



Cornwall's nationally protected landscape



Cornwall
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

The Cornish Hedge



The Cornish Hedge

The earliest Cornish Hedges are understood to be over 4,000 years old, making them one of the oldest human-made structures still used for their original purpose. They are as old as the Egyptian pyramids. They are neither a hedgerow or a dry stone wall, they are uniquely different and only found in Cornwall.

The Cornish Hedge is abundant across the protected landscape and connects the disparate and diverse AONB sections with other areas of Cornwall. It is the thread that connects us – to landscape, heritage, culture and biodiversity. Their contribution to a sense of place, to natural beauty and local distinctiveness, character and heritage is as yet unquantified. However we instinctively know the Cornish Hedge is of great importance to people, place nature and climate.

Valuing its Natural Capital and ecosystem services links the past with the present, historic farming with the future of farming.

The contribution of a Cornish Hedge in our landscape is largely unrecognised, the benefits they deliver when managed in good condition could significantly contribute to our climate and ecosystem recovery. There is a lack of available scientific evidence to capture its contribution to specific services and thus accurately describe their economic value in our landscape.

Over the next management plan period Cornwall AONB will support the Cornish Hedge Group to develop knowledge and increase understanding of the role of the Cornish Hedge, helping to educate and promote the opportunities and benefits the Cornish Hedge brings to landowners, farmers and local communities.

The aspiration is to raise awareness of the importance of the Cornish Hedge locally and nationally, and aim to use the knowledge to help inform national decisions regarding future farming schemes and to be acknowledged as a fundamental part of the County's Nature Recovery Network.





The Value of a Cornish Hedge



- Windbreaks that offer crop protection and reduce soil loss
- Livestock shelter, shade and forage
- Livestock management
- Wood fuel / foraging
- Wildlife (Flora & Fauna) corridors
- Improved biodiversity
- Natural Pest control.
- Pollination services
- Channelling flood water and water absorption
- Carbon storage
- Improved air quality
- Improved water quality
- Historical and cultural importance
- Sense of place and regional styles
- Traditional skills
- Access and health and wellbeing
- Field boundaries: The backbone of our landscape





The contribution Cornish Hedges can make to Ecosystem Services

Role in Reducing Impacts of Climate Change



- Carbon storage
- Water absorption
- Improved air quality
- Soil retention
- Evaporation

Role in Nature Recovery

- Wildlife pathways connecting wildlife rich habitats
- Pollination services for crops
- Natural pest control
- Wildlife food and refuge
- Seed bank





Role in Farmland Management

- Shelter
- Shade
- Livestock management
- Forage
- Barrier to spray drift
- Natural Pest Control



Role in Natural Flood Management



- Channelling flood water
- Reducing soil loss
- Helping to reduce flood risk to properties
- Improving water quality
- Retention of flood water
- Improving resilience to climate change



Hedges give a sense of place: local distinctiveness tied to cultural heritage

1



2



1

Granite:
Bodmin Moor
regional style
Cornwall AONB
Section 12, with
Goose holes

2

Slate:
Jack and Jill or
Kersey Way style
Cornwall AONB:
Section 2. Ex.
Dannonchapel

3



4



3

**Granite Large
grounders:**
Bodmin Moor / West
Penwith regional
style Cornwall
AONB Section 12 + 7

4

Slate Pitched:
Cornwall AONB:
Section 9: Lamorran,
Roseland

Illustrations by James Innerdale

These illustrations are indicative of a local style and not intended to be technically accurate.





Thank you for supporting and advocating for Cornwall AONB



Cornwall Wildlife Trust

