot, cycle, bus and boat for example from Truro, Falmouth and Penryn in a manner that conserves and enhances the AONB.

**GP09.8** Support appropriate improvements to footpath access around the Carrick Roads and its creeks with respect to the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 which does not encourage an increase in traffic levels or the provision of further car parks in the area.

**GP09.9** Support management of visitor car parking in quiet and remote tranquil rural areas in the Fal Ria and throughout the Roseland up to Porthpean such that levels of use do not increase and visual impacts are reduced by use of carefully located unobtrusive small scale dispersed rural car parks set back from the coast for example as managed by the National Trust at Vault Bay and Dodman Point.



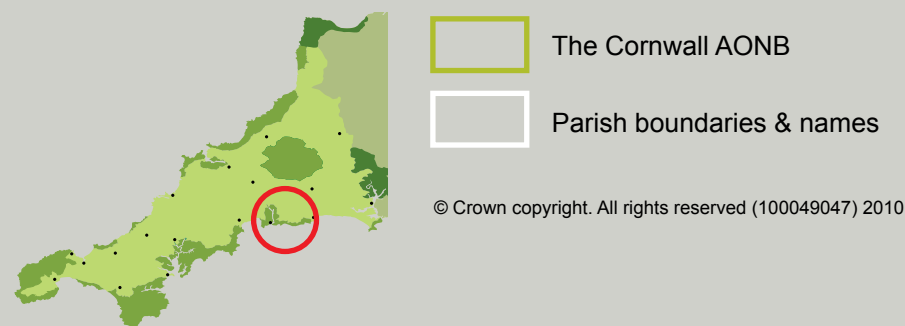
**GP09.10** Seek protection of the landscape setting of key landmarks such as St Mawes castle, St Anthony's Lighthouse and others from negative impacts by new development including housing and lighting and seek enhancement of their settings.

**GP09.11** Encourage the productive management of broadleaved woodlands for example around the Fal Ria in a manner that is consistent with conserving and enhancing local landscape character and biodiversity.

**GP09.12** Encourage in the context of a wider landscape scale approach the extension of Sessile Oak woodlands around the Fal and its tributaries and in the inland and coastal valleys of the Roseland. Consider opportunities for small scale planting of local provenance native tree species such as Sessile Oak, Hazel and Alder to act as a future seed source where this is currently absent or sparse to assist subsequent natural regeneration.

**GP09.13** Encourage the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of elm disease including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more treed.





## 10 South Coast Eastern

### Fowey Ria and Polperro Coast

#### Location

The Fowey Ria and its tributaries from just south of Lostwithiel, west of the Fowey to the coast by Par Sands and eastwards to Portlooe near the outskirts of West Looe.

#### Extent

Approximately 4,600 hectares or just under 18 square miles, forming just under 5% of the Cornwall AONB.

#### Statement of Significance

Similarly to the South Coast Central section of the Cornwall AONB this section comprises two distinct but complementary landscape character areas: the Fowey Ria and the adjacent coast to the east around Polperro which are described below in turn.

##### The Fowey River

Although the Fowey Ria (a flooded river valley) shares many basic characteristics with both the Helford and Fal Rias it is differentiated notably by its particularly steep sided enclosing slopes with gradients sometimes as steep as 1:3 descending in places from 120 metres above the river straight down to the waters edge. From deep inland the main river and its network of tributary creeks dissect the land between high exposed rounded landforms. Three large tributary creeks, the Lerryn, Penpoll and Pont Pill, all join the eastern side of the main river. Close to the sea the water becomes navigable forming an important deep water harbour.

The ria system is tidal with daily changes along the waters edges where low tide reveals areas of intertidal mudbanks. The broad estuary opens out to the sea through a coastline of low silvery slate cliffs

that enclose small beaches and extend westward to the spectacular promontory of Gribbin Head. From many elevated and coastal locations there are extensive panoramic views of the coast to the west and east and inland along the Fowey Ria. Adjacent to Gribbin Head, the coast is deeply incised by the Menabilly Valley; penetrating deep inland forming its own small network of tributary stream valleys. From the western coast of the AONB there are views across the adjacent Par Sands. Across the St Austell and Mevagissey bays to the southwest the distant coastline of the Roseland AONB can be seen.

By contrast with the exposure of Gribbin Head, the steep slopes surrounding the Fowey Ria give a strong sense of enclosure that is strengthened by the surrounding expanses of Sessile Oak woodland, much of it ancient, that embrace the estuary, clothing the shoreline and extending up the valley sides. Higher up the slopes and over the exposed rolling ridges are medium sized mixed arable and pasture fields with irregular boundaries indicating medieval origins. However the dramatically varying gradients make this overall field pattern difficult to discern from most vantage points. In exposed higher ground and away from the creeks there are few trees although lower down some Cornish hedges support belts of trees that extend like fingers up the slopes from the main woodlands. On some slopes vineyards have been established adding a new texture amongst the more traditional agricultural uses. Designed ornamental landscapes occur for example the remains of Hall Walk at Bodinnick and Tivoli Gardens at Lerryn and exotic ornamental planting is a feature of some waters edges and settlements. Fowey is Cornish for river of beech trees however these are more characteristic further upstream in the Bodmin Moor section of the AONB and it is on the heart of this moor that the river originally rises.





In places the silting up of the upper parts of creeks by mine waste has made them unnavigable and has generated new semi natural tidal habitats such as silt and mud banks and the coast is fringed by rough ground and scrub.

Castle Dore on the ridge top above Golant is a well preserved example of Iron Age defensive earthworks reputedly linked with the early kings of Cornwall. It was occupied between the fourth and first centuries BC and rebuilt around 50AD after the Roman Invasion of Britain. In medieval times Fowey was the most important port in Cornwall. At Fowey and Polruan there are late medieval blockhouses built to defend the sheltered estuary moorings and overlooking the mouth of the estuary is the landmark St Catherine's Castle built by Henry VIII as an artillery fort similar to those at Pendennis and St Mawes. The Tristan Stone, a seven foot high menhir, stands by the B3415 outside Fowey with its latin inscription Drustans hic iacet Cunomri filius. It is associated with the legends of Tristan and Isolde. Historic limekilns are found at Fowey, Pont Pill and Lerryn and historic quays occur along the river banks, many old and disused due to the silting up of previously navigable creeks and waterways. At Polruan are the ruins of an 8th century church and atop Gribbin Head a prominent beacon emphasises this landmark headland. The annual Daphne du Maurier literary festival celebrates the area's strong associations with this author both as inspiration for her works and for her former residences at Ferryside overlooking Bodinnick, a former coach house above Readymoney Cove and the Beach House at Polridmouth Cove. Grahame Green author of the Wind in the Willows also has strong associations with Fowey and Lerryn.

Fowey is a linear town fronting directly onto the waterfront for over a mile including the historic town quay and wharves creating a strong relationship

with the water that is central to its character. Closely packed three storey buildings flank the narrow streets of the medieval core. In the southern part of the town a significant presence of 19th and early 20th century ordered terraces ascend the slopes giving a more formal character. The towers of the Church and Place house form landmarks and in places the canopies of large ornamental trees rise above the buildings. Bodinnick and Polruan face Fowey across the water their tightly tiered randomly orientated settlement pattern equally driven by the steepness of the slopes. Further inland hamlets such as Lerryn and Penpol have established at the heads of formerly navigable creeks and Golant and St Winnow with their typical medieval churches and Mixtow lie alongside the riverbanks. The rural settlement pattern away from the waters edge is typified by scattered mostly isolated dwellings and farms with occasional small hamlets such as St Veep and Lanteglos Highway high on the ridges. The small coastal hamlet of Polkerris faces westward across St Austell Bay. The main building material is killas reflecting the local geology but a wide range of finishes and materials are used. Slate is the main roofing material.

Through roads follow ridge lines and higher ground around the boundary of the AONB. Local through roads link bridging points at Penpol and Lerryn where a medieval bridge crosses the head of the creek. Access to much of the AONB is limited to the few small lanes and tracks that descend precipitously steep slopes to end at or before the river barrier. The southern end of the coast to coast Saints Way trail ends at Fowey having started at Padstow on the north coast. This was once a route for monks and pilgrims from Wales and Ireland cutting out the dangerous sea voyage around lands end. A freight rail line primarily serving the china clay industry follows the western side of the river ending at the commercial jetties which are concealed just upstream from Fowey by a natural bend in the river .



Shellfish farming takes place in the estuary. The Ria is well used for leisure sailing and moorings and is busy with commercial activity from small local fishing boats to large ships using the china clay docks upriver from Fowey. Busy ferries criss-cross tirelessly back and forth carrying passengers between Fowey and Polruan and upstream also carrying vehicles between Fowey and Bodinnick. Occasional visiting cruise ships dwarf the nearby houses.

#### The coast around Polperro

The strongly bevelled cliffs with steep slopes form an even coastline whose few small headlands such as Pencarrow Head and Downend Point give definition to the majestic Lantic, Lantivet, Talland and Portnadler Bays. At low tide the rocky shelving shoreline displays grey, green and brown slates interspersed with small coves and occasional patches of sand which are mostly accessible only by boat or by a challenging steep scramble. The exception being the small beach at Talland Sand which is readily accessible by the road at its rear. This mostly very restricted access has helped the majority of this stretch of coast remain particularly unspoilt. Behind these cliffs, well rounded rolling slopes are incised by a network of numerous winding small valleys with local streams that emerge at the

coast through rocky coombes where they cascade onto the rocky shore as at West Combe, East Coombe, Porthallow and Portnadler.

The agricultural land is in parts intensively managed with a mix of arable and pastoral uses lending texture and variety to the landscape. Straight sided large fields close to the coast indicate recent enclosure from rough ground whilst further inland despite some recent removals of Cornish hedges for agricultural efficiencies there are still many irregular medium sized fields indicating earlier medieval enclosure. The network of mostly sparsely vegetated slate built Cornish hedges form a distinct pattern in the landscape emphasized by the intervening differing uses of the fields. Some hedges do however support taller vegetation such as windswept thorns but there is little survival of the previously ubiquitous elm shelterbelts. Trees on the plateau are mostly found in association with farms and other dwellings. However generally this is a landscape with few trees especially close to the open exposed coast.

It is along the coast and stream valleys where nature has its strongest presence in this otherwise well managed landscape. Unbroken and sometimes extensive rough ground clothes the coastal slopes. The steep sided winding local stream valleys inland





provide some degree of shelter combined with unintensified use allowing rough scrubby growth to develop clothing the side slopes. Along valley bottoms ribbons of developing woodland in combination with wetland habitats provide wildlife corridors. The slopes of the coastal valley that embraces Polperro is clothed in establishing rough ground and mixed deciduous woodland reinforcing a sense of seclusion and shelter.

Polperro is the only substantial settlement. The slate clad tightly packed cottages of this 13th century fishing village crowd along the narrow streets in the valley leading down to the sheltered historic fishing harbour. The widespread use of local slate in buildings lends great visual unity. A museum of fishing and smuggling is housed in the

old fish processing house. The place of smuggling in Polperro's history is reflected in the words of the famous Methodist preacher John Wesley's remark after visiting Polperro in 1762 "An accursed thing amongst them: well nigh one and all bought or sold uncustomed goods."

Apart from Polperro this is a sparsely settled landscape remarkably free of prominent man made structures or features. The clustered farms and isolated dwellings are linked by small enclosed lanes between the substantial Cornish hedges forming a network that winds through the farmland mostly avoiding the steep sided local valleys and only occasionally dipping to cross small streams.

## Management

- The National Trust manages significant areas of land around the Fowey Ria and along the coast, for example around Polperro and Trethill. Pony grazing of coastal rough ground is used in places to control scrub.
- St Sampson, Lansallos, Lanlivery and Lanteglos Parish Plans and Fowey Town Plan have been prepared.
- The Fowey Estuary Partnership (FEP) was set up in 1997 to meet the need for holistic management of the estuary, balancing the needs of tourism, commerce and leisure interests.
- The Fowey Estuary Management Plan represents the FEP's vision for the management of the estuary. It is a non-statutory document developed through extensive consultation and community involvement and contains guidelines to inform, advise and guide current and future management of the estuary.
- The Fowey Estuary Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA) was conceived in 1997 by the Fowey Estuary Partnership and includes many of the important habitats in the upper reaches of the estuary.
- The Estuary Partnership is the lead by the Fowey Harbour Commissioners and brings together an advisory group representing a number of regulatory bodies, non-governmental organisations and interested parties and offers a basis for voluntary co-operation.
- Friends of Fowey Estuary was formed in 1999 to provide a focus for voluntary activities for the conservation of the estuary. They are on the advisory group to the Fowey Estuary Management Plan.
- Fowey is home to spectacular annual celebrations such as, the Du Maurier Festival of Arts and Literature in May and the Fowey Royal Regatta in August.
- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative aims include the 'Coast To Coast' linking of native broadleaved woodland and other river valley habitats from Fowey to the Camel estuary via the periphery of Bodmin Moor.

## Condition

- Some recent development at Fowey, Polruan and Polperro has extended outside characteristic settlement patterns.
- Some public realm and traffic management works in Fowey lack sensitivity to local character.
- Par docks and its associated derelict infrastructure is visually intrusive on the setting of the AONB.
- Native broadleaved woodlands of the Fowey Ria are largely unmanaged.
- Many ancient broadleaved woodland sites have been planted with conifers thereby fragmenting habitat continuity.
- Unmanaged regeneration of scrub and woodland in coastal valleys between Polruan and Portlooe has allowed in places the establishment of non-native species.
- Significant removal of Cornish hedges has taken place in agricultural improvement.
- In parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impact on habitat connectivity and landscape character.





## South Coast Eastern Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP10.1** Seek reduction in landscape and visual impacts and better integration at holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, car parks and signage. Have regard to the increase in scale, massing, associated development and respecting local character in external works, landscaping, site design and layout at Polruan and around Polperro.

**GP10.2** Support local employment and affordable housing in settlements with access to local services such as Fowey and Polperro provided that this wholeheartedly respects the locally characteristic settlement pattern and vernacular in design and use of materials.

**GP10.3** Seek Community Infrastructure Levies and developer contributions from an early stage of

proposals for the redevelopment of Par Docks for management initiatives within the AONB and green infrastructure links with the Cornwall AONB.

**GP10.4** Support the consideration of landscape and visual impacts around the Fowey Ria, harbour and creeks of increasing or changing patterns of water based access, leisure and commercial activity and related infrastructure such as moorings, jetties, car parks and yards.

**GP10.5** Support the further development of sustainable water based travel, integrated with initiatives in South Coast Central AONB section that build on the existing ferry links between Fowey and Bodinnick and Fowey and Polruan.

**GP10.6** Support the work of the Fowey Estuary Partnership in its aim to stimulate an appropriate balance between competing demands placed on the Fowey estuary through shared information, co-operation and action, including seeking opportunities to implement the Fowey Estuary Management

Plan and to support the continuation of the Fowey Voluntary Marine Conservation Area.

**GP10.7** Support communication of the implications of the Shoreline Management Plan to creekside and coastal communities within this section such as Lerryn and Golant in order to open an early dialogue about sea level rise and coastal change.

**GP10.8** Support the cultural heritage around the Fowey and particularly its literary heritage including the continued success of the Daphne du Maurier Festival of Arts and Literature.

**GP10.9** Encourage the productive management of broadleaved woodlands around the Fal Ria in a manner that is consistent with conserving and enhancing local landscape character and biodiversity.

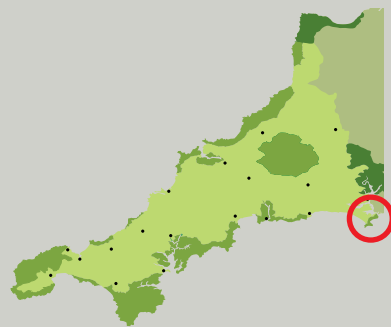
**GP10.10** Encourage the replacement of conifer plantations on Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to allow re-establishment of Sessile Oak woodland. Where this is achieved by felling of productive conifer plantations this should be

balanced with equal or greater productive woodland creation using appropriate sites elsewhere using species and design that have regard to landscape character.

**GP10.11** Encourage in the context of a wider landscape scale approach the establishment and extension of Sessile Oak woodlands at the Fowey Ria and local valleys at Polridmouth, West and East Coombe, Polperro, Porthallow and Portlooe. Consider opportunities for planting of local provenance native tree species such as Sessile Oak, Hazel and Alder to act as a future seed source for native woodland establishment where this is currently absent or sparse to assist appropriate subsequent natural regeneration.

**GP10.12** Encourage the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of elm disease including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more treed.





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## 11 Rame Head

### Location

Rame Head is the headland peninsula at the mouth of Plymouth Sound on the Cornwall side, taking in Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park, Penlee Point and Rame Head.

### Extent

Approximately 800 hectares or just over 3 square miles, forming just under 1% of the Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

Known as 'Cornwall's forgotten corner', the area's rocky shore is punctuated by popular sandy beaches at Kingsand and Cawsand and the surrounding steeply sloping cliffs blend with a ridge that stretches far inland. The distinctive rounded landmark of Rame Head is almost severed from the main peninsula by the steep slopes of a winding narrow valley at its rear.

From the exposed cliffs, the ridge top and Rame Head, the panoramic views take in the coast, the busy shipping lanes of the English Channel, the complex of estuarial features of the Tamar Valley and the vast urban expanse of the city of Plymouth with its cranes and naval shipyards seen across the broad waters of Plymouth Sound. By contrast the valley behind Rame Head is sheltered and in parts secluded providing at the coast an intimate and enclosed setting for Cawsand.

The sense of open exposure at Penlee Point is exaggerated by large rectilinear fields on land recently enclosed from former coastal rough ground. Elsewhere the medium sized irregular fields of medieval origin are interspersed with some that have been recently enlarged by hedge removal for agricultural improvements. The mixture of green

pastures and changing crops on arable fields adds seasonal variation in colour and texture. The hedges are low and clothed in rough vegetation with occasional windswept scrubby trees and bushes.

The Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park with its large historic house, numerous outbuildings, deer park and extensive ornamental landscapes with many ridge top mature trees occupies a significant proportion of the AONB and its coastline. Outside of the managed landscape of Mount Edgcumbe the steeply sloping cliffs gain a rugged wildness from their mixed heathland and rough vegetation and whilst the agricultural landscape of the inland ridge is almost without trees there is woodland at the comparatively sheltered coast between Cawsand and Penlee Point.

Geologically there is considerable interest here. The beach at Cawsand is formed of rhyolite, the only known surviving remains of the volcanic material that erupted above Cornwall's intruded granites some 270 to 290 million years ago and the red sandstone further north is the only evidence in Cornwall of the ensuing desert conditions.

The only significant concentration of settlement is at Kingsand and Cawsand. The two villages are surrounded by mature trees and separated only by a small headland on which sits Cawsand Fort, built of stone in the 1860s and recently converted to flats. These typical small fishing villages are tightly clustered around the two beaches that still provide landing points for small craft adding vitality and interest. The buildings are varied in form but united by their tight relationship to the narrow streets that run at right angles away from the sea. Kingsand is the larger of the two villages. The variety of building materials reflect the varied local geology including rhyolite (a purple volcanic stone), red sandstone, and slatestone along with slate hanging, painted





render and some brick. A prominent feature in both villages is the many local stone rubble built boundary walls. Until boundary changes in 1844 Kingsand was in Devon however Cawsand was always in Cornwall. A small stream marked the border. Rame is a small hamlet. The Country House and outbuildings of Mount Edgcumbe dominate the north of this section of the Cornwall AONB. Elsewhere this otherwise quiet landscape is typified

by sparse settlement of farms and cottages linked by mostly small winding rural roads.

The conical form of Rame Head, with its medieval chapel on top, forms a prominent landmark with a widely visible and distinctive silhouette. The strategic position of Rame Head overlooking Plymouth sound is evidenced by the frequency of visible military fortifications in particular from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

## Management

- Maker with Rame Parish Plan has been prepared.
- The 800 acre Mount Edgcumbe estate is jointly owned and managed by Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council.
- The business plan for Mount Edgcumbe includes expansion of employment, facilities and increased visitor numbers.
- Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) now also covers some parkland grassland and historic features in the Mount Edgcumbe estate.
- The 'Joint Committee' guides management of some non Mount Edgcumbe estate areas including for example Rame Head car park.
- The Plymouth Green Infrastructure Strategy includes access to Mount Edgcumbe and the Rame Peninsula.
- The Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum is the estuary management partnership which coordinates all activities on the water and promotes integrated management through the agreed Management Plan.
- The Tamar Ferry and Reconnecting Rame were proposed as initiatives toward seeking improved transport links for the peninsula.
- Pony grazing of coastal rough ground is used in places to control scrub.
- Biodiversity Action Plan targets include habitat enhancement for farm birds and all of the coast.
- The waters of Plymouth Sound and Estuaries is designated as a European Marine Site being both a Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area. The designation protects the key marine habitats including the large shallow inlets and bays, estuaries and sandbanks covered by seawater all the time as well as much of the wildlife that the area supports.

## Condition

- Some modern buildings are not sympathetic to the character of Kingsand and Cawsand.
- The design of Kingsand and Cawsand public car parks could be more sympathetic to their setting.
- The narrow streets of Kingsand and Cawsand in particular can become congested with visitor's cars.
- Small and narrow roads around the Rame peninsula can become congested by visitors arriving by car.
- Overhead wirescape is intrusive for example in Kingsand and Cawsand.
- Much of the AONB and the South West Coast Path is in the Mount Edgcumbe Estate and hence is well maintained.
- Some coastal rough ground is subject to increasing scrub encroachment.
- Removal of Cornish hedges for agricultural efficiency has fragmented some wildlife corridors and the pattern of the landscape.
- In parts of this section there was significant loss to disease of hedgerow elm trees with impact on habitat connectivity and landscape character.





## Rame Head

### Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP11.1** Support local employment and affordable housing development in settlements with access to employment and local services, such as Kingsand and Cawsand, provided that by location and design this fully respects historic settlement pattern, local vernacular in design and use of materials and conserves and enhances the AONB.

**GP11.2** Support the development of innovative sustainable transport links to and from the Rame Peninsula. This should include car free options

building on its location at the mouth of the Tamar Estuary, particularly seeking opportunities to develop sustainable water transport and should consider landscape and visual impacts and be designed and implemented in a manner that conserves and enhances the AONB.

**GP11.3** Support improvement of non car access between settlements and the South West Coast Path.

**GP11.4** Support measures to increase visitor numbers and employment opportunities at the Mount Edgumbe Estate provided that the character of the Rame Peninsula is conserved and enhanced and its environment protected.

**GP11.5** Support local community aspirations for undergrounding of overhead cables in villages such as at Kingsand and Cawsand in order to reduce visual clutter.

**GP11.6** Support the celebration and interpretation of the extensive and wide ranging military history of this area in ways which aid awareness and understanding of the role of the Rame Peninsula as a fortification at the mouth of the Tamar but do not erode the tranquillity of the area.

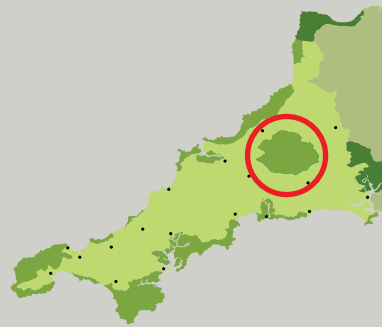
**GP11.7** Support the integrated management and partnership action of the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum in ensuring long term sustainability in the management of the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries.

**GP11.8** Support through a landscape scale approach the appropriate management, extension and linking of locally characteristic habitats. These include coastal heathland, farm hedges, parkland and broadleaved native inland and coastal woodland.

**GP011.9** Encourage the management of hedges to allow elm and other hedge tree regeneration or, where appropriate, planting of native or locally naturalised tree species on hedges in order to restore landscape character following the impacts of Dutch Elm disease, including raising awareness that such local hedges were previously considerably more treed.

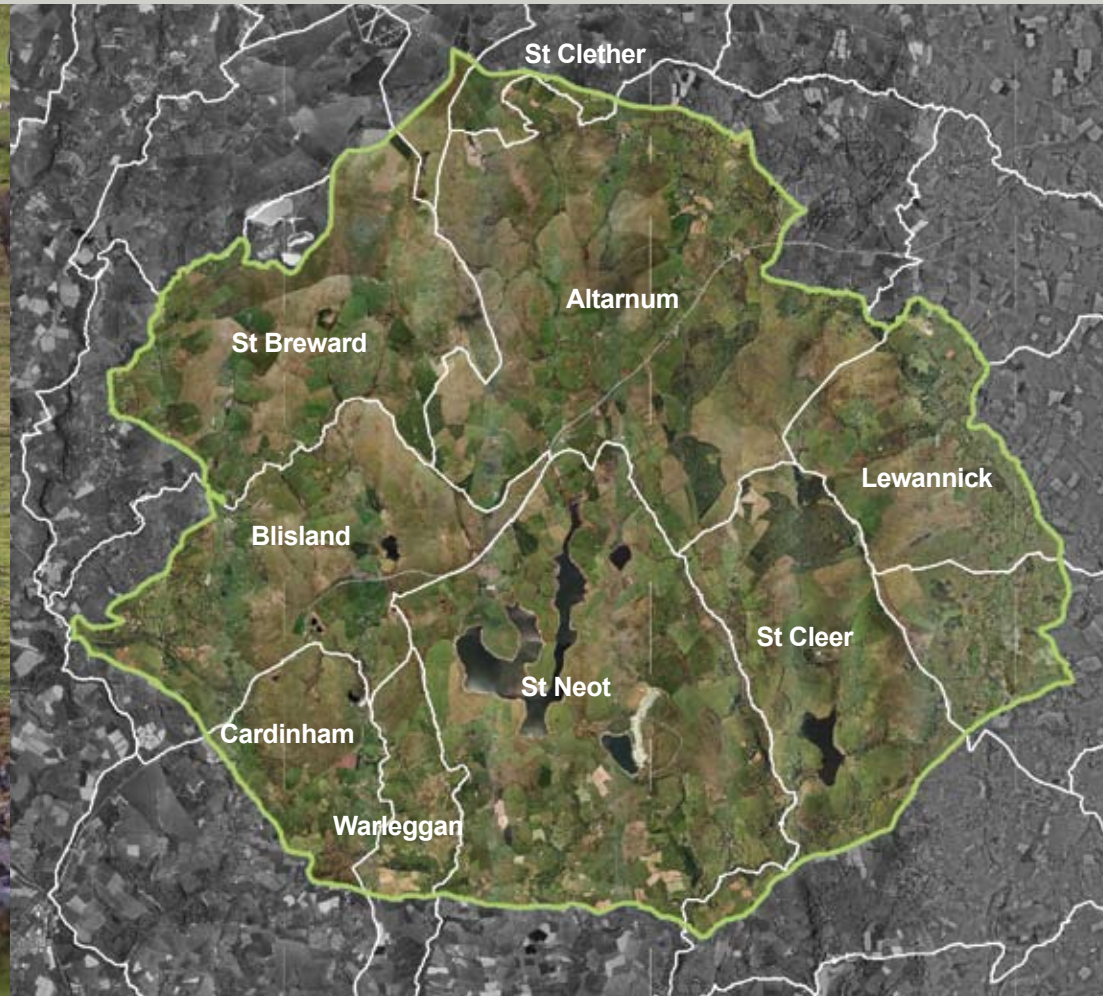






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## 12 Bodmin Moor

### Location

This AONB Section includes the open and enclosed moorland that spans the A30 between Fivelanes and Preeze Cross. It extends to Davidstow Moor in the north, Upton Cross in the east, St Neot in the south and Tresarrett in the west.

### Extent

Approximately 21,000 hectares or 80 square miles covering over a fifth (21%) of the Cornwall AONB. This is the largest single section of the Cornwall AONB.

### Statement of Significance

An underlying granite intrusion through the surrounding softer killas rock has formed this gently undulating elevated moorland plateau. The imposing summits of Brown Willy and the adjacent slightly lower Roughtor are the highest points of land in Cornwall, their impression of wild remoteness emphasized by the absence of man made structures. These and many other 'tors' have ragged crests of dramatically eroded granite creating a distinctive horizon recognisable from afar. The naturally formed 'Cheesering' has given its name to an internationally recognised geological category of tor and is an oft used iconic image of moorland Cornwall. Bodmin Moor is one of the best places in Cornwall to escape the intrusions of the 20th Century.

This is part of the central watershed for Cornwall and many small streams and rivers drain the gentle slopes in all directions through shallow valleys toward the edges of the moor. On reaching the softer surrounding killas rock water courses steepen markedly in now incised valleys and picturesque cascades and low waterfalls abound. Golitha Falls is an exceptional example, drawing visitors from far and wide. The resulting rivers such as the Fowey, Tiddy,

Lynher, Inny and Camel flow outward in all directions to eventually meet the distant sea at both the north and south coasts. The River Fowey which rises in the centre of the Moor gave Bodmin Moor its former name of 'Fowey Moor'.

Despite its relatively small size when compared to the other South West uplands of Exmoor and Dartmoor, the bleak sweeping landforms create an impression of endless empty vastness and huge scale in complete contrast with the intimacy of the surrounding lower valleys. Extensive, unenclosed high moorland is grazed by hardy weather-beaten cattle, sheep and ponies according to historic laws governing common land. This grazing plays an essential role in controlling scrub thereby maintaining the distinctive openness of this landscape. In parts the moor has never been enclosed. In other areas, past efforts at enclosure are long abandoned leaving enigmatic vestiges of past attempts to tame the land. Edging the open moorland, larger fields show enduring recent enclosure whilst nestling in sheltered folds at lower levels anciently enclosed farmland is recognisable by its smaller fields with irregular boundaries. This long historic process of attempts to tame the open moor has created a fascinating texture of intermingling pockets of commons and enclosures that distinguishes Bodmin Moor from most other upland landscapes. Almost all enclosed fields are semi-improved pasture for livestock grazing and there is little arable farmland.

Cornish hedges and retaining banks are constructed of the ubiquitous ever-present weathered local granite taken directly from the surface of the moor. High up the hedges are often of bare stone, at most supporting just a sparse turf topping or maybe a few gnarled and wind sculpted hawthorns, whilst at lower sheltered locations they support dense walls of mature Beech and native broadleaved trees such as Sessile Oak and Hazel.



The deep river valleys around the edges of the moor support luxuriant broadleaved woodland adding to the enclosed intimacy of these locations. Stately mature Beech trees are especially characteristic of the Fowey valley (Fowey means 'River of Beech Trees' in Cornish). Isolated modern conifer plantations however add a dark and sombre contrast to the open moorland. Gorse and bracken add to the roughness of the unimproved acid grassland of some commons whilst at the heads of streams on higher ground between hills poor drainage and substantial rainfall create a rich and interesting patchwork of fens, wetlands, quaking bogs and other valuable habitats emphasising the sense of remote exposure. Most of the north of the moor is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest - the largest single area so designated in Cornwall.

Bodmin Moor is remarkable for the survival of extensive visible remains of historic landscapes giving a tangible perception of a deep and continuous history of occupation stretching far back in time. Identifiable remains range from early Neolithic tor enclosures, bronze age roundhouse settlements and fields systems and from the same period often in separate locations ceremonial features such as barrows and standing stone circles such as the Hurlers of which the historian William Camden wrote in 1610: 'The neighbouring inhabitants term them Hurlers, as being by devout and godly error persuaded that they had been men sometime transformed into stones, for profaning the Lord's Day with hurling the ball'. The distinctive clitter slopes that surround the tors were formed by the shattering effect of summer thaws during the last ice age and this ancient geological landscape has survived ever since, adding to the moor's timeless qualities.

Abandoned medieval settlements and their associated vestiges of long abandoned fields systems and Cornish hedges are still discernable

where the wild roughness of the moor has reclaimed these human attempts at domestication. Significant numbers of surviving holy wells and stone crosses are poignant reminders of the enduring importance of religion in the history of Bodmin Moor's communities. Some of the older granite quarries make a positive contribution to the landscape for example at Carbilly Tor and Bearah Tor, and particularly the historic stone finger dumps. Partially flooded china clay workings occur at Lower Hawkstor, Parson's Pit, and Stannon Pit where this product of weathered granite has been found close to the surface. Prominent engine houses and mining structures especially in the South East of the moor near Caradon Hill and the Minions are a reminder of Cornwall's and Bodmin Moor's once great mining industry. The bleak central hamlet of Bolventor (named after a 'Bold Venture' to recover tin from moorland streams) is home to the Jamaica Inn made world famous by Daphne du Maurier.

With the tough exposed conditions it is not surprising that this is the most sparsely settled landscape in the Cornwall AONB – especially so high on the moor where only lonely farmsteads occur often huddled below hill tops to take advantage of any available shelter. By contrast around the fringes of the moor clusters of farms and houses hug the slopes or exploit sheltered hollows. Some of the occasional nucleated villages are named after Saints – for example St Breward, St Neot and St Cleer indicating their medieval churchtown origins. Buildings, often including substantial stone chimneys, are typically constructed of local granite and in exposed locations are weathered to appear as if grown from the bedrock itself. Slate is used on roofs and hung on walls for weather protection.

There are no tracks and few footpaths across the open moor emphasising its remoteness. Elsewhere

lower down however there is a widespread network of small winding lanes. These are open and characteristically unenclosed as they cross open moorland, but enclosed and secluded amongst the lower lying land and valleys. Cornwall's main road the A30 crosses the centre of the moor serving modern travellers as it follows the line of an ancient prehistoric ridgeway.

## Management

- Open moorland access is generally subject to management under the Commons system.

- Land owners and commoners are seeking to establish a formally and legally constituted Commoners Council for Bodmin Moor.

- The Bodmin Moor Parishes Network's objectives include: To regenerate a stronger economy; To foster and promote the vitality and viability of the area; To generate support for sustainable social, recreational and environmental initiatives; To bring together all the relevant organizations and individuals to work in partnership; To act as the consultative body for the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the area.

- Parish Plans exist for: St Neot, St Breward, Blisland, St Cleer and Linkinhorne.

- The National Trust owns land at Roughtor.

- Active quarrying operations are controlled under the terms of updated planning conditions approved under the Review of Mineral Planning Permissions. Quarrying under existing planning permissions at Parsons Park Pit, Stannon Pit (china clay) and Tor Down Quarry (granite) cannot be resumed following the making of Prohibition Orders

- Part of the moor is designated a World Heritage Site for Mining.

- Most of the moorland area is designated as Open Access land under the CROW Act 2000.

- The 'Vision for Bodmin Moor' seeks to establish a plan basis for shared agreement between agencies and with the land owners and commoners regarding management of habitats and historic landscapes of unenclosed land within the moorland line only. This could potentially then be used as a basis for guiding agri-environmental schemes and other relevant activities.

- The Caradon Hill Project seeks to work with the community including schools, local farmers and commoners to conserve the natural and historic landscape through an inclusive programme of minor works, education, training and helping foster community-pride in their landscape.

- The Bodmin Moor Livestock Initiative will run until 2013 and is a Partnership project aimed at improving take up of Axis 1 of RDPE funding to improve the competitiveness of the livestock sector.

- Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative (CBI) plans include enhancing native broadleaved wooded river valley corridors for example those of the Fowey and the Camel and other rivers that rise on or frame Bodmin Moor. The 'Vision for Bodmin Moor' (referred to above) is also supported by CBI.

- Some conifer plantations are approaching maturity and will be subject to applications or felling.



## Condition

- Large scale china clay extraction operations at Parson's Park Pit and adjacent to the AONB at Stannon Pit have ceased in recent years and plant and machinery have been removed and parts of the sites restored.
- Visitor numbers have led to ground and path erosion at popular locations such as Golitha falls and the Minions.
- Some historic mining structures remain unstabilised such as the two engine houses at Sharptor and other remains as at Wheal Bray and Phoenix.
- Some aspects of the A30 are visually intrusive on their moorland setting for example in the use of coloured road marking, signage, and detailing.
- Previous headage based agri-environmental payments led to some over grazing — but this is now largely under control.
- Broadleaved woodlands in Valleys are largely unmanaged.
- Some old hedges are deteriorating from long term lack of maintenance leading in places to the erecting of barbed wire fencing alongside.
- Some existing conifer plantations are visually intrusive due to their design and location.



## Bodmin Moor Guiding Principles

It is intended that these local guiding principles will support the actions of the AONB Partnership and other stakeholders and that their actions will be informed by them. Note: Some local issues may be addressed by strategic policies.

**GP12.1** Support proposals for the establishment of a Commons Council as a basis for co-ordinated management of the commons and resolution of commons issues.

**GP12.2** Support the extension of the Bodmin Moor Parishes Network and the development of the role of the Network in the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.

**GP12.3** Support through a landscape scale approach the integrated management of natural, historic and geologically significant landscapes across the moor with the full involvement of commoners, farmers and landowners through appropriate networks and seek to achieve consensus on long term management objectives.

**GP12.4** Support the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local need provided that this maintains the distinctive local settlement pattern and that this respects local vernacular in design and use of materials and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB.

**GP12.5** Assess the landscape, visual and cumulative impact of tall structures including future proposals for farm scale, community and commercial wind turbines on Bodmin Moor and its setting, within the context of the evidence base including the emerging Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document. Those proposals which have an adverse impact on the natural beauty of the moor would not be supported.



**GP12.6** Seek improved restoration of China Clay workings at Lower Hawkstor, Parson's Pit, and Stannon Pit in keeping with the local landform, soils and vegetation communities of their moorland setting. Support further measures to protect and enhance environmental quality when existing quarrying permissions are reviewed.

**GP12.7** Support measures to better integrate the A30 with its wider moorland setting for example, vegetation consistent with moorland habitats, native rock exposures, local style Cornish hedges, unenclosed boundaries, appropriate use of local granite, the retention of current positive rural aspects such as unlit sections and the reduction to the minimum necessary of highway signage, lighting and markings.

**GP12.8** Seek conservation and enhancement of the character of the small scale rural road network through the use of local stone and local styles in the maintenance and repair of roadside hedges, retention of characteristically unenclosed moorland lanes, utilizing locally characteristic soft passing places and banks for traffic management and avoiding hard engineering works and excess signage for example at Lady Down and Manor Common.

**GP12.9** Seek improved integration into the landscape of existing visitor facilities and car parks such as at Golitha Falls, Minions and Roughtor Road in order to reduce their existing landscape and visual impacts.

**GP12.10** Support a mutually acceptable approach to pro-active management of access on open access land, with the full involvement of landowners, commoners, moor users, Cornwall Council and other public bodies to ensure a long term strategy for integrated access management, built upon consensus.

**GP12.11** Back balanced projects that combine supporting and enabling the community, schools, landowners, commoners and farmers in conserving the natural and historic landscape, with providing education and training and that seek conservation of significant historic features such as mining structures at Sharptor, Wheal Bray and Phoenix.

**GP12.12** Seek reduction in the visual impact of existing conifer plantations for example at Priddacombe, Hawkstor, Bolventor Halvana, Smallacoombe and Roughtor consistent with established best practice. Seek opportunities for this to be achieved by restoration to open habitats after productive felling balanced with greater productive woodland creation at appropriate local sites in order to conserve and enhance the open moorland landscape and also protect the economic resource.





# The Cornwall AONB Partnership



# Photography

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