



# St Agnes Parish Draft Local Landscape Character Assessment



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**FOREWORD TO ST AGNES PARISH LOCAL LANDSCAPE  
CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

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# Chapter 1 – Background to St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment

## 1.1 Creating a St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment

The St Agnes Parish Neighbourhood Development (NDP) Plan Steering Group agreed that a local landscape character assessment would form part of the evidence base for the NDP and The Environment Focus Group was tasked with overseeing this work. St Agnes Parish Council at their meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016 endorsed the preparation of the LLCA for St Agnes Parish and agreed that a Landscape Consultant should be commissioned to assist with this project. A planner on the NDP team was also able to provide assistance with the training and assessment of the landscape. Following tendering for the contract Geoff Pring (Landscape Architect) was appointed to provide professional support with the training and assessment.

1.2 In September 2016 when local people were asked the question whether it was important to protect:

- the natural beauty and character of the landscape of the parish - 87% strongly agreed and 12.3% agreed;
- the wildlife - 79% strongly agreed and 19% agreed; and
- heritage and heritage sites – 76% strongly agreed and 22% agreed.

The preparation of the Local Landscape Character Assessment provided the St Agnes Parish NDP team with the opportunity to engage volunteers to look at St Agnes Parish landscape in more detail in order to gain a clear understanding of what characteristics make up the distinctive landscape.

1.3 Preliminary work was undertaken straight away and a group of volunteers was formed. Following the production of draft landscape character maps by the Landscape Architect a day training event for the volunteers was undertaken on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The morning session provided training on how to assess your local landscape; outlining how features in the landscape, which created its character, could be recorded. In the afternoon the north coast, near Porthtowan, was visited providing the volunteers with further guidance on how the landscape can be described by looking at the specific attributes. .... local people attended this workshop and undertook the training sessions for the field survey. Two feedback evening meetings were then undertaken, over the next month, to consider queries and look at the results. Karen Russell took on the role as co-ordinator of the volunteers. With the enthusiasm and immense skill of the volunteers within two months the local descriptions of the landscape were completed.

- 1.4. Chapter 2 of this report goes into more detail about the technical process of preparing the Local Landscape Character Assessment. The volunteers' work was very productive and now provides us with a comprehensive description of St Agnes Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) landscape and this is outlined in Chapter 3 of this report. The assessment looks at the types of landscape that make up the St Agnes parish and examines the features of these landscapes, that is the natural, historic and aesthetic characteristics, in more detail. Once again these descriptions are provided in chapter 3. Throughout the assessment the local environmental information was collected for the St Agnes Parish NDP area (Appendix 1 provides this information).
- 1.5 A series of NDP public consultation events were undertaken in the 5 larger villages in the St Agnes Parish during the first 2 weeks of September where the work which had been prepared on the St Agnes Parish NDP Local Landscape Character Assessment, and the mapping supporting this work, was displayed. The local people who attended were asked to provide information on the areas/features that they valued within the landscape of the parish of St Agnes and comments on the LLCA were encouraged. The responses are shown in chapter 4. Chapter 5 of this report outlines the relationship between the St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment and the St Agnes Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan. A village character assessment is also to be undertaken as part of the evidence base to the St Agnes Parish NDP and a separate report will be prepared on this when completed.
- 1.6 This report provides a comprehensive assessment of the St Agnes Parish NDP area landscape undertaken by St Agnes residents, which will assist in decisions on future development being based on a thorough understanding of the character of the landscape.

## Chapter 2 - Local Landscape Character Assessment

### 2.1 What is landscape?

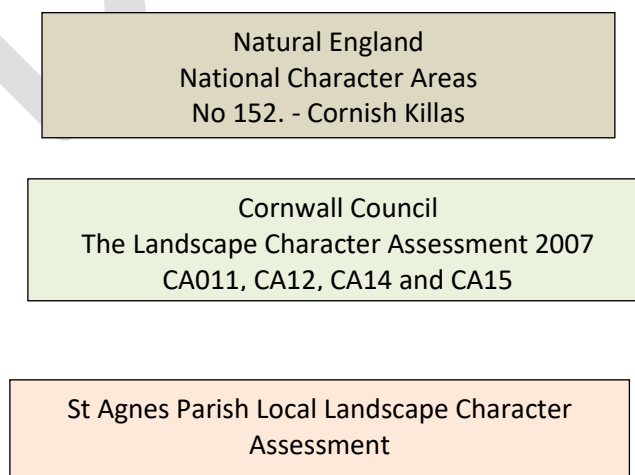
The landscape of the St Agnes Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) area that we see today has been shaped by the actions of people and the forces of nature over centuries. The concept of 'landscape' is however more than just what we can see, it is a complex interaction of many factors, landform, soils, flora and fauna, as well as what we hear, smell and feel, and our memories and associations with a place. Landscape too is not just the rural fields and undeveloped coast but it also includes the land within the hamlets and village which give the St Agnes Parish its unique local distinctiveness and sense of place.

### 2.2 What is landscape character assessment?

2.2.1 Landscape character assessment is a widely accepted framework which identifies and describes elements and features which come together to give the St Agnes Parish NDP area a locally distinct sense of place. If we understand what this distinct character is made up of, and why residents and visitors value it so much, then informed decisions can be made to allow development in the future which conserves and enhances, rather than erodes the St Agnes Parish unique character.

2.2.2 Before the preparation of this Local Landscape Character Assessment two levels of character assessment described the character of the St Agnes parish. At a national level this was through Natural England's National Character Area 152 and the county level through the 2007 Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment - Character Area CA11: Redruth, Camborne and Gwenap, CA12: St Agnes, CA14: Newlyn Downs and CA 15: Newquay and Perranporth Coast, (Appendix 2).

Figure 1 – Landscape Character descriptions



2.2.3 The current national and county landscape character descriptions do not provide a sufficient level of detail to inform the St Agnes Parish NDP, and it has therefore been necessary to undertake a new comprehensive assessment of the landscape character of the area to create a detailed evidence base of the landscape character to underpin the policies of the St Agnes Parish NDP.

### **2.3 What is the St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA)**

2.3.1 This Local Landscape Character Assessment describes in detail the special qualities of the landscape which it will be important to conserve and enhance in order to retain St Agnes Parish unique locally distinctive sense of place.

2.3.2 It divides the character of the five wards of the St Agnes Parish into five generic landscape 'Character Types' which define the locality through similar characteristics of topography vegetation cover, and land use, although they may appear in different parts of St Agnes Parish. The locations of each 'Character Type' have been identified on an Ordnance Survey map base for each ward and copies of these plans are attached (plan nos 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, and 1e)

1. Elevated upland plateau, exposed land
2. Intermediate sloping land
3. Steep land, valley sides and bottom
4. Cliffs and beaches
5. The Beacon

2.3.3 In addition to the maps which visually identify each 'Character Type', a detailed description of the elements of character which make each 'Character Type' distinct was provided. These detailed descriptions were prepared by local volunteers going out into the landscape and recording the character onto field assessment sheets against a series of headings. The headings follow those of the 40 Character Area descriptions within the 2007 Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment, and it provides more local detail. Appendix 4 provides the 'Character Type' descriptions on a ward by ward basis.

2.3.4 As well as the character information recorded by the volunteers, also incorporated into the 'Character Type' descriptions were details of designations including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Scheduled Monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Orders etc. The mapping which locates these designations can be found in Appendix 1. The 'Character Type' descriptions were also informed by historic environment summaries for each ward (Appendix 3), and land use maps, which also show historic characteristics such as mineworkers' smallholdings (see Plan 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and 2e).



- 2.3.5 The volunteers visually recorded the landscape of each 'Character Type' through photographs, and these have been used to supplement this document.
- 2.3.6 The thorough work undertaken by the volunteers created the factual element of the landscape character description, but did not place a value on any element of the landscape. People value the landscape for many different reasons, both personally and economically and the LLCA needed to also describe what people felt was important, and what they didn't want to lose within their landscape.
- 2.3.7 To understand what the St Agnes Parish community valued about their landscape the 'Character Type' assessment work compiled by the volunteers was displayed public consultation events in the villages of Mount Hawke, Porthtowan, Mithian, Blackwater and St Agnes during the first two weeks of September 2016. This was an opportunity for people in the St Agnes Parish community to add further detail to the character information already recorded. On the day the community were also asked to directly comment on what they valued about the St Agnes Parish landscape, by adding 'post it' notes and by placing coloured spots on a map of the five wards to describe what they valued under the following headings
- Recreational value – where they love to spend their leisure time
  - Historical interest - where there was an important historic feature, or place of cultural importance
  - Natural and wildlife interest - where there were important natural features, or important wildlife
  - Good views - where they love to stand and admire the view
  - Where they felt like they had 'managed to get away from it all'

(A copy of the map with the places of value marked and the 'post it' responses are included in Plan 3 and Appendix 7)

## **2.4 What is the purpose of the St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA)?**

- 2.4.1 The St Agnes Parish LLCA has been prepared in response to the need for a robust evidence base describing the character of the St Agnes Parish NDP area to underpin the policies within the NDP. However that will not be the sole purpose of this document.
- 2.4.2 The detailed descriptions of the elements and features which make up the unique landscape character of St Agnes Parish, along with the identification of future development pressures, guidance for land management and future development, can
- describe the relationship between people and the land;
  - define the locality highlighting what creates the St Agnes Parish NDP area sense of place;

- celebrate what is important to the local community and visitors;
- objectively guide the right development to the right place;
- inform decisions on the environmental implications of a development application;
- ensure quality of design where local character and vernacular building styles are respected
- help to set priorities for future land management and siting of development;
- provide detailed environmental information relating to designated landscapes.

2.4.3 This Local Landscape Character Assessment is an evidence base for community led planning which has been researched, written and edited by local people.

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## Chapter 3 – St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

As outlined in chapters 1 and 2 an assessment of the local landscape has been prepared for St Agnes Parish by local people. The details of this Local Landscape Character Assessment are provided in this chapter. Each of the 5 types of landscape found in St Agnes Parish is described covering the following:

1. **Key Characteristics**
2. Descriptive text explaining the elements which make up the **character of the 'landscape type'** under the headings of **'topography and drainage', 'Biodiversity', 'Land Cover and Land Use', 'Field and Woodland Pattern', 'Settlement Pattern', 'Transport Pattern', 'Historic Features', 'Condition', 'Aesthetic and Sensory', 'Distinctive Features', and 'Views'**.
3. **Pressure and forces for change** based on the description of the landscape that the volunteers have provided **To follow**.
4. Details of **Landscape Management and Development Considerations** which looks at how each of the landscape types may be sensitive in different ways to different types of development.

Maps of the five landscape types for each ward are provided in Plans 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d and 1e) and the descriptions of these landscapes for the St Agnes Parish are outlined in:

- Section 3.2 Elevated Upland Plateau/Exposed Land
- Section 3.3 Intermediate Sloping Land
- Section 3.4 Steep Land, Valley Sides and Bottom
- Section 3.5 Cliffs and Beaches
- Section 3.6 The Beacon

This information is also available in table form in Appendix 5

The descriptions are also supported by the detailed mapping information on St Agnes Parish environmental designations and attributes (Appendix 1. – Environmental Mapping) and the land use mapping (Plan 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and 2; this information should be used in conjunction with the findings of the Local Landscape Character Assessment which is provided in this chapter.

### 3.2 Landscape Type: Elevated Upland Plateau/Exposed Land

(This information is also provided for each of the wards in a Table in Appendix 4.1)

### 3.2.1 Key Characteristics

- Exposed, open and uncluttered.
- Frequent 360 views and general unspoilt natural beauty combined with an active agricultural landscape.
- Sense of space: big sky, dark at night.
- Village of Mount Hawke now characterised by modern development at its edges, sits awkwardly at the centre of this landscape type.
- Features of significant height such as pylons and turbines stand out disproportionately because there are few of them in a relatively flat landscape.
- Farmsteads and historic features add character.
- Much of this type is farmland that was enclosed from former heathland.
- Very limited woodland, though plantations beside the B3277 are locally significant.

### 3.2.2 Character of the Landscape Type

#### Topography and Drainage

The elevated upland / plateau area is discontinuous within the parish as a whole, but ridgelines link across the wards in several instances. The character type is typically flat, especially in the Blackwater ward where the land is at its highest (130 – 156 metres AOD). There are 3 ridgelines spreading out from Chiverton Cross. The southwest ridge swings to the northwest after Skinners Bottom, and runs all the way to Porthtowan Farm just south of the village. The principal central ridge follows the B3277 and turns west just north of Mount Hawke village. A subsidiary east – west ridgeline runs through the village itself. The previously noted principal ridgeline runs north to St Agnes village with a spur to the northwest merging with “The Beacon”. Another north south lies to the east of St Agnes village. There are four ridge elements surrounding Porthtowan village, the larger of which links with the ridge to the north of Mount Hawke village.

No water features present except ditches near Wheal Concord and Sevenmilestone.

#### Biodiversity

Overgrown hedgerows and Cornish hedges throughout provide locations for semi-natural habitats. More specifically, the margins and between runway areas of the airfield and numerous other heathland locations offer such possibilities.

Wide road verges in parts (especially Blackwater) contribute to semi-natural habitat as do the numerous areas of heath and scrub regenerating on abandoned mining areas.

Cornish hedges are likely to support protected species and provide corridors of movement / habitat continuity. The field margins adjacent to boundary hedges have a similar potential. Unimproved grassland and heathland / mining areas also offer such opportunities.

Small copses and the few larger plantations of trees, although not extensive within this character type could also provide support for protected species.

Some Japanese knotweed (mostly being treated) and *Rhododendron ponticum* at Mongoose plantation. Also, *Montbretia* and three-cornered Leek are found throughout in localised concentrations.

### **Land Cover and Land Use**

Arable and improved grassland extensively found, also small fields popular for horses. This is particularly evident around Mount Hawke. The airfield is dominant to the north of Mithian ward. Holiday and leisure facilities throughout the parish and also recreation facilities e.g. football and cricket pitches. Industrial area at Teagles and solar farm (44 acres) north of Gover farm in Mount Hawke ward.

Improved grassland generally, but significant heathland towards the coastal edge and around airfield. Very few trees except plantations along B3277 within Blackwater ward. Hedgerows have more trees within central and southern plateaus.

### **Field and Woodland Pattern**

Very little woodland on top of plateau, the exception being the 19<sup>th</sup>-century plantations alongside the B3277 in Blackwater ward. Block of woodland (Mongoose Plantation) at the eastern end of the northern Mount Hawke plateau. Some larger trees present on the western edge of Mount Hawke village, above Menagissey and at Skinners Bottom.

Tendency for medium and large-scale fields throughout the parish; particularly large in Blackwater due to later enclosure of farmland from heathland. Similarly on plateau north of Mount Hawke. Medieval fields and miners smallholdings around Trevellas.

Majority of boundaries are Cornish hedges, although earth banks present to some degree in St Agnes ward. Stone is local "Killas" and there is often use of stone cleared from fields. Granite gate posts are frequent features.

Character of hedges is defined both by construction through the manner in which the stone is used and through relative vegetation cover. There is a locally distinctive style of using stone in upright coursing with stone size diminishing in the upper courses. There is some infilling with smaller stones.

Relatively limited tree cover due to exposure and vegetation being stunted and sculpted by wind effect.

### **Settlement Pattern**

Properties are generally scattered and limited in extent in this character type, although in St Agnes there is some ribbon development along several roads. The main exception however is Mount Hawke, where the core of the village and the more dominant recent estate style developments which define the edge and overall character of the village. The village sits dominantly on a major plateau and dominant ridgeline.

Buildings vary in age and style from Mineworkers cottages to churches and farm clusters within the open landscape setting. Ages range from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Since the majority of the limited developments in this character area tend to be older properties, local stone predominates. Slate roofs and sash windows also feature commonly. More modern construction materials dominate in the estates which make up the majority of Mount Hawke. Occasional individual modern homes around Porthtowan feature extensive use of glass.

### **Transport Pattern**

Extremely variable from the former A39 through Blackwater to minor single track unclassified roads in Porthtowan ward. In Blackwater and Mount Hawke many of the roads, including the B3277, have grass verges, the management of which varies. Roads in this character area tend to be straighter than elsewhere.

No public rights of way in Blackwater ward in this character type, (possibly due to late field enclosure). St Agnes ward footpaths are good and well signed. Less so in Mount Hawke ward, where only bridleways are well kept. Some footpaths are impassable here. Well maintained footpaths in Mithian ward. West of Porthtowan footpath frequently impassable due to water logging. Rights of way generally follow field patterns in the areas of more ancient enclosure.

There are three bridges; being remnants of the former Newquay – Chacewater railway in Mount Hawke ward. Also bridges at St Agnes former railway yard and former Goonbell halt.

### **Historic Features**

Barrows in both Mount Hawke and Blackwater wards (three and two respectively) Also single barrow at Hurlingburrow, St Agnes. Mithian School distinctive as is its church. Airfield dominant element in Mithian ward with WWII features still evident. Engine houses, shafts and mine dumps add to historic context and most common in St Agnes ward and to a lesser extent Porthtowan.

### **Condition**

Buildings and roads predominantly well managed with the following exceptions:

- Some fly-tipping in gateways and on verges noted in Blackwater ward.
- Public right of way west of Porthtowan degraded and several footpaths in Mount Hawke ward are impassable.

Improvements could be made to enhance the area by:

- Regular inspection and clearance of fly-tipping.
- Engine house at North Treskerby mine deteriorating; walls and stack need repointing.
- More sensitive hedge flailing.
- Numerous footpaths (especially Mount Hawke) require clearance, ongoing maintenance and signage.

Efficient management of improved grassland for stock and crops. Heathland level of maintenance appears minimal but appropriate. Insensitive, excessive flailing of hedgerow vegetation a frequent occurrence.

### **Aesthetic and Sensory**

Predominantly calm and quiet but can be windswept and exposed. Intermittent traffic noise especially in Blackwater ward and approach roads to St Agnes. Occasional noise from airfield. Bird song a general feature.

Landscape is mostly exposed, often windy, very open and uncluttered.

Wind strength varies considerably with the seasons. Succession of hedgerow blossoms a distinctive seasonal feature. Colour changes within heathland habitats also.

Very little light pollution apart from in the vicinity of villages especially Blackwater & Mount Hawke

### **Distinctive Features**

Historic features previously noted, barrows, church towers, Mithian School, Mount Hawke church and vicarage, engine houses. Solar farm at Mongoose, and power lines, pylons and airfield also distinctive. The occasional modern dwelling encroaches on skyline in detrimental way.

### **Views**

Views from St Agnes Beacon and Carn Brea from highest point in Blackwater ward. Panoramic views where elevated land meets cliff character area in Mithian ward. Ridgeline views at Coosewartha and south of Mongoose plantation looking south and west towards Mount Hawke. View from ridgeline footpath above disused Tywarnhayle mine in Porthtowan ward. View from Wheal Kitty over St Agnes village and to the Beacon beyond.

## **3.2.3 Pressure and Forces for Change**

## **3.2.4 Landscape Management and Development Considerations**

Aim – Keep open character and extensive views.

- The nature of the high open ground means the prominence of any development in this landscape will be significant. Detailed consideration will need to be given to the siting and design of any such development.
- Locating development on prominent ridge or sky lines, particularly skylines with distinctive historic or cultural should be avoided.
- On higher more exposed ground the vegetation will take longer to establish and reach a height to screen development. Large trees also may not be a characteristic of this more exposed Character Type.
- Tree planting is generally not in keeping with the character and history of this landscape type.
- Retain the historic field patterns; miners' smallholdings are part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site and its setting.
- Development proposals should respect the character and setting of heritage assets and landscape features such as RAF Perranporth, traditional buildings and farmsteads, features of the Chacewater–Newquay railway, and Bronze Age barrows.
- This landscape type includes sensitive areas of heathland / rough ground and industrial heritage, part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site (e.g. in the northern part of St Agnes ward); development proposals should follow the aims, objectives and policies of the AONB and WHS management plans. Smaller more isolated areas of workings, shafts and spoil heaps, often with



regenerating semi-natural habitats, are also important and should be protected from encroachment.

- Developments should protect local character by retaining traditional vernacular buildings and features, including farmsteads, farm buildings, cottages, outbuildings and walling.
- Alterations and extensions to dwellings should have appropriate regard to the character of the existing dwelling, in particular to ensure that the scale and design reflects the character of the original dwelling and its setting in the landscape.
- Ensure new features have appropriate regard to the local vernacular using locally occurring materials.
- Loss of traditional cottages, farmsteads and farm buildings to replacement dwellings should be exceptional, as these are heritage assets which contribute to the character of this type. Any replacements should be comparable in scale, mass and character to properties in the area and in keeping with the area's character.
- Replacement of isolated agricultural buildings with new dwellings is generally not appropriate in this landscape type.
- Mount Hawke is located largely on the elevated plateau and new development should have regard to its prominence and ensure that it does not become intrusive in the landscape.
- Consider how cumulatively development (not necessarily of the same type) can have an increased impact competing with the characteristics of the landscape, and creating clutter.
- Consider how light pollution can be minimised, through appropriate design, in new development.

### **3.3 Landscape Type: Intermediate Sloping Land**

(This information is also provided for each of the wards in a Table in Appendix 4.2)

#### **3.3.1 Key Characteristics**

- Throughout this character area the features which stand out are particularly related to the pattern of farming activity.
- The farming activity is characterised by small to medium sized fields, the boundaries are often well vegetated Cornish hedgerows.
- Where trees have been allowed to grow to maturity, there is a less "open feel", which predominates in the lower areas.
- Several settlements such as Mawla, Mongoose and Mithian have many older properties where stone and slate roof construction predominates, giving a sense of great local character and timelessness.

- Regenerating heathland and scrub vegetation on old mine areas, particularly in St Agnes ward, impart a distinctive sense of place as befits the World Heritage Site designation.

### **3.3.2 Character of the Landscape Type**

#### **Topography and Drainage**

Generally shallow and gently sloping undulating land more complex around Mithian with sharper folds and curves. Also slightly steeper landform around St Agnes Beacon. Porthtowan ward has limited areas of this character type between the more dominant elevated plateau and steep-sided valley character types. The most gently sloping land lies in the Blackwater ward.

Two narrow fast flowing shallow streams in the east of the Blackwater ward. Former mill pond at Manor Parsley. Streams run into St Agnes village in the vicinity of Goonbell and Promised Land. Overall, very little flowing water is evident.

#### **Biodiversity**

Semi-natural habitats are present where regeneration has occurred on old mine workings, for example Wheal Butson and Polberro sloping away from Towan Cross. The Manor Parsley area also has semi-natural habitat as does the Porthtowan ward in the vicinity of the Coastal Path.

Heathland and regenerating areas offer valuable habitats for snakes, lizards, slow worms, insects and birds.

The many overgrown hedges found in all wards offer opportunities for a variety of species both protected and otherwise.

Green lanes, verges and disused railway line offer similar opportunities.

Small areas of Japanese knotweed in several locations: Wheal Butson, Wheal Davey, railway cutting; not all being treated. Ragwort near the Coast path in St Agnes ward. Himalayan balsam near Manor Parsley mill pond and individual, potentially spreading pockets of *Rhododendron ponticum* (Mount Hawke and St Agnes).

#### **Land Cover and Land Use**

Predominantly improved grassland used for cattle grazing, but also some sheep and occasional pigs. Also paddocks for horses. Some arable farming around Blackwater and in the Mithian and Mount Hawke wards.

Leisure and recreational uses: campsites and caravan parks and active leisure activities.

Mainly improved grassland with some heathland especially along coastal edge and in old mining areas. Small areas of woodland: Blackwater, Mithian and St Agnes wards. Many tree-lined hedgerows with particularly fine examples evident below Menagissey.

### **Field and Woodland Pattern**

Woodlands of any scale are very limited in this character type throughout the parish. However, there is a small relatively recent Pine plantation at Torvean, and broadleaf woodland to the north of Mithian near Anchor Farm. Some broadleaf woodland to the east of Blackwater ward, and both broadleaf and conifer trees associated with development at Menagissey, Mawla, Skinners Bottom and Wheal Rose.

Field sizes vary from small to large throughout the parish. Those closer to valley sides tend to be smaller; those on higher, more level ground are larger. There are extensive areas of mine worker smallholding fields, and at Stencoose there are recognisable remnants of a medieval strip field system. Very large arable fields at Parc Nor, St Agnes ward. Fields are generally rectilinear, but also the boundaries weave with the undulations of the land.

Predominantly Cornish hedges made with local "Killas" stone, but also with some granite and slate. Frequently overgrown with Gorse, bramble, grasses and increasing cover of shrub and tree species at lower levels.

Hedges are sculpted by the wind in the more exposed locations in the St Agnes and Mithian wards, sometimes there is a buffer of meadow / grassland adjacent to the hedge.

Most hedges have tree and shrub growth typically containing Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Elder, Gorse, Ash, Oak and Sycamore in various combinations. Unsurprisingly, growth is better in the more sheltered locations where mature trees have frequently been allowed to grow on top of or beside the hedges.

### **Settlement Pattern**

The majority of village and hamlet development is found in the intermediate sloping landscape character area with the exception of Mount Hawke (elevated plateau). Many scattered farmsteads and hamlets such as Mawla, Wheal Rose, Mithian, Skinners Bottom, Menagissey. The concentrations of miner's smallholdings are evident in several locations especially in the southern parts of Mount Hawke and Mithian wards and around Blackwater. Miner's smallholdings are not such a feature in Porthtowan ward, and are more dispersed throughout the St Agnes ward.

Buildings date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The older buildings exhibit the more traditional use of local stone, slate and scantle roof design, with cob a frequent component.

More random distribution of development over the last 60 years with less connection to local vernacular or landscape setting.

As noted above, local stone predominates in older properties with slate roofs (rarely but occasionally thatch e.g. Highlands in Blackwater ward).

Older community buildings frequently constructed from “killas” stone with granite dressings or painted rubble stone.

More modern buildings are dominated by the use of painted render finish. This creates the dominant visual impression through much of the parish.

### **Transport Pattern**

Varied character of roads from short section of A30 in south of Mount Hawke ward, through the B3285 from St Agnes to Perranporth with its steep winding course across Jericho Valley to the numerous minor unclassified roads that predominate in the parish. Frequent unmade tracks also serve as access to remote dwellings

The parish is well served with public rights of way including an extensive bridleway network. In addition, numerous old mine tracks which are not official PROW criss cross the abandoned areas through regenerating heathland.

In Mithian ward footpaths are noticeably part of the field pattern, in Porthtowan and Blackwater less so. Mostly in good condition, there are however several paths which have become waterlogged, are overgrown and in places, lacking signage.

Stone bridges at Barkla shop and Wheal Butson, also on Mithian Downs where there are two crossings of the disused railway. Between St Agnes and Mithian wards, the railway viaduct is over the valley at Wheal Liberty. No bridges in this character type in Mithian and Porthtowan wards.

### **Historic Features**

Much evidence of mining history especially in St Agnes ward, e.g. at Polberro, Wheal Butson and Gooninnis mines. Ancient remains in the form of barrows near Wheal Davey, and a “Round” in a field near Coosewartha farm.

Old farms are numerous, for example Trevissick Farm in Porthtowan dates back to 1337. Old chapels at Blackwater, Mawla, Goonbell, Higher Bal and Mongoose are all features in the landscape. Cameron Camp on the seaward side of The Beacon is distinctive, as is the viaduct at Wheal Liberty on the abandoned Newquay–Chacewater railway.

### **Condition**

Road verges and some PROW's (in particular St Agnes and Blackwater wards) suffer from fly-tipping. Some road surfaces, especially in Mithian, require repair. Condition of farmland is generally good, showing good management practices in most cases.

Improvements could be made to enhance the area by:

- The simple management strategy of improved rubbish collection would have an immediate effect.
- Some buildings, e.g. in Beacon area are deteriorating due to rain damage and could be renovated. Similarly, rain damage to footpaths needs attention.
- Less aggressive flailing of hedgerows would benefit visual appearance and habitat variety.
- Allowing more trees to grow in hedgerows would also bring advantages.

Many hedgerows are excessively trimmed, often at the wrong time of year, addressing this would enhance the visual appearance and improve habitat potential in many locations.

Heathland low level management is a good strategy and apart from some clearance of bramble and invasive species by the National Trust, should continue in the same manner.

### **Aesthetic and Sensory**

Generally quiet except in the immediate vicinity of well used roads such as the A30, B3277 and some of the minor roads which access the larger settlements. Numerous quiet and sheltered locations such as Silverwell and Mongoose areas.

Numerous rural and intimate areas especially along footpath routes where hedgerow trees have frequently been allowed to grow to maturity providing a very distinctive character. The phrase "Lost World Charm" has rightly been used to describe Menagissey.

Seasonal farming changes and changes to hedgerows make an impact. As leaf cover is lost, a degree of additional exposure can be felt, and views open up. Wind exposure noticeably increases in the winter. Heathland colour changes seasonally.

Low levels of light pollution, except in parts of the villages and around Mithian school. Some under-cloud reflections of lights from distance e.g. Redruth.

### **Distinctive Features**

Tree-lined hedgerows can impart a feeling of woodland when seen as long views along the slopes. Such hedgerows are frequently individually distinctive. Pylons and power lines are evident widely throughout the parish and are

sometimes visually intrusive. Similarly for wind turbines and telecommunication masts.

Farmstead clusters of buildings are frequently of historical as well as landscape relevance and are a general feature throughout this character area. Mining heritage features such as engine houses are seen within and beyond the character area.

### **Views**

Views tend to be more restricted than in more elevated areas, but there are views from Wheal Butson towards the St Austell clay pits and some views to the sea, particularly within the St Agnes ward.

Also vantage points at Eastcliff above Porthtowan along the coast to St Ives and inland to Mount Pleasant.

From Wheal Davey there are views to St Agnes and the Beacon similarly from the intermediate land above Jericho valley.

### **3.3.3 Pressure and forces for Change**

#### **3.3.4 Landscape Management and Development Considerations**

Aim: Reflect and maintain the predominating character of this landscape type, namely farmland with scattered traditional settlements, including farm clusters and hamlets, smallholdings and cottages.

- Development to have appropriate regard to the undulating character of the topography and should not be supported if it is out of scale or overwhelms the landscape pattern and character.
- Reflect the field sizes, retaining and enhancing the small and medium field patterns. The former miners' smallholdings are an important part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site and its setting.
- Developments should protect local character by retaining traditional vernacular buildings and features, including farmsteads, farm buildings, cottages, outbuildings and walling.
- Alterations and extensions to dwellings should have appropriate regard to the character of the existing dwelling, in particular to ensure that the scale and design reflects the character of the original dwelling and its setting in the landscape.
- Loss of traditional cottages, farmsteads and farm buildings to replacement dwellings should be exceptional, as these are heritage assets which contribute to the character of this type. Any replacements should be comparable in scale, mass and character to properties in the area and in keeping with the area's character.

- Development proposals should respect the character and setting of heritage assets and landscape features such as engine houses and other mining remains, features of the Chacewater–Newquay railway, and archaeological sites such as the prehistoric settlements at Trevissick and Coosewartha.
- This landscape type includes sensitive areas of heathland / rough ground and industrial heritage, part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site (e.g. in the northern part of St Agnes ward); development proposals should follow the aims, objectives and policies of the AONB and WHS management plans. Smaller more isolated areas of workings, shafts and spoil heaps, often with regenerating semi-natural habitats, are also important and should be protected from encroachment.
- Where this type adjoins the Beacon it has the potential to contribute positively or negatively to its setting and the views from it; this should be considered carefully in any development proposals.
- Consider how cumulatively development (not necessarily of the same type) can have an increased impact on the characteristics of the landscape.
- Consider how light pollution can be minimised, through appropriate design in new development.

### **3.4 Landscape Type: Steep land, Valley Side and Valley Bottom**

(This information is also provided for each of the wards in a Table in Appendix 4.3)

#### **3.4.1 Key Characteristics**

- Narrow valleys with fast flowing streams.
- Mining relics are prominent in many locations (Trevellas Coombe, St Agnes valleys and Porthtowan especially).
- An awareness of the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural regeneration that is occurring and ongoing in many locations is vital.
- Setting of Wheal Liberty viaduct is significant and impressive.
- A key characteristic is the general unspoilt nature of this character type; a feature that needs to be conserved and enhanced.

#### **3.4.2 Character of the Landscape Type**

##### **Topography and Drainage**

Valleys throughout the parish are steep sided without exception, and with narrow flat valley bottoms, often very narrow. There are two valley systems in the Mithian ward, Trevellas Coombe valley which becomes less steep higher up its course, and a second, running from south to north with five subsidiary valleys to the west.

There are two valley systems in both the Mount Hawke and St Agnes wards, and a single valley system with branches through Porthtowan.

Streams are present in all valley bottoms, fed sometimes by small tributaries on the valley sides.

There are various springs e.g. Barkla Shop, Wheal Liberty and towards Mithian Downs.

Ponds occur downstream from Mithian and also at Barkla Shop and Wheal Butson.

There are old leat channels at Blue Mills and below Barkla Shop.

### **Biodiversity**

In all wards, most of the valleys are almost exclusively semi natural habitat, and as such, one of the most important ecological resources in the parish.

Many of the valley sides show regeneration of old mining areas. There are some exceptions e.g. the broadleaf woodland at Rose Hill, Porthtowan, and fields which form a small area of farmland at Wheal Basset.

All the above areas have the potential to support protected species. Specifically, the woods at Parc Hoskyn, old mine buildings which have potential as bat roosts and the numerous areas of boggy ground all provide excellent habitat potential. This is particularly the case when inaccessible to humans. Some streams are known to contain Trout. Heathland is also a valuable supporting habitat.

Japanese knotweed has been present in the lower parts of the Trevellas Coombe valley and above Manor Parsley, but is currently being kept under control through treatment.

Three-sided Leek and Rhododendron occasionally present.

### **Land Cover and Land Use**

Evidence of former mine workings everywhere. Very little “active” land use, the exception being the small farm complexes at Wheal Basset and Manor Parsley in Mount Hawke ward.

Dwellings are situated along valley floors in numerous places, but much less so on the valley sides for reasons of steepness.

Significant leisure use of bridleways and footpaths by locals and visitors.

Some broadleaf woodland at Park Shady and a few other locations, but principally scrub and heathland regenerating on former mining areas.



Reeds in boggy areas on valley floors.

### **Field and Woodland Pattern**

Mithian Downs valley has possible ancient woodland, also broadleaf woodland in sheltered parts of Trevellas Coombe. Woodland regenerating from scrub throughout character type. Species include Sycamore, Oak, Willow and Elm (the latter especially along river banks), but also some Sweet Chestnut and conifer varieties.

Very few fields and always small. Trevellas Coombe valley has ex-miners smallholdings on upper east side of valley transitioning into the Intermediate sloping character area.

Small enclosed fields at Wheal Basset, also meadows of unimproved grassland at Parc Shady.

Cornish hedges not a common feature in this steeply sloping character area, but where they do exist are constructed of local "Killas" stone, and sometimes mine waste. Often covered in vegetation. In a few instances quite mature trees have developed.

Hedges are covered with trees in the more sheltered parts, sometimes sculpted by the wind.

### **Settlement Pattern**

In all the wards development is largely located along the valley floor. This is particularly the case for Porthtowan, but also for Chapel Porth, where clusters are more intermittent, and in both Mount Hawke and Mithian wards where the development is also more scattered.

Buildings vary between small traditional cottages, some associated with miners smallholdings and more modern styles, principally bungalows.

Older buildings are largely of granite and local stone with slate pitched roofs. More modern properties, especially bungalows are block with render; often with UPVC windows

New eco-lodges to the east of Porthtowan have grass roofs.

### **Transport Pattern**

The B3285 St Agnes to Perranporth road crosses Trevellas Coombe as it descends the valley side, but all other roads in this character type are minor, unclassified roads. Often single track with passing places, none of these roads have verges or pavements.

Bridleways and footpaths abound in this character type in all the wards and are well used; indicating how much attraction this character type has for visitors and tourists alike.

A road bridge crosses the valley in Trevellas Coombe. Bridges cross the stream in Porthtowan. Pedestrian bridges of various characterful styles exist on several footpaths in different wards.

### **Historic Features**

This landscape character type is defined by historic features. Mining remnants in the form of shafts, tips, redundant and ruined buildings including iconic chimney stacks, define the character type.

The blowing House at Perrancoombe has been converted to a dwelling. There is an old mill downstream from Mithian.

A disused railway embankment crosses the valley upstream of Mithian.

Bridleway through Parc Shady with distinctive beech trees also a distinctive feature.

### **Condition**

A characteristic of the area is regeneration from mining activity, although the very steepest slopes have developed relatively little vegetation to date. Some areas appear quite barren, possibly due to high mineral concentrations as much as slope angle. However, in most situations nature is gradually re-establishing a foothold.

Some tracks are in poor condition due to flooding and foot erosion.

Where woodlands have developed a dramatic contrast with the surrounding open land is evident. Superb tree tunnel at Rose Hill, Porthtowan.

Improvements could be made to enhance the area by:

- Footpath regrading and corrective drainage works are priorities.
- Disused structures should be stabilised and preservation work already carried out by Cornwall Council extended in scope to preserve heritage. Improvement of buildings at Manor Parsley would be a case in point.
- Locations such as Parc Shady where significant human activity occurs need a better management strategy in order to protect the environment and enhance small scale low key leisure activity.

Very little active management apparent in this character area. Natural regeneration processes should be encouraged through parish and volunteer

initiatives. Small scale interventions only are appropriate, and such work could be managed locally.

### **Aesthetic and Sensory**

All valleys throughout the parish have a high degree of tranquillity due to lack of development, except for Porthtowan which is an active village particularly during the tourist season.

Generally quiet enough to appreciate bird song and the sound of streams running,

The valleys are sheltered and enclosed, although more exposed where the coast is reached.

Locations such as Wheal Ellen have a real feeling of history and a sense of reversion to nature.

Higher volumes of water flowing in streams during winter can cause local flooding, restricting access to parts of some valleys e.g. Trevellas Coombe.

Where trees and shrubs are established, leaf colour change is seasonally significant, and leaf loss opens up views to some extent, although topography normally limits intervisibility.

Less traffic noise in Porthtowan in winter.

Minimal light pollution due to enclosure, although down lighting around Porthtowan village has a local effect.

### **Distinctive Features**

Historically important relics of mining activity throughout Trevellas Coombe and more particularly, chimney stacks, mine shafts and dumps in Porthtowan and St Agnes wards.

The railway embankment and Wheal Liberty viaduct in Mithian ward are locally distinctive features.

Wheal Basset farm is a distinctive “green oasis” in contrast to its surroundings.

### **Views**

Vantage points are generally limited due to the steep nature of most valley settings. However, there are views out to sea at Porthtowan, and also in Porthtowan is the inspiring “tree tunnel” at Rose Hill.

Limited views within valleys are locally significant e.g. car park at Trevellas Porth, both out to sea and of the opposite side of the valley.

Woodland limits the extent of views in many locations.

### **3.4.3 Pressures and forces for Change**

### **3.4.4 Landscape Management and Development Considerations**

Aim: Reflect and maintain the predominating scenic landscape character – valleys of heathland, woodland and scrub, farmland-edge grassland, limited scattered settlement, streams, leats and bridges.

- Consider the direction of the slope and nature of the setting; as in this Character Type there is potential for substantial impacts on land facing the development.
- Avoid the widening and or straightening of characteristic narrow winding lanes, minimise damage to Cornish hedges, trees, historic bridges, and gateposts and repair and replace any features which are lost.
- Developments should protect local character by retaining traditional vernacular buildings and features, including farmsteads, farm buildings, cottages, outbuildings and walling.
- Alterations and extensions to dwellings should have appropriate regard to the character of the existing dwelling, in particular to ensure that the scale and design reflects the character of the original dwelling and its setting in the landscape.
- Loss of traditional cottages, farmsteads and farm buildings to replacement dwellings should be exceptional, as these are heritage assets which contribute to the character of this type. Any replacements should be comparable in scale, mass and character to properties in the area and in keeping with the area's character.
- Ensure new features match the local vernacular using locally occurring materials.
- Industrial heritage remains are frequent in the valleys, more obvious in the open heathland (e.g. Trevellas Coombe and Tywarnhayle Mine), more hidden in the woodland and scrub; these must be safeguarded as part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site and its setting.
- The accommodation of development on the coastal edge and its immediate hinterland should have regard to its prominence, special importance of the landscape and its largely undeveloped characteristics; development proposals should follow the aims, objectives and policies of the AONB and WHS management plans.
- Consider how cumulatively development (not necessarily of the same type) can have an increased impact on the characteristics of the landscape.
- Consider how light pollution can be minimised, through appropriate design in new development.

### **3.5 Landscape Type: Cliffs and Beaches**

(This information is also provided for each of the ward in a Table in Appendix 4.4)

#### **3.5.1 Key Characteristics**

- Stunning views from coastal path, the drama of the sea in all seasons and relative lack of human interference.
- Coves with steep winding paths.
- Bird life including nesting locations.
- Mining history; engine houses, adits and spoil.

#### **3.5.2 Character of the Landscape Type**

##### **Topography and Drainage**

Frequently high, dramatic cliffs increasing rapidly in height from beaches to high points coinciding with plateau in Mithian ward.

Around St Agnes village, cliffs more precipitous to the north, less steep to the south. Sandy beach with small dune at Porthtowan. Sand and gravel beach at Trevaunance Cove, shingle at Star Beach. All covered at high tide, exposed rock at low tide especially near Trevaunance.

Mithian, Porthtowan and St Agnes wards have streams in valley bottoms discharging into the sea.

##### **Biodiversity**

Cliff tops and heathland behind provide habitats of heather, grassland and scattered scrub (gorse, heather, bramble, bracken). Mine spoil offers habitats for birds, snakes, lizards and butterflies.

Cliffs and rocky outcrops support nesting birds; there are large breeding colonies in the Porthtowan ward. Rock pools within the inter-tide zone are rich in life. Mine waste areas support unusual species assemblage.

No invasive species noted. Although mink are commonly seen in St Agnes ward.

##### **Land Cover and Land Use**

Predominantly leisure use. South West Coastal Path a consistent feature throughout. At Porthtowan, land is developed right up to the beach: shops, food outlets, car park etc. Some buildings in St Agnes ward relate to fishing as well as the tourist industry. Mithian cliffs immediately adjacent to WWII airfield which still has civil aviation use.

Typical heathland at the top of cliffs; heather, gorse, bracken. Rough grassland between cliff and airfield in Mithian. Some stunted windswept trees in gardens where development at Porthtowan extends onto the cliff areas.

### **Field and Woodland Pattern**

No woodland within this character area, except for a very small section of stunted Oak and Hawthorn in sheltered lower cliff at St Agnes.

No fields, although remnant patterns can be seen immediately above cliffs behind Newdowns Head, and north of West Towan House.

Very few hedges on cliff edge; an exception being near Tubby's Head.

Walls typically dry stone, lacking vegetation.

### **Settlement Pattern**

Little settlement, although individual scattered houses on cliff edge above ruined harbour at Trevaunance Cove. Also, dense development at top of east cliff Porthtowan and intermittent development to the west. Development surrounding beach at Porthtowan.

At Trevaunance, buildings date from 19C with some recent redevelopment. At Porthtowan, 19C, 20C and recent.

Wheal Lushington Engine House at the entrance of Porthtowan beach; lacking stack.

### **Transport Pattern**

Minor roads serving beaches at Mithian and Porthtowan. Minor roads east and west side serving properties at Porthtowan. Private road accessing properties on the "point" at Trevaunance.

South West Coast Path throughout. Regularly used. Some management but varying degrees of erosion, light in St Agnes ward but deeply rutted and with water erosion at Hanover Cove. Steps, way markers and warning signs in various locations.

Stone footbridge over stream at beach in Mithian ward and stone arch bridge crossing stream at Trevellas Coombe.

### **Historic Features**

Mine spoil and shafts especially near Hanover Cove and WWII airfield relics. At Porthtowan, engine house at entrance to beach, cliff-face adits and further west mine dumps and capped shafts.

Wheal Coates and Towanroath engine houses and open-cast copper mine (Wheal Luna 1528), ruined harbour and adits at Trevaunance Cove. Wheal Coates is particularly emblematic.

### **Condition**

Cliff faces subject to erosion and cliff falls. Mine spoil heaps have partial vegetation cover, Engine houses restored and preserved in sympathetic way.

Improvements could be made to enhance the area by:

- Management of paths and control of invasive species necessary to further stabilise coastal path.
- The placing of power lines underground to the west of Porthtowan Beach would be an improvement, as would the refusal of further unsympathetic developments.

National Trust manages much of the area but parts “left to nature” which is appropriate.

### **Aesthetic and Sensory**

Little “artificial” noise, tranquil, calming sounds of sea birds, waves breaking and the wind. However, Porthtowan village and beach are noisy in summer, less so in winter.

Real sense of remoteness in many locations.

Changes little other than wind direction and intensity through the seasons. Strong winter gales can be intense experience.

Heathland changes colour through flowering and die back of bracken.

Very little light pollution except for street and security lighting in immediate vicinity of Porthtowan.

### **Distinctive Features**

See also Historic Features where following are mentioned; Wheal Coates, WWII airfield, Engine House (minus stack) at Porthtowan.

Incredible views along coastline and out to sea; panoramic. Evidence of past mining activity; spoil heaps on land, adits on cliff face.

### **Views**

Vantage points and panoramic views along the whole of the cliff top. Views inland from some locations e.g. Jericho Valley.

### **3.5.3 Pressure and Forces for Change**

### **3.5.4 Landscape Management and Development Considerations**

**Aim:** Reflect and maintain the unspoilt scenic character of heathland, steep cliffs, and industrial heritage, and protect its setting.

- The accommodation of development on the coastal edge and its immediate hinterland should have regard to its prominence, special importance of the landscape and its largely undeveloped characteristics; development proposals should follow the aims, objectives and policies of the AONB and WHS management plans.
- The open open high nature of the coast provides extensive panoramic views of the surrounding area. Avoid locating development on prominent sky lines, particularly skylines with distinctive historic or cultural features.
- Avoid significant impacts on key views from important viewpoints, popular tourist and scenic routes and settlements.
- Avoid the creation of access tracks across coastal rough ground.
- Protecting our beaches from further losses of sand and shingle (all beaches from Tobban Cove to Hanover Cove - but particularly our main bathing beaches) based on their higher historical levels (photographic and map evidence and coastal sea defence survey).
- Proposals which seek to dredge off the coast of St. Agnes parish (for whatever purpose), such activity potentially depleting beach levels and disrupting the Voluntary Marine Conservation Area and surrounding marine areas will not be supported.

## **3.6 Landscape Type: The Beacon**

(This information is also provided in a Table in Appendix 4.5)

### **3.6.1 Key Characteristics**

- Sense of space, light and quiet.
- Big sky, dark at night and extensive windy hilltop views.
- A general feeling of remoteness and peace.
- A major landscape feature, prominent from many parts of the parish and from elsewhere in Cornwall; an iconic symbol of the parish.
- Heathland on the hilltop contributes to the upland feel of the hill.

### **3.6.2 Character of the Landscape Type**

#### **Topography and Drainage**



The Beacon is a granite outcrop/intrusion formed in an almost a perfect dome shape, at 192 metres, with specific ridgelines difficult to define. The hill slopes more steeply on its seaward side. It is the highest point in the area.

No water present on the Beacon.

### **Biodiversity**

It is predominantly heathland, not highly modified and some still regenerating.

Areas of gorse, bracken, bramble scrub offer valuable bird cover and habitat. The same with the hedgerows and cornish hedges and heathland which also provide habitat and "green corridors" for birds, lizards, adders and small mammals.

Montbretia on the eastern and western slopes.

### **Land Cover and Land Use**

Mostly recreational and amenity, including campsites and some farming on the lower flanks of the Beacon. Particularly to the south of the village. Both arable and pasture for cattle and sheep are evident.

Few houses on actual Beacon hillside, only a few mineworker type cottages on the lower slopes at Goonvrea.

Heather on the top of the Beacon, some bramble/thorn scrubland on higher slopes, bracken encroaching on the lower slopes to the east. Some improved grassland on the lower slopes.

### **Field and Woodland Pattern**

Some small hawthorns and privet on the eastern side of Beacon. Taller trees on the Goonvrea side but mostly in gardens near the roadside, some Sycamore and conifer.

No ancient woodland present.

Fields are medium in size on the slopes of the hill, becoming bigger as they descend the slopes, with the exception of the Goonvrea slopes where evidence of medieval field systems are still present. Most of the bigger fields are farmed and a few hedges have been removed.

Many earth hedgerows visible and some cornish hedges and occasional dry stone walls. The stone walls appear to be managed.

Most hedgerow scrub (willow, oak and occasional thorn), have been sculpted by the wind and are stunted. Very few mature trees seen, mostly in gardens on the inland slopes.

Hedges are buffered by grassland and gorse predominantly.

### **Settlement Pattern**

Victorian mineworker type cottages made from local stone are present on the Goonvrea slopes. There is no other housing on the actual Beacon, but there is a small ribbon development of mixed housing along the roadside at Goonvrea.

Older buildings made from local stone and slate roofs. Hotel is 1930's type build. Most homes have gardens and cottages at Goonvrea have the small mineworker type fields as gardens. Roofs slate and scantle.

### **Transport Pattern**

Minor roads circle the lower slopes of the Beacon, predominantly straight, but a few winding. No pavements or formal verges seen. The roads and paths are unlit and "dark sky" is present.

Access to paths are good with some occasional erosion, particularly on nearing the top of the Beacon.

Paths will have been routes to work for mineworkers and farmers historically.

No bridges present.

### **Historic Features**

Capped mine shafts

Remains of WW2 radar station.

There are sites of ancient barrows and cairns on the top of the Beacon.

The Beacon itself is an ancient natural marker and site of pageantry in the landscape and parish.

There is also a Trig point on the top of the hill.

### **Condition**

There is evidence of some erosion, caused by amenity use, particularly at the summit and on the more frequently used paths.

Some bracken clearance is needed to prevent dominance of species and promote heathland regeneration.

The land is managed by the National Trust and local farmers.

### **Aesthetic and Sensory**

The Beacon is a calm, quiet area with big open sky and extended panoramic views.

The landscape is mostly exposed, always windy, rugged and sculptural and feels remote.

There is considerable seasonal change in colour in the landscape on the heathland areas, when heather and gorse are in flower.

Wind direction is SW, sometimes fierce.

Very little light pollution. Village lights are seen in the distance from the Beacon and an awareness of other town lighting is experienced from afar. Predominantly a feeling of "dark sky."

### **Distinctive Features**

The Beacon itself stands high in the landscape and can be seen from a long way along the North coast and out to sea.

On the top there is a water reservoir, remains of the radar station, a Trig point along with rocky outcrops, barrows and cairns.

Elsewhere there are views of wind turbines, solar panels in fields, telegraph poles and cables in places of significant beauty.

Industrial heritage buildings are seen in abundance in the landscape from the top of the hill.

### **Views**

Panoramic, far reaching views from the top of the Beacon, across the land, sea and extensively along the North coast.

## **3.6.3 Pressure for Change**

## **3.6.4 Landscape Management and Development Considerations**

**Aim:** Reflect and maintain the predominating character of the landscape type – a prominent landmark hill, topped with heathland and fringed with farmland and scattered settlement, including miners' smallholdings.

- The prominent location and significance of this landscape means that great care is needed to avoid impact on views to and from the Beacon; development proposals should follow the aims, objectives and policies of the AONB and WHS management plans.

- Seek the restoration and enhancement of the expansive openness of the coastal plateau and Beacon to keep free from intrusive development and tall structures.
- Seek protection of the setting of St Agnes Beacon by conserving the extent and character of surrounding farmland for example between it and the existing settlement edge of St Agnes , Goonvrea and smaller groupings of dwellings, in order to protect the landscape integrity of this key landscape feature
- Developments should protect local character by retaining traditional vernacular buildings and features, including farmsteads, farm buildings, cottages, outbuildings and walling.
- Alterations and extensions to dwellings should have appropriate regard to the character of the existing dwelling, in particular to ensure that the scale and design reflects the character of the original dwelling and its setting in the landscape.
- Loss of traditional cottages, farmsteads and farm buildings to replacement dwellings should be exceptional, as these are heritage assets which contribute to the character of this type. Any replacements should be comparable in scale, mass and character to properties in the area and in keeping with the area's character.
- Reflect the field sizes, retaining and enhancing the small and medium field patterns. The former miners' smallholdings are an important part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site and its setting.

## Chapter 4 - The Importance of the St Agnes Parish Landscape

4.1 St Agnes Parish forms part of the St Agnes section of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Its landscape is recognised to be of national importance and there is a duty to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. This landscape is given the highest level of protection, the same protection as awarded to our National Parks.

4.2 The preparation of a Local Landscape Character Assessment for St Agnes Parish provides the opportunity to obtain the views of local people; in order to gain a better understanding of what they value about their landscape and what is important to them. It has been recognised that how people view, value and enjoy the landscape is broadly based on a range of factors. These for most people would include a combination of the following:

- Landscape and scenic quality
- Historical and nature conservation interests
- Recreation value
- Perceptions, memories and associations

A public consultation event was held in September 2016 and local people were asked their views on what they valued in the landscape. The results are attached (Appendix 7) and the response to the exercises that were undertaken is summarised below:

### 4.3 Comments

4.3.1 People were asked their views on the landscape and below is a list of the main comments:

- I love my allotment in Mithian and the view from it.
- Protect landscape from further development.
- No more development on the Beacon or where spoiling views in the parish.
- No more solar panels in fields.
- A priority must be protecting the green areas, countryside and coast.
- On opposite side of Porthtowan stream from Park Shady is an old Millpond which could be used as a reed bed filter to trap fertilisers from farms above and so improve bathing water quality.
- New housing - onto main walking areas should be made to keep hedges trimmed
- Please no more development on the tops of hills unless some effort made to landscape and soften impact. Historically the Victorians planted pines for pit props. Also straight oak was cut down for mines.
- There needs to be many more trees planted.
- Recognise the importance of all the mining heritage in the Parish.
- Land should be used for local food and energy and employment and economically sustainable way.
- There are invasive species in Porthtowan Ward. Knotweed at the top of Cove exit and Himalayan Balsam in the valley.
- Centre of Porthtowan needs to be better landscaped. The stream edged and the hinterland made attractive for visitors.

- Landscape = Character, history, beauty, identity. Once it's gone, it's gone! Protect, protect, protect! Do not pave paradise eh.
- Keep a clear non-development line between existing village and Higher Bal.
- Leave the remaining green spaces alone for nature.
- Create protected areas with green credentials that are stated.
- Wheal Friendly and Rocky Lane should be AONB.
- We want our children to have the village green space that we have.
- No more encroaching on village line

#### **4.4 Map of St Agnes Parish**

4.4.1 People were also asked to put different coloured dots on a map of the parish to depict 'what makes the landscape of St Agnes Parish important'. The coloured spot was put on the area/place that was considered to be special. Different colours were used to show why it was felt to be a special place; the list of categories included recreational value, historical interest, natural and wildlife interest, good views and where you can "get away for it all". The results are shown on Plan 3.

4.4.2 These results did show a pattern, with the majority of special places being located on the coast and the Beacon. The reason why places were valued are broadly summarised below:

- Recreational value – Largely on the coast where there is good accessibility; Chapel Porth, Porthtowan and Trevaunance Cove were very popular. The recreational areas in the countryside that were also highlighted included the Beacon, Trevellas Coombe, Park Shady and footpaths linking into the villages. Village facilities including the public houses and village halls were also selected.
- Historical interest- The area that was most popular was Wheal Coates. The individual areas of historic mining interest that were selected were Wheal Charlotte, Polberro, South Wheal Towan, Tywarnhayle the valley leading to Porthtowan and Cligga Head near Perranporth. Other areas of interest were the former railway line at Goonbell and the higher land at Two Burrows. In the villages the Passmore Edwards Institute in Blackwater, Old School House, Mount Hawke, the Garden of Rest, Church, Museum and the churchyard in St Agnes were also highlighted.
- Natural and wildlife interest- Again the coast and the valleys leading to the coast were considered to be very important for natural interest and wildlife, in particular the cliffs at Porthtowan and Chapel Porth and the valleys of Chapel Coombe and Trevellas Coombe. Other areas of interest included the higher ground at the Beacon, The Hayman nature reserve at Park Hoskyn, land to the north east of Mithian and the dismantled railway line.
- Good views - These were spread throughout St Agnes Parish but predominantly on higher ground on the Beacon, and along the coast where good views are achieved across the sea. The other areas which were highlighted included the former mining areas, with a significant concentration at Tywarnhayle Mine, the footpaths from Trevaunance Road to Trevaunance Cove, St Agnes and Polberro.

- Where you “get away from it all” – once again the footpath network serving the coast was most popular, with a concentration on the south west coast path. The other favourite spots included the Beacon, Banns, Mount Hawke and the valley to the west of Mithian Downs.

#### **4.5 Your Comments**

The comments from the preliminary public consultation exercise in September 2016 provided part of a picture of what is valued in the St Agnes Parish landscape. Future public consultation including the Consultation Draft St Agnes Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan will also provide an opportunity to gain more information on what people value about the St Agnes Parish landscape. It is also anticipated when future work is undertaken on the St Agnes Parish Village Character Assessment, that there will be other opportunities for the community to give their views on what is valued within the 5 main villages. This will enable the understanding of what is special and important about the St Agnes Parish landscape and villages to be built on further.

DRAFT

## Chapter 5 - The Relationship between the St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA) and the St Agnes Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) –

### To be completed when NDP policies have been drafted

#### 5.1 How the Local Landscape Character Assessment links to the Neighbourhood Development Plan policies

5.1.1 The current position on policy development in the plan will be outlined – the Vision and Objectives for St Agnes will be set down.

#### 5.2 How the St Agnes Parish LLCA can be used to inform planning decisions:

5.2.1 The draft LLCA policy used for the St Agnes Parish NDP is:

*Proposals for development will be supported where they have demonstrated that they respond to local character and reflect the identity of the local surroundings based on the assessment of the St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character. Where development is proposed which will detract from or have an adverse impact on characteristics that have been identified by the community and in the St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment as important to the character of the local area, it will be refused.*

Future proposed development in St Agnes Parish NDP area can be assessed against a LLCA policy in the plan. The St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment provides a description of the landscape for the St Agnes Parish NDP area (Chapter 3 and Appendix 5). This provides a list of key characteristics and a detailed description of their landscape features and attributes. In addition details are provided of 'Pressures and Forces for Change' and an assessment has been made of 'Land Management and Development Considerations'. The Local Landscape Character Assessment, and in particular, the Land Management and Development Considerations should be used when proposals come forward for development in the St Agnes Parish Plan.

5.2.2 The landscape management and development guidance outlined in chapter 3 supports the position taken forward in the National Planning Framework. As outlined below:

- Paragraph 14 – there is no presumption in favour of development that conflicts with AONB policies
- Paragraph 55 – To promote sustainable development in rural areas



- Paragraph 58 – To set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area; specific reference is made to the need to respond to local character
- Paragraph 60 – To promote local distinctiveness
- Paragraph 99 – Taking into account climate change, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape
- Paragraph 109 – To enhance the natural environment
- Paragraph 114 – To maintain the character of the undeveloped coast
- Paragraph 115 - The need for 'great weight' to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the AONB.
- Paragraph 123 – To protect areas of tranquillity
- Paragraph 125 – To limit the impact of light pollution

5.2.3 Guidance that can be used to assess landscape character when development proposals are under consideration is available (Appendix 8 - Judging Landscape Capacity - A Development Management Toolkit). This development management toolkit was adopted by Cornwall Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and will be used by the council for the assessment of development proposals. The Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment - 2007 provides the county wide landscape assessment for the whole of Cornwall and this will be used, as the evidence base, to inform this process. The preparation of the St Agnes Parish Local Landscape Character Assessment enables a local resource, based on involvement of the local community as volunteers and specialists, to be used in the St Agnes Parish NDP area. In the future when proposals come forward for development in St Agnes, the sensitivity of the landscape and its capacity to accommodate development, can be assessed using this community based local assessment of the landscape.

### **5.3 How the Local Landscape Character Assessment links to the Neighbourhood Development Plan policies –**

**To be completed when draft policies are agreed**