



December 2020

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Continuing to support Penwith's farmers

Welcome to another newsletter from the Penwith Landscape Partnership (PLP)

Despite all the challenges of 2020 we are very proud that we have been able to continue our work supporting the farmers of Penwith, and there are still opportunities for us to help!

Through our Buildings in the Landscape project, we offer an amazing service for any active farms with buildings of heritage value which may have redevelopment potential. Chytodden Farm provides a wonderful example of what can result, as featured in a recent PLP blog: <https://tinyurl.com/bldgsland>. We offer the

services of experienced local planning consultant, James Evans,

who can advise on the practicalities, and to arrange grants which can cover 80% of the professional fees for architectural design, planning applications and supporting surveys, and getting Building Regulations approval.

We are still open for the planning of further old building renovations to be supported through this project.

However, we expect that by the end of 2021, all our budgets for this will be committed. If you have an old building which may be able to offer an economic contribution to your farm business, contact James at

james@evansplanning.co.uk or call 0776 300 7794.

Over the summer we have also completed five Countryside Stewardship applications on behalf of farmers who want to provide space for nature or protect soils and water. A number of options are available. For instance, creating herbal leys can reduce vulnerability to drought and improve livestock health whilst reducing inputs. Pasture that is close to water or wildflower-rich can go into a very low or no fertiliser option, which lowers greenhouse gas emissions and protects water whilst encouraging wildflowers and providing for pollinating insects. Cornish Hedges can be restored, maintaining important wildlife corridors which date back thousands of years.

This year PLP volunteers spread wildflower seeds over 3.1 hectares, which we had previously harvested from local wildflower-rich grasslands. Initial results from 2020 sowings are promising, with Red Clover, Black Knapweed, Yellow Rattle and Common Bird's-foot Trefoil establishing, to provide mineral-rich forage beneficial for animal health, recreating a much-declined habitat important for many species whilst reversing habitat fragmentation.

For more information on how we are supporting farmers visit www.penwithlandscape.com/farming



Events

We have the following free events coming up. To learn more, more details will be added to www.penwithlandscape.com/events soon.

- 22nd-28th February 2021 – **Virtual Hedge Week**. Join us for a week of digital activities and fun celebrating the Cornish Hedge in Penwith. More information to follow soon!

Advice on Tree Planting in Penwith

Tree planting is very popular. This can sequester carbon and help fight climate change, but it is very damaging to wildlife in certain circumstances, even when native trees and shrubs are used. For example heathland, wetland and wildflower-rich grassland are wildlife-rich habitats, often of great antiquity and hard to recreate. They are destroyed by tree planting. The root systems of trees damage buried archaeology, so ancient sites should be avoided. Furthermore, the soil disturbance from tree planting on peatlands and other habitats with undisturbed organic-rich soils can lead to substantial carbon release, exacerbating climate change – the opposite of what is intended!



Whilst woodland can be very important wildlife habitat, new woods will not get anywhere near the biodiversity value of ancient woods for centuries. To avoid impacts on existing wildlife habitat, tree planting – or the creation of woodland through allowing natural regeneration – should be focused strictly on wildlife-poor intensive farmland, or recreational grassland such as parks and the edges of playing fields. Cornwall Wildlife Trust has a guide explaining how to select sites for woodland creation with wildlife in mind. Consultation with organisations like PLP and the Forest for Cornwall can also help.

We encourage natural tree regeneration over tree planting. This promotes the local genetic diversity of the native species already in the area, whilst avoiding the disease risk that comes with bringing in stock for planting. Natural regeneration often provides much more diversity due to the random pattern of shrub and tree colonisation, providing conditions for a wide range of other native flora and fauna.

It is also worth considering agroforestry. Trees planted in the farmed environment can increase shelter and rainfall infiltration and reduce soil erosion. This can benefit horticulture, arable or livestock farms whilst benefitting wildlife and capturing carbon from the atmosphere.

Volunteering is still taking place

Our team has worked hard to continue volunteer sessions in a Covid-secure way. We are always happy for more volunteers! To find out more and sign up go to www.penwithlandscape.com/volunteer

Who is on the Partnership?

Members of the Penwith Landscape Partnership board are:

Bolitho Estates
Cornwall Ancient Sites Protection Network (CASPN)
Cornwall Archaeological Society
Cornwall AONB
Cornwall Councillors representing four Penwith wards
Cornwall Wildlife Trust
Farm Cornwall
Farming representatives
National Trust
Save Penwith Moors

Spider Eye Animation
St Aubyn Estates
Towednack Parish Council
Zennor Parish Council

Chaired by Cllr Jim McKenna

Advisors to the board include:

Natural England and Cornwall Council Historic Environment Service

If you would like to keep in touch with our work please contact us to sign up to this newsletter.

Penwith Landscape Partnership

1st Floor Office, Above the Dog and Rabbit, North Row, St Just, Penzance, Cornwall. TR19 7LB

Visit www.penwithlandscape.com, or email PLPinfo@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk. You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

