

Minutes of Cornwall Heritage Trust Property Committee 21st August 2024

The meeting was undertaken via Zoom video-conferencing.
It was chaired by Peter Herring.

Present:

Trustees: Peter Herring and Helen Rawe

Staff: Dick Cole (Sites Officer), Hollie Ferris (Countryside Ranger) and Cathy Woolcock (Chief Executive Officer).

1.0 Apologies

No apologies had been received.

2.0 Minutes of Property Committee from 22nd May 2024

Helen Rawe noted that, in section 3.11 of the minutes, the word "the" was missing, while in section 3.14, the word "need" should have read "needs." The minutes, as amended, were agreed as a true and accurate record by consensus.

Peter Herring asked whether there had been any reply from Dawn Hunn about a "thank you" lunch to recognise her years as a trustee. It was confirmed that there had been no reply.

3.0 Report from the Sites Officer

A detailed written report had been circulated to the members of the Property Committee in advance of the meeting. It is attached as appendix 1. While there was some discussion of all sections of the report, the minutes only cover additional issues raised at the meeting.

3.1 Caer Bran

This section of the report was noted.

3.2 Sancreed Beacon

The Countryside Ranger was asked about the youth ranger project. She confirmed that the initiative has been funded through a grant from English Heritage's national youth engagement programme. A number of young people, aged between 14 and 18, were engaged with a number of tasks on Trust properties. They had built bird, bat and dormouse boxes at the Botho, before erecting them in Tony's Wood on the Beacon. It was noted that other activities included scything at Tregonning Hill and, on the day prior to the meeting, raking up cut vegetation on Caer Bran.

3.3 Tregonning Hill

It was noted that the ecological assessment for the site, which would soon be carried out, had been funded through the Bannister Trust. Peter Herring suggested that there also needed to be an assessment of the archaeological

remains on the site, because there was no detailed report as on other sites (eg. Caer Bran and Sancreed Beacon). It was agreed that there would be further discussion about how this work might be progressed.

3.4 Castle an Dinas

There was a discussion about the problems with discarded “dog poo bags” in the car park. It was agreed that the provision of waste bins on Trust sites was not an option, not least because of the cost, and the Trust needed to focus on educating people to take their waste home after their visits.

3.5 Luxulyan Valley

The Sites Officer pointed out an error in the report. The excavation by the Crib Hut will take place in October – not September as previously stated. The report, attached as appendix 1, has been updated.

3.6 Trevanion Culverhouse and St Cleer Well / Cross

3.7 Lammana Chapel

These sections of the report were noted.

3.8 Duloe Stone Circle

Peter Herring made the same point about the need for an assessment of the archaeological remains at this site, as he had made about Tregonning Hill.

3.9 Field at Trethevy

This section of the report was noted.

3.10 SPF and RPF projects

There was a discussion about the work needed to deliver the new “brown signs” and the benches across some of the Trust’s key sites. It was noted that the campaign for a new logo for the “brown signs” had stalled, and the Trust would need to use the traditional emblem for archaeological sites due to the tight timescales dictated by the funding.

The CEO noted that the outdoor classroom tent, which would not be funded through the RPF programme, was being delivered with funding from another programme.

3.11 Continuation of the PLP Volunteer Group

3.12 English Heritage sites

These sections of the report were noted.

3.13 Other activities

In terms of the installation of a toilet into the new "horse box," the CEO noted that this increased the ability of the Trust to cater for events and volunteer groups on those sites that would not have the compost toilets. It was further noted that, last year, over £5,000 was spent on rented portable toilets.

3.14 Capital Works Plan

This section of the report was noted.

4.0 Potential new sites

The CEO reported that she had had a recent meeting with Jon Mitchell from Cornwall Council about the acquisition of those sites discussed at previous meetings of the Property Committee.

She said that she was confident that three sites were likely to be transferred in time for the Trust's 40th anniversary year. These were the western Castle an Dinas, the hillfort at Warbstow and the Minions Engine House.

There was a delay to the acquisition of additional land at Hannafore, adjacent to Lammana Chapel, as the unitary authority was presently in dispute with the farmer who is the tenant on the land.

In terms of the Prince of Wales Mine, the CEO said that there were no condition surveys of the engine house and associated buildings, and she was seeking further information about the structures prior to transfer.

The situation at East Pentire Head was more complicated. Newquay Town Council had also shown an interest in the site and the CEO recently had to prepare business cases to justify gaining this site. She added that this was the least significant of the sites under discussion in terms of archaeological remains but it did come with a car park, which would obviously generate an income. She added that if the Trust did not secure this site, she was keen to get something else from the Council that would have the ability to generate monies for our organisation and that the Council are aware of this intention.

5.0 Future meetings

It was noted that the next Property Committee meeting would be on 23rd October 2024 (2.00). It was confirmed that the Property Risk Register would be discussed at this meeting.

APPENDIX 1

REPORT TO PROPERTY COMMITTEE OF CORNWALL HERITAGE TRUST

- covering the period from 20th May until 15th August 2024

Produced by the Heritage Sites Officer

Please note that this report does not cover the basic maintenance being carried out on individual sites.

CORNWALL HERITAGE TRUST SITES

1.0 CAER BRAN

1.1 Vegetation management

Bracken management across the Trust's sites has been a priority for the Sites Team from July onwards. On Caer Bran, bracken was cut back in July by contactors [Jason Appleby / Gerald Babcock].

The cost of this work was met by the remaining monies from the Historic England grant, which was largely spent in that financial year.

1.2 Two walks

I hosted two walks across Caer Bran on 26th July as part of the Trust's activities for the CBA (Council for British Archaeology) Festival of Archaeology.



1.3 New interpretation boards

Two new interpretation boards have been produced and are presently stored within the Botho at Geevor. The Countryside Ranger has secured the necessary consent from Natural England for the works, because of the SSSI status of the land. The signs will be erected in the very near-future.

2.0 SANCREED BEACON

2.1 Tractor shed

I am pleased to be able to report that the Trust has the necessary planning "permission" to erect the tractor shed at Sancreed Beacon.

As previously reported, the Trust has "permitted development rights" to construct the store building, as it relates to agriculture / land management. I submitted a "prior approval" notification [PA24/03928] to clarify that we do not need to submit a more formal planning application. This was confirmed on 11th June, when we were informed that an application was not needed.

I can confirm that the Trust has secured the necessary SSSI consent from Natural England for the works.

The various sections of metalwork for the building are presently being constructed, for erection on site later in the year. It will be placed on a concrete base.

2.2 Compost toilet

I have submitted a full planning application for a compost toilet on Sancreed Beacon but, because our ecological assessment is more than 12 months old, we have been asked to submit further information. I have tasked CEC (Cornwall Environmental Consultants) to produce a letter to provide the necessary evidence. Once this has been done, the application will be formally registered and taken forward.

The Countryside Ranger and I had a very positive meeting with Anna Guri from Natural England on 20th May about the location for the compost toilet.

2.3 Vegetation management

The Countryside Ranger and the Countryside Ranger Apprentice have commenced bracken clearance on the Beacon.

This has involved mowing with the tractor, scything and strimming. There have also been four sessions with volunteers.



2.4 New interpretation boards

Two interpretation boards were erected on the Beacon on 12th August. The Countryside Ranger had previously secured the necessary SSSI consent from Natural England for the works.

2.5 Other activities

In addition, the Countryside Ranger and Countryside Ranger Apprentice met up with our youth rangers to erect bird, bat and dormouse boxes on the site. The Ranger can explain more about the youth ranger initiative at the meeting. The Team also helped with preparations for the midsummer bonfire at the site.

3.0 TREGONNING HILL

3.1 Vegetation management

The Countryside Ranger Apprentice has spent a number of days at Tregonning Hill cutting back bracken. The work has focused on paths and around the round, which lies outside the SSSI. On one of these days, he was assisted by the youth rangers.

3.2 Other activities

Peter Herring and I spent an afternoon on the Hill with Simon Maddison, who provided a significant donation towards the purchase of the Hill.

3.3 Future work priorities

I have just secured a quote for an ecological assessment of the site from Cornwall Environmental Consultants, which I will be discussing with the CEO. I need to submit a "notice of works" application to Natural England for what we plan to do on the 25% of the Hill, which is SSSI, and I need to organise a site visit with Natural England to discuss an application for Countryside Stewardship funding.

4.0 CASTLE AN DINAS

4.1 Tractor shed

I am further pleased to be able to report that the Trust has the necessary planning "permission" to erect the tractor shed at Castle an Dinas. I submitted a "prior approval" notification [PA24/03930] to clarify that we do not need to submit a more formal planning application. This was confirmed on 13th June, when we were informed that an application was not needed.

4.2 Compost toilet

I have submitted a full planning application [PA24/03946] for a compost toilet to be located next to the above tractor shed. Because our ecological assessment is more than 12 months old, I had to submit further information and CEC (Cornwall Environmental Consultants) were paid to produce a letter to provide the necessary evidence. I attended the last meeting of St Columb Town Council, at which the application was supported. A decision is expected in mid-September.

4.3 Two walks

I hosted two walks across Castle an Dinas on 17th July as part of the Trust's activities for the CBA's Festival of Archaeology.

4.4 Vegetation management

The Team has cut back the vegetation on the flat areas of the monument with the tractor and mower, and there has been additional strimming and scything – sometimes with volunteers. This work is ongoing.



4.5 Other issues

The team has carried out a flora survey on the site.

There have been a number of localised issues in the car park. This includes dog walkers leaving dog poo bags in piles around the area, camper vans staying overnight and people also cutting the ties on the temporary portaloo next to the storage container. I will be raising our concerns about these activities on our land with the local Police and Community Support Officer for the St Columb district, to see whether she has any advice or can visit the site herself.

5.0 LUXULYAN VALLEY

The Trust has funding to carry out a community excavation by the Crib Hut, which would explore whether there is any surviving below-ground evidence of tram rails or any other remains next to the building. These works have been timetabled in for October.

6.0 TREVANION CULVERHOUSE AND ST CLEER WELL / CROSS

The new interpretation boards for these sites were erected on 5th August.



7.0 LAMMANA CHAPEL

No updates of note for the Chapel.

8.0 DULOE STONE CIRCLE

The Sites Team have erected a new gate on the entrance into the field containing the stone circle and I am pleased to have received positive feedback on the grass cutting that we are doing at the site.

The Countryside Ranger and Countryside Ranger Apprentice have carried out a survey of flora on the site.



9.0 FIELD AT TRETHEVY

The Countryside Ranger and Countryside Ranger Apprentice have carried out a survey of flora at this location as well, and reinstated a fence line. They hosted a guided walk about hedges around the site.



10.0 SPF AND RPF PROJECTS

It is necessary to update trustees on the situation with the projects funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and Rural Prosperity Fund (RPF).

The tractor shed at Sancreed Beacon is funded by SPF, while the tractor shed at Castle an Dinas and the two compost toilets are funded by RPF.

The cost of the tractor sheds has turned out to be more expensive than originally estimated, because of the need for concrete bases, but we are able to keep within the overall SPF / RPF budget envelopes, because we will not be purchasing a hedge trimmer (SPF) and an outdoor classroom tent (RPF).

Funding from the Rural Prosperity Fund is still in place for a new trailer, benches on a number of our sites and new "brown signs" for CHT-owned sites. Work is ongoing in terms of the delivery of these new assets.

The CEO and I can update further at the meeting if deemed necessary.

11.0 CONTINUATION OF PLP VOLUNTEER GROUP

The volunteer group previously associated with the Penwith Landscape Partnership is continuing to do great work under the supervision of Richie Smith. The Countryside Ranger Apprentice regularly liaises and works with Richie. As some trustees will be aware, Richie gave a presentation to a recent meeting of the Council of Management. The above photograph is from a recent intervention at Chun Castle.



12.0 ENGLISH HERITAGE SITES

12.1 Maintenance

Regular grass cutting and other maintenance is ongoing for the "free sites" that we look after for English Heritage.

12.2 Dupath Well

At the March meeting with Ed McGregor, the English Heritage officer with responsibility for their "free sites," he raised worries about the extent of moss on the roof. I can confirm that the English Heritage's Building Conservation Manager for the SW arranged for this work to be done.



13.0 OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Sites Team has been active with a range of initiatives, assisting the wider CHT team. In particular, the Countryside Ranger Apprentice has made improvements to the Botho store at Geevor and is working on the installation of a toilet into the Trust's new horsebox.



They have also helped with various events including the Trust's stand at the Royal Cornwall Show, and ongoing preparation for the Awenek festival.

The Countryside Ranger and Countryside Ranger Apprentice have both attended a hedging course with CREST (Cornwall Rural Education and Skills Trust), while the Apprentice has continued to do some work experience with the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

14.0 CAPITAL WORKS PLAN

I have been asked to prepare a detailed capital works plan for the sites, but must report that I have not been able to do this yet.

15.0 FUTURE MEETINGS

The date for the next meeting of the Property Committee has already been set: 23rd October 2024 – 2.00