



Cornwall's nationally protected landscape



Cornwall
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

10 *South Coast
Eastern*

Cornwall AONB Local Section



Section 10

South Coast Eastern



Ethy Wood, Lerryn
Roy Curtis

Location:

This section of the AONB consists of the Fowey Ria and its tributaries and extends south of Lostwithiel, west of Fowey over Gribbin Head to the coast near Par Sands and eastwards to Portloe on the outskirts of west Looe. As with the South Coast Central section, South Coast Eastern has two distinct landscape character types; the River Fowey, which is primarily a ria landscape, and the open coastal areas that extend eastwards from Polruan to Portloe. The coastal section also includes a small area of land west of Gribbin Head facing on to St Austell Bay and takes in the small coastal settlement of Polkerris.

AONB Section 10 South Coast Eastern	Area (ha) 4,630	% of total AONB 4.8%	Marine Character Areas covering the coast/adjacent waters • MCA 49: South Cornwall Coastal Waters and Estuaries
Cornwall Landscape Character Areas: • CA21: Fowey Valley • CA22: South East Cornwall Plateau • CA39: St Austell Bay and Luxulyan Valley			



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Note: The three 'South Coast' Local Sections (08, 09, 10) have split Statements of Significance to reflect the range and difference of special qualities within each of them. For this reason they will not be subdivided in the same way as the other Local Sections.

Special Qualities of South Coast Eastern: Fowey Ria

The Key Landscape Characteristics of this section of the AONB can be split into two distinct areas: Fowey Ria and Polperro Coast. The approach to this section of the Cornwall AONB sees a marked change in character from that of the industrial, China clay related landscape of Par Docks and the busy nature of the holiday park at Par Sands in the setting of the AONB.

Statement of Significance | Creating a Sense of Place



Jim Wood

East of Par Beach, the landform rises steeply marking the boundary of the AONB section. This elevated location, of the western headland of the Fowey Estuary offers extensive panoramic views inland along the Fowey Ria, across the adjacent Par Sands, across the St Austell and Mevagissey Bays and across to the distant coastline of the Roseland.

Stream valleys incise the coast east of Par, the first of these being home to the little village of Polkerris, with its intimate sandy beach and harbour. The Menabilly Valley, penetrating deep inland, forms its own small network of tributary stream valleys and the high ground in between, forms the promontory of Gribbin Head, with its beacon and distinctive red and white daymark.

The AONB landscape on the western slopes of the Fowey bordered by the B3269 offers glimpsed views of the estuary. Castle Dore on the ridge top above Golant is a well-preserved example of Iron Age defensive earthworks reputedly linked with the early kings of Cornwall. It was occupied between the 4th centuries BC until the 1st century BC and rebuilt around 50AD after the Roman Invasion of Britain.

Fowey has long been a strategic post with the fortification of St Catherine's Castle situated on the top of St Catherine's Point at the entrance to the River Fowey estuary.





St Catherine’s Chapel and St Saviour’s Chapel dominate the views on the east of the estuary. The castle was built by Henry VIII as an artillery fort to protect the estuary from the threat of a French invasion and the site also contains the remains of a prehistoric cliff fortification. The relics of 15th century blockhouses can also be found at both Fowey and Polruan. The larger settlements of the main town of Fowey and the villages of Polruan and Bodinnick cluster on the steep slopes on both sides of the ria and are connected by both a vehicle ferry from Bodinnick to Fowey and a passenger ferry from Polruan to Fowey. The main building material here is killas, reflecting the local geology, but a wide range of finishes and materials are used. Slate is the main roofing material.

Lower down the creeks, summer sailors moor a wide range of yachts and boats along the river course, whilst closer to the coast, larger sea-going vessels navigate upstream to Fowey to load their cargo at the China clay rail terminus, an important activity within the locality. Around half a million tonnes of China clay is exported from Fowey annually. The product serves the paper industry in Norway, Sweden and Finland. It also supplies the ceramics industry in Egypt, Italy, Portugal and many other countries. As of 2021, aggregate is also now being exported from Fowey. This is a secondary material, produced as a by-product from the china clay mining process which is being reprocessed and marketed as a building material. It is being shipped to the southeast of England for building and infrastructure projects.

Away from the river valley much of the settlement tends to be scattered with rural farms and occasional small hamlets such as



Bodinnick Ferry | Anon

St Veep and Lanteglos high on the ridgeway. Access to much of the AONB, away from the main settlements, is restricted to a few small lanes and tracks and is best explored on foot.

The steep slopes surrounding the Fowey Ria give a strong sense of enclosure that is strengthened by the surrounding expanses of Sessile Oak woodland, much of it ancient, that embrace the estuary, clothing the shoreline and extending up the valley sides. Higher up the slopes and over the exposed rolling ridges are medium sized mixed arable and pasture fields with irregular boundaries indicating medieval origins. However, the dramatically varying gradients make the overall field pattern difficult to discern from most vantage points.





A rainbow over
St Austell Bay
Lisa MacLeod

In exposed higher ground and away from the creeks there are few trees although lower down some Cornish hedges support belts of trees that extend like fingers up the slopes from the main woodlands. On some slopes vineyards have been established adding a new texture amongst the more traditional agricultural uses. Designed ornamental landscapes occur for example the remains of Hall Walk at Bodinnick and Tivoli Gardens at Lerryn and exotic ornamental planting is a feature of some water's edges and settlements. Fowey is Cornish for 'river of beech trees', however these are more characteristic further upstream in the Bodmin Moor section of the AONB and it is on the heart of the moor that the river Fowey rises. Indeed, Bodmin Moor was formerly known as Fowey Moor.

The area around the Fowey River has steep enclosed slopes ending abruptly at the water's edge with gradients of 1:3 plummeting some 120 metres. Similar to the Fal and Helford, the creeks extend inland dissecting the landform with rounded exposed areas intermixed with a large expanse of oak woodland.

These woodlands are part of a medieval working landscape when the wood was used for fuel, charcoal, coppice wood and timber and the undergrowth would have been utilised for grazing with the oak bark providing an important component for the tanning industry. Much of this woodland has now fallen out of management.

The three largest creeks namely the Lerryn, Penpoll and Pont Pill all join the eastern side of the River Fowey. The upper sections of these creeks are, in the main, un-navigable due to the build-up of silt and mud and now provide important wildlife habitats.

The Fowey area and particularly Menabilly, has deep cultural associations, not least because of its link to the famous writer, Daphne du Maurier, who lived at Point Neptune, near Readymoney Cove and at Menabilly (in Menabilly House). However, the area also inspired the works of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Kenneth Grahame and Leo Walmsley. Each year Fowey hosts the Fowey Festival of Words and Music, which is a significant cultural event in Cornwall's calendar.





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Special Qualities of South Coast Eastern: The Polperro Coast

Between Black Bottle Rock in the west and Pencarrow Head in the east is the white sand and shingle beach of Lantic Bay, only accessible from the South West Coast Path.

There are few villages along this section of the coast other than the small settlement of Lansallos Churchtown clustered around the head of a small valley leading down to Lantivet Bay and further east the much larger settlement of Polperro, a picturesque fishing village of slate cottages perched on steep sided slopes huddled around the sheltered historic harbour with its museum of fishing and smuggling, housed in an old fish processing house.

Due to the sparsely populated landscape and limited accessibility, much of this section of the AONB remains relatively free from development pressures, attracting mainly visitors who walk the South West Coastal Path.

Heading east, the coastline is characterised by its strong rolling landform with rounded convex slopes falling into incised valleys. Much of the open land on the ridges is generally in excess of 100 metres and is dissected by short coastal streams emerging at West Coombe, East Coombe, Polperro, Porthallow and Port Nadler.

The cliffs are distinctive for their chamfered profile, covered in scrub, and a wide range of rough vegetation intermixed with wildflowers and grasses, providing important habitats for a range of wildlife.



Wagtail | John Stather

Due to the exposed nature of this coastal landscape there are few trees other than the larger valley running inland from Polperro to Crumplehorn, here there are areas of mixed and deciduous woodland, benefiting from the sheltered environment. Much of the land along this section of the AONB is in agricultural use with a mix of arable and pastoral farming in a medieval field enclosure system with medium sized fields.

The narrow lane network connecting the farms with small hamlets are enclosed by high Cornish hedges of slate which are well vegetated and give the appearance of grassy banks.



Partnerships and Neighbourhood Plans

- Fowey Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Fowey Estuary Management Plan is a non-statutory document containing guidelines to inform and guide current and future management of the estuary.
- Lanteglos Neighbourhood Development Plan is at referendum
- Polperro and Lansallos Neighbourhood Development Plan
- The Fowey Estuary Partnership provides holistic management of the estuary, balancing tourism, commerce and leisure interests. It is run by the Fowey Harbour Commissioners bringing together a number of regulatory bodies, NGO's and interested parties on the basis of voluntary co-operation.
- Friends of Fowey Estuary provide a focus for voluntary activities for the conservation of the estuary.

Key species of interest for this section:

- Fulmar
- Little egret
- Kittiwake
- Great black backed gull
- Small-leaved elm

Other Designations

- Lantic Bay, Polruan to Polperro (SSSI and SAC designation)
- Pont Pill Marine Conservation Zone

Landscape Condition

- Some recent development at Fowey, Polruan and Polperro extends outside characteristic settlement patterns.
- Par Docks and its associated derelict infrastructure are visually intrusive on the setting of the AONB and provide opportunity to enhance the setting through redevelopment.
- Native broadleaved woodlands of the Fowey Ria are largely unmanaged.
- Many ancient broadleaved woodland sites have been planted with conifers resulting in fragmented habitat continuity.
- Unmanaged regeneration of scrub and woodland in coastal valleys between Polruan and Portlooe has, in places, allowed the establishment of non-native species.
- Significant removal of Cornish hedges has taken place due to agricultural land improvement.
- In parts of this section, there has been significant loss of hedgerow elm due to disease, which has impacted on habitat connectivity and landscape character.



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



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Community Network Area (CNA)
Liskeard & Looe

AONB section within CNA
South Coast Eastern and Bodmin Moor

Index of Multiple Deprivation Percentile by CNA : 2015 | 38.0% : 2019 | 39.0%

Health and Wellbeing in Liskeard & Looe (2016/2017)



Population

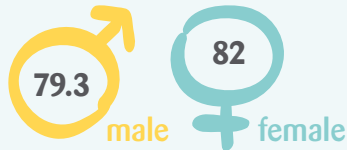
31,456
people

6% of
Cornwall's
total population

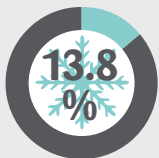
Life expectancy (years)

Births (2015)

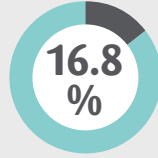
Deaths (Dec
2013-Dec 2016)



Inequalities



local households are fuel poor



local children live in low-income families



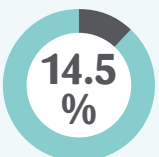
935 local children in receipt of free school meals

1515 residents claim Disability Living Allowance

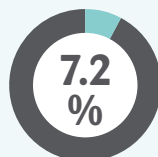
6% of all claimants in Cornwall



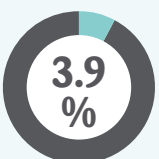
Risk Groups



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



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Community Network Area (CNA) : **AONB section within CNA**
St Blazey, Fowey & Lostwithiel : **South Coast Eastern**

Index of Multiple Deprivation Percentile by CNA : **2015 | 44.2%** : **2019 | 48.3%**

Health and Wellbeing in St Blazey, Fowey & Lostwithiel (2016/2017)

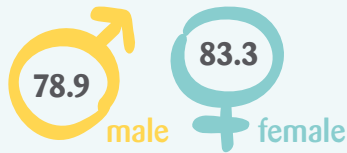


Population

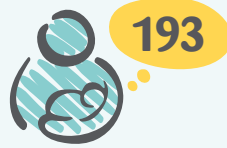
19,620
people

6%
of
Cornwall's
total population

Life expectancy (years)



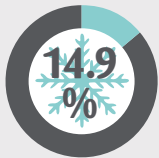
Births (2015)



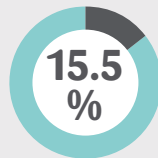
Deaths (Dec 2013-Dec 2016)



Inequalities



local households are fuel poor



local children live in low-income families



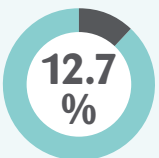
516 local children in receipt of free school meals

850 residents claim Disability Living Allowance

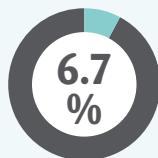
3% of all claimants in Cornwall



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



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10 South Coast Eastern: 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
L-SCE-P1	Require the active consideration of landscape and visual impacts around the Fowey Ria, harbour and creeks of increasing or changing patterns of water-based access, leisure and commercial activity and related infrastructure such as moorings, jetties, car parks and yards.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob9, NRLM-Ob11 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob2 RSA-P1, RSA-P2, RSA-Ob4 HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6 SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob3, SCE-Ob5 PD-P10, PD-P17
L-SCE-P2	Support the further development of sustainable water-based travel, integrated with other initiatives in South Coast Central AONB section that build on the existing ferry links between Fowey and Bodinnick, and Fowey and Polruan and further afield.	LS-Ob6 RSA-P1, RSA-P2, RSA-P3, RSA-P4, RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob2 HWB-Ob1, HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P4, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob3, SCE-Ob5, SCE-Ob6





Policy	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
L-SCE-P3	Support the work of the Fowey Estuary Partnership in its aim to stimulate an appropriate balance between competing demands placed on the Fowey Estuary through shared information, co-operation and action, including seeking opportunities to implement the Fowey Estuary Management Plan and to support the continuation of the Upper Fowey and Point Pill Voluntary Marine Conservation Area designation.	LS-P1, LS-P2 LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob2, NRLM-Ob3, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob6, NRLM-Ob8, NRLM-Ob9, NRLM-Ob13 CCBR-P1 CCBR-Ob2, CCBR-Ob3, CCBR-Ob4, CCBR-Ob5 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob7, HC-Ob11, HC-Ob12, HC-Ob13, HC-Ob14 RSA-P1, RSA-P2, RSA-P3, RSA-P4, RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob2, RSA-Ob3, RSA-Ob4 HWB-Ob1, HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob3, HWB-Ob4, HWB-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P4, SCE-P5, SCE-P6 SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob3, SCE-Ob4, SCE-Ob5, SCE-Ob6?, SCE-Ob7
L-SCE-P4	Support communication of the implications of the Shoreline Management Plan to creek side and coastal communities within this section such as Polkerris, Lerryn and Golant in order to open an early dialogue about sea level rise and coastal change.	LS-P1, LS-P2 NRLM-O9 CCBR-P1, CCBR-Ob3, CCBR-Ob4, CCBR-Ob5 SCE-P6, SCE-Ob6?
L-SCE-P5	Support the wealth of cultural heritage around the Fowey and particularly its literary heritage, including the continued success of the Fowey Festival of Music and Words.	HC-Ob1, HC-Ob3, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob8 HWB-Ob1, HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob5 SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob5, SCE-Ob6?



Policy	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
L-SCE-P6	Support appropriate improvements to footpath access around the Fowey Ria and its creeks with respect to the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 provided that this does not encourage an increase in traffic levels or the provision of further car parks and that this conserves and enhances the natural beauty, provided that this does not impact upon the qualifying features of the SAC or SPA from recreational disturbance.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-Ob6 NRLM-Ob9 CCBR-Ob4 RSA-P1, RSA-P2, RSA-P3 RSA-Ob1, RSA-Ob2, RSA-Ob3, RSA-Ob4 HWB-Ob1, HWB-Ob2, HWB-Ob3, HWB-Ob4, HWB-Ob5, HWB-Ob7 SCE-P3, SCE-P6 SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob5
L-SCE-P7	Support the continuation of small-scale, sustainable fisheries in order to maintain community vibrancy providing that this enhances local character and conserves natural assets, such as at Polperro, provided that this does not have adverse impact upon the Lantic Bay Special Area of Conservation.	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
L-SCE-P8	Support the management and extension of sessile oak woodlands at the Fowey Ria and local valleys at Polridmouth, West and East Coombe, Polperro, Porthallow and Portloe. Consider opportunities for planting of local provenance native tree species such as sessile oak, hazel and alder to act as a future seed source for native woodland establishment where this is currently absent or sparse to assist appropriate subsequent natural regeneration.	LS-P1 LS-Ob1, LS-Ob2, LS-Ob3 NRLM-Ob1, NRLM-Ob3, NRLM-Ob5, NRLM-Ob12, NRLM-Ob13 CCBR-P1, CCBR-Ob1, CCBR-Ob2, CCBR-Ob3 HWB-Ob5 SCE-P4, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob2, SCE-Ob3, SCE-Ob4
L-SCE-P9	Seek a reduction in landscape and visual impacts of tourism including better integration of holiday sites, visitor infrastructure, car parks and signage. Have regard to the increase in scale, massing, cumulative development and respecting local character in external works, landscaping, site design and layout including at Polruan, along the coast, and around Polperro.	LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6, LS-Ob6 NRLM-O11 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob11 RSA-P1, RSA-P2 RSA-Ob4, RSA-Ob5 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-O1, SCE-O5 PD-P9



Policy	Detail	References to the main aims, policies & objectives
L-SCE-P10	<p>Require particular consideration of effects on landscape character of new areas of housing within the settings of Fowey and Polruan and elsewhere eroding their settings and recognising the harmful effects on the designated landscape of some areas of recent residential development. Seek to retain the special character of the legible historic development pattern of the Fowey and other settlements, recognising the harmful effects of contemporary development which interrupts and masks this pattern. Respect the particular landscape character and tranquillity of the area east of Polruan and ensure that development within this area and its coastal setting does not detract from this.</p>	<p>LS-P1, LS-P2, LS-P3, LS-P4, LS-P6 NRLM-Ob11 HC-Ob1, HC-Ob4, HC-Ob7, HC-Ob9, HC-Ob12 SCE-P2, SCE-P3, SCE-P5, SCE-P6, SCE-Ob1, SCE-Ob5 PD-P1, PD-P2, PD-P3, PD-P7, PD-P12</p>



Thank you for supporting and advocating for Cornwall AONB



Cornwall Wildlife Trust

