



Cornwall's nationally protected landscape



Cornwall
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

05 *St Agnes*

Cornwall AONB Local Section



Section 05

St Agnes



Chapel Porth
Hannah Beech

Location:

This section of the AONB is situated on the north Cornwall coast and forms a narrow strip of land just half a kilometre wide at its most northerly point broadening to a kilometre wide at St Agnes Beacon and stretches from the southern edge of Perranporth to the north eastern edge of Porthtowan.

AONB Section	Area (ha)	% of total AONB area
05 St Agnes	627	0.7%

Cornwall Landscape Character Areas:
 • CA12: St Agnes • CA14: Newlyn Downs

Marine Character Areas covering the coast / adjacent waters
 • MCA 45: Port Gaverne Bay to St Ives Bay



05

Special Qualities of St Agnes

The Key Landscape Characteristic of this section of the AONB is the dominant large granite intrusion that forms the distinctive St Agnes Beacon, which rises from the surrounding undulating coastal plateau (formed of slate killas) to a height of approximately 90m above sea level. The plateau itself is dissected by small streams flowing to the north coast and outcrops of craggy grey cliffs that slant away from the sea with wide expanses of sandy beach revealed at low tide.

The general character and attraction of this area is its open and exposed landscape with very limited tree cover except in narrow valleys, where it forms an important part of the landscape character. The openness of the clifftop landscape reveals extensive areas of coastal heathland that are exposed to the worst of weathers, this being further evidenced by the windblown heather. Areas that were previously disturbed by mining activity are now colonised by this heathland, which provides a contrast with the complex pattern of regular but small-scale enclosures of former miner's smallholdings so typical of the mining landscapes of Cornwall.

Between the fields and across the heathland there are numerous old mining tracks, which are still in regular use providing a network of informal access paths.

Clusters of houses which once housed miners and their families shelter in the coastal valleys and have a rough appearance that complements the derelict engine houses. The conversion of buildings formerly related to the mining landscape and redevelopment of other buildings and

structures is beginning to erode the local landscape character. 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.

Many remnants of the former mining industry including engine houses, chimneys, spoil heaps and shafts are scattered across the coastal landscape. Large expanses of rocky bare ground, stained rust red with iron ore still exist at Cligga Head, Trevaunance Cove, Wheal Kitty, Higher Bal and atop Mulgram Hill, overlooking Chapel Porth. The Wheal Coates engine house poised on the edge of the heathland-clad coastal slope above Chapel Porth is viewed against breath-taking expansive coastal views and is widely recognised as an iconic image of the Cornish coast.

Nowadays, St Agnes is a hotspot for landscape inspired arts and craft (and craft ales) and the village has many shops and galleries whose wares reflect the exceptional nature of the AONB landscape, coast and seascape.



Land Use

Fields are mainly small rectilinear improved pasture reflecting historic miner's smallholdings. They are archetypical of the mining landscapes of Cornwall and a distinctive element of the field pattern in this area. Between the fields and across open heathland numerous old mining tracks are still in use providing a network of informal access.

Significant Landowners

- The National Trust manages St Agnes Beacon, plus a coastal strip from Tubby's Head through to Wheal Coates, Chapel Coombe and Wheal Charlotte north of Porthtowan.

Biodiversity & Geodiversity

The underlying geology is coursed with rich mineral veins that gave rise to extensive mining during the 17th, 18th and 19th century, an industry which thrived on the strength of the high-quality tin, copper, lead and iron available in the St Agnes area. Local tradition boasts that 'St Agnes produced the finest tin in Cornwall'.

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.

Key species of interest for this section;

- Solitary (mining) bees
- Adder
- Common lizard
- Peregrine
- Green hairstreak
- Grey seal
- Cornish gorse
- Bell heather



Culture and Heritage

Whilst the mining industry has carved its shape on the historic landscape of St Agnes, there are other historic remains including The St Agnes Beacon, ancient burial mounds, which date back to the Bronze Age as well as the Bolster Bank earthwork providing evidence of an early Iron Age settlement. More recent 20th century activity includes the runways and dispersal point of the World War II airfield on the cliff tops west of Trevellas.



The harbour, constructed in 1798, supported a fishing industry and allowed for the export of copper ore and the import of coal from south Wales for the smelters at the mines and later, during the 19th century, as a hub for pilchard fishing. Piles of huge granite blocks in Trevaunance Cove, visible at low tide are all that remains now of the old harbour which collapsed in a storm in the early 1900s.

Every year in May, the Bolster festival takes place on the stunning cliffs at Chapel Porth beach. It tells the tale of the Giant Bolster who, having ravaged the locality and terrified the locals, is finally brought to his comeuppance by a fair village maiden. In addition, the St Agnes Carnival is the highlight of the village social calendar with fancy dress abound, dating back well over a hundred years, to the time when the village streets would have been lined with miners and fishermen, bal-maidens and fishwives.

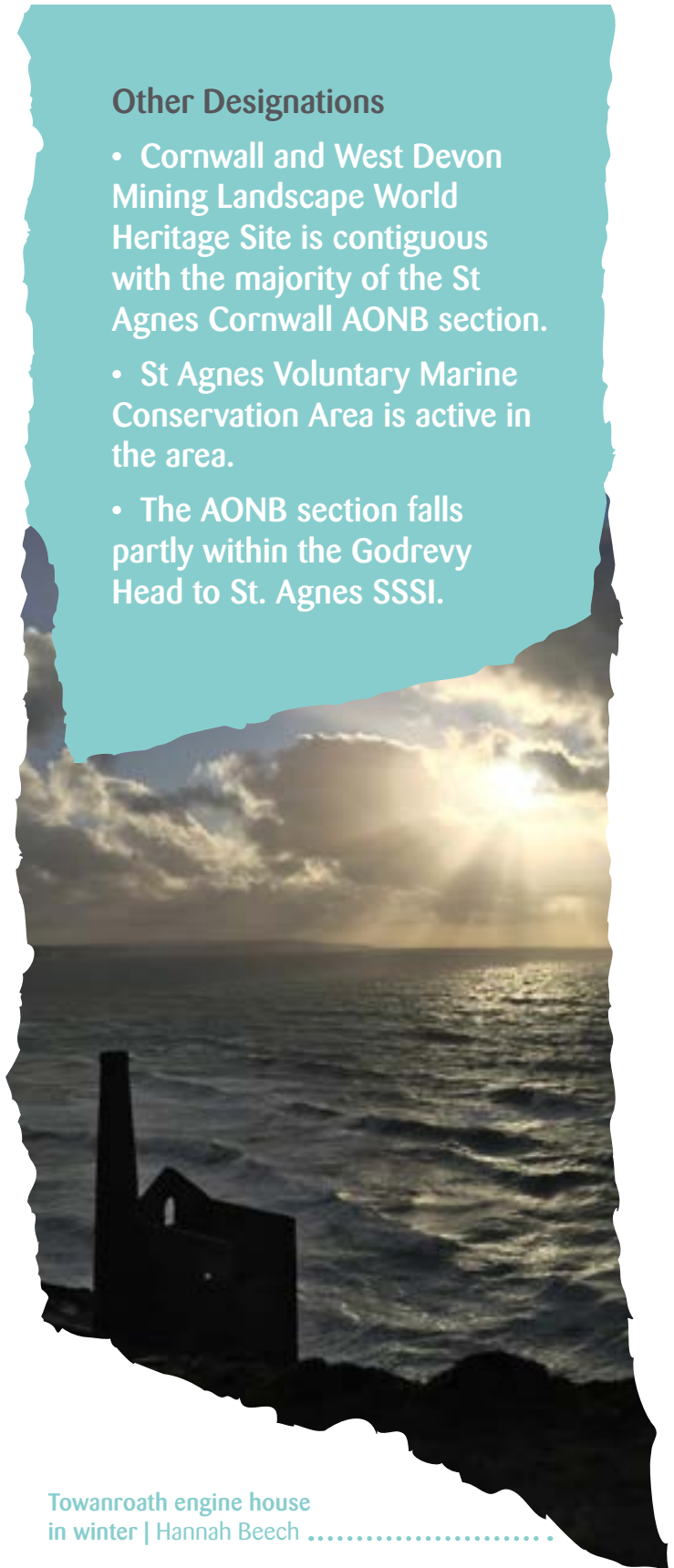
The Cornish hedges which criss-cross the land consist mainly of rubble stone from local killas which incorporate unweathered, mineralised mine spoil, providing a valuable habitat for both native flora and fauna.

Partnerships and Neighbourhood Plans

- St Agnes Neighbourhood Development Plan
- A St Agnes Conservation Area Appraisal (conservation and enhancement of local settlement character) has been produced.
- Perranzabuloe Parish Council prepared a Management Strategy for Cligga Head

Other Designations

- Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site is contiguous with the majority of the St Agnes Cornwall AONB section.
- St Agnes Voluntary Marine Conservation Area is active in the area.
- The AONB section falls partly within the Godrevy Head to St. Agnes SSSI.



Towanroath engine house in winter | Hannah Beech



Landscape Condition

- Existing and more recent development above both sides of the beach at Porthtowan is out of character as is some more recent development at Trevaunance Cove (materials used, scale, massing and design).
- Property development at St Agnes has extended beyond the local characteristic valley settlement pattern and vernacular built form and is now beginning to impact upon the AONB.
- Perranporth airfield (partially in the AONB) includes visually intrusive features and can impact upon the tranquillity of the area.
- Instability of some existing mining structures resulting in progressive deterioration.
- Footpath erosion on coastal heathland from overuse of unmarked routes at Trevellas Coombe, Chapel Porth and Porthtowan.
- Coastal heathland in varying condition with some areas displaying serial succession of scrub vegetation



Towanroath engine house | Andrew Hocking



The Cornwall State of the AONB Report and Cornwall AONB Atlas interactive map provide more detail and insight





Community Network Area (CNA) : AONB section within CNA
St Agnes & Perranporth : St Agnes

Index of Multiple Deprivation Percentile by CNA : 2015 | 49.1% : 2019 | 50.0%

Health and Wellbeing in St Agnes & Perranporth (2016/2017)

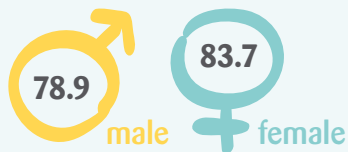


Population

17,693
people

3% of Cornwall's total population

Life expectancy (years)



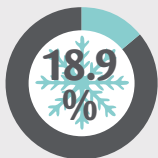
Births (2015)



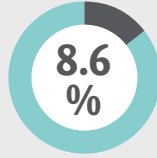
Deaths (Dec 2013-Dec 2016)



Inequalities



local households are fuel poor



local children live in low-income families



local children in receipt of free school meals



residents claim Disability Living Allowance

3% of

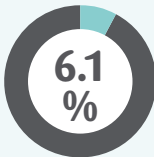
2% of all claimants in Cornwall



Risk Groups



Obesity
(% of residents on the Chronic Disease Register)



Diabetes
(% of residents on the Chronic Disease Register)



Chronic Kidney Disease
(% of residents on the Chronic Disease Register)



residents who speak English as an additional language



05 St Agnes: Policies & Objectives

The policies and objectives below are applicable to this Local Section – they should, however, be read in conjunction with the Cornwall AONB Strategy Aims, Policies and Objectives which are applicable to the whole designation.

Policy	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
SA-P1	Require all new development including replacement dwellings, to be “landscape-led” to respond appropriately to the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape by conserving and enhancing the landscape character and natural beauty of the area. This needs to include consideration of cumulative and scale of replacement dwellings. It should also preclude extensions and encroachment.	<p>LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob11 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob15 RSA-P1, RSA-P2, RSA-P4 RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob2, RSA-Ob4, RSA-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob5 PD-P1, PD-P2, PD-P3, PD-P9, PD-P12, PD-P14, PD-P18</p>
SA-P2	Seek the restoration and enhancement of the expansive openness of the coastal plateau and Beacon to keep free from intrusive development and tall structures. 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.	<p>LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob1, LS-Ob2, LS-Ob3, LS-Ob4, LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob6, NRLM-Ob9, NRLM-Ob11, NRLM-Ob13 CCBR-Ob4 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob15 RSA-P1, RSA-P2 RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob2 HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P3, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2, SCE-Ob4, SCE-Ob5 PD-P1, PD-P2, PD-P3, PD-P7, PD-P12, PD-P18</p>



Policy	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
SA-P3	Protect 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.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob1, LS-Ob2, LS-Ob3, LS-Ob4 NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob11, NRLM-Ob13 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob15 RSA-Ob1 HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2, SCE-Ob4 PD-P18
SA-P4	Encourage the sympathetic management of Perranporth Airfield, for example by improvement of boundary features and sensitive siting and design of airfield infrastructure.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3 RSA-P1, RSA-Ob5 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1 PD-P1, PD-P12
SA-P5	Seek a reduction in landscape and visual impacts of tourism including 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	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob11 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob15 RSA-P1, RSA-P2 RSA-Ob4, RSA-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob5 PD-P9
SA-P6	Require particular consideration of the adverse cumulative effects of development of both replacement and new dwellings and the expansion of characteristic villages into their protected setting and settlement pattern. The unique historic character of many of these settlements reflects both their vernacular form and buildings and also their relationship to their landscape setting. The loss of either characteristic will be disproportionately harmful.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6 NRLM-Ob11 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob15 RSA-P1, RSA-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob5 PD-P1, PD-P2, PD-P3, PD-P7, PD-12



Objective	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
SA-Ob1	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.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P4, LS-P6 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob6, HC-Ob7, HC-Ob9, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob14, HC-Ob15 RSA-Ob3, RSA-Ob5 HWB-Ob3 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2
SA-Ob2	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.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P4, LS-P6 LS-Ob1, LS-Ob2, LS-Ob3, LS-Ob4 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob2, NRLM-Ob3, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob9, NRLM-Ob12, NRLM-Ob13 CCBR-Ob2, CCBR-Ob3, CCBR-Ob4 HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob14, HC-Ob15 RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob5 HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5 SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob4
SA-Ob3	Support the St. Agnes Marine Conservation Group and the continuation of the St. Agnes Voluntary Marine Conservation Area to protect and conserve; raise awareness and increase understanding; and encourage education and research of the St. Agnes marine environment.	NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob2, NRLM-Ob9 CCBR-Ob4 RSA-Ob3 HWB-Ob1, HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob3, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob4?
SA-Ob4	Support measures to visually enhance existing development and car parking, for example at Porthtowan and Trevaunance Cove so that this becomes more in keeping with local character in materials, scale and design.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P4 RSA-P1



Thank you for supporting and advocating for Cornwall AONB



Cornwall Wildlife Trust

