

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan for Polperro and Lansallos Parish: Additional issues and projects for community action**

A Neighbourhood Development Plan is an important part of the legal framework for making planning decisions and the policies as set out in the main NDP document will be ‘material considerations’ that decision makers at all levels will be required to take into account. However during the many discussions that have taken place as part of the process of preparing this NDP, and from comments made by respondents to the household and business surveys, a number of additional issues have arisen. These additional issues might be significant for the future of the Parish but are beyond the scope of the Plan itself and addressing them will require separate action by the community. The following is a summary of those issues together with steps that are being taken or will be necessary in relation to each of them.

### **1. Housing and a Community Land Trust**

The community’s main concerns for housing are whether and where to build new ones with the least damage to the environment and the landscape, and how to build at a price that is within reach of the people most in need. All these issues are well within the scope of the Cornwall Local Plan and the NDP and both include various relevant policies. The Cornwall Local Plan and the NDP also support the idea of making use of Community Land Trusts or similar non-profit organisations both to monitor genuinely local housing need and to plan how best to meet that need. In the case of Polperro and Lansallos Parish this would mean either working in partnership with an existing CLT such as the Cornwall Community Land Trust, or setting up a new body specifically for this area.

### **2. Employment opportunities**

Creating and supporting enough well-paid, year-round employment opportunities within a reasonable distance of home is a concern for any community, including ours, as reflected in NDP-related discussions and surveys. The planning system is not intended to create jobs but rather to set conditions that will encourage job-creation by easing the way for existing businesses to grow and for new ones to emerge. The NDP clearly indicates that proposals for new or larger workshops and storage units would be supported and suggests some locations that would be considered suitable. It then falls to the businesses that are either already here or might move into the area to make the right decisions and investments. In doing so they now, potentially, have the support of the Polperro Promotion Group’s Community Interest Company (Polperro CIC) which was set up in 2017 in order to establish local expertise for identifying funding sources and attracting funds to the area.

### **3. The Polperro Conservation Area**

Discussions, surveys and general local knowledge clearly show that the community values the unique qualities of Polperro and wants those qualities to be well protected, which is the purpose of the Conservation Area. However there is no doubt that there has been a gradual slippage of standards in the case of individual decisions about replacing doors or windows or carrying out other renovations. The NDP reinforces the principles of the Conservation Area, and refers to the need for regular reminders so that both businesses and residents are more aware of what is permitted and what is not. It is recommended that the Polperro Community Council take on the responsibility of distributing printed reminders once each year.

### **4. The Polperro football field**

Polperro AFC was established in 1908 and continues to be active and successful, and wishes to improve its facilities both for its football teams and for local residents as a recreation space and community centre. The NDP designates the football field as a Local Green Space which provides a high level of protection against unwanted development while allowing for improvements such as a new club house or changing room which will increase the amenity value of the site. The football club has already started raising funds and might consider approaching the Polperro CIC for assistance in identifying sources. NDP Policy 14 on open spaces states that proposals that enhance and increase the use and amenity value of this important open space will be supported.

## **5. Allotments**

Surveys and discussions suggest that the use of allotments is a minority interest for the community, but support for them fits well with the desire for sustainable, environmentally responsible and healthy development that is a goal at all levels of the planning system from the NPPF to the Cornwall Local Plan and the NDP. Cornwall Council has agreed to transfer an unused piece of land adjacent to Kellow Hill on a long term lease for the use of the community, to be administered by the Polperro Environment Group (PEG); the NDP designates that area as a Local Green Space.

## **6. Revitalising Big Green**

Big Green in the centre of Polperro has become an important venue for several community events each year and is an important community asset. NDP questionnaire surveys showed that businesses benefit considerably from the events on Big Green. However the area has deteriorated and is in need of a serious renovation programme. The NDP designates Big Green as a Local Green Space which will protect the area from unwanted development. The Polperro Community Council is in the process of arranging ownership transfers that will give them control over the whole area of Big Green, and preliminary steps have been taken to plan, finance and implement a renovation project.

## **7. Village Hall improvements**

Polperro's Village Hall is an important asset and is regularly used by various community groups and organisations; the building itself is an iconic landmark both for residents and for visitors as they arrive in the village. The Village Hall Committee has done well to maintain an income stream that allows them to keep the building in good order and implement repairs and gradual improvements as necessary. Even so surveys and discussions suggest that the community would like to see the building used more effectively as a genuine community centre and the Village Hall Committee acknowledges that there is potential for further improvements if grant funds were to be available. NDP Policy 4 on commercial development stipulates the type of development proposal that will be supported.

## **8. The Net Loft**

The Net Loft is an old building on the side of Peak Rock outside Polperro's harbour. After some years when it was rarely used, and after sustaining serious damage in the great storm of 2014, the building was recently refurbished at considerable expense by its owner the National Trust. The NDP household survey questionnaire included a question on how the Net Loft should be used, resulting in many constructive comments and suggestions. These included using the building as an exhibition space for artists and wildlife groups, as a meeting place for local organisations, as a fishing museum, as a workshop for local crafts people, as a drama

venue and as an off-site classroom for the school. All of these ideas have been forwarded to the National Trust and a group of volunteers has been set up to promote and manage the building.

## **9. Local access**

The single most common comment from the NDP household survey concerned access to Polperro shops and services for residents who live on the edge of the village or in other parts of the Parish. The problem was usually expressed in terms of the lack of reasonably-priced short-term parking facilities. There is a general feeling that charges in the main public car park are too high and too inflexible: the minimum charging period is three hours. In practice it is difficult to see a solution to the parking problem since the car park is privately owned and managed, and there are no other spaces close to the village centre that could be made available for public parking.

An alternative approach would be to develop a local transport service for getting around within the parish. This idea has been discussed by the Polperro CIC and they have taken some early steps towards buying and running a community bus primarily for the benefit of local residents on a year-round basis.

## **10. Promotion of sustainability, energy efficiency and green energy**

As noted above, sustainability, energy efficiency and the use of non-polluting sources of energy are important concerns for the community within Polperro and Lansallos Parish and important themes underlying all levels of the planning system. The NDP does what it can to require high standards of energy efficiency and the adoption of green energy sources in the construction and renovation of all buildings, mainly through its Policy 3 on energy saving and carbon reduction measures. There is also a need to ensure that these measures are well understood and put into practice by local building companies and by residents who may be planning improvements to their homes. To this end it is recommended that bodies such as the Polperro Community Council and PEG consider launching a public information campaign to promote better understanding of sustainability, energy efficiency and green energy and the relevant modern technologies and building standards.

## **11. Footpaths and pavements**

Responses to the NDP household questionnaire survey indicated strong support for improvements to footpaths and pavements, including two particular issues:

(a) The re-opening of the section of the coastal footpath on the western side of Talland Bay which has been closed due to erosion since a major storm in February 2014. Cornwall Council is responsible for decisions on opening or re-routing the path and it is understood that an agreement with a local landowner that will allow the path to reopen close to its original route is imminent.

(b) Improving access to the Net Loft, which at present is only possible by a rough and uneven footpath. The necessary changes could only be made as a result of joint action by the community and the National Trust.

## **12. Management of trees**

The NDP household questionnaire survey and discussions with local organisations drew attention to the largely unplanned and uncontrolled encroachment of trees on the sides of the valleys above the historic centre of Polperro. Photographs from the 1950s and 1960s show very few trees above The Coombes, behind what used to be St John's church and on the slopes below Brent, whereas now each of these areas is well-covered by what are sometimes

referred to as 'weed trees' that have grown up through a lack of both management and grazing by farm animals. There are members of the community who believe the trees bring an unnecessarily dark and sombre appearance to the upper levels of the valley which could be improved by a planned management programme.

### **13. Improved communications signals**

While most homes and businesses in Polperro have access to satisfactory broadband speeds, this is not the case for some of the outlying areas of the Parish, as was pointed out by respondents to the NDP household questionnaire survey. The parallel survey carried out among business owners also revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the strength of mobile telephone signals within Polperro; the village also suffers from a limited range of television channels that can be broadcast through the local relay station, and from a lack of DAB radio service.

Experience in rural areas elsewhere in England shows that problems with communications signals can be resolved as a result of resolute action by the communities concerned in pressing their case among the relevant service providers and by making use of appropriate government assistance. According to the website of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport the government has made a commitment to provide every home and business in the UK with access to a basic broadband service. A subsidised broadband installation is now available for those who cannot access an affordable broadband service with a speed of at least 2 MB per second.