



Cornwall's nationally protected landscape



Cornwall
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

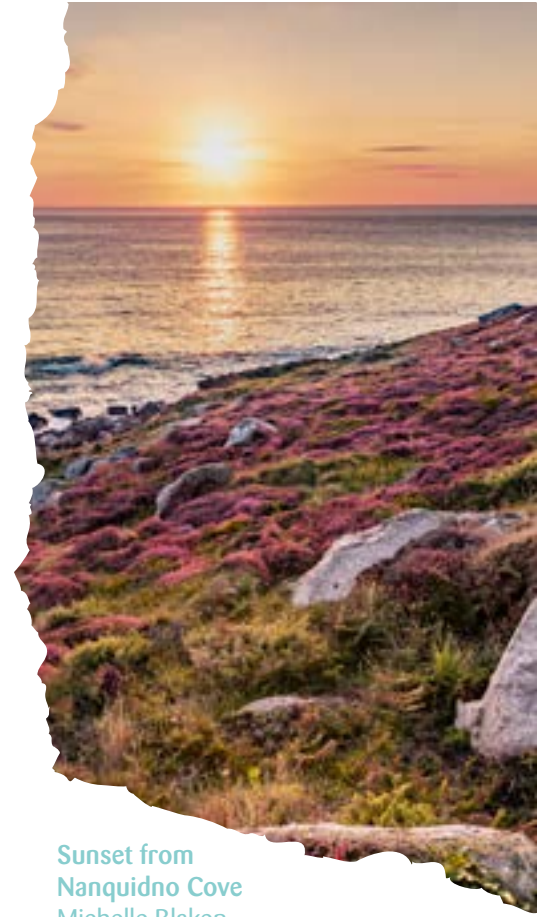
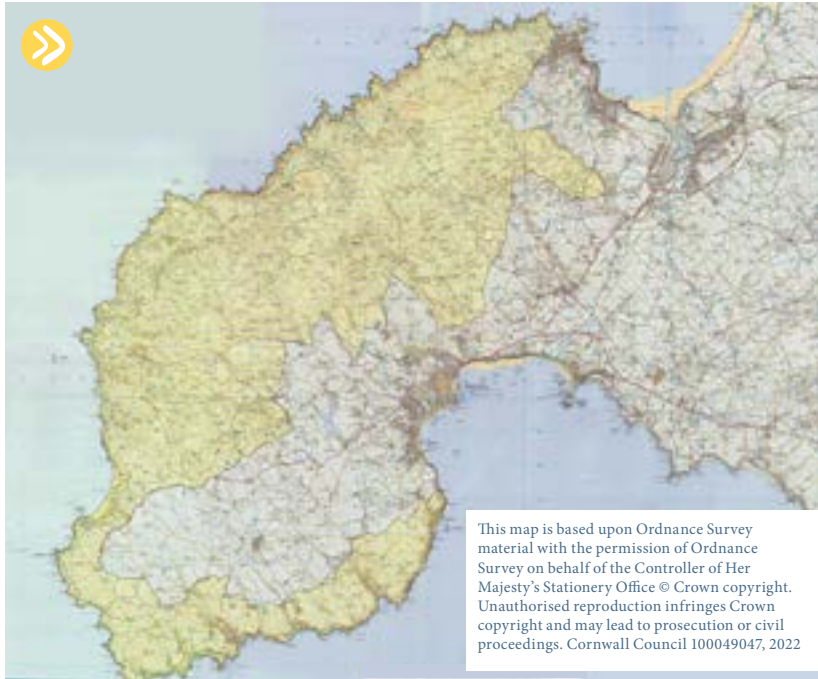
07 *West*
Penwith

Cornwall AONB Local Section



Section 07

West Penwith



Sunset from
Nanquidno Cove
Michelle Blaken

Location:

This section of the AONB includes the most westerly stretch of the Cornwall peninsula, extending from the western edge of St Ives around Cape Cornwall and inland to include the central Penwith Hills (also referred to as the downs or moors). From Sennen Cove and Land's End the AONB narrows and the A30 forms the inland boundary. On the south coast of the Peninsula, the AONB remains mostly south of the B3315 extending east to Penlee Point on the Penzance side of the coastal village of Mousehole.

AONB Section	Area (ha)	% of total AONB area	Marine Character Areas covering the coast/adjacent waters
07 West Penwith	13,762	14.3%	MCA 46: Penwith Maritime

Cornwall Landscape Character Areas:

- CA01: West Penwith South (Lands' End to Newlyn)
- CA02: West Penwith North and West Coastal Strip
- CA03: Penwith Central Hills • CA04: Mount's Bay



07

Special Qualities of West Penwith

The Key Landscape Characteristic of West Penwith is shaped by its granite geology and geographical position at the end of the land – exposed to the full force of the Atlantic Ocean. The hard granite coastline has been sculpted by wind and weather into a sequence of headlands punctuated by substantial cliff chasms or ‘zawns’.



Sunset at Crown
Houses, Botallack
James Reed

This is a historic landscape of unique, sparse, open, coastal moorland which offers a complete contrast to the lush, enclosed, subtropical valleys of the south coast. The Penwith Central Hills, locally known as the Penwith Downs, form a granite spine along the northern part of the peninsula, stretching in an arc from Trencrom and Rosewall Hills (237m) in the east, to the highest mid-point of Watch Croft (252m) near Morvah, diminishing at the small, rounded hill of Chapel Carn Brea in the west. Further west, the AONB boundary narrows, as it rounds the very tip of the Peninsula, past Sennen and Land’s End, then hugs the coast south of the A3315 and is comprised of the more sheltered landscapes that address Mounts Bay.

The north coast of West Penwith comprises a series of headlands and coves that form a continuous sequence from Carrick Du, west of Porthmeor Beach at St Ives to the mining landscapes of Pendeen and St Just. Here, the coastal plateau forms a narrow shelf-like band that gently slopes toward the cliffs, bordered and defined at its inland edge by the sharp transition to the steep sides of the Central Hills. The Central Hills offer shelter to the mainland area of Cornwall beyond West Penwith by providing a barrier to the worst of the Atlantic storms; the open elevated moorland is interspersed with outcrops of granite such as Zennor Carn, Carn Galva and Rosewall Hill whilst the small hill of Trencrom, topped with tors forms an outlier to the east.



Land Use

Apart from scattered farmsteads, the two small north coast villages of Zennor and Morvah provide easy access to the popular routes of the South West Coast Path, the Tinner’s Way and the Coffin Trail. Smaller hamlets are found along the dramatic and stunning coast road, the B3305, such as at Rosemergy and Porthmeor. The main road through these

Bronze Age such as the stone circle at Tregeseal and the well-known ‘Men-an-Tol’ near Carn Galva, bear testament to early human settlement together with the notable remains from the Romano British period at Chysauster, near Nancledra and Carn Euny to the extreme west of the Central Hills. The rocky headland at Gurnard’s Head and Bosigran also provide evidence of Iron



Waves of Porthcurno
David Rose-Massom

places becomes characteristically narrow and winding. Further west, a linear pattern of housing, mostly terraced cottages has developed along the coastal road such as at Pendeen and Trewellard, with the older medieval town of St Just with its twin squares providing most local facilities. The traditional buildings, houses and farmsteads are of local vernacular, granite construction.

The archaeological interest in West Penwith is of international importance. The range of archaeological relics ranging from Neolithic quoits (tombs), standing stones from the

Age cliff castles. This wild landscape has a powerful sense of place largely due to the (apparent) absence of 21st century pressures and provides inspiration for many writers and artists.

The whole area is famed for its past of hard metal mining, particularly on the north coast from the Cot Valley at St Just and at Pendeen where relics of the mining industry are very evident. Here, the prehistoric fields are littered with redundant mine buildings old waste heaps and fenced off shafts, a legacy of the 19th Century.



Porthchapel beach

Caleb Giddens

Just outside Pendeen lies Geevor Tin Mine, which is preserved as a working mine and is a key tourist site. This area forms the core of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site in Penwith. The Cot and Kenidjack valleys form breaks in the otherwise elevated coastline with both valleys revealing extensive evidence of the former mining industry.

North of Land’s End is the popular Whitesand Bay stretching for one mile between the headlands of Pedn-mên-du and Aire Point. At high tide the beach, a popular surf spot, is divided into two with Sennen Cove beach to the south and Gwynver

beach to the north bounded by 38 hectares of stabilised sand dunes. A short walk west out of Sennen, past accessible granite cliffs, a popular spot for climbers, brings you to the actual Land’s End, otherwise known as The Peal where a finger of sharp, craggy granite called the Longships dips into the sea where is mounted the Longships unmanned lighthouse. The western exposure of jointed granite cliffs from Land’s End to Gwennap Head is the most westerly point of England.

Apart from the prominent tourist facility at Land’s End, visitor infrastructure past Sennen is low-key, although the Land’s End Airport has recently undergone some expansion. Upland areas are almost devoid of settlement with most dwellings built in the sheltered south east of the downs.

The south coast of the peninsula is undulating but still has a rugged and indented coastline with many headlands and small coves with slipways providing access for fishing boats such as at Porthgwarra, Penberth and Lamorna Cove. There is a distinctive and regular pattern of narrow linear valleys with small streams running north-west to south-east draining towards Mount’s Bay.

On the sheltered cliff land between Mousehole and Lamorna, remnant small horticultural fields grow daffodils and potatoes. These fields date back to the late 19th century and were cultivated to take advantage of the low sun angles to hasten the growing season. Many of the field boundaries have now been removed to provide access for modern planting and harvesting machinery, resulting in the historic character of the small irregular field system being largely erased. The largest settlement in this area is Mousehole, a very



popular tourist destination where summer visitors flock to see its historic working fishing harbour and its cluster of granite cottages along winding narrow streets providing a picture postcard setting.

Active granite quarrying operations in elevated land at Castle-an-Dinas and operations at Penlee quarry (close to the AONB at Newlyn) are controlled under the Review of Mineral Planning Permissions.

Significant Landowners

- **Historic England** manages the ancient Iron Age settlement of Chysauster
- **The National Trust** manages significant and extensive coastal and inland properties around Zennor, St Levan and St Just including many of the coastal mining features

Biodiversity & Geodiversity

The moorland vegetation of West Penwith consists of western heath intermixed with gorse, hawkweed, scabious and fine grasses. By contrast the areas of wet heath are populated with purple moor grass, cross leaved heath and western gorse.

Whitesand Bay dunes contain the only British population of a shield bug which was first recorded in 1864 and is associated with sparsely vegetated areas of loose sand.

Key species of interest for this section;

- Basking sharks
- Nightjar
- Grasshopper warbler
- Dolphin

Culture and Heritage

When you walk the dramatic and ancient landscape of West Penwith, you walk in the footsteps of giants. Myths and legends across the ages can be found in the magical scenery. From the Lost Lands of Lyonesse and the City of Atlantis to the prophecies of Merlin and the beauty of the Mermaid of Zennor.

Tom Bawcock's Eve is a celebration of the heroic actions of one fisherman in Mousehole and further festivals recognise the incredible heritage of the landscape and its communities.

West Penwith has inspired artists across the centuries. From 1880-1940 the Lamorna Society, part of Newlyn School, was prolific in the production of art and culture. Artists and writers included Derek Tangye, The Minack Chronicles, Sir Alfred J Munnings, modernist painter John Tunnard, Lamorna Birch and Laura and Harold Knight. This period dramatised in the novel Summer in February, and also turned into a film of the same name. More recently, contemporary artist Kurt Jackson has his studio and gallery in St Just.



The granite cliffs provide a dramatic setting for the open-air Minack Theatre set on the headland high above Porthcurno beach with its impressive backdrop of Mounts Bay and the distinctive silhouette of Logan Rock. Culture and heritage has also inspired innovation. Porthcurno is home to the Museum of Global Communications, PK as it is known in telegraphic code, owes its unique heritage to the arrival of the first undersea telegraph cable in 1870 which stretched out from under the sea-bed at Porthcurno Beach.

Cornish Hedges

The north coast is particularly distinctive for its intricate network of tiny irregular pasture fields bound by granite Cornish hedges, which are prehistoric in origin and deemed by many to be among the oldest surviving man-made structures that have been in continuous use for their original purpose since they were made, many being older than the Egyptian pyramids. Cornish hedges in West Penwith have a construction markedly different from elsewhere in Cornwall. Large granite boulders, or “grounders” act as a foundation for irregular upper courses of varying sizes of weathered granite taken straight from the surface of the moor. Some have little vegetation other than perhaps a sparse topping whilst others support windswept and gnarled thorn bushes.

Partnerships and Neighbourhood Plans

- St Ives Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Ludgvan Neighbourhood Development Plan
- St Just-in-Penwith Development Plan

Other Designations

- The Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site designation includes sites at Geevor, Botallack and Levant along the western coast.
- The area along the west Penwith coast from Land’s End in the south, extending past Cape Cornwall to just east of Gurnards Head is an SAC.
- The sea at Land’s End (Runnel Stone) is a Marine Conservation Zone.
- West Penwith has been designated an International Dark Sky Park (2021)

- Parish Plans exist for: St Levan, Zennor, St Buryan, Sancreed, Sennen and Madron.
- Working with local businesses and residents, PK Porthcurno are leading on the Porthcurno community becoming a plastic free community.
- The St Just Heritage Area Regeneration Project has led to the successful physical regeneration of St Just town centre and stabilisation of selected prominent historic mine buildings and sites of interest.



- Cornwall Council’s Historic Environment Service publications, The Archaeology of the Moors, Downs and Heaths of West Cornwall and Managing the historic environment on West Cornwall’s rough ground, provide excellent guides.

Landscape Condition

- Large areas of the valleys are now colonised by invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and bracken with many mineshafts hidden beneath.
- Whilst the majority of visitor infrastructure is low-key, that at Sennen and particularly Land’s End is visually intrusive.
- Castle-an-Dinas quarry supplies granite for road aggregate and hedging and has a significant visual impact on the horizon. Although operations are largely screened from external views there are still some unnatural landforms associated with tipping and stock piling.
- Some historic mining structures remain un-stabilised and are at risk of further deterioration namely; Rosewall and Ransom, Wheal Sisters, Ding Dong, Gurnard’s Head, Wheal Hearle, Leswidden chimney, Speare Consols, Carnyorth, Wheal Call, Cot Valley, Portheras, Porthmeor, Bosigran, Wheal Cleveland and Rosevale.
- Some of the infrastructure developed through the St Just Heritage Area Regeneration project has suffered from vandalism and resources for ongoing maintenance is a problem.

- In the south, some agricultural land has seen localised but significant change in layout to create efficiencies in farming through the removal of historic field hedges.
- Scrub encroachment on the moors with serial succession to bracken and woody vegetation is widespread and particularly evident at Rosewall Hill and Carn Galver impeding local access.
- Lack of woodland management along stream valleys has resulted in sycamore encroachment.
- In southern parts of West Penwith there has been significant loss of hedgerow elm due to disease resulting in loss of habitat and landscape character.
- The Grade II listed quay at Lamorna was significantly damaged during the 2014 winter storms and requires urgent attention and investment to prevent further deterioration.
- Further development of the Land’s End Airport has the potential for visual impacts and impacts on landscape character and tranquillity



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



Community Network Area (CNA)
Hayle and St Ives

AONB section within CNA
Godrevy to Portreath and West Penwith

Index of Multiple Deprivation Percentile by CNA : 2015 | 44.0% : 2019 | 46.0%

Health and Wellbeing in Hayle and St Ives (2016/2017)

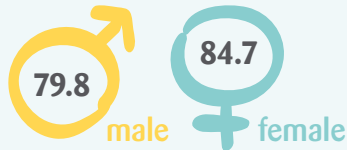


Population

26,200 people

5% of Cornwall's total population

Life expectancy (years)



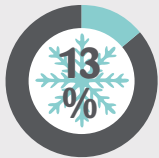
Births (2015)



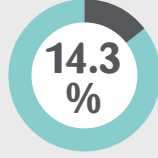
Deaths (Dec 2013-Dec 2016)



Inequalities



local households are fuel poor



local children live in low-income families



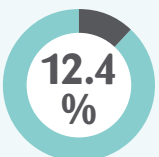
local children in receipt of free school meals

1270 residents claim Disability Living Allowance

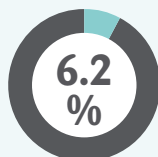
5% of all claimants in Cornwall



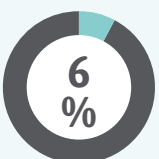
Risk Groups



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





Community Network Area (CNA) : **AONB section within CNA**
West Penwith : **West Penwith and South Coast Western**

Index of Multiple Deprivation Percentile by CNA : **2015 | 32.2%** : **2019 | 32.6%**

Health and Wellbeing in West Penwith (2016/2017)

Population

39,983 people

7% of Cornwall's total population

98% white

Life expectancy (years)
 78 male, 83 female

Births (2015)
 320

Deaths (Dec 2013-Dec 2016)
 +1543

Inequalities

19.2% local households are fuel poor

19% local children live in low-income families

1269 local children in receipt of free school meals

8% of all claimants in Cornwall

2340 residents claim Disability Living Allowance

9% of all claimants in Cornwall

Risk Groups

13% Obesity (% of residents on the Chronic Disease Register)

6.4% Diabetes (% of residents on the Chronic Disease Register)

5.1% Chronic Kidney Disease (% of residents on the Chronic Disease Register)

110 (5.5%) residents who speak English as an additional language



07 West Penwith: 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
WP-P1	Protect the wild, open, exposed and undeveloped character of the North Coast. Support coastal heathland restoration.	<p>LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob1, LS-Ob2, LS-Ob3, LS-Ob6</p> <p>NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob2, NRLM-Ob3, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob9, NRLM-Ob11, NRLM-Ob12, NRLM-Ob13</p> <p>CCBR-Ob2, CCBR-Ob4</p> <p>HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob15</p> <p>RSA-P1, RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob4</p> <p>HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5</p> <p>SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2, SCE-Ob4, SCE-Ob5</p> <p>PD-P1, PD-P12, PD-P18</p>
WP-P2	Support the sympathetic operation and progressive restoration of Castle-an-Dinas quarry, and others, in a manner that respects local landscape character, includes appropriate vegetation, appropriate final landform and permanent restoration of completed areas at the earliest possible stages. Support further measures to protect and enhance environmental and landscape quality when existing quarrying permissions are reviewed.	<p>LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-Ob4</p> <p>NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob2, NRLM-Ob3, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob12</p> <p>CCBR-Ob3</p> <p>SCE-P3, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2, SCE-Ob3</p> <p>PD-P13, PD-P14</p>
WP-P3	Ensure that development at Land's End Airport has appropriate regard to the rural character of the area and tranquillity is maintained.	<p>LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3</p> <p>RSA-P1, RSA-Ob5</p> <p>SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1</p> <p>PD-P1, PD-P12</p>





Policy	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
WP-P4	Seek the conservation and enhancement of the existing rural character of the B3306 and other roads in this area via sensitive design and minimal use/ decluttering of highway infrastructure. Discourage widening, straightening, re-routing, kerbing and enclosure of currently unenclosed sections or additional openings to lanes through existing hedge banks introducing contemporary design standards and requiring appreciable uncharacteristic visibility splays.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P6 LS-Ob4, LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob10, NRLM-Ob11 HC-Ob1, (HC-Ob2), HC-Ob4, HC-Ob8, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob15 RSA-P1, RSA-P4, RSA-P5 RSA-Ob4, RSA-Ob5 HWB-Ob5 SCE-P3, SCE-P6 SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2, SCE-Ob5 PD-P20
WP-P5	Support the continuation of small-scale sustainable fisheries in order to conserve community vibrancy and the character of local coves such as at Porthgarra, Lamorna, Penberth and Cape Cornwall.	LS-P1, LS-P4 NRLM-Ob9 HC-Ob4 HWB-Ob6 SCE-P2, SCE-P4, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-P7, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob3 PD-P10
WP-P6	Seek the strongest possible recognition and protection of the ancient prehistoric field systems bound by granite Cornish hedges as valuable historic landscape features and support their ongoing conservation and management.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P4, LS-P6 LS-Ob1, LS-Ob2, LS-Ob3, LS-Ob4 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob2, NRLM-Ob10 HC-Ob1, (HC-Ob2), HC-Ob4, HC-Ob7, HC-Ob8, HC-Ob9, HC-Ob10, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob14, (HC-Ob15) RSA-Ob4 HWB-Ob5 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2



Policy	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
WP-P7	Support integrated projects and take opportunities through planning to stabilise and repair engine houses and other mining structures that are significant in the landscape throughout the Section	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P4, LS-P6 LS-Ob4 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob6, HC-Ob7, HC-Ob9, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob13, HC-Ob14, HC-Ob15 RSA-Ob5 HWB-Ob3 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2 PD-P12
WP-P8	Support measures to safeguard and restore the Grade II listed quay at Lamorna in a manner that supports the purposes of the AONB designation	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P6 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob7, HC-Ob9, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob14 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2
WP-P9	Seek a reduction in landscape and visual impact of tourism including better integration of existing holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, car parks and signage. For example, infrastructure at Land’s End and the car parks along the B3306 and at Sennen. Support measures to address visitor pressure/ traffic at key destinations within West Penwith	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P6 LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob11 (HC-Ob2), HC-Ob4, HC-Ob11, (HC-Ob15) RSA-P1, RSA-P2, RSA-P4, RSA-P5, RSA-Ob4, RSA-Ob5 HWB-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob5 PD-P9
WP-P10	Support aspirations for West Penwith to be recognised as an International Dark Sky Park through seeking to limit light pollution arising through development	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3 LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob11 (HC-Ob2), HC-Ob4, (HC-Ob15) RSA-P1 HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P3, SCE-P6 SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob3, SCE-Ob5, SCE-Ob6 PD-P2, PD-12



Objective	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
WP-Ob1	Support the sensitive management of well-used footpath routes and their setting.	LS-P1, LS-P3, LS-P6 LS-Ob6 RSA-P1, RSA-P2 RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob2, RSA-Ob4 HWB-Ob3, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob5
WP-Ob2	Support integrated management of the biodiversity and the historic landscapes of the Penwith Downs (also known as Penwith Moors) based on stakeholder and community support.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob1, LS-Ob2, LS-Ob3, LS-Ob4 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob2, NRLM-Ob3, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob10, NRLM-Ob11, NRLM-Ob12, NRLM-Ob13 CCBR-Ob2, CCBR-Ob5 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob6, HC-Ob7, HC-Ob8, HC-Ob9, HC-Ob10, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob13, HC-Ob13, HC-Ob14, HC-Ob15? RSA-P1, RSA-Ob1 HWB-Ob3, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2, SCE-Ob4
WP-Ob3	Support the productive management of woodlands for example at Lamorna, St Loy and Penberth valleys in a manner that is consistent with conserving and enhancing local landscape character and biodiversity.	LS-P1, LS-P2 LS-Ob1, LS-Ob3 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob3, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob12 CCBR-Ob1, CCBR-Ob3 SCE-O1, SCE-O2, SCE-O3



Thank you for supporting and advocating for Cornwall AONB



Cornwall Wildlife Trust

