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Planning Policy Background

National Policy and Legislation

- 1.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Sections 40 and 41 places a duty upon a Local Planning Authority (LPA) to identify, conserve ‘and enhance’ biodiversity within their Plan area.
- 1.2 The Environment Act 2021 in Part 6 Paragraph 101 provides for a 10% minimum Biodiversity Net Gain as a mandatory condition of planning permission. Biodiversity Net Gain [BNG] is a new approach to development which builds upon the NERC Act and aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before it was involved in development.
- 1.3 ‘Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services’ aims to ‘halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people’.
- 1.4 Nature Positive 2030, endorsed by the Govt., sets out the priority actions and achievable steps for becoming “Nature Positive” – reversing biodiversity decline – by 2030. It includes:
 - Ensuring wildlife thrives within protected areas on land and at sea.

- Better conserve wildlife habitats outside protected areas, in particular those areas identified as parts of nature networks or as important blue/green infrastructure.
- Investing in habitat restoration and creation to strengthen nature networks that deliver for biodiversity and climate change.
- Ensuring outcomes for nature are integrated in development plans on land and at sea.

1.5 The 25 Year Environment Plan [25YEP] published in 2018 sets out the Government's environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan aims to 'tackle the growing problems of waste and soil degradation...improve social justice by tackling the pollution suffered by those living in less favourable areas.... and by opening up the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world to people from the widest possible range of ages and backgrounds'. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change – 'still perhaps the most serious long-term risk to the environment given higher land and sea temperatures, rising sea levels, extreme weather patterns and ocean acidification, which harms marine species.' It sets 10 Goals to achieve these outcomes:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 2: Clean air
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
- Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity
- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

1.6 The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. Regarding land-use planning it recognises that there are a significant number of demands on land, from development, energy, food production, nature, climate and beyond. Strategic planning can help deliver environmental improvements by protecting natural capital whilst contributing to its enhancement. It commits to publishing a Land Use Framework in 2023 to set out the Govts., approach to making the most out of land and to ensure all its objectives for agriculture, the environment and net zero are met. Environmental improvement are fully reflected in the review of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2023.

1.7 The Plan for Water: our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water, sets out Government plans to 'deliver clean and plentiful water – a healthy water environment, and a sustainable supply of water for people, and businesses, and nature'. It sets out several priorities that land use planning can contribute to:

- Reducing pollution from wastewater, urban areas and transport.
- Reducing storm overflow discharges
- Designing towns and cities for water sustainability
- Encourage and incentivise best farming practices and Reduce pollution from farms
- Improving regulation of private sewage discharges
- Restoring protected nature sites
- Addressing legacy land contamination
- Improving water efficiency through sustainable drainage systems and 'water positive' or 'net zero water' development.

National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

1.8 Key messages from the NPPF are that Planning policies should aim to:

- Achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places (para 96) and should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment (Para 180). They should:
 - Protect and enhance valued landscapes, biodiversity, geological or soils;

- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services (i.e. green infrastructure)
- **Minimise impacts on and provide ‘measurable’ net gains for biodiversity, and establish coherent ecological networks**
- Avoid unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability, and
- Encourage remediation and mitigation of despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land (Para 180).
- Designate green areas of particular importance to local communities to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances (Para 105).
- Take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure [Para 181];
- Allocate only land with the least environmental or amenity value [Para 181].
- Not permit major developments in AONBs, where great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty, ensure that development conserves and enhances the landscape character and scenic beauty of the AONB (Para 182).
- Not permit development where it is likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest or result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland unless very exceptional circumstances apply (Para 186),
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them [Para 185a].
- Protect Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation and ‘Ramsar’ sites from harm (Para 187)
- Take into account ground conditions and land instability, including from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and contamination (Para 189).
- Take into account the effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution (Para 191).
- Protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason (Para 191b).
- Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation (Para 191c).
- Sustain and contribute towards compliance with objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas, identifying how to improve air quality or mitigate impacts, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement (Para 192).

NPPF 2023 defines Green infrastructure as ‘A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity’.

1.9 Key messages from the Cornwall Local Plan include:

- The CLP (Policy 16) aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Cornwall's communities, residents, workers and visitors, by:
 - requiring that development should protect, and alleviate risk to people and the environment from unsafe, unhealthy and polluted environments by avoiding or mitigating against harmful impacts and health risks;
 - not causing increased risk to human health from air pollution or exceeding EU standards;
 - maximising the opportunity for physical activity through the use of open space, indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities and providing or enhancing active travel networks that support and encourage walking, riding and cycling;
 - encouraging provision for growing local food in private gardens which are large enough to accommodate vegetable growing or greenhouses or through the provision of allotments; and
 - providing flexible community open spaces that can be adapted to the health needs of the community and encourage social interaction.
- The CLP also reflects the NPPF requirements that the needs of the local community are met, including through affordable housing provision.
- Good quality well planned and appropriately located green infrastructure is critical to Cornwall's future. Not only does it help us to live more healthily, sustainably and self-sufficiently, it helps to increase resilience and adaptation to climate change and supports ecosystems services providing for food production, flood control and wildlife and their component parts: water, soil, nutrients and organisms (Para 2.190).
- Open space and Green Infrastructure can play an important role in improving health and wellbeing by providing accessible space for recreation (Para 2.192);
- New developments should use the environmental features of sites as the foundation of their design.... The impact of new development on green infrastructure assets will be assessed as part of determining planning applications (Para 2.194).
- Existing green infrastructure ... which is important to recreation, leisure, community use, townscape and landscape quality and visual amenity will be protected and enhanced. New development should retain and enhance the most important assets...take in to account and show how GI assets have positively contributed to place making and influenced the proposal....provide buffers to natural spaces with GI significance...restore or enhance the connections of nature and people through physical integration and links with GI assets...provide accessible and quality open space...include arrangements for maintenance of GI assets...mitigate any losses by provision elsewhere (Policy 25).
- Residential development is expected to contribute to appropriate management, mitigation and monitoring measures to mitigate their recreational impacts on European Protected Sites (Policy 22).

1.10 Objective 10(a) within key theme number 4 states to '*respect the distinctive character of Cornwall's diverse landscapes*'.

1.11 Policy 2 – Spatial Strategy states that new development should 'maintain and respect the special character of Cornwall, recognising that all urban and rural landscapes, designated and undesignated, are important' ... by

identifying ‘the value and sensitivity, of the character and importance of landscapes, biodiversity and geodiversity and historic assets’

- 1.12 Policy 23 – Natural Environment – states that development proposals should sustain local distinctiveness and character and protect and enhance Cornwall’s natural environment where development should be of
- 2. *‘of an appropriate scale, mass and design that recognises and respects landscape character of both designated and undesignated landscapes... must take into account and respect the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape asset, considering cumulative impact and the wish to maintain dark skies and tranquillity in areas that are relatively undisturbed, using guidance from the Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment and supported by the descriptions of Areas of Great Landscape Value.*

Cornwall Climate Emergency Development Plan Document

- 1.13 This is an extension to the Local Plan has been prepared to bring forward more specifically focused policies dealing with the causes and impacts of the climate crisis. The CEDPD was adopted in February 2023. Its proposed policies include additional strong measures that will help the local community to tackle the causes and effects of the climate. Policy G2P requires that proposals for major development should demonstrate, through use of a Biodiversity Net Gain Plan [BNGP], based on an assessment of the site before and after development, how the impact on biodiversity will be minimised and at least a net gain in biodiversity achieved in line with national policy, and that minor development (as defined in secondary legislation) shall demonstrate biodiversity net gains in accordance with a Cornwall Council approved Small Site Biodiversity Metric.
- 1.14 Each BNGP should use appropriate methods drawn from the guidance in the Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guide and the **British Standard for Biodiversity [BS8683]** and explain how a Mitigation Hierarchy has been followed and how the proposal will integrate into any wider green infrastructure networks.
- 1.15 Net Biodiversity Gain [NBG] follows the principle of the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ which seeks to:
- Enhance habitat
 - Avoid habitat loss
 - Minimise habitat loss
 - Restore habitat loss
 - Compensate for habitat loss
 - Offset Habitat loss
- 1.16 DEFRA have published a ‘Biodiversity Metric’ to provide a way of measuring and accounting for biodiversity losses and gains resulting from development or land management change. Examples of appropriate methods to address NBG might include:
- Purpose designed boxes and bricks for bats, birds (including owls in remoter areas),
 - Bees and other invertebrates, within the structure of the building, or within the site
 - Boundaries on non-built features if this is not possible;
 - Hedgehog access points in fences,
 - Planting new native trees and hedges and flower-rich habitats
 - The intentional use of suds, and drainage ponding, as habitat,
 - ‘re-wilding’ of areas to support drainage and create habitat
 - Measures to protect the integrity of any affected wildlife corridors, mitigate any
 - Harmful impact, and incorporate linkages to provide new connections between corridors
 - Contributions to a ‘green reserve’ nearby.

Other plans and studies

1.17 **Natural England - Green Infrastructure Guidance** defines green infrastructure as:

'...a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types. Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently, it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.'

1.18 **The Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan¹** is presented in 4 volumes:

- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 1: Audits and Priorities
- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 2: Action Plan
- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 3: Action Plans 2004
- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 4: Priority Projects 2010-2015

1.19 **'Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 1: Audits and Priorities** set recommendations for Action Plans, which were produced for the Cornish priority habitats and species and published in 'Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 2: Action Plans'. A further volume, 'Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 3: Action Plans 2004' was produced in line with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) process, highlighting the 25 UK BAP priority habitats and 127 BAP priority species occurring in Cornwall. In light of a progress review, Cornwall's BAP was reviewed and updated, taking into consideration the new UK list of priority habitats and species, and the England Biodiversity Strategy (EBS) delivery framework. This document is 'Volume 4: Priority Habitats' 2010 identifies priority project areas.

1.20 **Cornwall's Environmental Growth Strategy²** provides a long-term framework that aims to not just conserve, but also to grow nature by ensuring that there is more of it, and that it is bigger, better, more diverse and more joined up.

1.21 It is produced by the Cornwall Local Nature Partnership, and guided by the principle that human social, economic and environmental conditions are interconnected with nature. It contains 10 pillars as the natural foundations for a green recovery. They provide steps towards the target that by 30% of land and seas are well managed for nature by 2030. It also elaborates on how a cleaner, greener Cornwall with more space for nature will be delivered.

1.22 The **'Cornwall landscape character best practice guide'** says that for 'smaller-scale development particularly in rural areas:

- i. consider how new development can foster the existing rural character
- ii. ensure residential entrances and approaches avoid over-engineered solutions, favouring designs which follow the site topography

¹ <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/30918968/cornwalls-biodiversity-action-plan-cornwall-wildlife-trust>

² <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/environmental-growth-strategy/>

- iii. retain trees and Cornish hedges, ditches and walls, especially where these form backdrops, soften roof lines, and produce screening. Replace features which have to be removed to fit in with the existing landscape pattern
- iv. reflect vernacular and local rural detailing at gates, entranceways and boundary treatments
- v. retain grass verges and avoid upstanding kerbs and highway bollards, avoiding the extension of garden features such as close-mown lawns, flowerbeds and ornamental shrubs beyond the garden boundary, as these have the effect of suburbanisation of rural lanes
- vi. site garages and other utility features such as rubbish bins and fuel storage away from property frontages in screened areas
- vii. locate parking and turning spaces at the sides and rear of buildings, or within courtyards, reducing their visibility from the highway
- viii. provide new native structure planting of Cornish hedges, copses, shelterbelts, (where appropriate) to help integrate new buildings into the landscape. Carefully consider the use of exotic species, especially evergreens such as cypresses

- 1.23 **The Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity and Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document**³ was adopted on the 16th October 2018 by Cornwall Council and is a material consideration in planning decisions. It is supplementary to policies of the Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies (2016). It gives requirements and guidance for the achievement of a minimum 10% NBG. See:
<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/v1roqk0x/planning-for-biodiversity-and-net-gain-spd-v11.pdf>
- 1.24 [Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Guidance for Developers and Planners](#), in-depth guidance including Biodiversity Offsetting is also available.
- 1.25 The **Cornwall Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy**⁴ is a blueprint for a Cornwall Nature Recovery Network drafted under the terms of the Environment Act 2021, which identifies how it can be protected, enhanced, created and restored. This will lay out the steps to reach the goal that 30% of Cornwall's land and seas are well-managed for nature by 2030. includes a map of the most valuable areas for wildlife presently [Zone 1], opportunities to improve nature in the future [Zone 2], and short-term priorities. The aim is to use the high-quality existing habitats as core wildlife hubs and connect them together through the restoration and creation of strategically placed opportunity habitats, thereby creating one larger network.
- 1.26 Policy G4 of the Climate emergency DPD requires that where applications are sited within or adjacent to an adopted Local Nature Recovery Network they should demonstrate how they will maintain and enhance the integrity and connectivity of the network and support the principles of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 1.27 A map showing the NRN zones in Pentewan Valley Parish can be found at the LAGAS Natural Capital Information and Management Hub at <https://lagas.co.uk/app/product/nature-recovery-network> It should be taken onto account when new development and net gains in biodiversity are being considered.
- 1.28 The Cornwall Nationally Protected Landscape Management Plan 2022 – 2027 is a shared strategy for those who live, work and visit the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It provides guidance to help Government, statutory organisations and any public body to ensure they are fulfilling their Section 85 duty to 'have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty' of the AONB.
- 1.29 The current plan was adopted by Cornwall Council in May 2022 and will run until 2027. It operates from a strategic to local level. It is structured to be able to inform and guide organisations and individuals whose work and actions impact on the AONB. In particular those who have a statutory duty to ensure that their

³ <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/v1roqk0x/planning-for-biodiversity-v14.pdf>

⁴ <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/nature-recovery-plan-overview>

decisions and actions contribute positively to the primary purpose of AONB: to conserve and enhance landscape and natural scenic beauty and be applied to the designated AONB sections and its setting.

- 1.30 Its primary purpose is to conserve and enhance Natural Beauty, with the intention to inspire all who live, work and visit to be connected with the landscape that is inclusive and appreciated by everyone.
- 1.31 The relevant section of the AONB for this Neighbourhood Development Plan is the South Coast Central areaⁱ
- 1.32 The '**Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions**' or 'Standing Advice' says that planning permission should be refused if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and there's a suitable compensation strategy in place

Baseline

Trees and Woodlands

- 1.33 Pentewan Valley Parish is in comparison with most other Cornish Parishes very well 'treed' with extensive woodlands running the length of the valley of the St Austell River or River Vinnick, also known as the White River. Park Matthews Wood to the east of the Parish, and Kings/Shepherdshill Wood and within the valley itself, and Wood Orchard nearby, are all Ancient Woodlands. Figure 1 below illustrates the extent and location of the woodlands.

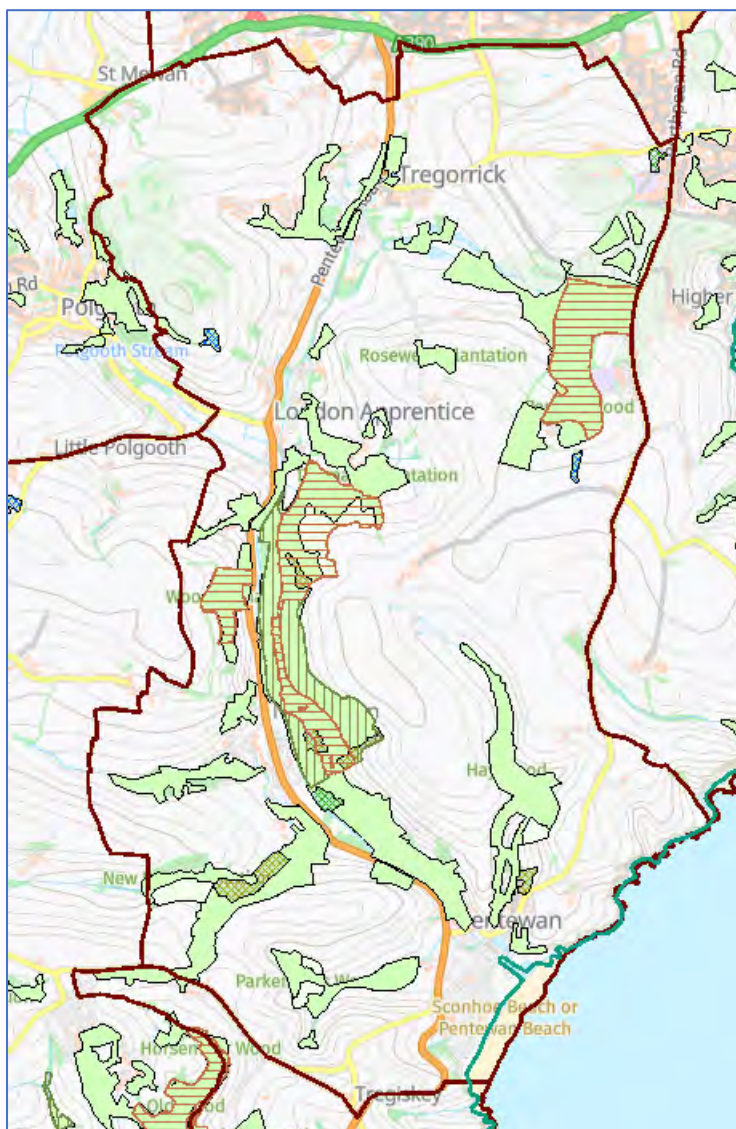


Figure 1: Location and Range of Woodland Types [source DEFRA MAGIC map].



- 1.34 There are currently no Tree Preservation Orders within the Parish. However, the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory records 17 Veteran Trees and 3 Notable Trees in the area, predominantly oak, with some beech and other species. A significant cluster is located around the Cornwall Hotel, with further individual specimens at the eastern end of Tregorrick Road and to the south of London Apprentice. Although many of these trees are not publicly accessible or visible, they are of considerable ecological and historical value and should be afforded appropriate protection and respect in the planning process [see Figures 2 and 3].

Figure 2: Veteran, Ancient or Notable Trees in Pentewan Valley Parish included on the Ancient Tree Inventory								
Tree name	Species	Form	Standing or fallen	Living status	Girth	Veteran status	Grid reference	Public accessibility
Austrian pine	Pinus nigra ssp. nigra	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.40m at 1.50m	Notable tree	SX0269450768	Private – visible from public access
Beech	Beech	Maiden	Fallen	Dead	4.22m at 1.50m	Lost Veteran tree	SX0119051142	Private – not visible from public access
Beech	Beech	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.48m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0092451222	Private – not visible from public access
Beech	Beech	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.46m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0091851271	Private – not visible from public access
Beech	Beech	Pollard form (natural)	Standing	Alive	3.49m at 0.60m	Veteran tree	SX0099351379	Private – not visible from public access
Beech	Beech	Maiden	Standing	Alive	2.95m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX01185137	Private – not visible from public access
Common beech	Fagus sylvatica	Maiden	Standing	Alive	4.75m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0223050372	Private – not visible from public access
Holly	Ilex aquifolium	Maiden	Standing	Alive	1.65m at 0.15m	Veteran tree	SX01145135	Private – not visible from public access
Oak	Oak	Coppice	Standing	Alive	5.00m at 0.10m	Notable tree	SX0060349930	Public – partial

Oak	Oak	Phoenix	Standing	Alive	3.50m at 1.50m	Notable tree	SX0058349937	Public – partial access
Oak	Oak	Stump	Fallen	Dead	4.00m at 1.00m (estimated)	Lost Veteran tree	SX0112851332	Private – not visible from public access
Pedunculate oak	Quercus robur	Maiden	Standing	Alive	4.10m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0035547089	Public – no access information recorded
Pedunculate oak	Quercus robur	Maiden	Standing	Alive	4.70m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0220750509	Public – partial access
Pedunculate oak	Quercus robur	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.32m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0103751370	Private – not visible from public access
Pedunculate oak	Quercus robur	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.86m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0109651320	Private – not visible from public access
Sessile oak	Quercus petraea	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.80m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0127750945	Private – not visible from public access
Sessile oak	Quercus petraea	Pollard lapsed	Standing	Alive	3.78m at 0.50m	Veteran tree	SX0233251342	Public – open access
Sessile oak	Quercus petraea	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.67m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0097551085	Private – not visible from public access
Sweet chestnut	Castanea sativa	Coppice	Standing	Alive	5.80m at 0.10m	Veteran tree	SX0253951374	Public – partial access
Sweet chestnut	Castanea sativa	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.69m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0093751207	Private – not visible from public access
Sweet chestnut	Castanea sativa	Maiden	Standing	Alive	3.85m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0093651246	Private – not visible from public access
Turkey oak	Quercus cerris	Maiden	Standing	Alive	4.74m at 1.50m	Veteran tree	SX0123751427	Private – not visible from public access

Figure 3: Status and Species of Veteran, Ancient or Notable Trees in Pentewan Valley Parish

Veteran status	Count
Veteran tree	17
Notable tree	3
Lost Veteran tree	2
Species	Count
Beech	5
Quercus robur	4
Oak	3
Quercus petraea	3
Castanea sativa	3
Pinus nigra ssp. nigra	1
Fagus sylvatica	1
Ilex aquifolium	1
Quercus cerris	1

Why is Landscape Important?

Landscape is far more than just a view. It is the relationship between people, place and nature – the ever-changing backdrop to our daily lives. Land becomes landscape through our perception of it, shaped both by how we experience its aesthetic qualities – its patterns, colours, smells, textures and sounds – and by the associations we attach to them, such as memories, feelings of familiarity or a sense of awe.

Landscape exists everywhere: from mountains, uplands, moors and the seascapes of our stunning coastline, to rolling countryside and traditional green parks within both urban and rural settings. Each has its own distinctive character and sense of place. All landscapes matter, wherever they are and whatever their condition.

A widely accepted definition of landscape is: *“an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”*

Landscapes differ because of their underlying geology, soils, topography, land cover, hydrology, historic and cultural development, and climatic influences. These natural and socio-economic factors combine to make each landscape unique.

By including landscape considerations in Neighbourhood Plans, communities have the opportunity to identify what makes their area distinctive, and to ensure that its special qualities and unique character are protected and enhanced through the planning process.

- 1.35 Landscape character assessment is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive.

Statement of Local Landscape Character – Pentewan Valley Parish

- 1.36 Pentewan Valley Parish is defined by the broad valley of the St Austell River, also known locally as the River Vinnick or White River, a name recalling the historic discolouration of its waters by china clay waste. This wooded river corridor bisects the Parish and provides an intimate, enclosed character that contrasts with the rolling, more open agricultural land which rises on either side. The juxtaposition of these two elements – river valley and elevated farmland – underpins the Parish’s distinctive rural setting.
- 1.37 Above the valley floor, the Parish is largely rural in character, with a rolling agricultural topography punctuated by hedgerows, small woodland blocks, and areas of post-medieval designed landscapes. Historic estates, such as Penrice and Trewhiddle’s White House, introduced parkland features and plantations that remain legible in the present-day landscape. To the south, the Heligan Registered Park and Garden projects into the Parish, reinforcing this historic layering of designed landscapes. Much of the Pentewan Valley itself lies within the Cornwall National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), recognised for its scenic quality, cultural associations, and ecological value.
- 1.38 The Parish is also shaped by its industrial past. The trackbed of the 19th-century horse-drawn St Austell and Pentewan Railway remains a defining historic feature, running from the edge of St Austell down the valley to Pentewan Village on the coast. This industrial heritage, together with the wider context of china clay working, forms part of the cultural landscape, contributing to both local identity and tourism appeal.
- 1.39 To the north and east of the Parish, the character shifts as the open farmland, predominantly of medieval origin with some prehistoric rough ground and small plantations, abuts the expanding urban edge of St Austell. This area, though outside the National Landscape designation, functions as an important transition zone and visual buffer between town and countryside. It provides a valuable setting for the National Landscape to the south, acting as a gateway for visitors travelling into the Pentewan Valley and wider coast. Recreational and institutional land uses such as golf courses, sports facilities, and the hospital reflect

proximity to the town, but the land nonetheless retains a role in protecting the rural setting of the valley and preventing settlement coalescence.

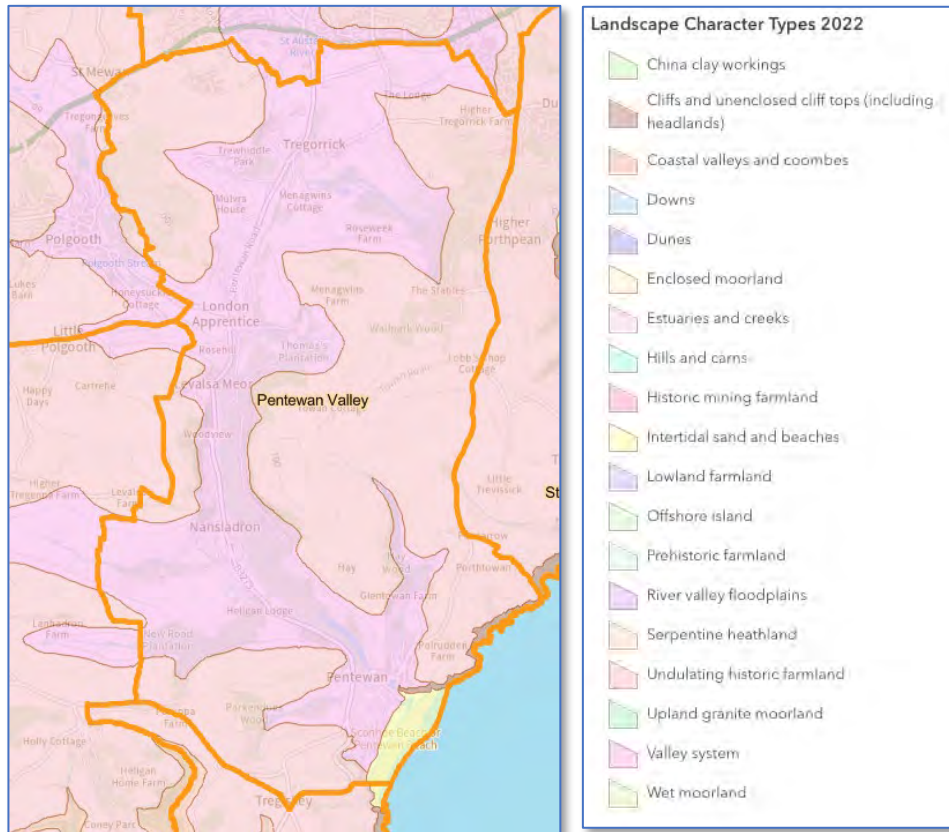
- 1.40 The Parish's landscapes are therefore multi-layered: combining rural farmland, wooded valley, historic parkland, industrial heritage and urban fringe. They provide not only scenic value but also biodiversity, recreational opportunity, and cultural continuity. Their contribution to the green infrastructure of St Austell, particularly the ecological and recreational corridor along the White River, is of strategic importance.
- 1.41 While much of the Pentewan Valley benefits from National Landscape designation, areas beyond its boundary also require careful consideration. Development in these areas has the potential, individually or cumulatively, to harm the natural beauty and special qualities of the National Landscape through visual intrusion, increased traffic, or noise. The extent of such impacts is generally proportionate to the size and proximity of development, though very large or tall structures may affect views and tranquillity even at a distance.
- 1.42 Overall, the landscape character of Pentewan Valley Parish is defined by the interplay of river, farmland, historic estates, designed parkland and industrial heritage, framed against the urban edge of St Austell. It is a landscape of high scenic, ecological and cultural value, central to community identity, recreation and well-being, and integral to the wider setting of Cornwall's South Coast Central National Landscape.

National Character Area

- 1.43 Nationally there are 159 Character Areas, each of which is distinctive with a unique 'sense of place'. These broad divisions of landscape form the basic units of cohesive countryside character, on which strategies for both ecological and landscape issues can be based. The Character Area framework is used to describe and shape objectives for the countryside, its planning and management.
- 1.44 Pentewan Valley lies in the **Cornish Killas Character Area**, details of which can be found here: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6125360068427776>

Landscape Character Type 2022

- 1.45 Landscape Character Types (LCT) are generic landscapes often repeated across Cornwall which are relatively homogenous, having a common pattern of characteristics, sharing similar geology, topography, hydrology, land cover, historic land use and settlement pattern. LCTs combine to create the locally distinct Cornwall Character Areas. Each of the 18 LCTs is supported by a character description. [See Map 11].
- 1.46 The Pentewan River valley is partly within the 'Valley systems' character, the detailed description for which can be found here: https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/reports_LCT/Cornwall%20LCT%20Valley%20Systems.pdf
- 1.47 The rest of the Parish lies mainly in the 'Undulating historic farmland' character the detailed description for which can be found here: https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/reports_LCT/Cornwall%20LCT%20Undulating%20Historic%20Farmland.pdf
- 1.48 Pentewan Beach is in the Intertidal sand and beaches character type, the detailed description for which can be found here: https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/reports_LCT/Cornwall%20LCT%20Intertidal%20Sand%20and%20Beaches.pdf



Cornwall Character areas 2022

Cornwall Character Areas (CCA) replace the 40 Landscape Character Areas in the 2007 assessment. There are 44 CCAs which are geographically discrete areas with their own 'sense of place' and a distinct localised pattern of elements in the landscape that are unique to a specific area of Cornwall. Within each CCA there will be a number of strategic Landscape Character Types, which may be repeated across Cornwall. Each of the 44 CCAs is supported by its own detailed character description using the following headings:

- Location
- Changes to CCA boundaries from the 2007 Landscape

Character Assessment

- Summary of landscape character
- Summary of key designations found in the Cornwall Character Area
- Key characteristics
- Valued landscape attributes and key sensitivities
- Pressures and forces for change
- Landscape guidance

1.49 The Parish is entirely within the Gerrans, Veyan and Mevagissey Bays (LUC), the detailed description for which can be found here:
https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/reports_CCA/Cornwall%20CCA22%20Gerrans,%20Veyan%20and%20Mevagissey%20Bays.pdf

1.50 The key points from these documents that directly relate to the Pentewan Valley area are:

Valley Systems Character Type

- Valleys like the Pentewan/St Austell River valley are typically densely wooded—often with both broadleaved and coniferous woodland—creating a naturalistic, enclosed feel.
- The incised topography of river valleys cutting through surrounding farmland shapes a strong sense of place, with limited views except from upper slopes.
- These valleys support important semi-natural habitats (wet woodlands, riparian vegetation), often with designated conservation status (SSSIs, County Wildlife Sites).
- Vulnerable attributes include woodland cover, biodiversity, tranquillity, historic features (e.g., parkland, veteran trees, industrial relics), and recreational access.
- Strategic guidance includes: conserving semi-natural habitats and historic landscape features, retaining veteran trees, restoring field boundaries, improving riparian buffers and water quality, encouraging woodland regeneration, and planning for flood resilience.

Undulating Historic Farmland Character Type

- Surrounding farmland exhibits gently undulating topography, shaped by medieval field enclosures, often overlaid with historic hedgebanks (Cornish hedges).
- The land supports mixed agriculture (pasture and arable), with remnant semi-natural habitats (woodland copses, grassland, heath) and biodiversity value.
- Historic and designed landscapes (e.g., estate parklands, ornamental gardens) are present, alongside archaeological features and mining heritage.
- The area generally retains sparse settlement, narrow rural lanes, and a strong rural/tranquil character—though proximity to roads or tourism activity can introduce disturbance.
- Guidance recommends conserving medieval field patterns, hedges, parkland character, semi-natural habitats; restoring field boundaries, buffering waterways, enhancing wildlife corridors, encouraging low-impact recreation, and planning for coastal climate impacts.

Intertidal Sand and Beaches Character Type

- This covers the coastal strip near Pentewan—sandy beaches, dunes or backed cliffs, often adjacent to settlement or tourism activity.
- These areas often carry national designations (SSSI, SPA, Marine Conservation Zones) and support important biodiversity (e.g., bird populations).
- Popular for recreation, especially water sports, with amenities and access via the South West Coast Path.
- Sensitivity lies in their recreational draw, scenic value, ever-changing coastal dynamics, and habitat significance.
- Guidance calls for conserving habitats, balancing recreation with conservation, preventing pollutant run-off from inland, ensuring low-impact access, and planning adaptively for climate change and coastal processes.

Character Area – Gerrans, Vryan and Mevagissey Bays (CCA 22)

- Pentewan Valley falls within CCA 22, a region characterized by undulating farmland, stream valleys, and a dramatic coastal edge of cliffs, bays, and headlands.
- Soils and geology: sedimentary bedrock with fertile loamy soils; alluvial clays occur in valley mouths; streams drain to bays.
- Land use: mixed pastoral and arable farming, medieval irregular enclosures, pockets of historic parkland and designed estate landscapes, and rough scrub near the coast.
- Notable settlements and features include Pentewan Harbour, the historic Pentewan Railway, mining heritage near Polgooth, and registered parklands at Heligan and Caerhays.
- The coastal strip includes beaches, cliffs, saline lagoons, and areas with national ecological designation (SAC, SPA, SSSI).
- Landscape values: irregular field patterns, hedgebanks, steep wooded valleys, heritage features, tranquil, rural character, and coastal scenery.
- Pressures: tourism, urbanisation, hedgerow degradation, modern fence/pony tape replacing hedges, threats from coastal erosion and static caravan development, infrastructure creep, agricultural intensification.
- Guidance emphasizes: conserving medieval field patterns and hedges, parkland settings, tranquillity, and coastal heath; managing hedges and fingerposts; restoring wetlands and parkland, guiding heritage-appropriate development, reinstating boundaries, planning renewables sensitively, promoting woodland regeneration, and considering coastal climate adaptation.

1.51 From this more general guidance it is possible to draw more specific Landscape Guidance Points Relevant to Pentewan Valley:

Wooded Valleys (White River / Pentewan Valley)

- Conserve and expand semi-natural woodland and riparian habitats.
- Retain and manage veteran trees and parkland features.
- Protect and interpret historic features (industrial heritage, parklands, field boundaries).

- Enhance riparian buffer zones and water quality.
- Support natural flood management and climate resilience.
- Maintain tranquillity and enclosure by resisting intrusive development.

Undulating Historic Farmland (Valley sides and uplands)

- Conserve medieval field patterns, Cornish hedges, and historic enclosures.
- Protect and restore estate parklands and designed landscapes (e.g. Penrice, Heligan influence).
- Encourage management of semi-natural habitats (grassland, scrub, woodland copses).
- Restore field boundaries and hedgerows; avoid replacement with fencing.
- Support low-impact recreation that respects farmland character.
- Safeguard archaeological features and mining heritage.

Coastal / Intertidal Sand & Beaches (Pentewan Beach & Harbour)

- Balance tourism and recreation with habitat and landscape protection.
- Safeguard ecological designations (SSSI, SPA, SAC, MCZ) and sensitive dune/beach systems.
- Manage visitor pressure: access, parking, and coastal path use.
- Avoid pollution and run-off from farmland and settlement affecting intertidal habitats.
- Plan for coastal change and sea level rise – adaptive management of facilities.

Regional Character Area 22 (Gerrans, Veyan & Mevagissey Bays, incl. Pentewan)

- Conserve irregular field patterns, hedgerows, and wooded stream valleys.
- Retain and manage parkland settings and historic estates (Heligan, Trewhiddle, Penrice).
- Protect tranquil, rural character from urbanisation and tourism sprawl.
- Guide heritage-appropriate development that respects scale, materials, and setting.
- Resist infrastructure creep (roads, lighting, signage) that erodes rural character.
- Manage hedgerows to prevent loss/degradation; reinstate traditional boundaries.
- Restore wetlands and parkland landscapes where degraded.
- Support woodland regeneration and enhance biodiversity corridors.
- Plan for coastal climate adaptation: erosion, flooding, saline lagoons, beach dynamics.
- Promote sustainable tourism and avoid static caravan sprawl or insensitive facilities.

1.52 As noted above, much of the Parish lies within the designated National Landscape, with a small area also included within the Heligan Registered Park and Garden. However, this does not imply that the remainder of the Parish is without local landscape value. Beyond the nationally recognised areas, the Parish contains landscapes of distinct character and importance at the community scale. While some of this land is in recreational use (notably golf courses), the northern area to the east of the White River is particularly valued by local people. It represents a locally cherished landscape that embodies qualities consistent with the guidance provided in Cornwall's Landscape Character Assessments and Seascape Character Area descriptions. These qualities include:

1. Landscape Character and Continuity

- The area is predominantly medieval farmland with intact field patterns and Cornish hedges, characteristic of the wider Undulating Historic Farmland LCT, with small plantations and patches of prehistoric rough ground.
- Its character is similar to that of the National Landscape (AONB) immediately to the south, providing visual and ecological continuity across the Parish boundary.
- The river valley woodland edge defines its western boundary, reinforcing the sense of enclosure and contributing to the Parish's green infrastructure corridor.

2. Setting, Buffer and Gateway Role

- The land forms the immediate rural setting of St Austell, preventing harsh settlement edges and protecting attractive countryside views from within the town.
- It functions as a buffer to the AONB, reducing the encroachment of urban development and shielding the nationally designated landscape from cumulative visual, traffic, and noise impacts.
- It also serves as a gateway into the AONB and the Pentewan Valley tourism area, shaping first impressions for visitors.

3. Preventing Coalescence and Maintaining Identity

- The area prevents coalescence between St Austell, St Austell Bay settlements, and the Pentewan Valley villages, helping to maintain their separate identities.
- Retaining this open landscape is essential for the distinctiveness and sense of place of the Parish, ensuring local communities feel connected to their countryside setting.

4. Biodiversity, Recreation and Well-being

- The farmland and woodland mosaic supports valuable biodiversity, linking with habitats in the White River valley and designated coastal sites.
- The land provides accessible open space and recreation benefits (shown on the map with allotments, sports pitches, and school grounds), which directly contribute to community health and well-being.
- Offers significant opportunities for wildlife movement and enhancement.
- The ordinary, everyday landscape is familiar to and cherished by local residents, contributing to identity, distinctiveness and belonging.

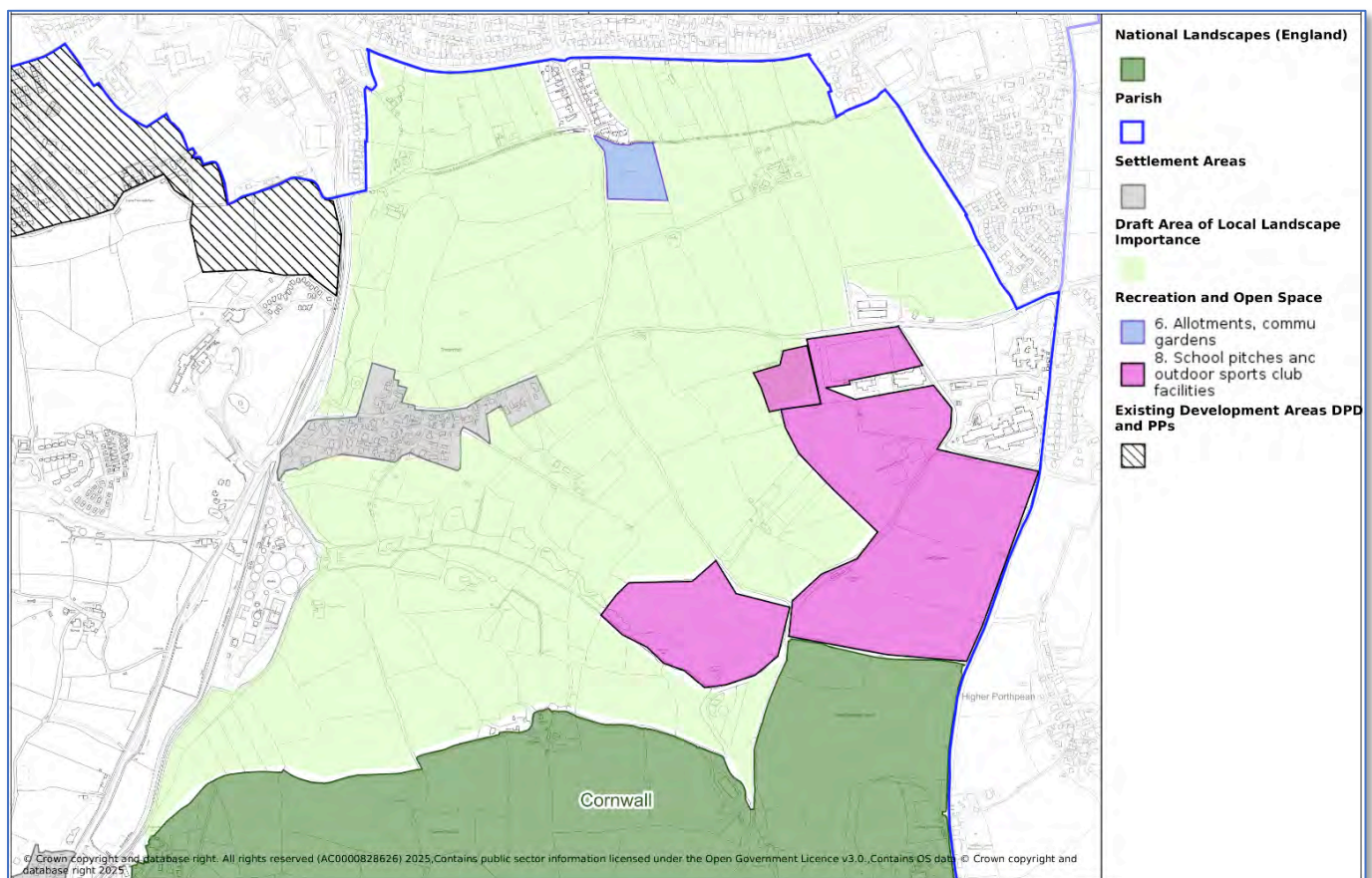
5. Historic and Cultural Value

- Estate landscapes and remnants of designed parkland contribute to its cultural depth, tying into the broader historic landscape of the Parish.

6. Vulnerabilities and Pressures

- Its proximity to St Austell means the land is under development pressure (institutional uses, urban expansion, recreational infrastructure).
- Large-scale or tall developments, even at some distance, would risk harming tranquillity, views, and the setting of the AONB.
- Loss of field patterns, hedgerows or incremental urbanisation would erode the Parish's distinctive rural edge.

1.53 Therefore there is a cogent argument to designate this area as being of Local Landscape Importance [see Figure 4]



Cornwall Renewable Energy Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2020

- 1.54 Cornwall has the best wind resources in Europe, and as shown in the evidence base for this NDP, the Parish has average wind speeds that would support viable wind turbine development. All of the area is within 2km of the 33kV and 132kV electricity distribution grid. The CEDPD identifies a ‘broad area’ that is ‘suitable for wind energy’ development based on a landscape sensitivity assessment and sets relevant criteria for decision-making in its Policy RE1. The entire Parish is within this area apart from Pentewan beach [see map 3].
- 1.55 Policy RE1 of the Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (CEDPD) places strong emphasis on protecting designated landscapes. With specific regard to National Landscapes (formerly AONB), development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and should be of very small scale. Within the Parish there is currently only one turbine, at Levalsa Meor Farm, with a blade tip height of approximately 23 metres.
- 1.56 The wider Gerrans, Verran and Mevagissey Bay Landscape Area (RLU 33) has been assessed in the CEDPD’s landscape sensitivity study. This concludes that:
- Away from the open coast and its hinterland (including the designated National Landscape), the undulating agricultural landscape is of medium sensitivity to wind turbine development, and could potentially accommodate a small number of single turbines up to Band C (61–99m).
 - However, due to the open and highly visible nature of the designated National Landscape coastline and hinterland, no further turbines of any banding should be located there.
- 1.57 The assessment also provides strategic landscape guidance which advises that turbine development should:
- Avoid a scattered pattern of development across the landscape to minimise cumulative impacts, focusing instead on locations already influenced by existing development.
 - Site any larger turbines within areas of larger post-medieval and modern fields, where they can be more easily absorbed into the landscape scale.
 - Avoid siting turbines within historic parkland, including the Heligan Registered Park & Garden.
 - Avoid, wherever possible, siting within rough ground (coastal and upland) and ornamental parkland.
 - Take account of views from local viewpoints and popular routes when considering siting and design.
 - Ensure that development does not adversely affect Pentewan Harbour.
- 1.58 No precise definition of the “coastal hinterland” is provided in the sensitivity assessment. The Oxford English Dictionary defines hinterland as “the district lying behind the coast,” while planning guidance frequently refers to the “setting” of designated landscapes. “Setting” can be described as land outside the formal boundary of a designated landscape which is visible from, or itself affords views into, that landscape. Development beyond visual setting may also be relevant if it generates noise, traffic or lighting impacts. Cornwall Council planners often adopt a rule-of-thumb that the setting of the National Landscape extends to a distance of 1–2 km.
- 1.59 In addition to the National Landscape, its coastal hinterland, and the Pentewan Village Conservation Area, the Parish includes extensive medieval farmland, areas of ornamental parkland, two popular sections of the National Cycle Network, the South West Coast Path, and part of the Heligan

Registered Park & Garden. Together, these features heighten the Parish's sensitivity to turbine development.

- 1.60 It is therefore considered that, while in the wider RLU 33 landscape area turbine development up to and including Band C (61–99m) may be appropriate, within the Parish itself turbine development should be limited to single Band A turbines (approximately 18–25m to tip) and restricted to the Area of Search identified on Map 4.
- 1.61 Small individual turbines of this scale can make a positive contribution to farm and business viability, reducing energy costs and providing a degree of independence from the electricity grid, while keeping landscape and heritage impacts to a minimum.
- 1.62 National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph 007) states that “local planning authorities should not rule out otherwise acceptable renewable energy developments through inflexible rules on buffer zones or separation distances. Other than when dealing with set-back distances for safety, distance of itself does not necessarily determine whether the impact of a proposal is unacceptable.” While CEDPD Policy RE1 sets broad criteria for renewable energy schemes, it makes no explicit reference to safety offsets. The Parish Council therefore regards public safety, particularly in relation to highways, rights of way, and occupied buildings, as a priority when considering the siting of turbines.
- 1.63 The CEDPD landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that within the wider Gerrans, Veryan and Mevagissey Bay Landscape Area, there may be opportunities for solar PV development up to and including the lower end of Band D (10–15 ha), provided such schemes are carefully located. The assessment highlights that the most suitable locations are:
- Within intensively farmed areas,
 - Where natural screening is already provided by hedgerows and woodland, and
 - On or adjacent to existing industrial or brownfield land.
- 1.64 It further advises that minor wooded valleys may offer well-screened locations for Band A (<5 ha) and Band B (5–10 ha) solar PV developments, but stresses these should be sited within farmland rather than semi-natural habitat, in order to retain the valleys' naturalistic character and biodiversity value.
- 1.65 The assessment also provides strategic landscape guidance for solar PV development, recommending that schemes should:
- Avoid the remote and naturalistic coastal edge, which is highly sensitive to change.
 - Avoid the steep upper slopes of stream valleys, where panels would be particularly visible.
 - Favour lower slopes and landscape folds, where developments are less intrusive.
 - Make effective use of existing landscape features (Cornish hedges, trees, plantations, woodland) for screening, ensuring that any new planting is in keeping with local character.
 - Avoid zones of Rough Ground or Ornamental parkland, which are especially vulnerable to intrusion.
 - Consider views from local viewpoints and popular routes, particularly the South West Coast Path, when designing and siting schemes.
 - Avoid sites that would be directly overlooked at close quarters, especially side-on.

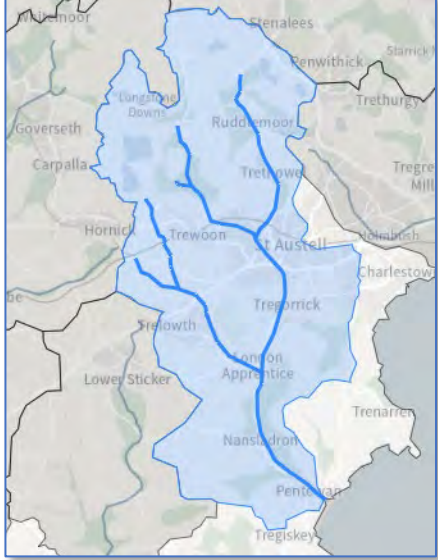
- Ensure development does not adversely affect the setting of the Lost Gardens of Heligan or Pentewan Harbour.
- Protect the qualities that underpin the scenic value of the Cornwall National Landscape (AONB)—including the outlines of historic strip field systems and the wild coastal rough ground of scrub and bracken-clad cliff tops—ensuring that site selection and scale of development does not detract from these features.

1.66 Given the exceptional range of sensitive landscape, heritage and recreational features within the Parish (see Para 4.30 above), and recognising that much of the Parish's farmland is classified as Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land, it is considered that solar PV development should be restricted to Band A (<5 ha). This scale of development is considered sufficient to support the transition to renewable energy while minimising impacts on landscape character, biodiversity, and heritage assets, and safeguarding the scenic quality of the Cornwall National Landscape

Cornish Hedges and Hedgerows

- 1.67 Cornish hedges are culturally and environmentally important to Cornwall and as such need protection and management to thrive. Typically, they are earth banks faced with stones – with larger 'grunder' boulders at the bottom, layers of stones that decrease in size as the hedge heightens and often topped with trees, shrubs and other plants. In effect they function as vertical flower meadows and can often have a field margin, ditch, stream or pool at the hedge base that creates another habitat opportunity. They form Cornwall's largest semi-natural habitat suitable for a wide variety of flora and fauna on a variety of scales. Not only do they act as habitats, but also as wildlife corridors to allow species like adders, harvest mice and bats to move safely from one habitat to another.
- 1.68 Cornish hedges remain functional parts of the Cornish landscape today – hedges with trees can reduce wind speed by up to 20% and can provide shelter leeward of between 8-12 x the height of the hedge. They can also prevent soil erosion, reduce flash flooding and improve water quality.
- 1.69 Cornish Hedges provide part of the distinct local identity to Cornwall's landscape and some date back as far as the Bronze age, whilst others are distinctive reminders of medieval farming. They may involve stone patterns of particularly local character and often have unusual and historic stiles built in to their fabric. Detailed information about the history, value and character of Cornish hedges can be found [here](#).
- 1.70 As noted above, Pentewan Valley Parish's open, hilltop rolling landscape features many low irregular Cornish hedges with hedgerows. These can be identified on the Wildlife Resource Map which forms part of this report see: <https://www.pentewanvalley-pc.gov.uk/shared/attachments.asp?f=69926418%2D6098%2D44d0%2D808e%2D76196dfba0f4%2Epdf&o=Pentewan%2DValley%2DCP%2DWildlife%2DResource%2DMap%2D2024%2Epdf>
- 1.71 Unfortunately the area is not immune to loss through farming practice, road improvements, development and general decline. Cornish hedges constantly need repairs to their structure and it is best to repair them as soon as a weakness or gap appears to prevent large-scale, slow and more expensive repairs later on; these repairs need traditional craftsmanship [which fortunately keeps the activity alive today]. Cornish hedges are not classed as hedgerows and are therefore not offered protection under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997

Water Quality and Water Resources

- 1.72 The Parish lies adjacent to the St Austell Coastal Operational Catchment and within the Par, St Austell and Caerhays Operational Catchment. The principal watercourse flowing through the Neighbourhood Plan Area is the **St Austell River**, also historically known as the **White River**, together with its tributaries, the **Pentewan Stream** and the **Polgooth Stream**. The St Austell River has a total catchment area of approximately **37.47 km²**, extending well beyond the Parish boundary. Rising on **Hensbarrow Beacon** in the north, the river runs for some 20 km, cutting through steep-sided valleys shaped by historic mining activity before passing through the town of St Austell and flowing southwards to Pentewan. Numerous tributaries feed into the main channel, significantly increasing the length of stream within the catchment. The legacy of past mining is evident in the altered landform, abandoned workings, and the discolouration of river waters that gave rise to the name *White River*. The condition of water resources within the Neighbourhood Plan Area is therefore strongly influenced not only by activities within the Parish itself but also by land use, industry, and urban development across the wider catchment. **These wider catchment pressures are reflected in the River's current Water Framework Directive classification, where issues such as phosphate enrichment, chemical contamination, and physical modification prevent the waterbody from achieving 'Good' ecological status.**
- 
- 1.73 Responsibility for these pressures spans the **Water Industry, Urban & Transport, and Local & Central Government** sectors. While some improvements have been achieved, ongoing efforts are hindered by technical challenges and financial constraints. Ambitious targets aim to restore Good ecological, biological, and physico-chemical status by 2027, though progress may be slow and uncertain. Chemical contaminants such as Mercury and PBDEs are expected to recover via natural processes over several decades.
- 1.74 The Neighbourhood Plan Area lies within the **Pentewan Bathing Water Catchment Zone of Influence**. These are areas where heavy rainfall can lead to increased surface water runoff, temporarily reducing water quality at designated bathing water sites. **Pentewan Beach** is one such site, first esignated in **1988**, and is popular for swimming, paddling and other water-based recreation.
- 1.75 The combined effects of **china clay mining, cross-catchment water transfers** and the **porous nature of the catchment** have reduced runoff from the steep gradients of the St Austell River, resulting in lower peak flows reaching the bathing water. In addition, the **Menagwins (St Austell) Sewage Treatment Works (STW)** discharge into the St Austell River approximately **4.6 km upstream** of the bathing water is disinfected and designed specifically to protect bathing water quality. As a result, Pentewan Beach has consistently achieved the **highest 'Excellent' 3-star classification** under the Bathing Water Regulations between **2021 and 2024** (with the 2025 result awaited at the time of writing). The adjacent **St Austell Coastal Operational Catchment** is also recorded as being of **Good ecological status**.
- 1.76 However, water quality is known to **temporarily deteriorate during and after heavy rainfall**, as recorded by Environment Agency monitoring. The majority of sewers in England are **combined systems**, carrying both sewage and surface water from roofs and drains. During heavy rainfall, **storm overflows** may operate when the sewerage system is overwhelmed, discharging diluted effluent to

prevent sewage backing up into homes and gardens. **Emergency overflows** may also operate infrequently, for example following pump failure or sewer blockages. Within the Pentewan bathing water catchment there are:

- **Four emergency/storm overflows** that discharge into the St Austell River at least **1.5 km upstream** of the bathing water, and
- **One emergency/storm overflow from the Pentewan Pumping Station**, discharging to the St Austell River approximately **250 m from the beach**.

1.77 The operation of these overflows can lead to short-term reductions in water quality at both the St Austell River and Pentewan Beach. Pentewan Bathing Water is included in the **Surfers Against Sewage “Safer Seas Service”**, which provides live information on sewage and water quality alerts [see Figure 5]]

Summary of Alerts (2019–2025)						
Year	Total Alerts	Sewage Alerts	Maintenance Alerts	Abnormal Event Alerts	Pollution Incidents	PRFs
2025	15	14	–	–	1	–
2024	35	30	1	4	–	–
2023	48	47	1	–	–	–
2022	17	13	4	–	–	–
2021	36	34	–	–	–	2
2020	10	10	–	–	–	–
2019	13	13	–	–	–	–
Category			Total (2019–2025)			
Total Alerts			174			
Sewage Alerts			161			
Maintenance Alerts			6			
Abnormal Event Alerts			4			
Pollution Incidents			1			
Planned Release of Flow [PRFs]			2			

1.78 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, there are no designated SPZs.

1.79 As local water quality and the status of the bathing waters are linked to the reputation of the area for tourism, which is a major contributor to the economy of south Cornwall and Pentewan, they are issues of great significance in the NDP area.

Drinking Water

1.80 To ensure that there is sufficient water to supply to existing customers and accommodate the proposed level of growth in the area, SWWL are tasked with planning the future of our region’s water resources as part of a regulatory approved Water Resources Management Plan [WRMP], prepared on a five yearly cycle. Core aims of the WMRP are to ensure the Undertaker can maintain essential supplies and protect the environment in times of drought.

1.81 The WRMP sets out how SWWL plan to manage supply and demand for the next 25 years. Assessments contained within the WRMP include examinations of strategic issues including those that influence demand for water and water availability. The Plan also sets out how SWWL intend to

maintain the balance between water supply and demand to ensure customers receive a continued reliable supply and to protect the environment.

- 1.82 The Colliford Water Resource Zone (WRZ) covers most of the Cornwall area including Pentewan Valley Parish supplying water to c.560,000 customers. The total average demand is around 160 Million Litres [Ml] per day. The strategic Colliford Reservoir is SWWL's second largest impounding reservoir, and SWWL operate it in conjunction with our local service reservoirs, two groundwater fed lakes and river intakes. These sources are supplemented by a bulk transfer from the Roadford, enabling effective distribution of resources across the wider region.
- 1.83 SWWL's demand reduction plan – including environmental and water efficiency initiatives – aims to promote sustainable water consumption practices in the area, decreasing the volume of water we need to take from rivers and put into supply. SWWL are in the process of increasing the drinking water supply capacity at a water treatment works in our Colliford zone from 100 Ml per day to 110 Ml per day; providing an annual average benefit of 2 Mega Litres per day from 2030/31.
- 1.84 This is a link to the Water Resources Management Plan published by SWWL: - [Water resourcesmanagement plan | South West Water](#)
- 1.85 It is not expected that the level of growth proposed within the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for the Pentewan Valley area will require large scale asset upgrades within the water distribution network. However, this is subject to continued evaluation of the exact location of future growth applying for planning permission and the detailed design of the development's supply being assessed.

Wastewater

- 1.86 In terms of SWWL Statutory Sewerage Undertaker function, the Undertaker develops a Drainage Waste Management Plans for regulatory approval. The central role of this document is to set out SWWLs plan to manage the impact of growth and climate change on the waste network and treatment assets over the next 25 years. The final report for the are affecting Pentewan Valley Parish can be found here:

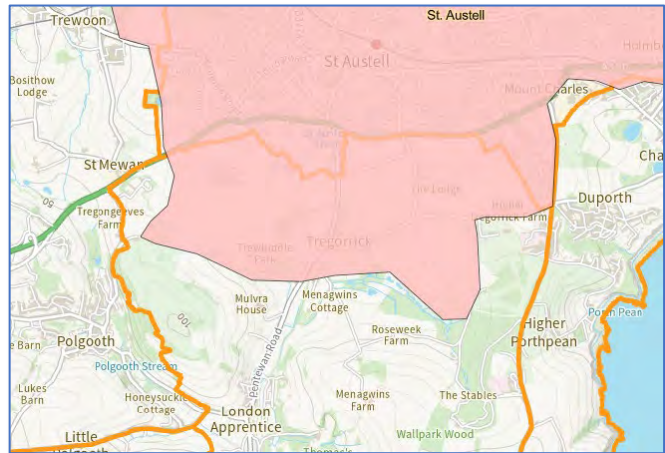
https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/siteassets/documents/about-us/dwmp/strategic-catchments/st-austell-area_l2_dwmp.pdf

- 1.87 This document records the baseline position as at 2023 and at a high level, this sets out the kind of investment that the catchment is likely to need over the next 25 years to maintain compliance with the permits that have been agreed with the Environment Agency. There is also a need for SWWL to meet the requirements set out in its Storm Overflow Plan which aims to reduce spills from storm overflows to an average of 10 per annum per overflow by 2040.
- 1.88 It is not expected that the level of development proposed in the draft NDP will be significant and any known new development will be taken into account so that any investment will meet at least a 15 year design horizon

Critical Drainage Area

1.89 A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is an area with critical drainage problems, which has been formally notified to the Local Authority by the Environment Agency. Within CDAs, proposed development may present risks of flooding on-site and/or off-site if the surface water runoff is not effectively managed.

1.90 The purpose of creating the CDA allocation is to reduce downstream flooding by controlling the accumulative impact of surface water runoff from multiple development sites in sensitive catchment areas. This means that any site discharging surface water to a watercourse or public sewer must attenuate the flow to mimic the green field runoff for a 1:10 year rain fall event. Where the surface water can be managed within the site for the “1:100+40%” condition (i.e., an allowance of 40% over and above the 1:100 event), there is no change to the standard surface water drainage requirement.



1.91 The Development Management Procedure Order requires that the EA is consulted on developments within Areas with Critical Drainage Problems (ACDPs).

1.92 The northwest part of the Parish falls into the St Sustell CDA – see Figure 6 and:

https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/reports_critical_drainage_areas/St%20Austell%20CDA%202015.pdf

1.93 In summary, this advises that all new development, including infill and redevelopment, must incorporate robust surface water controls and follow the drainage hierarchy, favouring infiltration where practicable. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be designed not only to manage flows but also to protect bathing water quality, with reference to the CIRIA SuDS Manual and Lead Local Flood Authority guidance. Runoff from new sites must mimic greenfield performance up to the 1 in 10 year event, while safely managing on-site flows up to the 1 in 100 year plus climate change scenario, requiring additional storage to reduce downstream flooding. Brownfield sites are expected to meet the same standards, and in areas with a legacy of mining activity, additional ground investigations are required to ensure safe and effective drainage design.

Mineral Resources

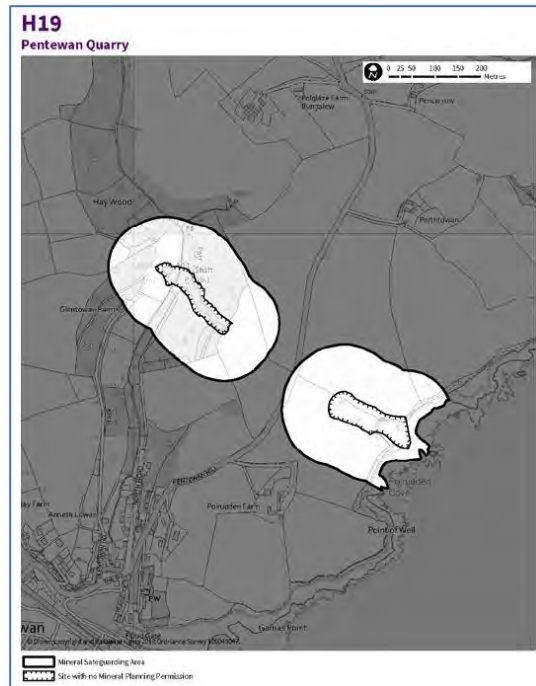
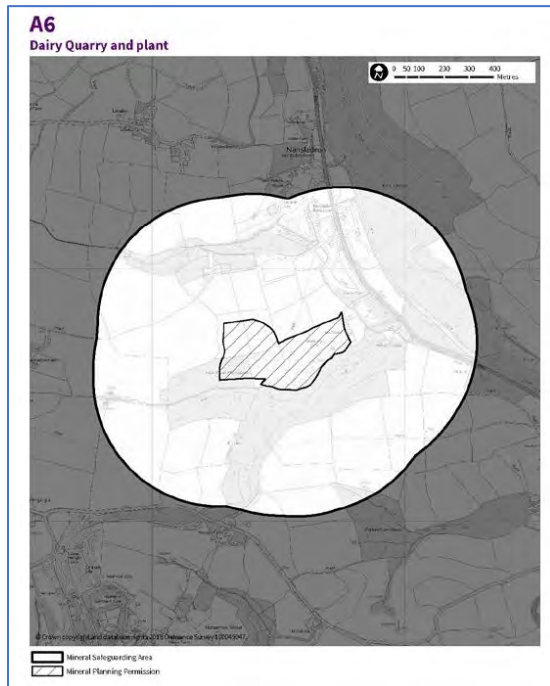
1.94 The Cornwall Minerals Safeguarding Development Plan Document (DPD) was adopted by Cornwall Council on 4 December 2018 and now carries full weight as part of the statutory planning framework for Cornwall. The DPD identifies mineral resources and infrastructure that should be safeguarded from sterilisation by other forms of development, recognising their strategic, economic and cultural importance.

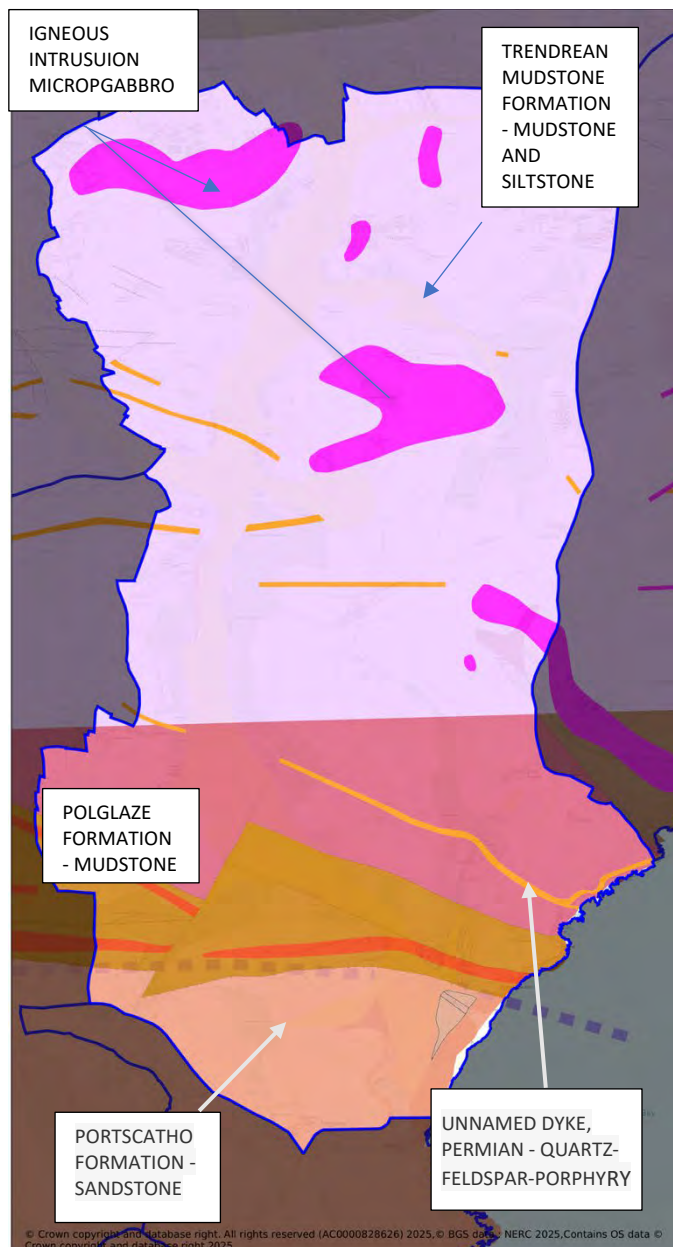
1.95 Within Pentewan Parish, four sites are safeguarded:

- Dairy Quarry – safeguarded for aggregate extraction, reflecting its ongoing role in the supply of construction materials.
- Penrice Quarry – safeguarded for heritage stone, notably a creamy beige elvan that is believed to have been used in the construction of Penrice House and St Levan’s Church, Porthpean.

- Pentewan Quarry – safeguarded for the extraction of Pentewan Stone, one of Cornwall’s most celebrated building stones. This distinctive golden-yellow elvan has been worked since medieval times and is one of Cornwall’s few true freestones, capable of being carved into intricate tracery and decorative features. Historic examples of its use include St Austell Parish Church, Place, Fowey, and the fine late-15th-century “Sermon in Stone” carving on the tower of Holy Trinity Church, St Austell. Nineteenth-century window tracery, also carved from Pentewan Stone, demonstrates its continued use over centuries. Beyond St Austell, Antony House near Torpoint was also built using Pentewan Stone.

- 1.96 Pentewan Stone is highly prized both for its workability and its durability. Unlike limestone, it is not gradually dissolved by rainwater; instead, it weathers in a distinctive way, with prolonged exposure producing a fine honeycomb surface texture as feldspar crystals are leached away. This resilience, combined with its rarity and aesthetic qualities, makes Pentewan (or Pentuan) Stone arguably the most desirable building stone in Cornwall.
- 1.97 The safeguarding of these quarries within the Parish ensures that such unique resources remain available for heritage repair, conservation, and sensitive new build projects, while also recognising their importance as part of Cornwall’s geological and cultural heritage [see Figures 7 to 10].





Geodiversity

1.98 The majority of the parish is underlain by Cornish Killas, Devonian mudstones and siltstones. There are some areas of Devonian to Carboniferous igneous intrusions of micro gabbro type rock the largest of these is to the east of London Apprentice with other areas around Trewhiddle and adjacent to Tregorrick. A quartz-felspar-porphyratic igneous dyke of Permian age extends from Nansladron to the coast west of Pentewan, this is the source of Pentewan Stone [see Figure 11].

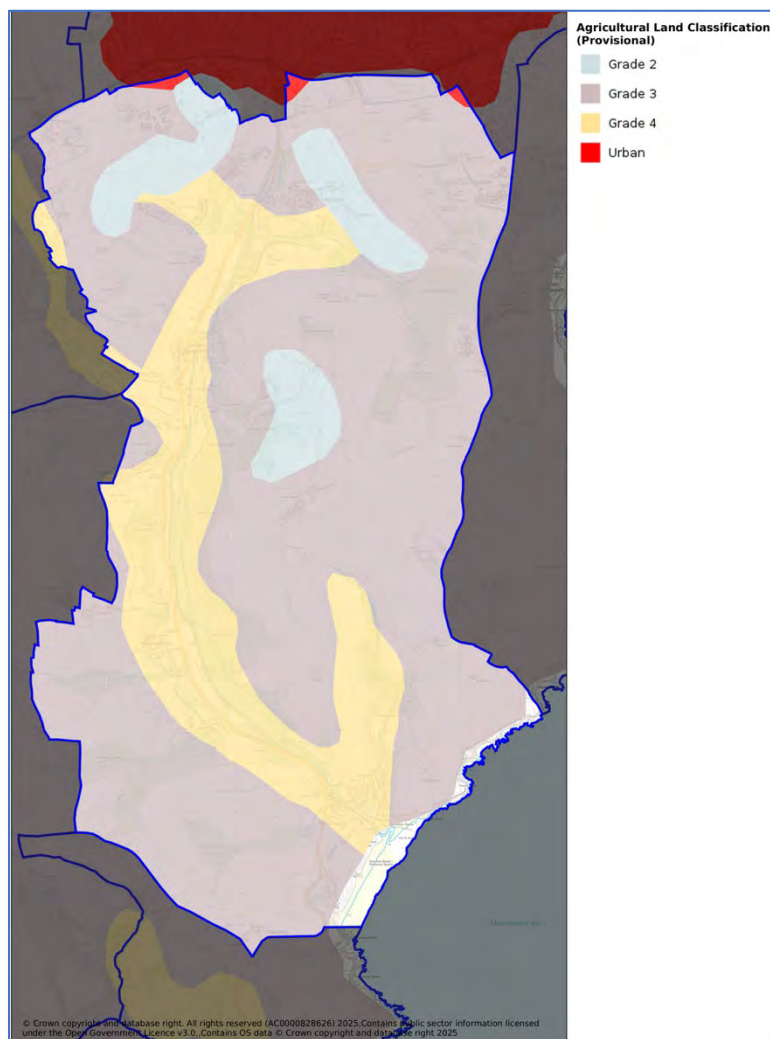
Figure 11: Geology

Soil Resources

1.99 The Londis Soil Scape viewer indicates 3 different soil types in the parish, The majority of the parish is described as Soilscape 6, an area to the east of London Apprentice covering some of the Kingswood is Soilscape 7 and the valley from London Apprntice down to the coast at Pentewan is Soilscape 13.

1.100 Soilscape 6 is freely draining slightly acid loam soil, it is low fertility arable and grassland and is suitable for a range of spring and autumn sown crops.

- 1.101 Soilscape 7 is freely draining slightly acid but base rich loamy soil. It is of high fertility arable and grassland providing habitats of base rich pasture and deciduous woodland
- 1.102 Soilscape 13 is freely draining acid loamy soils over rock. It is freely draining and of low fertility. Landcover is grassland and rough pasture supporting gorse and oak woodlands.
- 1.103 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into size grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 of poorer quality. In this context, there is a national policy based need to avoid loss of higher quality 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. See Figure 31.



- 1.104 In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, small pockets of the Parish falls into Grade 2, with the remainder being Grades 3 and 4 [See Figure 12].

Figure 12: Agricultural Land

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 1.105 There are no SSSIs in the Parish, although it falls into the impact risk zones for the St Austell Clay Pits SSSI which lies beyond St Austell, some 5km north, the Gerrans Bay to Camels Cove SSSI some 12km to the south. This means that Natural England must be consulted when larger scale planning applications are considered.

Special Areas of Conservation [SAC] and Special Protection Areas [SPA]

- 1.106 The Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA lies immediately off the coastline of the Parish. Special Protection Areas have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding,

wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the 'Birds Directive 1979' which provides enhanced protection given by the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status all SPAs also hold.

- 1.107 Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) is a 259 km² site on the south coast of Cornwall, covering five shallow sandy bays of Falmouth Bay, Gerrans Bay, Veryan Bay, Mevagissey Bay and St Austell Bay. It also includes Carrick Roads, an estuarine area which meets the sea between Falmouth and St Mawes, and part of the tidal Helford River. The river complex areas are part of a ria system, typified by steep Not to be used for navigation. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2019) • sides and slow tidal currents, with subtidal rocky shores and exposed intertidal mud on creeks and river branches. Falmouth Bay to St Austell SPA is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of the following species in any season:

black-throated diver (*Gavia arctica*), great northern diver (*Gavia immer*) and slavian grebe (*Podiceps auritus*).

1.108 A 1 and 3 km buffer zone for the SPA extends into the Parish, which are relevant mainly for onshore wind under the adopted Climate Emergency DPD affecting where turbines can be sited.

- One km buffer - New onshore wind proposals must be outside a 1 km buffer drawn around all SACs and SPAs on the Policies Map.
- Three km buffer - Within 3 km of Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA, wind proposals must fully consider impacts on SPA birds, including migratory flight paths, core foraging zones, and any functionally linked land. This typically means ornithological survey work, collision and displacement assessment, and a Habitats Regulations Assessment that can rule out adverse effects on site integrity.

1.109 There is no SAC in the Parish but it is partly covered by the SAC Natura 2000 Zone of Influence for the Fal and Helford SAC [See Figure 13]. Natura 2000 is a network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and some rare natural habitat types which are protected in their own right. It stretches across all 28 EU countries, both on land and at sea. The aim of the network is to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats, listed under both the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. The impact of this is that any significant new development for residential purposes would be required to make a contribution towards the mitigation of any impacts that new residents might have through increased recreational pressures on the SAC. This means that Cornwall Local Plan Policy 22 applies.

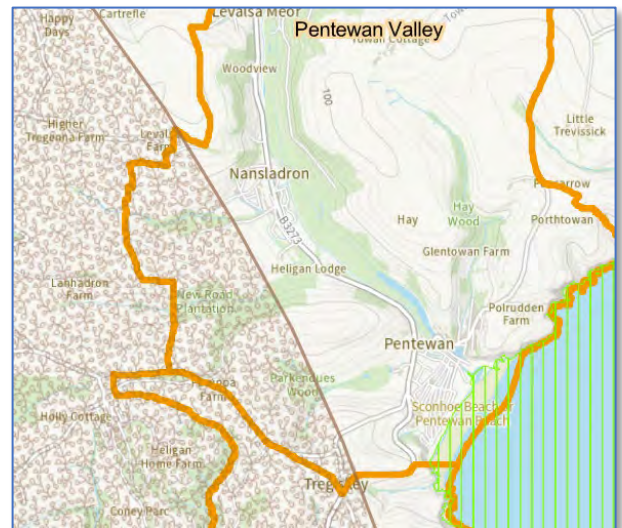


Figure 13: SAC Natura 2000 Zone of Influence

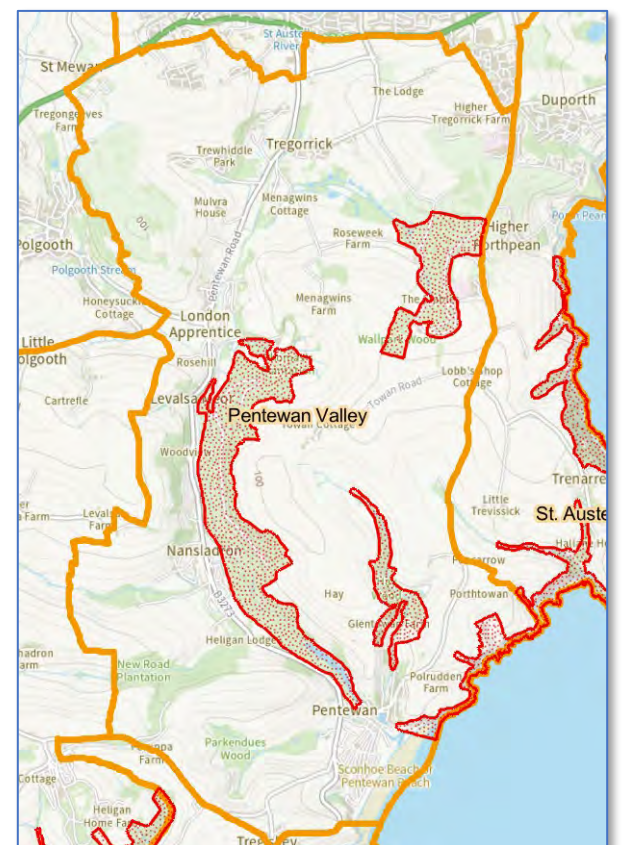


Figure 24: County Wildlife Sites (CWS)

County Wildlife Sites

1.110 County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are the most significant areas of semi-natural habitat in Cornwall outside of statutory protected sites such as SACs and SSSIs. Typically CWS range from small copses and linear features like river valleys, to ancient woodlands, and wetlands. Those in Pentewan Valley Parish are shown in Figure 14. Most are Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 'Habitat Action Plan Woodland' habitats i.e. habitats which are considered of conservation significance either locally or nationally. Local sites form the steppingstones of a countywide biodiversity network of wildlife corridors and play a key part in helping to deliver the Biodiversity Action Plan.

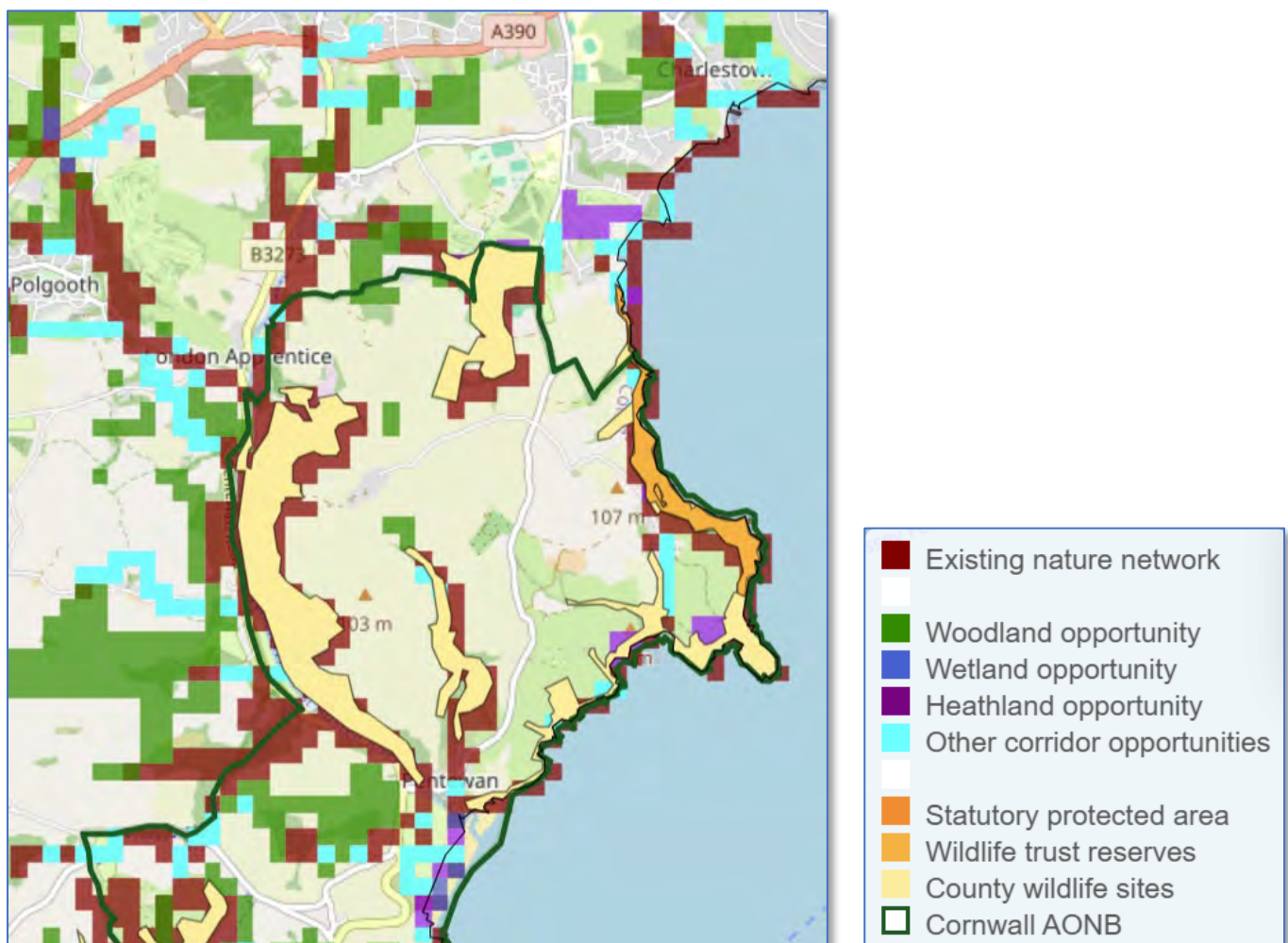
1.111 The CWS include:

- Park Matthews Wood

- Pentewan to Higher Porthpean
- Hay Wood
- St Austell Valley Woodlands

Green Infrastructure Network

- 1.112 Green infrastructure as network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- 1.113 Pentewan Valley is not in one of Cornwall Council's designated Green Infrastructure Areas, but is included in the Local Nature Recovery Network which Cornwall Council is delivering, in partnership, through a Local Nature Recovery Strategy under the terms of the Environment Act 2021. It includes a map of the most valuable areas for wildlife presently [Zone 1], opportunities to improve nature in the future [Zone 2], and short-term priorities. The aim is to use the high-quality existing habitats as core wildlife hubs and connect them through the restoration and creation of strategically placed opportunity habitats, thereby creating one larger network.
- 1.114 A map showing the NRN zones in Pentewan Valley Parish can be found at the LAGAS Natural Capital Information and Management Hub. [<https://lagas.co.uk/> see Figure 15].



- 1.115 A local Wildlife Resource map, commissioned from the Environmental Records Centre of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly [ERCCIS] indicates the extent of the green infrastructure network in the Parish [See figure 16].

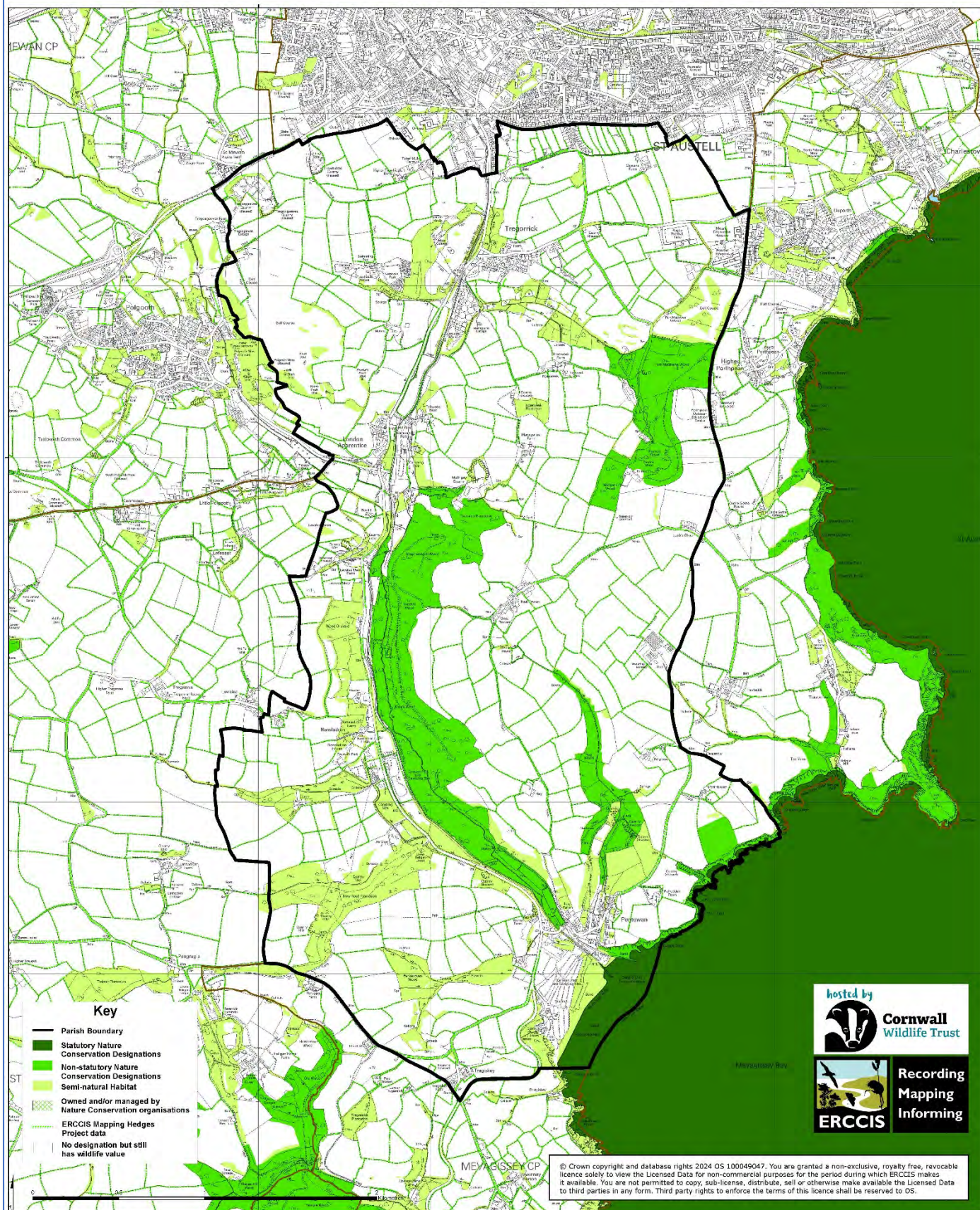


Wildlife Resource Map for Neighbourhood Planning Pentewan Valley Parish

Please view this map in conjunction with the guidance notes provided



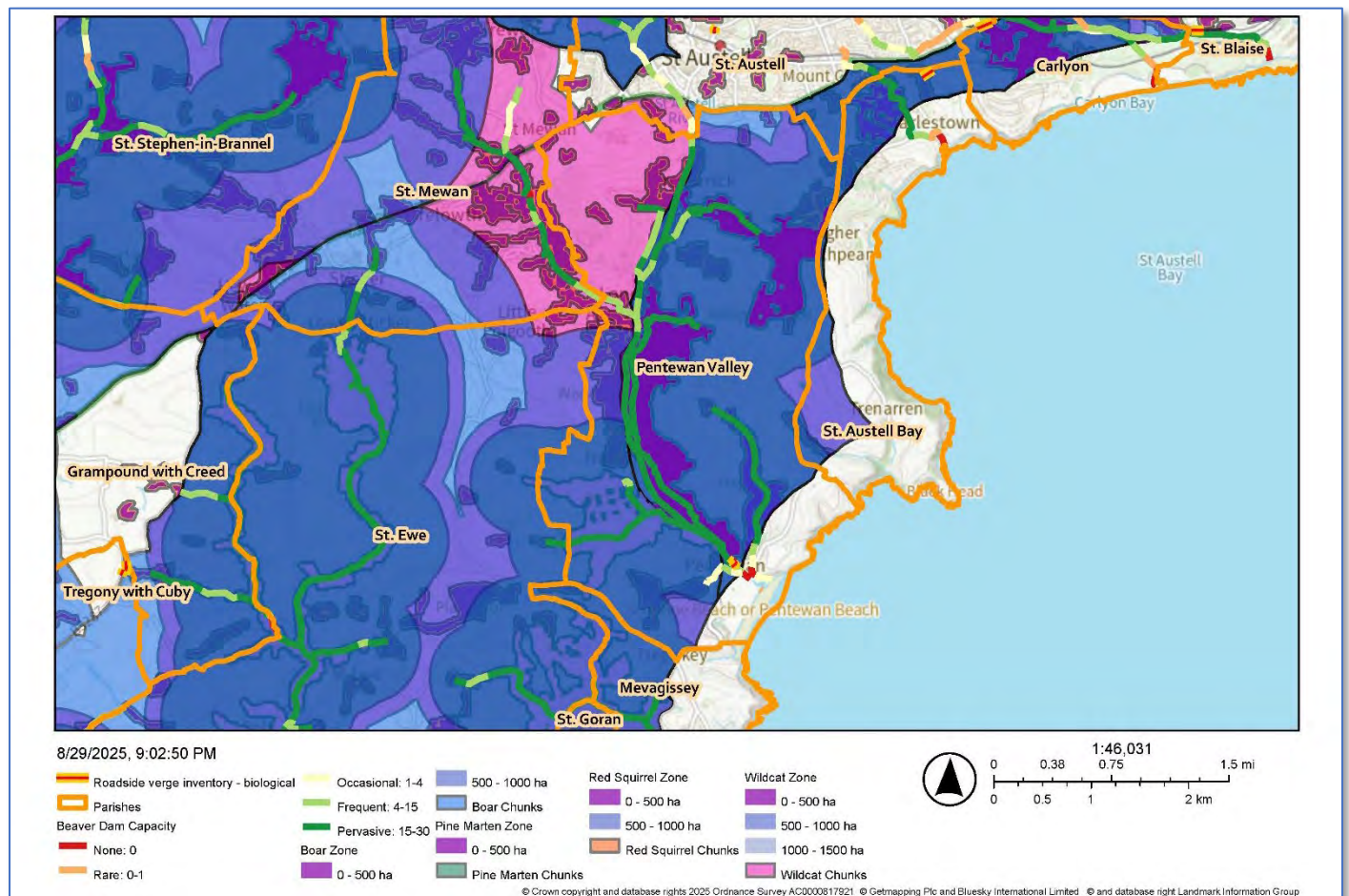
The Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly



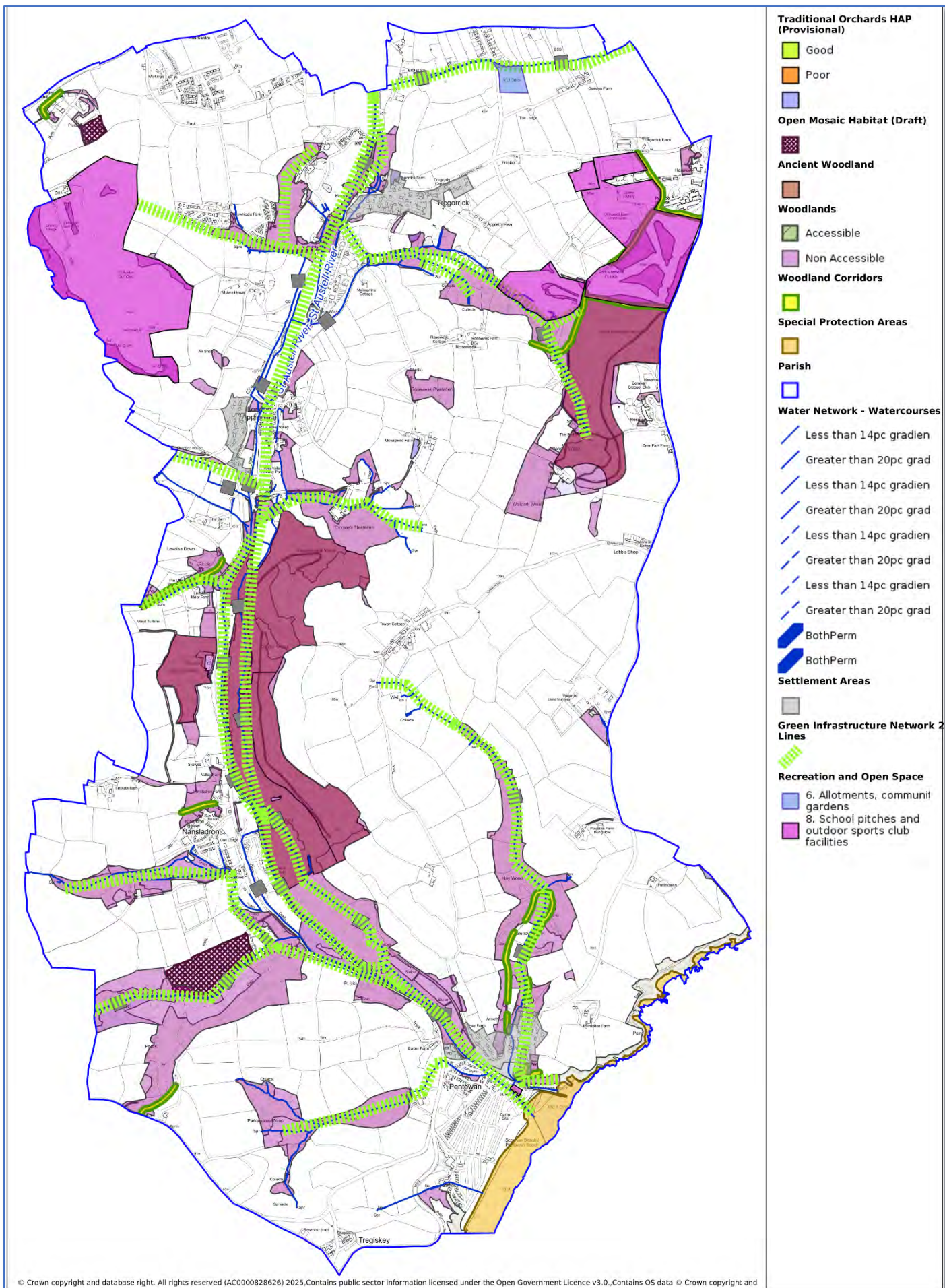
[Click here for zoomable map](#)

Species Reintroduction

1.116 One way to restore nature is to reintroduce lost wildlife into Cornwall. The Species Reintroduction Feasibility Study examined the benefits and challenges of reintroducing species that once lived here, such as beavers, water voles, red squirrels, pine martens, wild boar and wildcats. The mapping in the study shows the green infrastructure network in the Parish as having potential for various species reintroduction [see figure 17].



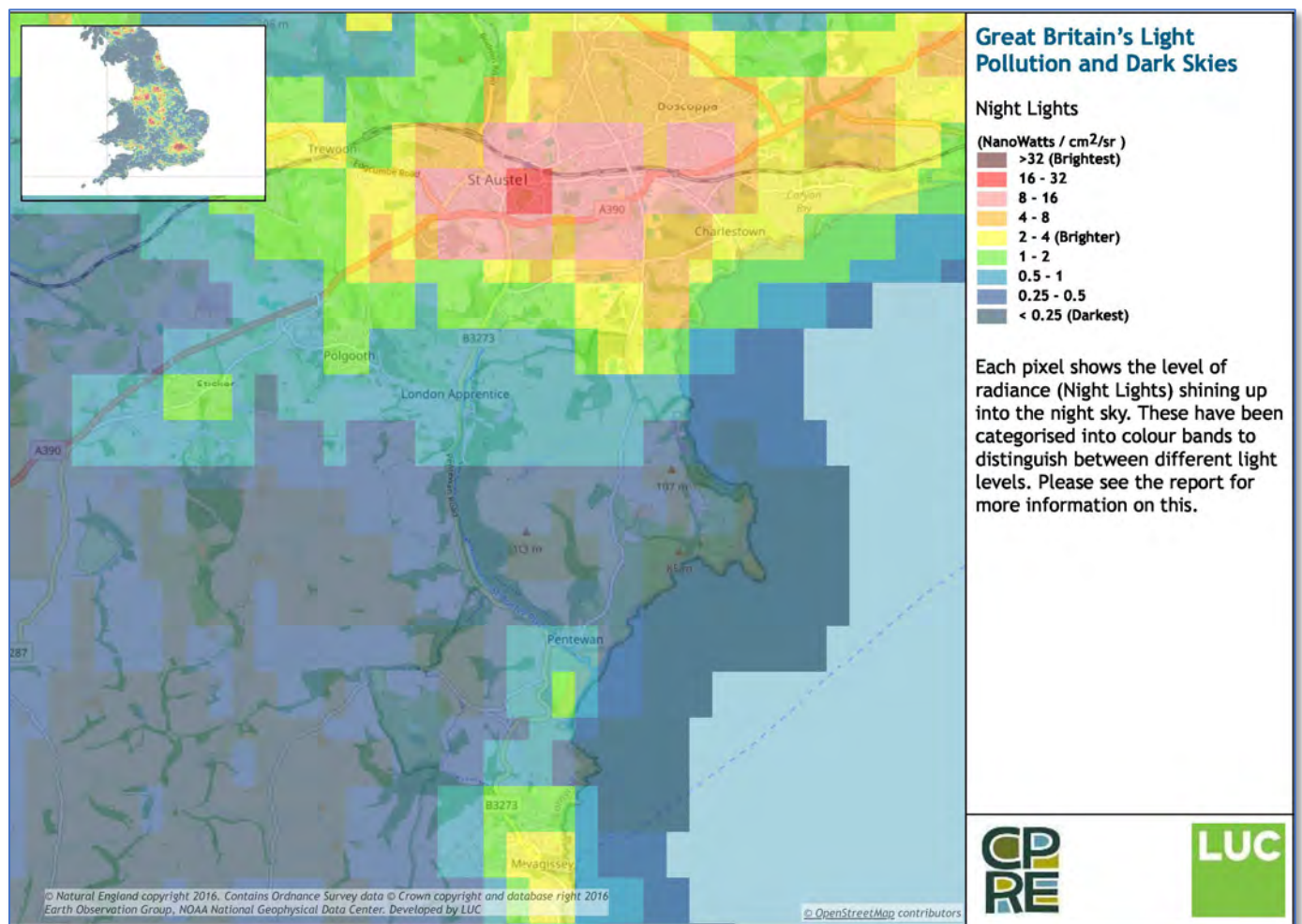
- 1.117 Some of the 'green infrastructure network' is protected by landscape, biodiversity, and recreation designations and policies. However, it is essential that other natural assets, which are not so protected, should be recognised and supported, and that the entire system is perceived as a functioning network.
- 1.118 If considered appropriate, based on this and the preceding information it is possible to designate a Green Infrastructure Network to ensure that these features are recognised in planning processes so that developments help build the biodiversity network as appropriate and should not adversely impact on local sites [see Figure 18 below].



Dark Skies

The dark night time sky is a natural asset which is enjoyed and appreciated by the community of the Parish and visitors such as tourists, as part of the experience of living in the area and its quality of life. It can also bring several other benefits such as enhanced conditions for astronomy, acting as an educational resource, providing creative inspiration etc.

- 1.119 However, lighting is often installed which is overly bright, needlessly spills upwards, is poorly aimed and creates shadows – making it harder to see as well as being wasteful and harmful to the night sky. This can cause a sky glow and a significant light ‘bloom’ on misty nights. [See Figure 19 below]. In Pentewan Valley parish the rural parts have a particularly dark sky, but lighting from St Austell in the north stands out.
- 1.120 Taking steps to encourage development to protect the night sky can preserve these benefits, and add to them, including energy saving by avoiding unnecessary or excessive lighting, promoting improved sleep patterns and reducing stress and providing a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals. More information on tackling light pollution can be found at <https://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-care-about/nature-and-landscapes/dark-skies/>

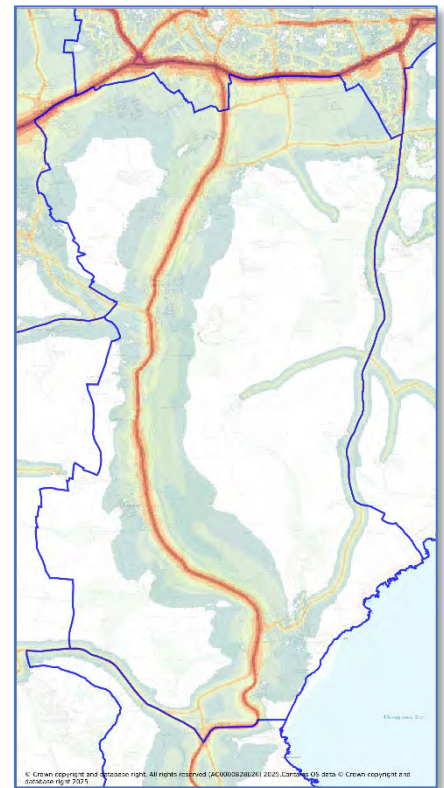


Air Quality

- 1.121 A small part of the parish (from the A390 south to Sawles Rd and the area covering higher Trewiddle is in a Declared air quality management area. Air quality Samples taken along the northern boundary of the parish (A390) are in the 10-40µg/m³ range. There is additionally, an issue with odours from the sewage works at Menagwins affecting local residents.

Noise

- 1.122 Environmental noise is a subject of growing public concern. In the countryside, in areas such as Pentewan Valley Parish, noise sources are related to:
- Agricultural process noise including machinery such as milking machines, combine harvesters which can be working early in the morning and late at night under floodlights when it is hay-making or harvest time, and tractors ploughing or muck-spreading.
 - Animal noises, most notably when large numbers of animals are present such as pig or chicken farms
 - Bird scarers which attempt to disperse birds that eat seeds and crops
 - Clay pigeon shooting and rough terrain motor sports
 - Traffic noise in the vicinity of larger tourism accommodation and activity sites
 - Loud music and other noises associated with entertainment at caravan, mobile home and holiday lodge sites
 - Farm diversification activity including music at wedding receptions, food processing etc.
- 1.123 Because of the generally very quiet background noise in the countryside, noise from these sources can be perceived to be quite loud in terms of their relative impact, but are rarely significant enough to constitute a nuisance. Where planning permission is required for an activity or use, noise will be a factor to be considered amongst other matters.
- 1.124 Some noise from roads is evident as shown in Figure 20. The day-evening-night level is a noise indicator for overall annoyance based upon annual average A-weighted long-term sound over 24 hours with a 5 dB(A) penalty for evening noise (19:00-23:00) and a 10 dB(A) penalty for night-time noise (23:00-07:00).boundary of the parish.



Related Community Engagement Feedback

- 1.125 Community feedback on Q1, the character of Pentewan Valley, shows a strong attachment to the area's natural qualities. The countryside and landscape were most frequently valued, 74%, followed by tranquillity, 67%. A majority also highlighted the importance of wildlife and biodiversity, 59%, while over a third valued the dark night sky, 37%, indicating support for limiting light pollution and protecting the rural setting.
- 1.126 Open comments reinforced these priorities, with repeated references to the river, the proximity to the sea, and space that has been preserved from housing and industrial uses. Respondents described the valley, the river, the leisure trail, and the surrounding woodlands as amenities that serve not only local residents but the wider area, underscoring their role in community wellbeing and the distinct character of the valley.

Key issues and implications for the NDP

- 1.127 A large majority of residents value the landscape and bucolic character of the parish, and place a high value on tranquillity. Wildlife and biodiversity are important community considerations, and the dark night sky, while valued by a smaller proportion, remains significant.
- 1.128 The Plan should protect the tranquil, rural character of the Pentewan Valley, which reflects the interplay of landscape and ecological factors. The northern parish has experienced substantial growth at Higher Trehiddle, with further permissions along Pentewan Road, almost doubling the housing stock. The underlying geology and geomorphology create the distinctive valley system that runs through the parish, yet the river and floodplain are areas of flood risk and are affected by storm overflows from Menagwins, with potential impacts on river health and Pentewan beach. The landscape's character is strongly influenced by woodland and the dense network of Cornish-hedged small fields, which are critical for biodiversity. A recent appeal observation describes a peaceful, relatively unspoilt rural landscape with few obvious structures in the countryside and a special quality arising from the balance of arable and pasture land and evenly distributed woodland. While part of the parish lies within the National Landscape, much does not, so consistent protection is required across the valley. There are no notable air-quality or traffic-noise issues within the parish other than near the A390 on the northern boundary, and this quiet environment contributes to tranquillity. These qualities underpin residents' quality of life and local prosperity, since the parish economy relies heavily on tourism, and harm to landscape character would adversely affect both the community and visitor businesses.

ⁱ https://assets.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/chapters/AONB_Management_Plan_chapter_26.pdf