

Cornwall Matters December 2022

CPRE Cornwall newsletter
Issue 2, December 2022

This is the second issue of our new regular newsletter. We'd like to wish all our members

A Very Happy Christmas and all best wishes for the New Year

CPRE have been celebrating a 'big win' – the Prime Minister's reinstatement of the fracking ban, in his very first week in office. Congratulations to all who helped with the campaign. This issue includes our regular up-date on planning issues and an outline of our regular Wildlife and Countryside walks-and-talks, organised by Committee Member Rowena Castillo Nicholls for 2023: book your places with us by email: ilovecornwall8@yahoo.com

We are delighted to be able announce that our exciting and informative new website will be launched in January 2023. We hope you like it and we shall certainly be asking for your feedback when you can explore the site.

As always, we are making a big effort to get new members to join us – please spread the word among your friends, family and neighbours. If you would like a copy of this newsletter sent to anyone who is not a member yet, please just let us know.

The next issue will be in January 2023 and our 2023 AGM will be on Saturday 25 February 2023 at Woodland Valley Farm, Ladock followed by a speaker and a tour of the beaver project.

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



St Agnes Sewage Spill November 2022 - Photo credit Cornwall Live

Our Rivers: The Second Great Stink?

Anyone following the local media over the last few months will have been aware of the continuing problem of untreated sewage being discharged by our local water company, South West Water, into Cornish Rivers and onto Cornish beaches. Clearly, no-one contemplating a nice morning dip wants to be confronted by a foul smelling torrent of effluent making its way down the beach. Much local anger has followed.

In normal times, sewage and other toxic matter is pumped to a treatment works for purification before being released into rivers. However, problems arise when excess rainwater combines with the effluent to overwhelm the capacity of the treatment works to purify it, with the result that the so-called “waste water” has to be released via a Combined Storm Overflow into a water course and ultimately into the sea.

South West Water, along with other water companies, is permitted to discharge such “waste water”, on occasion. Unfortunately, such occasions are becoming routine: in 2021 there were 87 such incidents per 10,000km of sewer. For comparison, the average for all water companies was 32 such incidents. The onset of unpredictable and severe weather events resulting from climate change is likely to make the situation worse; one only has to recall the flooding of central Truro this summer after heavy rainfall fell onto hard ground baked during the previous prolonged heatwave.

South West Water’s record in failing to curb other types of pollution incidents is equally grim, showing no improvement from 2011 (147 such pollution incidents) to 2021 (151 pollution incidents). This performance, along with other failures, has led to South West Water being rated red, the worst possible rating.

At this point, it may be informative to give this situation some context; apologies then, for a brief history

lesson.

London in the mid-19th century may seem remote both in time and space, but the pollution of the River Thames at that time is worth a mention. For many centuries, residents had dumped their raw sewage directly into the River. Flush toilets had appeared and a rudimentary sewerage system was in place by the 19th century, but London's rapidly expanding population had simply overwhelmed this system. Even the flush toilets, where they had appeared, simply deposited human waste directly into the River.

To obtain drinking water, some residents simply dipped buckets into the same River; some others were supplied by one of a number of privately owned water companies. The Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company was an example. Unfortunately, this water was also taken directly from the River and supplied, untreated, to residents. The results, unsurprisingly, were frequent and devastating outbreaks of diseases such as cholera.

A mistaken belief prevailed that the cholera was spread by airborne bacteria in the widespread, noxious industrial smell in the poorer parts of London., and little was done to discover how the cholera was transmitted, apart from ostracising some of the industrial activity lining the River. The fetid and nauseating smell arising from the water could not be ignored, however, and became known as "The Great Stink". Many fanciful attempts were made to disguise the malodorous smell, such as tipping chloride of lime, chalk and carbolic acid into the River. Even the curtains of the Houses of Parliament were doused in the acid.

Eventually, an intrepid physician by the name of Dr Snow discovered the cause of the disease and the Government finally acted. It commissioned a civil engineer employed by the Metropolitan Board of Works, a Mr. Joseph Bazalgette, to design and build an ambitious new sewerage system for central London. The work started in 1859 and was completed in 1875. Much of the riverside frontage was demolished and the various London Embankments, familiar to any visitor to London today, were built to house the infrastructure installed underneath. One hundred and fifty miles of old pipes were replaced and 1000 miles of new pipes laid. Several pumping stations were built to pump the sewage downriver, two of these buildings, Crossness and Abbey Mills, being considered so architecturally significant that they are today protected by English Heritage. This system is still in use 150 years later, although the sewage is no longer released into the River.

Parliament initially allocated £2,500,000 *from public funds* for the project (an estimated £300,000,000 today). One estimate states that Mr. Bazalgette had spent £6,500,000 by the end of the scheme, but both the total spend and the over-spend are dwarfed by sums spent on modern-day infrastructure projects. (HS2 anyone?)

Back to Cornwall in the present. The Victorian sewerage systems in Cornwall are antiquated, leaky and barely able to cope with the increased infrastructure demands. Much is overdue for replacement. It is not suggested that Cornish consumers are being provided with anything other than clean and pure drinking water (although it has been subject to a hosepipe ban this year), but please read on.

Earlier this year, South West Water were challenged by Cornwall CPRE on the various failings mentioned at the beginning of this article. On the subject of pipe replacement, a spokesman for the Company

asserted that the cost would amount to “tens of billions of pounds...”. He continued that, “We have a rolling programme of pipe replacement and, although this is not on the scale to notably prevent leakage, it is affordable to our customers and is focused on pipes that fail more frequently. To put the investment into full pipe replacement of all aged pipes within a short space of time would significantly affect all of our customers’ bills.”

This seems to be saying that,” We acknowledge that you, the customers, are being presented with a sub-standard service. If you would like to see a significant improvement, you can put your hands a lot deeper into your pockets.”

South West Water is a publicly listed company, part of the Pennon Group. In 2021 Pennon had £3 billion which it intended to spend by financing further acquisitions or simply by returning capital to shareholders. It has acquired Bristol Water Holdings for £425,000,000. It has paid Susan Davey, its Chief Executive Officer a basic salary of £456,000, increased to £1,600,000 through bonuses and other payments. It is not clear how any bonus, let alone the stratospheric basic salary, relates to the performance of South West Water mentioned above.

There appears to be no record as to whether Mr Bazalgette was paid any bonus for his masterpiece of Victorian engineering, or whether Dr. Snow was given any public award for his research into cholera that undoubtedly saved many lives. Mr. Bazalgette was an employee of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

Perhaps the ethics of water utilities have changed in the intervening years.

As for our politicians, do bear in mind the delay and obfuscation in Parliament before anything meaningful was done about the first “Great Stink”. Then remember that a Bill to impose more stringent controls on the private water companies earlier this year was blocked by Government.

By contrast, resources provided to the Environment Agency have been reduced in recent years to the point where it can no longer effectively police the activities of the private water companies. Agency staff complain that cuts and operational decisions have rendered it “toothless”. Higher pollution fines have been imposed, but there seem to be no staff to apprehend wrongdoers.

Are our politicians again simply rinsing the curtains of the Houses of Parliament, and are we, the public, enduring the “Second Great Stink”?





Photo credit Mark Fairhurst

A woodlands project in Southwest England

With a grant from the Forestry Commission, the National Coppice Federation (NCFed) has initiated a project to locate, survey and map coppice woodlands in Southwest England (including Cornwall). The project will also promote the restoration and active management of coppice woodlands for a range of positive environmental and socio-economic benefits including biodiversity. Coppicing is a method of sustainable woodland management that produces renewable roundwood material for a wide and increasing range of uses.

NCFed will be looking for existing coppice woodlands in private ownership that are unmanaged or being actively managed; the call is out for help from everyone who can feed information into their survey preparation stage by identifying coppice woodland in their local area. This is an exceptionally good 'green' project and CPRE Cornwall are delighted to be among its wide range of consultees and supporters.

If any CPRE Cornwall members can help, please contact morecoppiceSW@ncfed.org.uk to tell them:

- name of the wood if known
- where the woodland is: map or OS six-figure grid reference
- approximate size (hectares)
- name and contact details of the owner if known

For more information, see the leaflet on their website: <https://ncfed.org.uk/news/>



Photo credit Stephen Horscroft. Moorswater Number 2 Kiln

MOOR TO SEA PROJECT

We have agonised over the name but found difficulties in coming up with anything better! Even though there are several companies and organisations around with the same name; it does 'exactly what it says on the tin'.

'Moor to Sea' was an idea put together by Looe Development Trust in 2019 who developed a successful bid to several funding bodies including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Cornwall Heritage Trust, the Cornwall World Heritage Site Team and the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership.

The idea is to create a lasting community partnership that can focus on the care and interpretation of the

beautiful Looe Valley which stretches between the town of its name and Liskeard; working with all town and parish councils in the area to demonstrate how the industrial history of the Valley has shaped the environment and encouraging greater understanding of all of this across the communities within and around it.

Although initially defeated by Covid, we got the project up and running again this year and secured additional support from the Community Rail Partnership (via Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership), Cornwall Council and Looe and Liskeard Town Councils. The nature of the wide partnership that we now have is testament to the importance that organisations have placed on the project to support people to discover the sensitive environment and history on the doorstep.

The Valley is surrounded by AONB on either side and Bodmin Moor to the north. It would be great, as a legacy, to extend these sensitive designations into it. As Project Manager I have discovered concern about too much footfall happening because of the project in places like Kilminorth Woods; yet the curious thing is that it has nowhere near as much footfall as (say) the over popular Tehidy in west Cornwall.

Another legacy is that the project is working with the wide partnership of Town and Parish Councils in the wider area to identify strategic and local footpaths that may be blocked or under used and discover opportunities for signage and interpretation.

It has – perhaps unsurprisingly – taken a while to get the project up and running with strand leads to develop and deliver it. We are really fortunate now to have strand leaders who are skilled and enthusiastic in their field, and we are finding natural connections between strands.

These include Petra Stephenson and India Jolly from the respective town museums who are looking to engage people with the collections and story of place. Most significant amongst the projects here is the appointment of Dr Jo Buchanan to develop an oral history project; aimed not only on collecting the recollections and thoughts of people across the area, but also archiving and enabling these to be accessed for future use while creating capacity to carry on with the process in the future.

Talking, reminiscing and the stories behind objects are great ways to support mental health and skills such as communication and research will hopefully assist people who take part in their future lives.

The second strand, 'Environmental Explorers' is led by Loveday Jenkin. It would probably be easier to list the things that Loveday is not involved in in Cornwall! But the purpose of the strand is to engage people in the landscape and character of the Looe Valley through walks, talks and practical activities. Loveday is new to the project and working on some exciting event opportunities as I write.

The third area 'Moorswater' is lead by heritage expert Iain Rowe who has lived in the area man and boy. Behind the façade of the Moorswater Industrial Estate near Liskeard is a story of Cornwall's role in leading the industrial revolution and how connectivity between 'Moor to Sea' helped drive the economy, communities and landscape we now have 150 years after the opening of the Liskeard to Looe branch line. Encouraging people to explore the communities within and between Liskeard and Looe is a critical part of the project and to that end Iain has created a couple of interactive walks which we hope to formally launch in February 2023 along with supporting trail leaflets for both adults and children.

The walks can be viewed here: [Moorswater Trail - Google My Maps](#) and in the two months it has been

created has been viewed almost 700 times.

In addition , the area contains a number of important lime kilns which processed the material sourced from Bodmin Moor and transported via the canal to the former hamlet of Moorswater. One of these will be subject to a commissioned survey of its condition with a view to funding proposals which may be able to restore it to its former glory.

EVENTS FOR MEMBERS



**The countryside charity
Cornwall**

**2023 Events
Connect with Nature
Nature and Wildlife Walks**

Location: Camel Estuary
Date: Monday, 9 January 2023

Location: Trevoze Head
Date: Monday, 6 February 2023

Location: Penhale with Ladock Parish Wildlife Group in celebration of World Wildlife Day
Date: Monday, 6 March 2023
Walk Leader: Rob Nicholls and Rowena Castillo-Nicholls
Contact Details: ilovecornwall8@yahoo.com

Location: Wheal Coates, St Agnes with Ladock Parish Wildlife Group in celebration of Earth Day
Date: Monday, 3 April 2023
Walk Leader: Rob Nicholls and Rowena Castillo-Nicholls
Contact Details: ilovecornwall8@yahoo.com

Location: Nare Head, Roseland with Ladock Parish Wildlife Group in celebration of National Walking Month
Date: Monday, 1 May 2023
Walk Leader: Rob Nicholls and Rowena Castillo-Nicholls
Contact Details: ilovecornwall8@yahoo.com

Location: Breney Common with Ladock Parish Wildlife Group and Cornwall Butterfly and Moth Society in celebration of Butterfly Education and Awareness Day and World Environment Day
Date: Monday, 5 June 2023
Walk Leader: Rob Nicholls and Rowena Castillo-Nicholls
Contact Details: ilovecornwall8@yahoo.com

Location: Porthgwarra, West Penwith in celebration of National Meadows Day
Date: Monday, 3 July 2023

Location: Lizard Head
Date: Monday, 7 August 2023

Location: Godrevy
Date: Monday, 4 September 2023

Location: Looe
Date: Monday, 2 October 2023

Location: Rame Head
Date: Monday, 6 November 2023

Location: Bodmin Moor
Date: Monday, 4 December 2023

All events are free, but any donation is most welcome. Booking essential. To book your place, please email the walk leader.

Please check our website www.cprecornwall.org for more details on our events.

Follow us on Social Media:
Facebook: www.facebook.com/cprecornwall.org
Instagram: www.instagram.com/cprecornwall
Twitter: www.twitter.com/CPRECornwall

For 2023, a programme of events for members and their guests is in preparation. So far, a series of monthly wildlife walks-and-talks have been scheduled, organised by CPRE Cornwall Committee Member and wildlife expert Rowena Castillo-Nicholls.

All events are free but booking is essential. To book, or for details including start time, place to meet up, information about parking and any facilities or access issues, please contact ilovecornwall8@yahoo.com on Mondays:



Photo credit Rowena Castillo - Nicholls

An extremely rare American Painted Lady, *Vanessa Virginiensis*, was seen and photographed by Rowena Castillo - Nicholls at the tip of Nare Head on the Roseland Peninsula in Cornwall on 20th September 2022. The only other recorded sighting in Cornwall was in 1876.

This butterfly was first seen in the British Isles in August 1828 at Withybush, near Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire. Rowena and her husband Rob Nicholls were so delighted to have had a glimpse of this rare beauty.

Rame Head.



Photo credit Cornwall AONB

CPRE Cornwall submitted an objection in November to this latest attempt to build under Permitted Development rules and fortunately Rame Head is safe for now. The Rame Head Protection Group issued the following statement:

"A decision has now been made in the latest instalment of the Rame Head saga. The planning officer has determined that a barn cannot be built under Permitted Development rules as the land is not currently agricultural. This means full planning approval must be sought unless the decision is successfully appealed. This is the best outcome we could have hoped for at the present time. You can find the Planning Officer's decision notice under the document tab of PA22/09821 In our judgment, the decision is kinder to the applicant than is deserved. Even though an even larger barn lies unused and unrepaired within the curtilage of the farm yard, the planning officer accepted that it was 'reasonably necessary' to build a barn on the site, which is on the very edge of the farm itself, down a single track lane heavily used by others, close to residential buildings and a kilometre from the existing farm.

We must therefore expect further developments as the applicant seems determined to damage the AONB and the beauty of the area when he could easily avoid so doing. Thanks to those who posted a comment (more than 20; none of them in favour)."

The RPG Team

Planning

Below is a list of planning applications that CPRE Cornwall have been involved with this year and their current status.

| Reference | Location | Summary | Decision |
|------------|------------------|--|------------------------------|
| PA22/09821 | Rame Head | Prior approval application - agricultural building | Planning permission required |
| PA21/01480 | Poundstock, Bude | Crematorium, parking and access | Approved with conditions |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| PA21/11651 | Germoe Cross, Praa Sands | 24 dwellings. 12 affordable in AONB | Approved |
| PA22/06562 | The Chalet, Boat Cove Lane, Perranuthnoe | Demolition & replacement of existing chalet | Withdrawn |
| PA22/05411 | Angarrack Lane Connor Downs | Outline application for 40 units with open space | Approved |
| PA21/05791 | Walled Garden, Padstow | Change of use from residential to commercial | Approved with conditions |
| PA22/05151 | Little Lanherne Farm St Mawgan | Change of use and construction of home office, swimming pool, stables | Approved with conditions |
| PA22/06771 | Adjacent to Mount Hope, Carnon Down Meudon | Outline planning permission for residential development of up to 3 dwellings | Refused |
| PA21/11384 | Hotel, Maenporth | 10 villas swimming pool and restaurant in land adjacent to Meudon Hotel in AONB | Refused |
| PA22/06380 | Burthallan Lane, St Ives | Metal roof on main barn, one bedroom cottage roof and tractor shed roof | Refused |
| PA20/05166 | Allens Meadow, Probus | 17 dwellings, 2 office spaces, garden store | Withdrawn |
| PA21/03460 | Chywoone Hill, Newlyn | 29 affordable dwellings | Refused |
| PA21/00038 | Gillyflower Farm, Lostwithiel | Agronomy Centre, restaurant, market area cookery school, 20 holiday units parking | Refused |
| PA20/09716 | Halsetown, St Ives | 80 bed hotel 63 holiday villas a community hub, landscaping, access and 200 parking. | Refused |
| PA22/09472 | Priory Road, Bodmin | Reserved Matters application - 527 dwellings, community facility, orchard. | Work in progress |
| PA22/08178 | Clodgey Lane and Gays Hill, Helston, Cornwall | Reserved matters application 404 dwellings for access including the principal site access | Work in progress |
| PA22/07887 | Higher Lane Mawgan, Helston, | Outline application with some matters reserved for development 20 houses | No |
| PA22/01752 PRE APP | West Cornwall Golf Club, Church Lane, Lelant, St Ives | New clubhouse inc 30 bed hotel, spa & 50 apart hotel. Extend golf course | Work in progress |
| PA22/07670 | 13 Conker Road, St Erth Praze, Cornwall | 12 motorhome spaces, camping area, reception, 4 WC/shower blocks. | No |
| PA22/05179 | Trewiston Farm , St Minver, | Extension to existing caravan site and 36 plots for static caravans and installation. | No |
| PA22/05334 | Prow Park Business Village, Newquay | Retrospective change of use of land for parking, storage and storage containers | No |
| PA22/05468 | Land North Of Tredavoe, Newlyn, Penhale Camp, | Agricultural access track, woodland planting, and 2 bay extension to existing building. | No |
| PA22/02896 | Camp Road, Holywell Bay, | Holiday park comprising short stay holiday accommodation units and leisure facilities | No |
| PA22/04841 | 601 Carbis Beach Apts, Carbis Bay | Six new Aparthotel apartments with associated facilities | No |
| PA22/03090 | Perran Springs Park, Goonhavern | Static caravan sites, maintenance building; children's play, conversion of 2 dwellings | No |
| PA22/02794 | Penhale Camp, Holywell Bay | 9 new build housing units and refurbishment of 3 existing cottages | No |
| PA22/02389 | Gorran Churchtown | 17 dwellings, 09 affordable, road access, parking, open space | No |
| PA21/12480 | South of The Queens Arms Inn, Breage | Erection of 2 x detached dwellings and creation of new vehicular accesses | No |
| PA21/12133 | Maen Veor, Barn Hill, Cadgwith | Construction of a detached local needs dwelling | No |
| PA21/07481 | Hospital Cross, Helston | Erection of 4 retail/food outlets, access, car parking, servicing yard, landscaping | No |
| PA21/06771 | Land North West Of Polscoe, Fowey | Erection of community convenience retail store, access, parking and landscaping | No |
| PA20/10041 | Trefresa Farm, Rock, Wadebridge | Hotel, restaurant, outdoor cinema, spa, 9 woodland huts, 13 lodges, micro distillery. | No |
| PA20/10618 | Halgavor Moor | Outline planning residential development of up to 540 dwellings | Halted by Natural England. |

APPEALS

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| APP/3298232 | Men's Institute, Breage | Appeal against refusal | No |
| APP/3292785 | Queen's Arms Breage | Appeal against refusal | Dismissed |
| APP/3284321 | Rame Head | Appeal against refusal | Dismissed |
| APP3273258 | Cherry Mason's Fruit Farm, Breage | Appeal against Enforcement Notice | Dismissed |
| APP/3284828 | Carbis Bay Hotel | Appeal against Enforcement Notice | Dismissed |