

Cornwall Matters June 2023

CPRE Cornwall newsletter

Issue 5, June 2023

As we are drawn further into the summer of 2023, the beauty of the countryside in this very warm sunny spell opens up for us. Here in Cornwall of course we must brace ourselves for the visitors who will be descending upon us. A sustainable tourism industry that respects and supports rural life in Cornwall is to be welcomed and supported but we fear some recent planning applications have been for capital development projects that put far too much strain on infrastructure as well as destroying yet more precious greenfield land - see the planning updates below.

For those of us who love the countryside the idea of leaving a legacy to help protect it is very appealing – but often left on the back burner until it's too late. If you are considering something like a legacy, one of us from CPRE Cornwall would be very happy to talk to you (in strict confidence) – and/or to help with the paperwork. An excellent booklet, drawn up by our national office, sets out the options and how to get started. Please e-mail admin@cprecornwall.org or phone 01872-480127 to order a copy. We can send it by e-mail or by post.

We'd love to be able to support members' events more widely. However, there are two problems – a shortage of money for publicity materials and a shortage of volunteers to cover events like local agricultural shows or festivals where we would want to make a stand. We can't canvass for new members or reach out to tell people what we do and how important it is to protect rural Cornwall, its environment, and its biodiversity, without help from volunteers. The members of the committee do what they can, but it is limited. So please, if you could possibly spare some time to volunteer for us, do get in touch. And of course, if you can recruit new members from among your own family, friends, and contacts, that would be a huge help.

♥ And a big THANK YOU for your support – we very much appreciate the ongoing commitment of our members as we seek to protect rural Cornwall and support sustainable development to meet local needs.

Natural England and the Penwith Moors

Stephen Horscroft



CPRE Cornwall has now received a formal response from Natural England following submission of our 'objection' to the SSSI designation on the Penwith moors.

It is important to note that the consultation only allowed the choice of 'support' or 'objection' and not support with caveats. This would have been our preferred approach as we are concerned about the lack of joined-up governance on this matter – made plain by the social and economic anxiety being expressed by the farming community in the area.

Indeed, Natural England's response recognises that CPRE Cornwall 'welcomes the notification' but they say that socio-economic factors are not matters of 'material consideration'. This should surely be a concern of DEFRA as part of their post-Brexit remit to facilitate a joined-up thinking approach. The issue remains as to whether Natural England is best placed (on its own) to support farmers and landowners with the transition to SSSI status.

One area where Natural England 'disagreed' with CPRE Cornwall's representation was that we said visitors and people from outside of the area had been supporting the designation without understanding the economic and social implications. Furthermore, NE claimed that respondents in Penwith and Cornwall

more widely responded positively to the suggestion.

However, they have agreed to our representation (with others) that the Board meeting to consider the designation should be at an accessible venue in West Cornwall rather than 2 hours away in Plymouth. They have picked the St. Ives Harbour Hotel on June 28th. Secondly, they are suggesting that farming practice consents could be for 5 or 10 years, rather than the costly prospect of farmers having to complete paperwork every time they wanted to (say) plough or store something on their land. This was an issue that we had raised.

It is likely that we will wish to respond verbally and succinctly to their letter response on June 28th. A rounded approach to sustainability needs to take into account economic, environmental, and social considerations but the worry is that only 'environmental' is being considered by NE. They need to ensure a rounded approach and support for farmers in any implementation of policy; looking at issues such as productivity, food affordability/security, the wellbeing of the farming community, and the importance of the Moors as a Cornish and UK asset.

St Ives Bay – Consultation on experimental CO2 reduction scheme



The Canadian company Planetary Technologies has come up with a proposal for using the ocean to capture and reduce carbon dioxide. If successful, the method could generate tradeable carbon reduction credits for the company. Planetary's proposal is to run a live trial of their scheme in the shallow but turbulent waters of St Ives Bay by sending gallons of magnesium hydroxide out through South West Water's wastewater outlet at Godrevy.

The magnesium hydroxide (apparently rather like Milk of Magnesia) produces enhanced alkalinity in seawater and, it is claimed, would collect CO₂ and carry it down through the water. This small-scale trial will tell us whether a scheme like this would be viable and effective across a scale big enough to have a worthwhile impact on CO₂ levels.

The consultation has generated much debate – mostly on the grounds of environmental and marine life conservation concerns. There has been a strong groundswell of opinion against this proposal from local people and marine specialists. More information has been demanded and the company has been persuaded to carry out a full-scale Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Furthermore, local environmentalists and organisations including Surfers Against Sewage have pointed out that the substance they are using is a by-product of mining in China, sent to West Cornwall via America: not a good CO₂ reduction score.

CPRE Cornwall are watching closely as the consultation proceeds and looking forward to seeing the EIA in due course: we will keep you informed.

A new study from the US warns that Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement could have CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MARINE FOOD WEB.

Researchers in the US used computer modelling to simulate what would happen if vast quantities of alkaline minerals were released into the ocean (this is the future business plan of Planetary Technologies). This study warns it could have catastrophic consequences for the marine food web due to its impact on the marine biological pump (the whole mechanism of carbon storage in the ocean). As usual Planetary Technologies say don't worry, our experiment is safe, we're doing a small test, just trust us. But they are operating without regulation (apart from that designed for effluent) and making the rules up for themselves.

Farming, Wildlife, and Conservation - Updates

Elizabeth Knowles

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) are providing information and advice, including free workshops to help farmers and landowners navigate the grant applications required for the various schemes under the banner of Agricultural Transition. They also work with Pasture for Life, to restore ecosystems and implement positive change in our food and farming systems, and to demonstrate the benefits of 100% pure pasture-fed animals. Under the Future Farming Resilience banner, FWAG are also involved with Bristol University, looking at natural flood management schemes in the South West.

The People's Trust for Endangered Species are running a nationwide 'citizen science' survey on water voles, seeking to gather information to inform conservation plans to ensure this species survives and thrives. Please go to their website for details <https://ptes.org/uk>– anyone can participate, free training and Zoom talks will be provided.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust are making plans for a rewilding scheme for Helman Tor, their nature reserve in mid-Cornwall. Working with Ben Macdonald of Real Wild Estates, they are contemplating bringing beavers back to this hill country as well as some of the herbivores who would play a part in restoring a sustainable natural balance to this wild place. This spring the Trust completed their Kernow Glassa project. Callum Deveney writes: 'An important part of the project was to look beyond the boundaries of Trust land to see where we could work with others to link the habitats we are improving with more land to create bigger nature recovery networks.' Besides flood prevention and water quality work, '...many of the interventions carried out through the Kernow Glassa project provided multiple environmental benefits, with a great example of this being woodland management work including tree planting. Our woodland management work is helping to make wildlife more resilient to climate change while tree planting is helping capture carbon.'

Government Planning Policy – the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill



Photo: Tom Fyans, Director of Campaigns and Policy, CPRE

This bill is close to the end of its passage through Parliament. It includes the National Development Management policies that will give the government unprecedented powers over local development planning and severely curtail local democracy.

Tom Fyans of CPRE says:

'Local democracy will be trashed by these unjustified planning reforms....any Secretary of State will be able to override local plans to suit their political agenda.'

The bill is currently at the Committee Stage in the House of Lords – to be followed by the report stage and third reading before it goes through.

We urge members to write to their MP before it is too late.

PLANNING MATTERS

Gillyflower Farm, Lostwithiel

An application for a mixed tourism and industry development on land that had once been part of Lostwithiel golf course was submitted in January 2021 and refused on 20 April 2022 (PA 21/00038). In April 2023 a somewhat reduced scheme was submitted (PA 23/02502) and is yet to be decided. This current application is for a more substantial main building for holiday apartments and other amenities, in addition to the 19 drum-shaped holiday lodges as in the first application. Applications for temporary preparatory work on hedges, trees, access and car parking had gone through in the meantime and substantial amounts of hedge removal, tree cutting, access, and car parking works have already been done.

The application has attracted a great deal of comment, almost all of it negative. Points raised by many local people include the following: the site is a designated Area of Great Landscape Value; its hillside position above the town detracts from local views, notably to and from Restormel Castle; local lanes are small and already congested; the lights and sounds and traffic will be highly detrimental to the local community. One person sums up local feeling, writing that the development ...'respects neither the landscape nor the community [and] is outside Lostwithiel's development boundary.' Many mention that the proposal contravenes existing planning policy, does not address concerns about the environment, local wildlife or biodiversity, and will substantially damage the visual and historical amenity of the area.

CPRE Cornwall will be submitting a comment based, as always, on a careful and very thorough examination of the technical breaches, distortions or omissions in the case. The full application can be seen on Cornwall Council's Planning Portal.



Photo: Planning Committee - Cornwall Live

Recent Decisions

Wellington PL Carnon Downs

Outline permission for up to five dwellings

Appeal APP/3295228

DISMISSED

Land North Of Tredavoe Newlyn
Agricultural Access Track, Woodland Planting,
and 2-bay extension.

Planning Application PA22/05468

WITHDRAWN

Halsetown, St Ives
Hotel, 80 beds 63 villas
Appeal APP/3307064

DISMISSED

Perran Springs Touring Park Bodmin Road
Goonhavern
Installation of bases for the siting of static
caravans, maintenance building; children's play
equipment; the conversion of 2 dwellings and 1
extension.

Planning application PA22/03090

REFUSED

Objections lodged with Cornwall Council - Awaiting Decision

Headland Hotel Headland Road Newquay
Installation of photovoltaic panels & LBC
Planning applications PA22/11258, PA22/11259

Trewidden Road St Ives
Erection of a Premier Inn hotel
Planning application PA22/11311

Higher Lane, Mawgan, Helston
Development for up to 20 houses
Planning application PA22/07887

Prow Park Business Village, Newquay
Change of use of land for parking and containers
Planning application PA22/05334

Carbis Beach Apartments, Carbis Bay
Six new Aparthotel apartments with facilities
Planning application PA22/04841

Barn Hill, Cadgwith, Ruan Minor, Helston
Construction of a detached dwelling
Planning application PA21/12133

Trefresa Farm Rock Wadebridge
Hotel, restaurant, cinema, spa, 9 huts, 13 lodges
Planning application PA20/10041

East of Wellington Place, Carnon Downs
5 dwellings and site access
Appeal reference APP/3295228

Leans Field, Trevarrian, Newquay
Change of use of land for Drive-in Cinema
Appeal reference APP/3295146

Halgavor Moor
Residential development of up to 540 dwellings.
Planning application PA20/10618
Paused by Natural England 05/22

