



The countryside charity
Cornwall

Cornwall **Matters** December 2024

CPRE Cornwall newsletter

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In this, the last issue for 2024 important new research on the nuts and bolts of the problem of homes for local people is examined in the context of the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and Cornwall Council's actual and possible responses to it. John Killick sets out the essential points of a complex set of factors that add up to our serious lack of accessible affordable housing – to buy or to rent – and the collateral problems of a low-income economy.

Stephen Horscroft writes of a day on the farm when some of the issues facing farmers and growers in Cornwall were highlighted. In fact, this piece was written before the recent dramatic events in the wake of the government's ill-informed proposal to apply inheritance tax to family farms. We wait and hope for a re-think and will certainly be covering this issue next year.

We also have a very interesting piece from Laura Gude of **Innovative Farmers**, an offshoot of the Soil Association. She sets out some of the work being done on farms here in Cornwall, to sustain and improve farming practices 'from the ground up' – all important strategies in the fight to mitigate climate change.

* * *

***Our Patron, Merlin Hanbury Tenison and all of us
on the CPRE Cornwall committee would like to wish you a very
Happy Christmas and all the best for 2024***



♥ 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.



Leyonne Farm, Fowey Valley

A Farming Day

Stephen Horscroft

Nestled in the Fowey Valley, a swathe of the 'Cornwall National Landscape' (previously known as the AONB) is Leyonne Farm, owned and run by the Whell family. Bridget Whell opened their farm up on the 11th September on this, the ninth year of '**back British farming day**'. And what backing it needs.

Covid, Brexit and the cost of living crisis is felt keenly in the farming community. Martin Whell put it interestingly well when he said that although those sympathetic to the cause of farming and the opportunity to eat Cornish and British produce was of course welcome, a farmer needs to earn a living and pay the bills just like anyone else. They need to make a profit, think about their pension and their succession strategy (although the Whell's daughters have joined them on the farm with some great ideas).

Thinking of profit and loss not least is the cost of compliance. Bridget (in her capacity as NFU Cornwall President) made the point that slurry pits are generally not being upgraded amongst farmers because of the financial costs of doing so. Planning applications can be a costly business – with around £10,000 needed to hire a range of experts to get the required reports written for the planners – and apart from the money, farmers do not always have time to be project managers.

In west Cornwall, the need to upgrade slurry pits has a wider imperative. The impact of the new SSSI status on farming the moors between St. Ives and St. Just mean that there is an individual impact and cost on farming practices there – but no defined funds and facilitation available to help make the switch. One farmer in the area has already left the industry. Slurry pits represent an opportunity to capture the methane but planning costs and of course, a lack of specific finance, prevent some farmers from addressing something that would be beneficial for the environment and farming businesses.

Diversification is important for farmers. Around a decade ago Leyonne farm had an application for 22kwh wind turbines turned down but DEFRA and the Protected Landscapes* have developed a fund (available until March 2025) called 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' (FIPL) which the farm has now successfully applied for.

This scheme will lead to increased tree canopy cover, greater diversity and enhanced capacity for carbon sequestration. It will result in additional pasture with trees on the farm and a different way of growing some hay for foraging animals, as well as better integrating

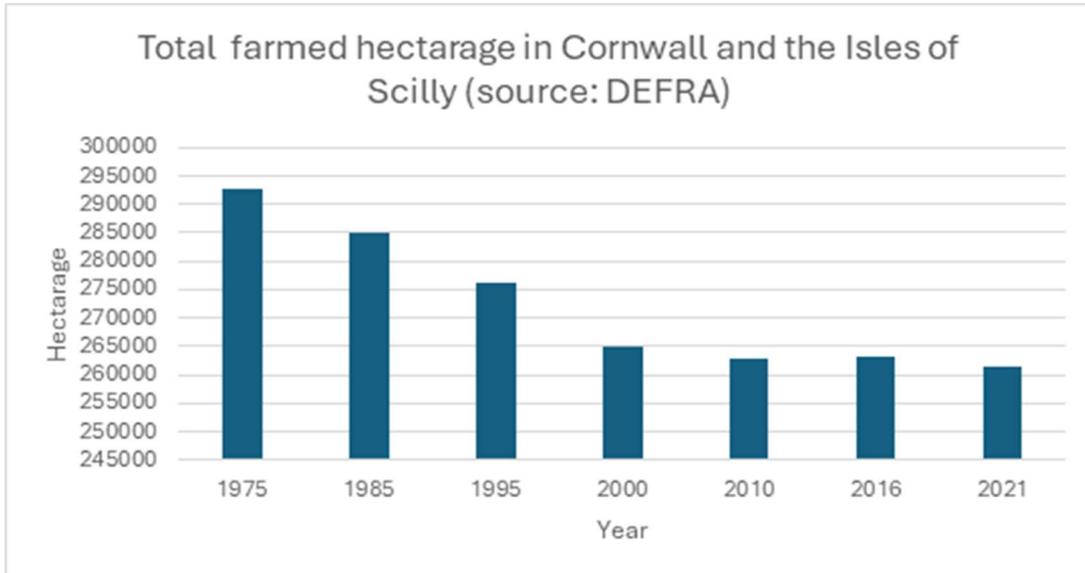
the farm into the beautiful landscape of the Fowey valley. Nonetheless, there are some issues. No information on tree management is provided with the grant but Bridget did tell us about an organisation that she discovered called 'Plant One' where volunteers in Cornwall will plant and maintain trees for businesses. However, tree guards (necessary to keep farm and wild animals away from the young trees) were an additional cost.

More generally, there appears to be a host of funds running out in March 2025 (including the major Shared Prosperity Fund used for all sorts of projects across Cornwall) and there is unlikely to be a flavour of what will replace them before the new government's budget in October. The risk of a gap in the funding or of new rules and regulations to try and understand may be a concern.

The environment is, of course, a big issue. Another massive one is 'food'. In the southwest peninsula (there are no official figures available for Cornwall) 12% of household income is spent on food every week. The issue of course (for the NHS and the environment) is what food people are consuming and what they can afford to consume. Restaurants and cafes (like farming) are popular businesses in Cornwall. In fact, the whole food and drink supply chain is worth over £2.5b to the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly region and employs (depending on the source for figures) between 40,000 and 60,000 people, or around one quarter of the entire Cornish workforce.

For Cornwall, higher price tends to be equated with quality and the Cornish brand. While that is great at one level it does not present affordability for people struggling with some of the lowest incomes in the country. Food security and how it is achieved is a local and national government issue. The conundrum can be put like this: cheaper milk can be a loss leader for a supermarket, tempting people who pick up a pint to make other impulse purchases. Cheaper milk as a staple can also be great for the hard pressed consumer, but not for the farmer who has his overheads to pay.

The good news though is that the historic loss of farm land and those employed in farming appears to have been arrested in Cornwall, although one can argue whether it can get any lower?



Well, it can if green fields become part of the focus for a potential 90,000 new homes in Cornwall by 2050. We certainly need our productive land to feed an already growing population, work Cornwall's food and drink economy and reputation and maintain the primary production sector.

Anyway, I want to thank the Whells and the NFU for a great day and their hospitality on the farm. It was very educational and very useful.

* see *Protected Landscapes*

<https://pltof-apportionment-targets-1-7-8.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Cornwall.pdf>



***Editor's note:** Since this was written the big news issue of the Government's proposed inheritance tax on farmland has brought all the other issues that farmers and growers have been battling with to the fore. Farmers have made their voices heard and it is to be hoped that a better outcome on tax and on new funding streams will emerge. There will be more on this in a future issue.*

Farmers trials in Cornwall

Laura Gude

Introduction

The Cornish landscape has been fundamentally shaped by farming over centuries. Over 70% of Cornwall's land is farmed, and all farming systems are represented in the county. It's tempting to

think that the ancient landscape means that practices have changed little too but Cornish farmers are innovators, especially in response to current, unprecedented pressures. The county is crammed with interesting trials, as farmers carry out innovative research, experiment with new practices, and share ideas and experiences to help their communities and farm more sustainably. As network coordinator for the **Innovative Farmers** programme (**IF**), I oversee a whole range of 'field labs' (on-farm trials) across the UK but I have a particular attachment to the Cornish field labs. This is partly because of proximity (I live in Devon; don't hold it against me!) but also because of both the range of topics and the passion and drive I have encountered amongst the farmers I work with. Whether experimenting with fermented seaweed for soil health like David Oates at Rosuick Farm on the Lizard, or looking for more ecologically sound ways to grow maize, like Malcolm and Catherine Barrett at Tregooden farm near Bodmin, I have met with commitment and passion, alongside a healthy dose of practicality and scientific rigour.

Enabling farmer innovation

IF is managed by the Soil Association, an organic farming charity, but we work with all types of farmers from across the UK in their efforts to adopt more regenerative farming practices. Farmers are natural innovators, but there can be barriers to trialling new practices. These include cost, risking land to a practice or crop which may not work, lack of in-depth knowledge in the relevant field, or insufficient scientific training or support to design a useful trial.

IF can provide a small research grant to help cover costs such as seeds, sampling and research time. This grant does not go far enough to mitigate the risk for farmers if the trial fails, but by matching farmers with a researcher to guide them through the trial design process, we can ensure they have help to design a trial with minimal risk but maximum potential. We can match triallers with other farmers and growers interested in the same topic, both to improve the range of results and to provide support to each other. **IF** also has a dedicated communications team to help with knowledge exchange, since all the trial results are open-source so that others can benefit from the learnings.

Testing sisal string for baling

Our most south-westerly trial is on the Lizard. Farmer Stuart Oates was shocked to see how the plastic netting around his hay bales disintegrated when the bales were cut open, showering microplastics into the soil and the hay itself. Stuart remembered his father using sisal on the farm as bailing twine for square bales and decided to look into the potential of this old product for modern round bales. Sisal is a plant fibre which grows in dry areas of South America and Africa which are unsuitable for other crops. As the global north has moved towards plastic alternatives, the industry has all but collapsed.

Stuart loves the idea that by bringing back sisal he's recreating a circular, global economy among farmers, cutting out the fossil fuel industry. His ultimate goal is to move towards fossil free farming. The field lab has 8 triallers, and Stuart alone has made over 12,000 bales this year. Half will be bound with plastic netting, and half with sisal. The group will compare their resilience when moved and stored, and forage quality at the beginning and end of the winter, to see whether the sisal impacts how long the hay storage.



Making hay bales with sisal at Rosuick Farm, The Lizard. Credit Stuart Oates

Cornish farmers working towards net zero

Another reason I have been working so closely with Cornish farmers is through our role in the **Farm Net Zero** project (**FNZ**): a fantastic initiative funded by the National Lottery, in which the Cornish farming community are showing the contribution agriculture can make to achieving net zero. Through this project we have launched five field labs throughout the county. In the compost field lab triallers showed that composting can kill pernicious weeds and diseased leaf matter (for full results have a look at the website). They have also been trialling the impact of different compost treatments on bindweed burden.

Other **FNZ -IF** trials in Cornwall include trialling soil aeration and calcium application to naturally

reduce dock levels in pasture without herbicide. Docks thrive in compacted soil, so farmers are trialling different methods of reducing compaction to cut dock numbers without herbicide. We're also working with Plymouth University to analyse the effects of different maize establishment methods to reduce soil runoff and promote soil health. Maize is often seen as an environmentally damaging crop, due in part to its late harvest and soil erosion issues. But Cornish farmers are trialling reduced tillage and cover crops to make growing maize more sustainable.

Carbon Farmer of the Year



Cows grazing Andrew Brewers herbal leys.

It was through **FNZ** that I met Andrew Brewer, who has just won the award for Carbon Farmer of the Year. Based near Fraddon, Andrew manages 500 Jersey cross dairy cows across his 400-hectare farm and he wanted to run a trial on herbal leys and their impact on milk production. Andrew is committed to pasture-based dairy farming, to minimise the use of concentrate feeds, and to enhance soil health, animal health and biodiversity.

Rather than simply rely on ryegrass and clover fields, which is most usual in the dairy industry, Andrew has planted more diverse swards. Different species have different benefits for soil and animal health and biodiversity, and Andrew's fields include a range of grass and legume species,

as well as herbs like chicory and yarrow. But Andrew needed to know whether this new sward was affecting milk yield and quality: at the end of the day farming is a business and changes to farming practice have to work within that business context. So we're working with researchers from Bristol University, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and the Eden project to test what impact herbal leys are having on milk yield and constituents.

I love my job, because I get to work with some of the best farmers in the county, who are working to adapt their farming systems in response to unprecedented external pressures. For more information on any of our trials, see the website: <http://www.innovativefarmers.co.uk>

The National Planning Policy Framework and Cornwall: a counterproductive effort.

John Killick

1: Introduction

In general terms, we support the government's new housebuilding aims but in detail we doubt that they will work for Cornwall. This requires explanation. Since 1961 the Cornwall Council (CC) and successive national governments have struggled to foster a modern economy to overcome our historical legacy and peripheral geography. However, despite much success, critical parts of their effort are now proving counterproductive – and increasingly harming our main capital asset – our vital natural environment.

To be more precise, when CC debated its new Local Plan in 2015 their consultants reported that '...although Cornwall had very high overall growth in the early 2000's, caused by the cumulative impact of rising public sector spend, a retail boom and the housing market with its own related boom, together with the first tranches of European investment funding' ..., it had still not achieved parity with the rest of England in many other respects. There was still '...low pay, low level of skills & qualifications, part time work, seasonality, peripherality, and a lack of major sized companies.'(see note 1)

Now eight years on, despite a great deal of development, and many improvements, we still have a housing crisis which if anything is getting worse. Hence one Cornish MP's question

- in effect - in a recent Commons debate was - If Cornwall's housing stock has grown times three since 1961 – far faster than normal in the rest of the country – then why do we still have a housing crisis? - would building more and more houses actually help? - were there better solutions? (2) The government housing minister listened politely but there was no real reply at that point. However, CC's recent response to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) proposal reveals strong reservations. This is briefly discussed in our final section and will be addressed in a future Newsletter.

2: Comparison with Cumbria and the Lake District

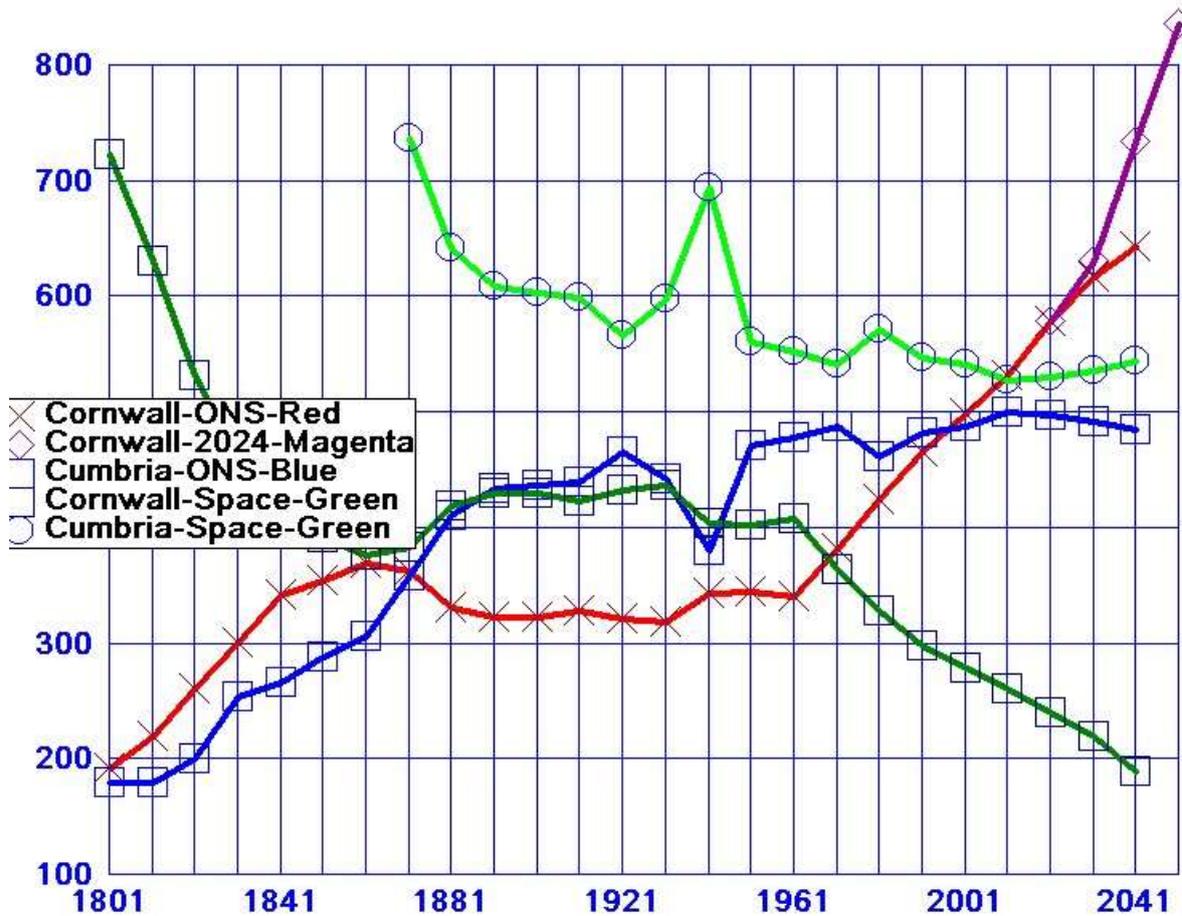
A comparison between Cornwall and Cumbria - our chief rival in England for famous landscapes and popular holiday destinations - provides more detail. See **Chart A:**

Both counties began industrialisation between 1750 and 1850 with rapidly rising populations, but Cornwall's progress was aborted in the mid-19th century after tin and copper were found in America, Australia and elsewhere, and thousands of miners emigrated. See on Chart A: 'Cornwall– ONS-Red' in light red. However, in Cumbria rapid population growth continued until about 1921 and then stalled, and has never really recovered - see 'Cumbria-ONS' in Blue.

In detail, the Cornwall Local Plan as created in 2016 was aimed for a population of 650,000 by 2050 but the Labour government's new plan has raised this to about 850,000. See on Chart A: 'Cornwall-2024-Magenta' – an extension of the light red line. This could eventually happen, supposing prosperous times and generally full employment - and if cultivated by sufficient outside funds - since the demand for houses from outside the county currently appears infinite.

Meanwhile, continued growth threatens our natural capital – the Cornish environment. On Chart A the dark green 'Cornwall-Space-Green' plus square and the light green Cumbrian equivalent measure increasing congestion as each economy develops, by calculating the space available per person. What is not included in this simple congestion measure is the smaller household sizes of modern families – implying far more household spaces for the same population and the greater impedimenta – cars etc – that modern households require.

CHART A: Cornwall/Cumbria Population & congestion under current and proposed NPPF plans



Source: Office of National Statistics, Census records.

his is important because the characteristic comparative advantages of both Cornwall and Cumbria rely on space (see our October Newsletter). What is obvious is that Cumbria - largely by chance – seems to have become locked into a slow rate of growth and is preserving its natural beauty, its attraction to tourists and retirees. Cornwall, however, seems to have become locked into a high rate of growth – we would argue far too high for its own good, subsidised by and to the detriment of, its natural environment.

This is likely to have happened initially because of the post WW2 tourist boom, when people could not easily go overseas, coinciding with strong local and national government support for growth. From the 1980s onwards demand for second and retirement homes supplemented tourist demand. Strong regional and national interests became committed to development and buoyant demand for construction and services jobs drew in labour – but at low wage rates. (3)

Then between 2011-16, the government justified an expansive new Local Plan based on

these existing trends, and the process continued. Now a substantial proportion of the growing local population, in competition with new arrivals, second-home owners and tourists, finds it hard to find a home and the new Labour government has responded with an even higher NPPF target. Meanwhile, in Cumbria, slower initial development led to lower subsequent demand and a less ambitious NPPF requirement. (4)

We think the NPPF should attempt to break this circle and aim for a more calculated expansion in both counties. Under the framework as currently set out Cornwall's required shift from 2,707 to 4,450 extra houses annually is far too much for our environment and is unlikely to solve the housing crisis. Cumbria's modest current expansion of 244 houses per year was based on their prior slow trend, and their new NPPF required shift to 1217 houses per year may be tolerable.

3: The housing crisis and internal migration

Our argument is that this increased development has, paradoxically, led to Cornwall's present housing crisis despite the extra homes that have been built and will continue to do so in future. As reported in our October Newsletter, too many of the new houses are being constructed by developers in the most attractive countryside available for affluent incomers from up-country: that is, **in the wrong places, at the wrong prices for the wrong people.**

Accordingly, new legislation doubling rates on second homes has now been passed and increasing control of holiday lets seems likely. A policy like the 20% maximum allowed for non-resident homes in defined local areas (as in Switzerland) could help. However, there are obvious limits to how far simply re-arranging the use of some housing stock could go. Most second homes are too expensive for affordable housing and many landlords rely on rented accommodation for a living.

Chart B below shows incomers and outgoers by age between 2016 and 2020, when about 120,000 entered and 92,000 left the county, out of a population of 571,000. At the younger end in-migrants predominated, as up-country parents brought in their children. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, more left Cornwall than arrived as they entered higher education or sought better careers up country. Above 50, older incomers predominated – retiring or preparing to retire in Cornwall.

Chart B: Internal migration into and out of Cornwall

Outgoing on top, incoming below, totals for 2016- 2020



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Age Profile of Internal Migrants into Cornwall How old are those coming into Cornwall

119,702

No. Migrants to Cornwall with selected Characteristics

100.0%

% of Migrants into Cornwall with selected Characteristics

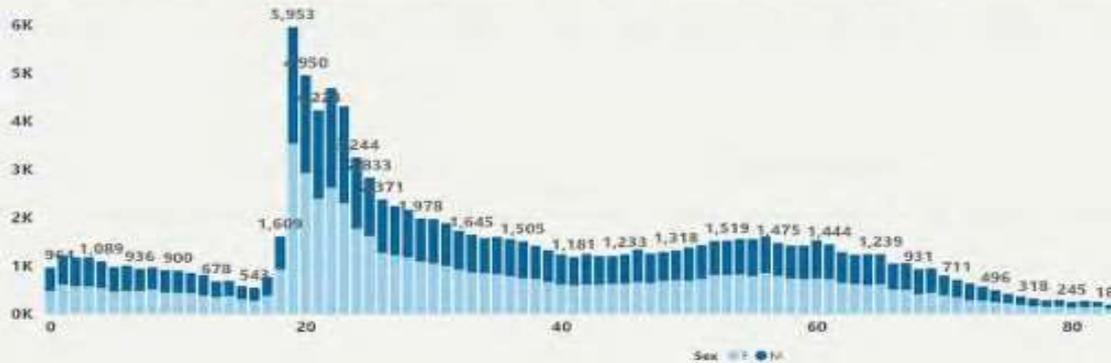
16,109K

No. Migrants to areas Outside Cornwall (Selected Age/Sex/Yr Only)

100.0%

% of Migrants to areas Outside Cornwall (Selected Age/Sex/Yr Only)

USER SELECTIONS: Selected Age Range: 0-111, Sex: All, Year: 2016-2020, Migration



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Age Profile - Internal Migrants Leaving Cornwall How old are those leaving the county?

91,825

No. Migrants Leaving Cornwall with selected Characteristics

100.0%

% of Migrants Leaving Cornwall with selected Characteristics

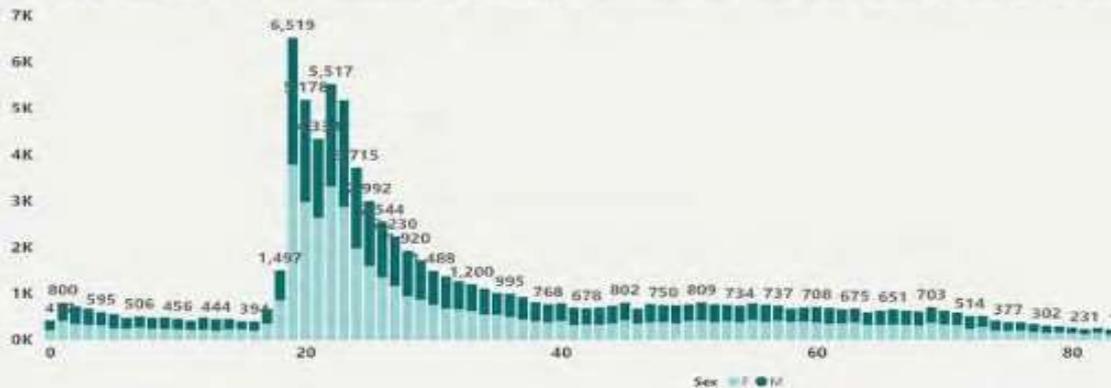
16,136K

No. Migrants Leaving their Area Excluding Cornwall (Selected Age/Sex/Yr Only)

100.0%

% of Migrants Leaving their Area Excluding Cornwall (Selected Age/Sex/Yr Only)

USER SELECTIONS: Selected Age Range: 0-111, Sex: All, Year: 2016-2020, Migration



Source: Cornwall Annual Monitoring Report, 2022

Note: This chart has been heavily cropped to enlarge the smaller details.

As the net gain was 28,000 between 2016 and 2020 - or 5,500 per year - it is likely the provision of new houses at about 3000 per year was the main driver of the incoming middle-aged and older population. So building fewer new executive houses might reduce the in-flow. Meanwhile, the outflow is determined by the numbers choosing the

opportunities of a life and a career away from home - as most young people do these days – as against the potential attraction of the Cornish environment and family and social ties.

Chart C below shows ONS estimated population movements into and out of Cornwall with some other selected peripheral areas – Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Norfolk, and for comparison, two big city conurbations, Leeds and Bradford.

CHART C: ONS Population Projections

Annual average 2018-25 in 1,000s

2018	Pop'n	Births	Inwd	Otwd	Inwd	Otwd	Inwd-	Inwd-
2019	ONS	minus	from	to	from	to	minus	minus
.	Actual	Dths	Eng'd	Eng'd	Eng'd	Eng'd	Otwd	Otwd
.	No	No	No	No	%	%	No	%
Rows	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Cornwall	571	-1.1	22	17	3.9	2.9	5.6	1.0
Cumbria	498	-1.6	11	10	2.3	2.0	1.2	0.2
Nt-Yorks	620	-1.9	25	22	4.0	3.6	2.7	0.4
Norfolk	925	-2.0	29	24	3.1	2.6	5.1	0.5
Leeds	805	3.2	39	40	4.8	5.0	-1.2	-0.1
Bradford	542	2.5	15	18	2.8	3.2	-2.5	-0.5

Source: ONS Lower Subnational Projection, Table T56, 2018. (the next ONS Subnational estimates will be published in 2025.)

Columns A to H run through population levels, natural growth, inward and outward movements, with gross and net inward/outward movements. Column B shows the natural decline of the ageing resident population of Cornwall and the other peripheral areas compared to the buoyant natural growth in big cities like Leeds and Bradford. International immigration, not shown here, is also larger into these big cities while the age structure and ethnic composition is also different.

Naturally Leeds and Bradford, surrounded by other large conurbations, have much higher separate inward and outward migration rates than peripheral Cornwall - see Cols C to F. Less to be expected is the much higher NET migration rate into Cornwall - see Cols G and H. Overall it is not surprising, given the absolute numbers coming here and requiring so many extra places, that our local residents face such difficulties finding new homes.

4: Stubborn low income levels in Cornwall.

Low income levels here are exacerbated by the relatively easy availability of low skilled jobs in hospitality and food services, mostly for tourism but also supporting retirees. Job seekers from up-country are attracted into Cornwall's service industries and then trapped in low pay. The evidence for this in **Chart D** below shows the division of employment and gross value, GVA, added by industrial sectors from 2015-2030. These come from several studies of employment prospects in Cornwall commissioned by Cornwall Council for the Local Plan prepared in 2015-16.

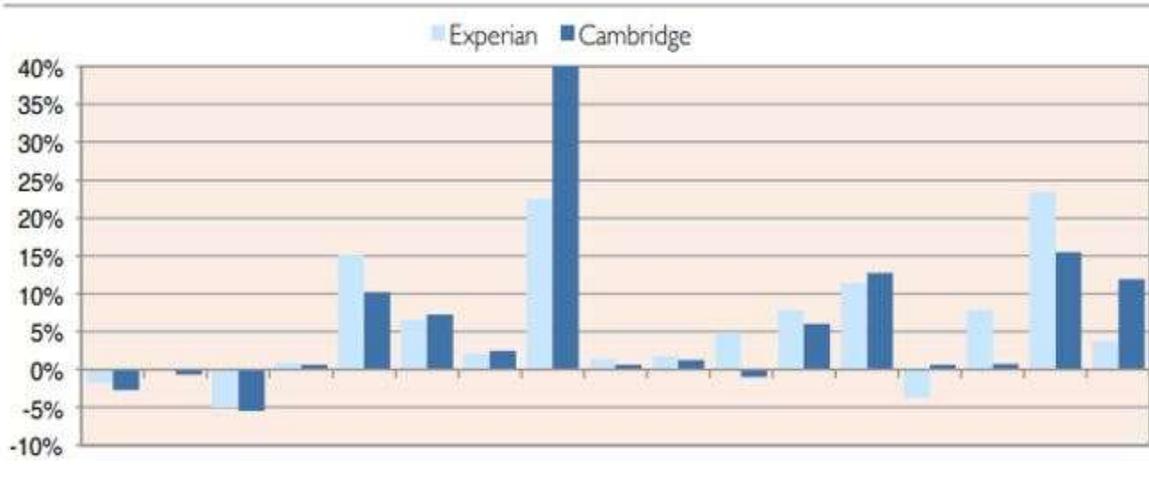
The top chart **A** shows two estimates, by Experian and Cambridge Econometrics, of the estimated percentage increase in employment by industrial sector between 2015-2030. According to Experian, after Accommodation & Food Services (a 40% addition), the fastest growing sectors are Education and Human Health & Social Work. The substantial differences between Experian and Cambridge suggest how difficult it is to assign narrow definitions to overlapping categories.

The lower chart **B**, estimating the percentage growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) by sector, 2015-2030 is more equally spread and the leaders are less obvious. It does, however, show that the front runners are Real Estate Activities, Wholesale & Retail and Construction. Not surprisingly therefore the building and home-making trades were leading sectors in the Cornish economy and strong incentives for high housing targets.

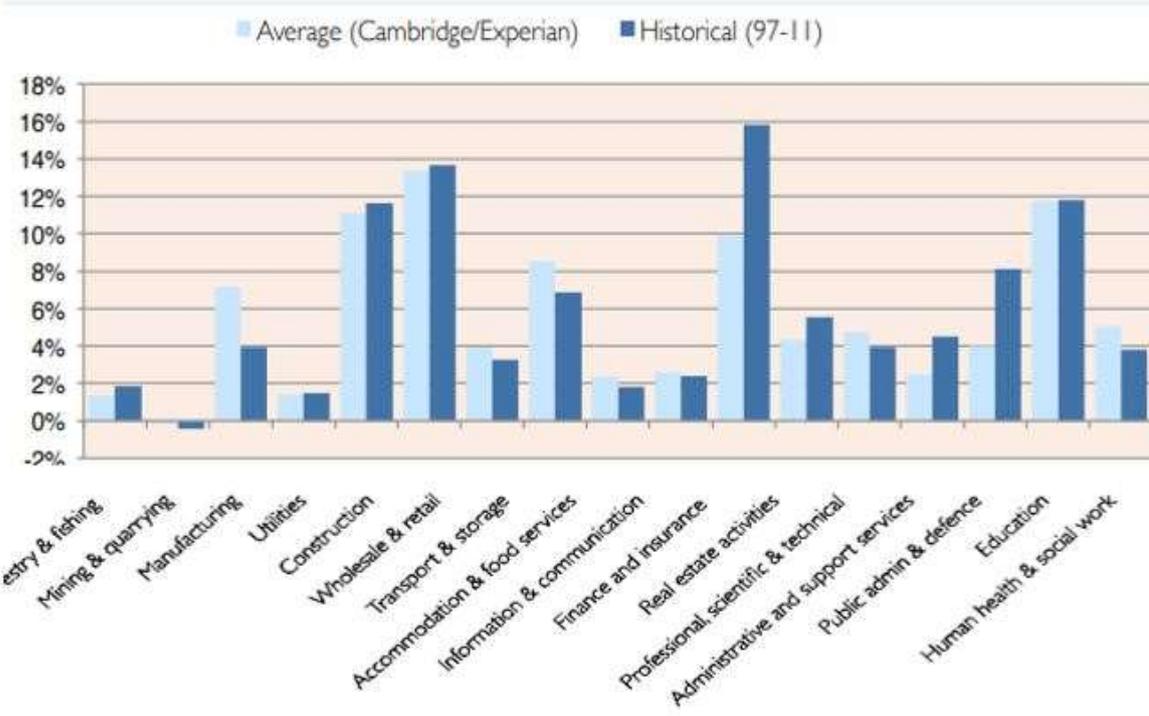
It is interesting that the charts show Accommodation & Food Services absorb far more of the projected increase of labour (23-40% of the total in chart **A**) than it generates GVA (6-8% in chart **B**), which implies low productivity and therefore very probably, low wages in that sector. Conversely, manufacturing GVA rises while manufacturing employment falls, suggesting much higher growth of productivity and probably wages. Over time fewer manufacturing workers are producing more manufactured goods: that is the sort of activity Cornwall needs but finds it hard to attract.

CHART D: Growth in employment and gross value added by each industrial sector.

A: CONTRIBUTION TO CORNWALL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH PROJECTED BY SECTOR, 2015-2025.



B: CONTRIBUTION TO CORNWALL GVA GROWTH PROJECTED BY SECTOR, AVERAGE 2015-2030, AND HISTORICAL, 1997-2011.



Source: 'Cornwall Employment Projections, supporting technical advice for the Local Plan', Ash Futures, 2015. Note: Ash Futures summarised reports by Cambridge Econometrics and Experian, shown as alternative results in the lower half of the table.

Given that the Ash Futures study also shows many Cornwall-educated young people have relatively high education levels, it is not surprising that so many wish to leave Cornwall to

go to college or make their lives elsewhere. This, together with the desire of the asset-rich retired (or near-retired) to settle here and some younger newcomers attracted by the Cornish natural environment and the availability of relatively low paid jobs, explains the very high levels of inward migration. These then produce the high affordability ratios, and our serious levels of homelessness.

5: Conclusions for policy

These considerations should be factored into decisions about total housebuilding in Cornwall in order to preserve our attractive Cornish environment as well as to improve relative productivity and incomes. Migration from the rest of England to Cornwall presumably opens up spaces up country for others to move into but this benefit should be weighed against the environmental damage being done to Cornwall.

Inward migrants may bring welcome resources of finance, experience, and talent to the county but their housing needs should mostly be met by natural turnover in the very significant open market housing stock already in existence and not by substantial new building. Just like tourists, they mostly come for our environment, but supposing the present trend of overdeveloping the Cornish countryside continues, would many of them - in a few years' time - still recognise large parts of Cornwall? Would they still want to come to a new, overdeveloped Cornwall at all?

For large parts of our open countryside outside the present National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) we advocate a modified 'National Park' status that would make the most of our natural advantages. Inside towns, we think accommodation for the local population might easily be increased by greater density and the imaginative use of redundant space above shops. And of course, it will be essential to deal with our current infrastructure problems – roads, cars, noise, sewage etc.

On national policy, we support the Chancellor's stated core beliefs that sustained economic growth is the only route to improving our national prosperity and we think growth should be concentrated in and around our great metropolitan, industrial, commercial and university cities where the new industries of the 21st century are most likely to develop. The recent budget revealed how tight resources for this growth are likely to be; we think there will be little available for much else.

It seems unlikely that the fundamental nature of Cornwall's economy will be changed by those new industries. We are already seeing a surge in planning applications for solar farms, of which Cornwall is currently becoming the leading provider (see our October

Newsletter) and these should not be allowed to imperil everything else. We think it is vital to protect our environment and concentrate on growing and improving our current specialisations and infrastructure. We should increase our productivity wherever possible, and protect our share of the present tourist and retiree market.

We should accept that many youngsters will choose to leave Cornwall to find jobs in areas where they can blossom: there is no point in subsidising low-quality housing to retain them here in low productivity occupations. At the same time, we must make sure that hard working local people are able to find decent productive jobs and good, affordable accommodation in sustainable housing to rent or buy.

A glimmer of hope comes, as while Cornwall's Chief Planner's own response to the NPPF does not venture into these demographic and migration calculations, he does strongly criticise the government's proposed 'Standard Method' of assessing housing demand. He also convincingly asserts that it will be very difficult for CC to meet the new set targets because it is unlikely developers will build out - at least in the short run - all the houses for which CC has given consents. In our view it is also unlikely government will supply funds to make up the deficit for social housing.

Footnotes:

(1): Cornwall Employment Projections, Supporting Technical advice for the Local Plan, Ash Futures, 2015.

(2) Andrew George, for St Ives. Hansard Sept 9th, 2024.

(3) Bernard Deacon, Andrew George and Ronald Perry, Cornwall at the Crossroads: Living Community or Leisure Zone? (1988)

(4) Bernard Deacon, The Land's End? The Great Sale of Cornwall (2013)

Editor's Note: Cornwall Council's response to the new NPPF will be discussed in a future Newsletter.

Planning Update

PA23/02629 Fair Park Solar Farm, Carland Cross

The Fair Park application near Carland Cross has just been rejected by Cornwall Council but it may be appealed. The maps below outline the application and show how large it is by superimposing the outline on a map of Truro - within the ring road A390 and Morlaix Avenue.



A map showing the 210-acre Fairpark solar development area overlaid on Truro city centre to demonstrate its size (Image: Carnon Action Group / Google Earth)

Source: Cornwall Live.

See also our October Newsletter for a discussion of Solar Farms in Cornwall by Richard Cogar.

At an extraordinary meeting of Cornwall Council's Strategic Planning Committee on 21 November, councillors voted by 8-1 to reject planning application PA23/02629 for a solar farm in Carland Cross. Had it been approved it would have been the biggest solar farm in Cornwall covering a 210 acre site with 125,000 solar panels.

The application was refused for one reason.

The proposed solar arrays and associated infrastructure would, by virtue of their manmade appearance and regular layout over a significant area of the landscape would cause harm the character of the immediate rural landscape, particularly when viewed from nearby roads and public rights of way notwithstanding the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed. The significant benefits of the scheme are not judged to outweigh the extent of this harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to Cornwall Local Plan Policies 2 and 23, Climate Emergency DPD Policy RE1(c), St Erme Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies 9 and 11 and paragraph 180(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework

CPRE Cornwall welcomes the decision and acknowledges the challenges facing Cornwall Council in balancing the competing priorities of climate change, renewable energy, food security and the protection of our rural environment.

Recent Decisions

Quintrell Downs

400 holiday units

Planning application PA23/09752

APPROVED BUT NOT ISSUED.

CALL IN REQUESTED

Replacement of existing chalet

PA24/04886

REFUSED

Objections submitted to Cornwall Council - Awaiting Decision

Land East Of Cove Hill, Port Navas Construction of 1 dwelling & solar array PA24/06454	Pandarosa Farm, Bodmin Erection of 58 Dwellings Planning application PA23/07573
Shute Hill, Breage Residential development Planning Application PA23/09456	Pendower Beach Hotel Aparthotel and 3 dwellings Planning application PA24/00042
Gwinear Lane Solar farm Planning application PA23/09696	Cold Northcott Wind Farm Repowering & extension of windfarm Planning application PA23/02727
Penhale Camp, Camp Road, Holywell Bay Holiday and leisure facilities. Planning application PA22/02896	Halgavor Moor Development of up to 540 dwellings. Planning application PA20/10618
Penhale Camp, Camp Road, Holywell Bay 9 new dwellings 3 refurbished dwellings Planning application PA22/02794	

Appeals to the Planning Inspectorate - Awaiting Decision

APP/3349687 (PA24/00716) St Hilary Appeal against refusal	APP/3353157 (PA22/10184) Trelissick Gardens Appeal against refusal
APP/3344255 (PA22/11402) Meudon Hotel, Maenporth Appeal against refusal	APP/3352494 (PA23/02502) Gillyflower Golf Club Appeal against refusal
APP/3348225 (PA23/08660) The Cornish Vineyard, Kea Appeal against refusal	