



# WITHIEL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2030

Description of the Parish  
Vision for Development  
Policies about

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Environment
- Community Facilities
- Heritage and Tourism
- Green Assets
- Sustainable Development

This plan was initiated by the Withiel Parish Council and has been produced by a Steering Group whose members are

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Acknowledgements and thanks: Department of Communities and Local Government Locality initiative, for a grant in aid of production, printing and distribution of this plan; Colleen O'Sullivan of the Cornwall Council neighbourhood plans support team, for advice and assistance in the preparation of the plan and for supplying maps; James Evans, planning consultant, for professional advice and assistance; Robin Turner, parish clerk, for financial management; Janet Shearer, for photographs.

# Contents

Foreword

Introduction

- Description of the parish
- Neighbourhood planning: national and local
- Plan period
- Description of development plan process so far
- Procedure for submission, examination, referendum, adoption

Neighbourhood Development Plan: The Vision

Objectives and Policies

- A. Economic development
- B. Housing
- C. Environment and community facilities
- D. Heritage and tourism
- E. Green assets and sustainable development

Appendix A.1: Directory of Businesses located in/working from Withiel Parish

Appendix D.1: Historic England listed sites in Withiel Parish

## Foreword

1. Those of us who are fortunate enough to live in this beautiful part of Cornwall seek to protect and wherever possible to enhance the local environment. We want to ensure that the Neighbourhood Development Plan exists as a guide for future development in the area, both in terms of the positioning of development and also to maintain a high standard of design and workmanship in building.

2. We want to encourage local enterprise, especially the micro businesses now flourishing within the parish, and support agriculture which is the basis of the main economy. Enabling tourism to grow so that visitors can share the treasures in Withiel, both historic and natural, also supports the local economy. We hope to positively and actively influence improvements in the local infrastructure which impact on businesses – for example, by continuing to seek improvement in the broadband service which has hitherto been very disappointing in the more rural areas of Withiel.

3. Volunteers from the community have worked together over the last two years to produce the Plan and it has been both fascinating and rewarding to witness the project taking shape. As we have progressed we have become more and more aware of the value of our stunning surroundings.

4. The late Sue Kirkby, who was chairman of the Withiel Parish Council and who also chaired the original Neighbourhood Development Plan steering group, initiated proceedings by organising a parish questionnaire, consultations and meetings. Her tireless energy and commitment to the plan inspired us all to take it forward to its conclusion and we hope that it will represent the views of all members of the public living within Withiel Parish for the foreseeable future.

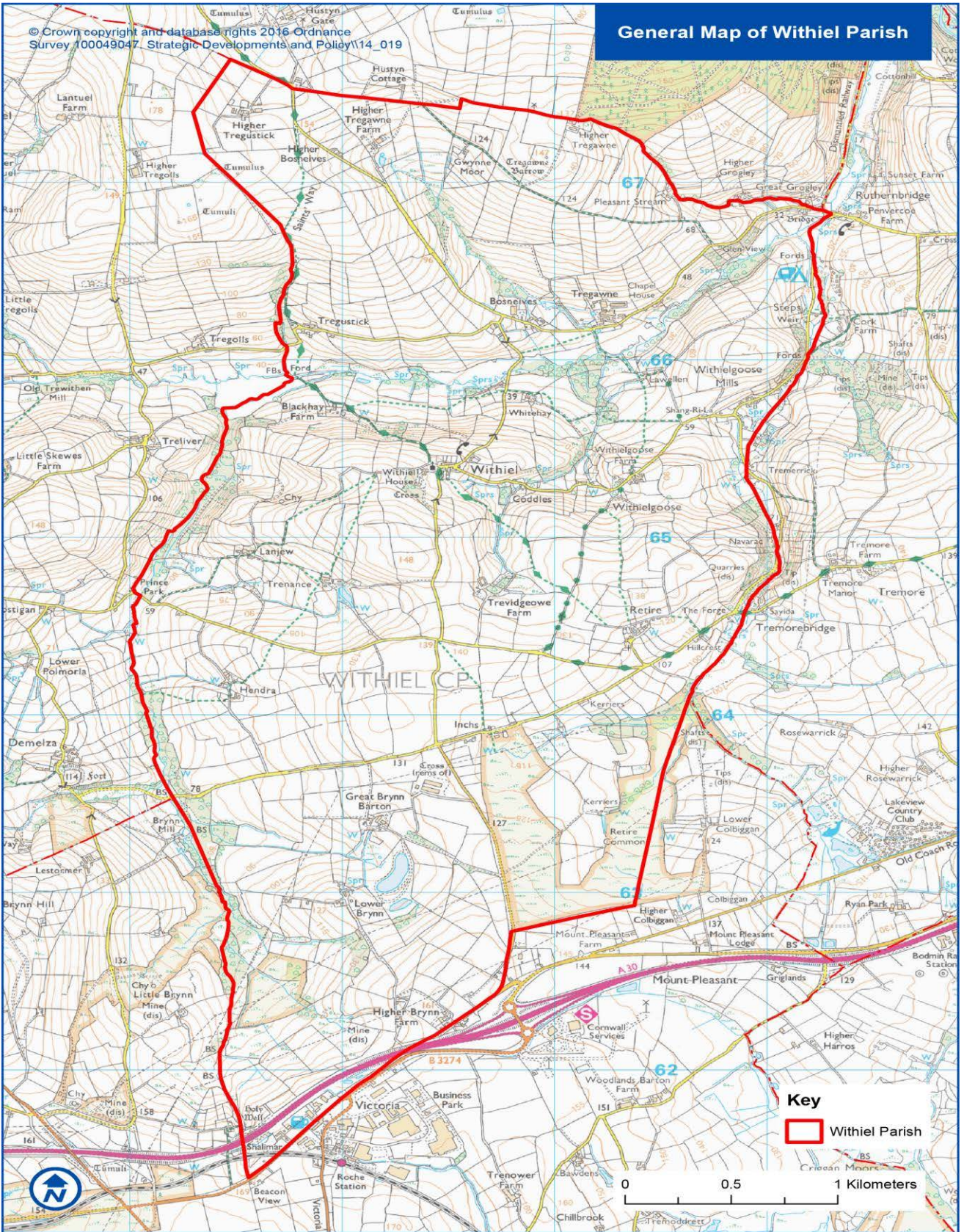
5. Thanks are due to David Cubitt who as steering group rapporteur was responsible for collating contributions and comments.

*Janet Shearer*

Chair, Withiel Parish Council




June 2016

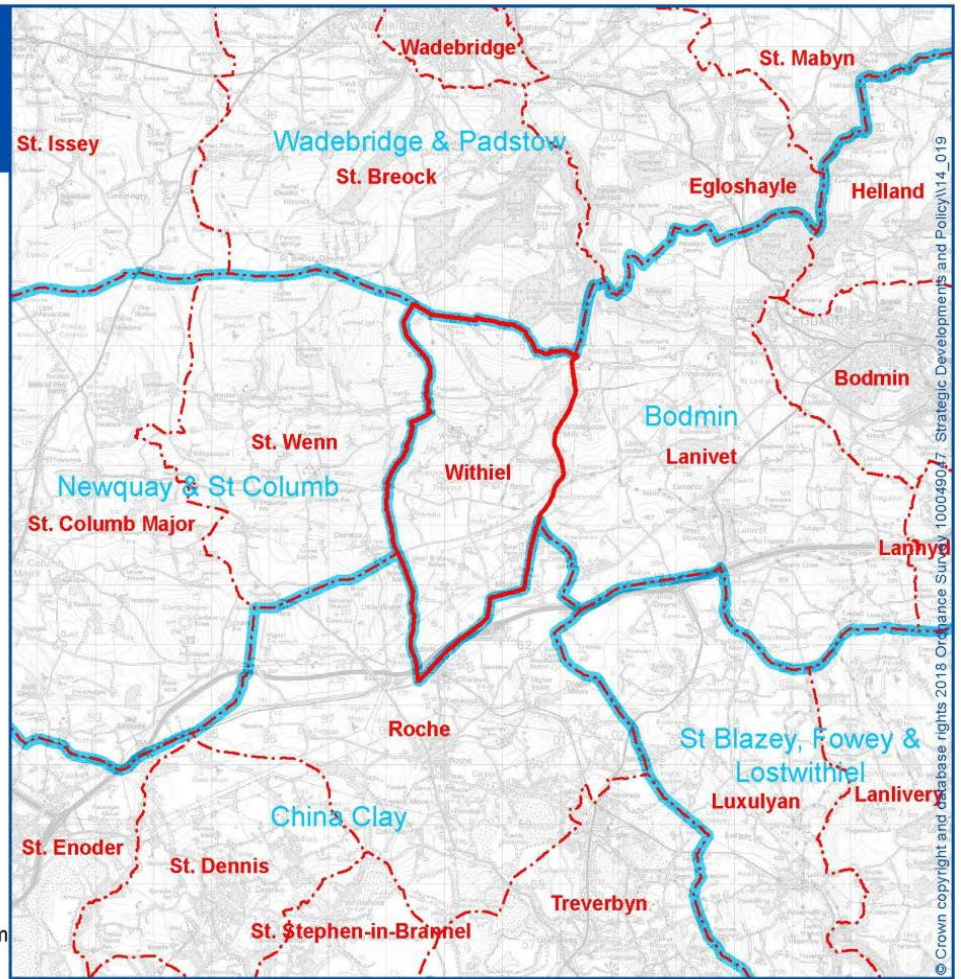
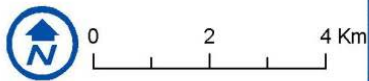
# General Map of Withiel Parish



## Parish of Withiel: Wider Context

### Key

-  Withiel Parish
-  other Parish boundaries
-  Community Network Areas



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# Withiel Neighbourhood Development Plan

## Introduction

### 1. Description of the parish



6. Withiel is a small (1,251.7 hectares/3093 acres), essentially rural parish the economy of which has traditionally been primarily dependent on agriculture (mixed agro-pastoral farming), with tourism as a secondary activity (holiday lets, the Saints' Way path and proximity to the Camel Trail), however in recent years there has been a significant growth in self employed microbusiness. The population density is low at 0.3 persons per hectare, one-fifth of the average for the county as a whole, and

the population numbers have remained relatively stable over the last two centuries (high of 468 in 1841, low of 270 in 1971, and 353 in the most recent census). The principal settlement is Withiel (Churchtown) village, clustered round the 800-year-old St. Clement's church, approximately in the centre of the parish, with smaller hamlets at Withielgoose and Retire towards the south east, and Withielgoose Mills and Ruthern Bridge (shared with the adjacent parishes of Lanivet and St. Breock) towards the north east. There is a small group of commercial/ retail businesses on the southern boundary at Higher Brynn Farm Industrial Estate and Victoria Square. Otherwise there are discrete dwellings, mostly farms and smallholdings, scattered over the rest of the parish. The parish is bounded on the north by the parish of St. Breock; on the south by the main A30 highway and the parish of Roche; on the east by the river Ruthern, part of the parish of St. Breock and the parish of Lanivet; and on the west by the parish of St. Wenn. St. Breock and St. Wenn are similar to Withiel in their rural character, Lanivet and Roche are more settled and developed.

7. In the Department for Communities and Local Government's 2015 national Index of Deprivation in England, Withiel parish appears in the fourth quintile (low deprivation), in the index of multiple deprivation; in the fifth quintile (least deprived) for crime and disorder; in the fifth quintile (least deprived) for health and disability issues. Other findings from this Index are reported under relevant sections below.

### 2. Neighbourhood planning: national and local

#### 2.1. Policy Framework

8. In developing a neighbourhood development plan, the steering group has taken into account the following documents, which we deem most relevant, emanating from national

government and Cornwall Council which determine how such development is to be carried out:

- National Planning Policy Framework (published March 2012) following the Localism Act of 2011 includes a section ‘Neighbourhood Planning’ which sets out the procedure for developing a neighbourhood plan.
- Consultation on proposed changes to national planning policies (December 2015), which proposed significant changes to the NPPF housing policy requirements, including *inter alia* re-definition of affordable, low cost and starter homes. These changes were subsequently incorporated into the NPPF and were the framework within which the steering group worked.
- Cornwall Housing Strategy adopted January 2010, updated May 2015, which sets out the five key priorities in housing policy for the county.
- Cornwall Local Plan formally approved by the examiner and adopted by Cornwall Council (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016).
- Saved policies of the North Cornwall Local Plan 1999 (until superseded by the county level local plan).
- Core Strategy Based Area Discussion Paper (2011), interim statement of what was required for the Bodmin Community Area Network, until superseded by the adoption of the definitive Local Plan in November 2016. Envisaged 3000 (almost the entire quota) homes to be built in Bodmin town to 2030, with surrounding parishes to have very little additional home building beyond organic development. On the basis of this and the definitive Local Plan, the steering group estimated that (1) homes a year would fulfil this parish’s obligation; this may be regarded therefore as the minimum requirement.
- Towards a one-nation economy: a 10-point plan for boosting productivity in rural areas (August 2015). Emphasises the importance of extensive and fast broadband services, mobile communications and transport links; improving skills and education in the rural workforce; enhancing conditions for rural business growth; improving living conditions in rural areas.

## 2.2. Evidence Base

9. Withiel Parish Survey 2004: This was organised by North Cornwall District Council with support from the Countryside Agency, and is a comprehensive survey of the existing situation and local preferences across a range of issues (housing, employment, transport and highways, local services such as hospital, doctor, chemist, dentist etc., environmental issues, sport and recreation, information and local government, planning, children’s needs and facilities).



10. Withiel Parish Plan 2004: This was assembled by a steering group drawn from the parish and builds on the Parish Survey to identify what issues and problems are of most concern to residents of the parish, and to recommend actions and procedures to resolve them. The proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan to a considerable extent builds on the earlier work.

11. Parish Profile 2013: This was generated by NOMIS (an agency of the Office for National Statistics) from the returns of the 2011 national census, and provides a wealth of up-to-date statistical details for the parish of Withiel, with comparative information for the county of Cornwall and for England as a whole, with regard to population, housing, economic activity, employment etc.

12. Parish Plan Questionnaire 2014: A questionnaire was produced in May of this year and distributed to approximately 200 premises (effectively the whole population of the parish) in July. There were 83 returns with a clear majority in favour of producing a neighbourhood plan based on the parish as the unit of planning. Other responses confirmed or repeated the findings of the 2004 survey.

### **3. Plan period**

13. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is designed to run in tandem with the county level Local Plan i.e. for the period from 2015 to 2030. Within this framework it is intended that it should be monitored and reviewed from time to time to keep it up-to-date.

### **4. Description of development plan process so far**

14. [Note: The following is a summary of the process which is more fully described in the accompanying Supplementary Document 'Consultation Statement'].

15. The process towards a neighbourhood plan was initiated in July 2013 when the parish council resolved to take forward the idea. Consultations followed over the next months with Cornwall Association of Local Councils and with residents of the parish and in October 2014 the parish council resolved to go ahead with a plan based on the parish boundaries.

16. An open meeting was held on Wednesday 4th February 2015 to invite expressions of interest in assisting with the neighbourhood plan, and follow-up meetings were held on 18th March and 22nd April 2015. As well as issues of structure and timing, these meetings discussed substantive matters of content and format. Formal designation of the parish as a neighbourhood area was requested on 4th February 2015, was subject to a consultation period from 11th March to 22nd April 2015, and the formal designation certificate issued by Cornwall Council on 30th April 2015, with the parish council as the relevant body.

17. Further informal meetings of interested parties followed and on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 a small working party met and mapped out the basic features of the proposed parish housing policy to be embodied in a draft document for presentation to the steering group.

A member of the parish council was charged with taking forward the production of the draft document.

18. Unfortunately, continuing work on the plan was delayed during autumn 2015 by the illness and subsequent death of the chair of the parish council and informal steering group, and only resumed at the beginning of 2016, when a steering group was formally established, with the aim of meeting at approximately monthly intervals to progress the draft. Working meetings of the steering group took place on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 9<sup>th</sup> March, 13<sup>th</sup> April and 18<sup>th</sup> May when, as well as progressing our own proposed texts, we took evidence from members of the St. Eval neighbourhood development plan group, examined the Roche plan for comparative purposes, and received advice and comments from a member of the Cornwall Council neighbourhood development support team. Copies of the draft were sent to the four adjacent parishes (Lanivet, Roche, St. Breock, St. Wenn) and to the county councillor for this electoral division for their information and comments. On 18<sup>th</sup> June a community consultation event was held in the Withiel village hall when around 40 people visited the exhibition and left comments. These were reviewed by the steering group on 29<sup>th</sup> June and the draft plan amended accordingly.

19. The steering group continued to work on the draft plan and the supporting documents during the rest of the year 2016 with detailed discussions at each stage with Cornwall Council, Historic England and Natural England, and on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017 made a formal submission of documents (draft neighbourhood plan, map of designated area, basic conditions statement, consultation statement, design statement) to Cornwall Council. In the event, the basic conditions statement was rejected as insufficiently compliant with the regulatory requirements, and the following months were devoted to recruiting a professional planning consultant to assist with advice and drafting, and rewriting both the basic conditions statement and the design guide, and also doing some redrafting of the main document. A second formal submission was made on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017. A statutory public consultation was organised by Cornwall Council and ran from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 8<sup>th</sup> November. In October the independent examiner was appointed by Cornwall Council with the agreement of the steering group, and completed her examination of the documents during January 2018. Her final recommendation was for the neighbourhood plan to proceed to referendum, subject to certain modifications being made.

## **5. Final Steps**

20. Once the plan has passed the independent examiner's recommendation stage, Cornwall Council will organise a referendum to gauge community support for it. The plan will be adopted if there is majority support for it in the referendum.

## Withiel Neighbourhood Development Plan

### The Vision

21. The steering group has formulated the following vision to inform the structure and application of the neighbourhood development plan:

*“To maintain Withiel as predominantly a peaceful and attractive rural environment with strong community cohesion, but with a commitment to high-quality communications both physical and electronic, effective controls on industrial development, adequate provision of appropriate and good-quality housing for residents, and a thriving economy using local talents and resources.”*

22. The evidence to support this vision is the following:

23. In 2004 and again in 2014 the parish council conducted surveys of residents of the parish to collect their views on various aspects of the parish, among them the reason for choosing to live in Withiel and what they thought are its most attractive features and worth maintaining and enhancing.

24. In 2004 the most significant opinion by a comfortable margin was that it should stay as far as possible as it is or develop as an integrated working community. In 2014 the feeling was broadly similar, with the leading responses emphasising especially the quiet and peacefulness of the parish (39-44 %), the friendliness of the people and the community feeling (28 %), and the beautiful countryside (24 %). Several respondents answered the questions ‘What do you enjoy about living in Withiel?’ and ‘What do you think could be improved about Withiel?’ with a simple ‘Everything’ and ‘Nothing’ respectively.

25. As far as improvements to Withiel were concerned, the most frequent demand was for improved road management (maintenance of surfacing, filling in potholes, keeping them clear of farm slurry and other litter, traffic controls) (20-30 %). The second most frequent issue – close behind – was the lack of fast broadband in most of the parish (20%). Third was a wish to have a pub and/or shop (16 %), though several of these respondents recognised that this was probably not viable.

## Withiel Neighbourhood Development Plan

### A. Economic Development

#### 6. Description of Relevant Features of Parish

26. Of the population of the parish, 63 per cent are of working age; this is slightly above the average for the county as a whole. Of the working age population, 72 per cent are economically active; this is above the averages for the county and England as a whole. Self employment accounts for 39.4 per cent of the economically active population; this is almost twice the county and three times the national averages (20.4 and 14.0 per cent).

27. According to the 2015 national Index of Deprivation, Withiel is in the highest quintile for standard of education, skills and training; in the second quintile for levels of employment; and in the top quintile for income standards. In other words, other things being equal, the parish should have a strong base on which to support a thriving and dynamic local economy.

#### A. The non-Agricultural Economy

28. Non-agricultural businesses in the parish fall into two categories, companies and individuals with dedicated business premises, and those who work primarily from home. The former are located primarily along the southern boundary of the parish in the Higher Brynn Farm Industrial Estate to the north of the A30 and Victoria Square to the south of the A30. In a general sense the



diversion of traffic onto the new A30 dual carriageway has had an adverse effect on the area; there are empty and run-down industrial and retail units in the Victoria Square site and the increasingly derelict aspect they present is a matter for concern. On the other hand, access for transport is excellent, services and utilities are in place, the establishment of Cornwall Services has improved the sustainability of the area, and the immediately adjacent area on the Roche side of the parish boundary is also earmarked for development. In general the businesses in the Higher Brynn Industrial Estate and Victoria Square area do not draw their employees from residents of the parish. The other category of nonagricultural economic activity in the parish is primarily small- or micro-businesses, typically home-based operations in which the principal is the sole employee, perhaps with part-time or contract assistance. There is a very diverse range of such business, including handymen, builders and gardeners, publishers and journalists, photographers and artists, manufacture of eco-stoves, restaurant management, holiday cottage owners, sophisticated translation providers etcetera

## B. The Agricultural Economy

29. Agro-pastoral and its associated activities such forestry and fishing at 12.0 per cent constitute the second largest sector (after wholesale and retail trade at 13.1 per cent), of employment of residents *of* the parish and the largest of employment *within* the parish. The highly productive and fertile nature of its grass-growing landscape has since medieval times enabled the supply to local and national markets of high-quality milk and meat products from Withiel parish. Continued investment in milk processing in the county is securing the future for the parish's milk producers, the trade in lamb in recent years has been steady, and beef production continues to be an important sector. In addition, arable crops are grown on the better land, and today's family farming businesses continue successfully to manage a well-established landscape. Developments such as the growing of maize to supply anaerobic digestion demonstrates the changing mix of farming and the willingness of the parish's farmers to innovate. Equestrian-based activities, rare-breed poultry rearing and honey production are some examples of specialised high-grade activities. In short, the state of agro-pastoral activities and its prospects give grounds for optimism about the future. However, there are also significant obstacles in the area of communications and transport links. The parish's network of single-track roads presents a growing challenge to road users, especially as farmers rely on access for heavy goods vehicles, tankers, modern tractors etcetera, to remain viable. Both the 2004 and the 2013 surveys evidenced concern among residents of the parish about the state of the roads. Many of the parish roads are narrow lanes with occasional passing bays and blind bends. There is concern about the standard of maintenance of the drainage and verges. Particular pinch points are on Withiel Hill, Coddles Hill, Lawellan lane, the Ruthernbridge to Bosneives road, and Ruthern bridge itself. The other major communications problem is with superfast broadband. Frequent flooding is also a problem on some roads.

## C. Superfast Broadband

30. The lack of effective, fast broadband is seen (most recently in a community consultation event on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016) as the single most important obstacle to growth and development in both agricultural and non-agricultural segments of the economy. Approximately nine-tenths of the parish (including its principal settlement) is not designated to be wired for superfast broadband either in the current two phases (all and 75 per cent of premises) or in subsequent, anticipated, phases. This means that work that could be done locally is contracted out to people outside the parish and the competitive status of parish-based enterprises is impaired. Business banking, filing tax and VAT returns, and communicating with central and local government are all activities now principally or exclusively carried out online. Contact with existing clients and customers and finding new outlets is seriously compromised. Internet-based businesses – the fastest growing sector of the micro-business community – are discouraged from starting up in the parish.

31. Government's own analysis is that "local availability of broadband and mobile communications is closely associated with rural economic performance" and that upgrading to superfast broadband, where it has occurred, has enabled rural businesses in

Cornwall to increase productivity by 30 per cent. The government's announcement in the Queen's Speech in May 2016 that it is to introduce a Digital Economy Bill to establish a universal service obligation and a legal right to be supplied with fast (10 Mbps) broadband is an encouraging step and to be welcomed, however it is not yet clear whether this will ensure a universal provision of superfast broadband in rural areas such as Withiel.

## **7. Policies on Objectives for Economic Development**

### **A.1. Superfast Broadband**

32. Support will be given to proposals that would provide or improve access to a superfast broadband service and mobile telephone services within the neighbourhood plan area. Any above ground installations must be sympathetically located and designed to integrate into the landscape

### **A.2. Agricultural Development**

33. Proposals to expand existing or develop new specialised agri-pastoral farming activities will be supported, provided the development is appropriate to its scale and location and complies with other relevant policies in the NDP and Cornwall Local Plan.

### **A.3. Victoria Square**

34. Development proposals for commercial and employment use to promote the regeneration of the site known as Victoria square (identified on Map A2) will be supported in principle. Any proposals for the loss of business space should

- (a) demonstrate that there is no market demand through active and continued marketing for at least nine months, and
- (b) result in the provision of better quality employment space allowing for mixed use and the regeneration of existing uses, or
- (c) be necessary to meet a clear need for community facilities or rural affordable housing.

35. Any development proposals on this site should be subject to early engagement and consultation with the Parish Council and seek to provide safe pedestrian and cycle access to the facilities at Victoria. Any significant development should be subject to traffic impact assessment and consultation with the Highways Agency.

## **8. Community Actions on Economic Development**

A.4. 36. We will continue energetically to press, by whatever means available, for national and local government to implement a universal superfast broadband policy for the whole of the parish.

- A.5. 37. Noting that Victoria square is part of a wider commercial and business zone in the north of Roche parish, we will explore opportunities to collaborate with Roche parish to achieve an integrated regeneration of the Victoria square area.
- A.6. 38. In the context of deep public spending cuts to local authorities in the period up to 2020/21 we see little likelihood of there being funding to significantly improve the road network, and will focus on pressing Cornwall Council and its agencies to maintain at least a minimum standard of road quality. Particular projects within this policy should address the need for relieving ‘pinch points’ with passing bays or other appropriate modifications, and the need to take measures to prevent or remediate flooding.

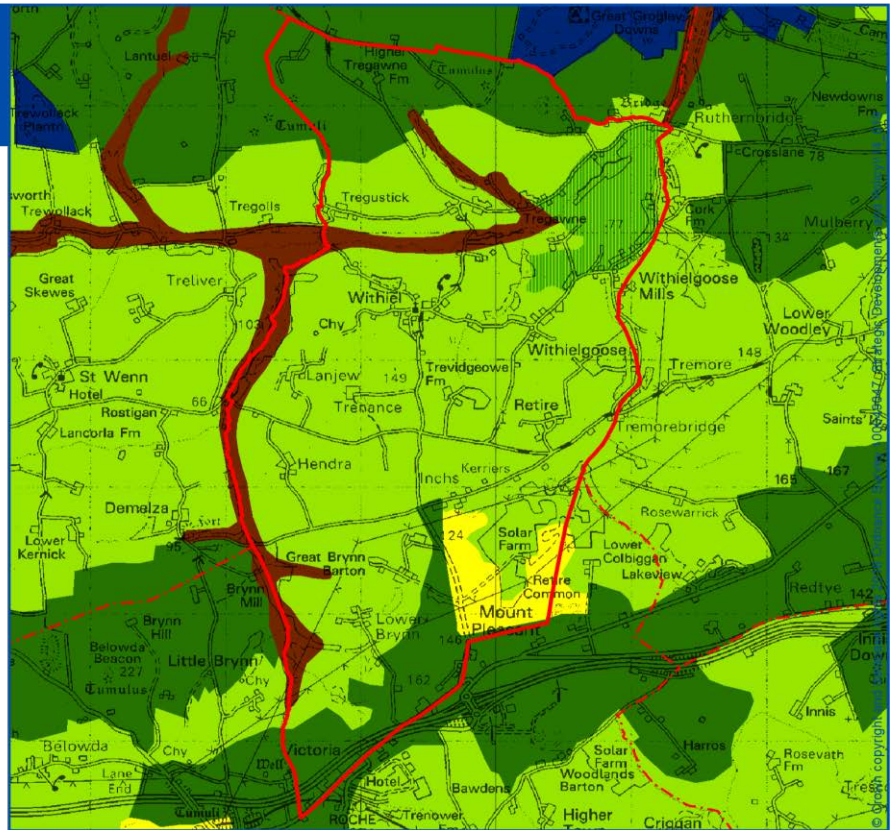
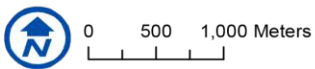
## Map A1: Landscape Assessment

### Key

 Withiel Parish



### Historic Landscape Character Zones 1994

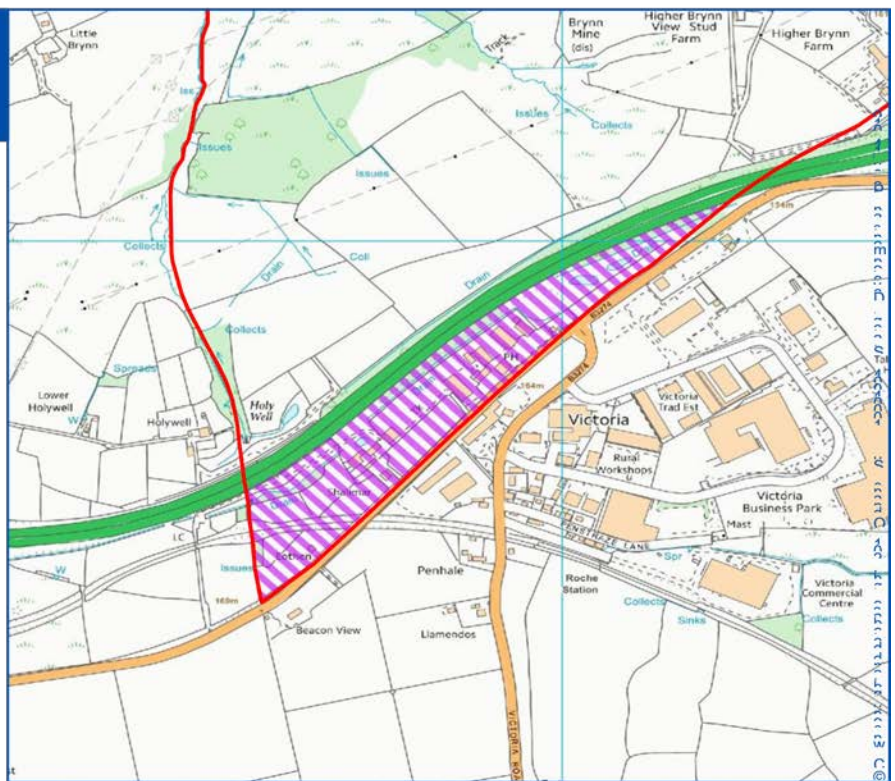
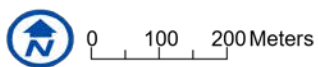
-  Anciently Enclosed Land (altered C18 & C19)
-  Anciently Enclosed Land
-  Recently Enclosed Land
-  Steep sided valleys
-  Upland Rough Ground
-  Upland Woods (Plantations)



## Map A2: Victoria Square

### Key

-  Withiel Parish
-  Victoria Square







# Map A3: Superfast broadband


## Key

 Withiel Parish

## Superfast broadband

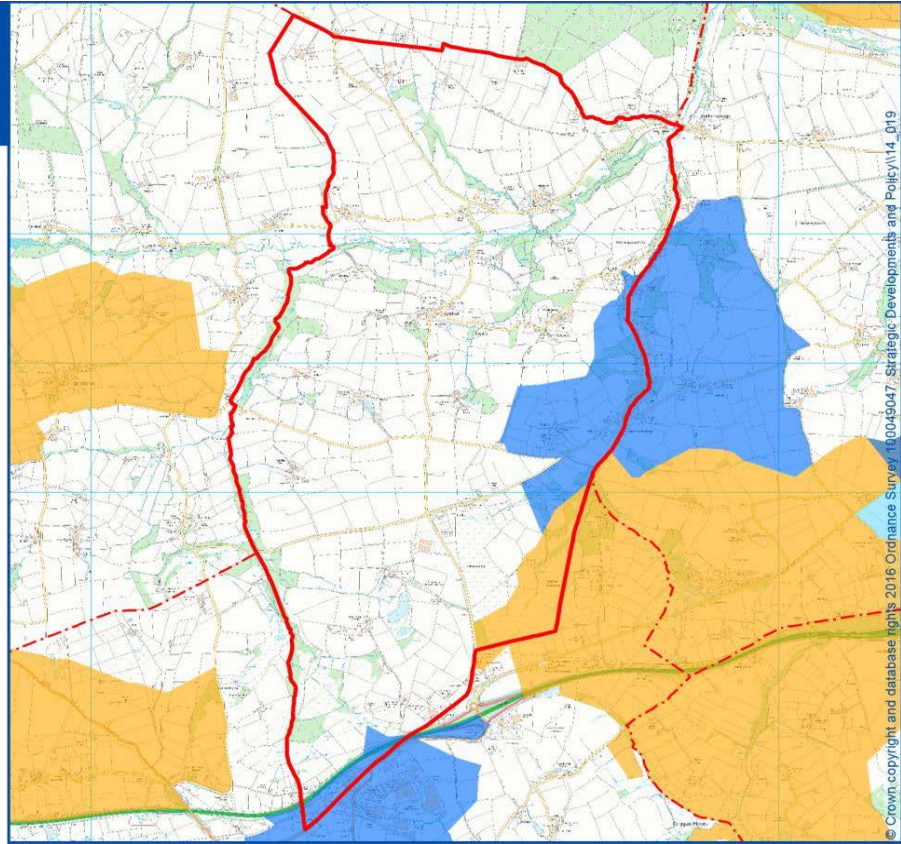
 All premises in postcode modelled to have 15+Mbps fibre broadband

 At least 75% of premises in postcode modelled to have 15+Mbps fibre broadband

 Proposed Postcode Coverage Phase 1a/1b - 24+ Mbps



0 500 1,000 Meters



## Withiel Neighbourhood Development Plan

### B. Housing

#### 9. Description of Relevant Features of Parish



39. Of the 157 household spaces or dwellings in the parish, 118 (75.2%) are detached houses or bungalows, well above the average for Cornwall as a whole (37.6%). There are 139 household spaces (88.5%) with at least one usual resident, and 18 (11.5%) with no usual residents i.e. typically holiday lets or second homes. Of the 139 usually occupied household spaces, 112 (80.6%) are owned outright or with a mortgage (county average 68.8%), 3 (2.2%) are social rented (county average 12.0%), 20

(14.4%) are private rented (county average 16.8%), and 4 (2.9%) are living rent free (county average 1.7%). It is clear from these figures that there is a significant deficit in social housing accessible to households on a modest income, and it is the perception of the parish council that there are consistently around 5-10 families or households which would like to have their own (if necessary, rented) dwelling but are unable to access one; the Cornwall Homechoice housing register currently lists 11 places need. This was also evidenced in the 2004 Parish Plan, and informs the steering group's wish to see a clear commitment to expansion of social rented housing available to families with occupational or kinship links in the parish. Finally, in the 2015 national Index of Deprivation, Withiel appears in the top quintile i.e. most deprived, for barriers to housing and services. The parish is defined as part of the Bodmin Community Network Area (CNA) where residential development will be limited to infilling within existing settlement boundaries and rural exception sites.

#### 10. Policies on Housing

40. The general principles governing decisions on proposals to undertake housing development are drawn together as follows:

##### B.1. General Development Principles

- (a) Proposals for single dwellings or very small scale residential development on infilling plots within defined settlement boundaries will be permitted.
- (b) Development outside settlement boundaries will be permitted only where special circumstances are demonstrated in accordance with Policy 7 (Housing in the Countryside) of the Cornwall Local Plan, or the proposal meets a clearly defined local need for affordable housing in accordance with Policy 9 (Rural Exceptions Sites) of the Cornwall Local Plan.

- (c) All new development within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area should seek to enhance local character and be of a high standard of design in accordance with the principles of the Cornwall Design Guide and the Withiel parish design guide. Any development should complement the existing built environment and respect the rural nature of the parish.
- (d) Proposals to replace existing residential dwellings will be supported where the replacement design is of high quality, there is no increased visual impact on the Cornish landscape and where the redevelopment does not result in the loss of a traditional building unless that building cannot be retained through renovation or improvement.
- (e) Proposals to replace residential caravans with permanent dwellings will not be supported.

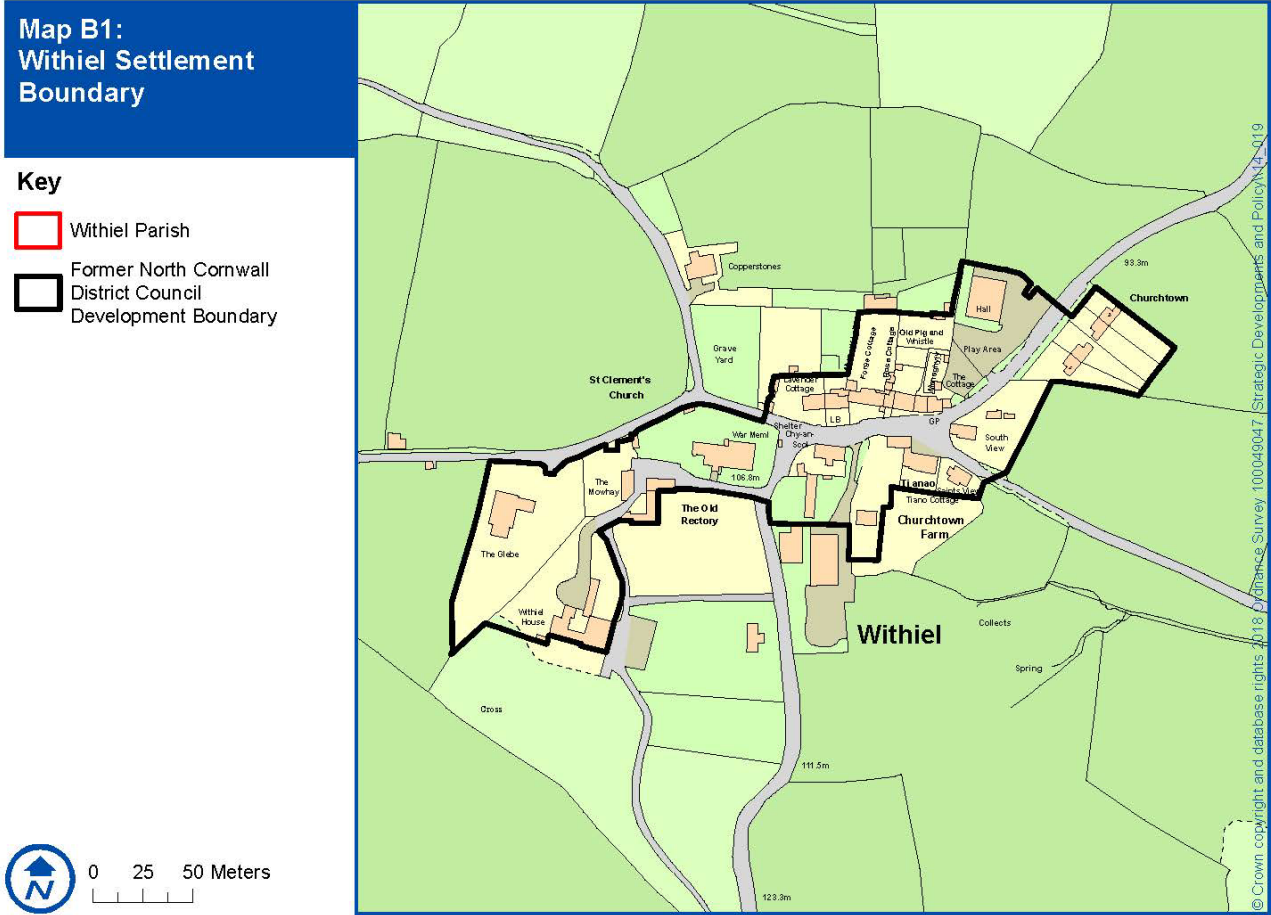
## B.2. Affordable Housing

Proposals for the development of affordable housing will be permitted in accordance with Cornwall Local Plan Policy 8 (Affordable Housing), provided there is no significant adverse impact on the landscape or historic environment. Such proposals must be located near to existing services and facilities and should be well connected to the local transport network.

## 11. Community Actions on Housing

- B.3. 41. There is ongoing consultation with Cornwall Council on whether it is desirable and feasible to constitute development boundaries (curtilages) for the hamlets of Withielgoose, Withielgoose Mills, Retire and Ruthern Bridge similar to that defined by the North Cornwall saved plan for Withiel (Churchtown) village.
- B.4. 42. Noting that as yet no firm proposals for development have been brought forward for affordable housing development, we are advised by Historic England that further work must be done to identify what if any heritage assets – both above and below ground – might be affected by such development, and the agency consulted for advice as to their conformity with national and local planning policies and guidelines.
- B.5. 43. We will encourage applicants to include a Design and Access statement as an automatic requirement for all planning and development applications.
- B.6. 44. We will encourage builders and developers to use suppliers and materials which have been Cradle to Cradle (C2C) certified for achieving green and sustainable building standards.
- B.7. 45. Devon & Cornwall Police advise that all development proposals should include consideration of the need to ‘design out’ crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour to ensure ongoing community safety and cohesion.

46. Further information about design policies and issues is contained in the Supplementary Document 'Design Statement' accompanying this Neighbourhood Development Plan.





## **Withiel Neighbourhood Development Plan**

### **C. Environment and Community Facilities**

#### **12. Description of Relevant Features of Parish**

47. The most important community facility in the parish is undoubtedly the village hall along with a children's playground and an adjacent field on the northeastern edge of Withiel village. The hall is a charitable trust managed by a committee in accordance with a constitution which embodies a community approach by representing all the different regular user groups in the parish. The hall and field are currently used for a wide range of activities including indoor and outdoor sporting events; parish social events; twice-yearly flower shows and exhibitions; lectures, demonstrations and educational activities; meetings and public information events; and pantomime, concert and other entertainment events. It is available for hire for private parties and for events organised by organisations outside the parish. It would be the designated parish centre in the event of emergencies. The steering group felt that there could be scope to promote the hall as a venue for other activities which might bring in additional money to support its upkeep and development, but have no specific proposals to make on this head.



48. The parish has a well-developed network, totalling approximately nine miles, of footpaths and bridleways. One of these, the Saints' Way, is classified 'gold' by Cornwall Council which is responsible for its maintenance and development. The other footpaths are classified 'silver' or 'bronze' and are the responsibility of the parish council which in recent years has devoted considerable attention to them, leading to improved standards of vegetation management, surface

maintenance, and signage. The footpath network is a good way to access and observe the wide variety of flora and fauna in the parish.

49. The steering group considered the case for encouraging the development of cafeteria facilities for the use of walkers on the Saints' Way and other visitors to the village, however it felt that there would be insufficient footfall to make this a viable business proposition.

#### **13. Policies on Environment and Community Facilities**

- C.1. 50. To maintain and conserve the character and attractiveness of the plan area and to facilitate access to it for residents and visitors alike, developer contributions

will be sought, where appropriate, to enhance existing or provide new community facilities.

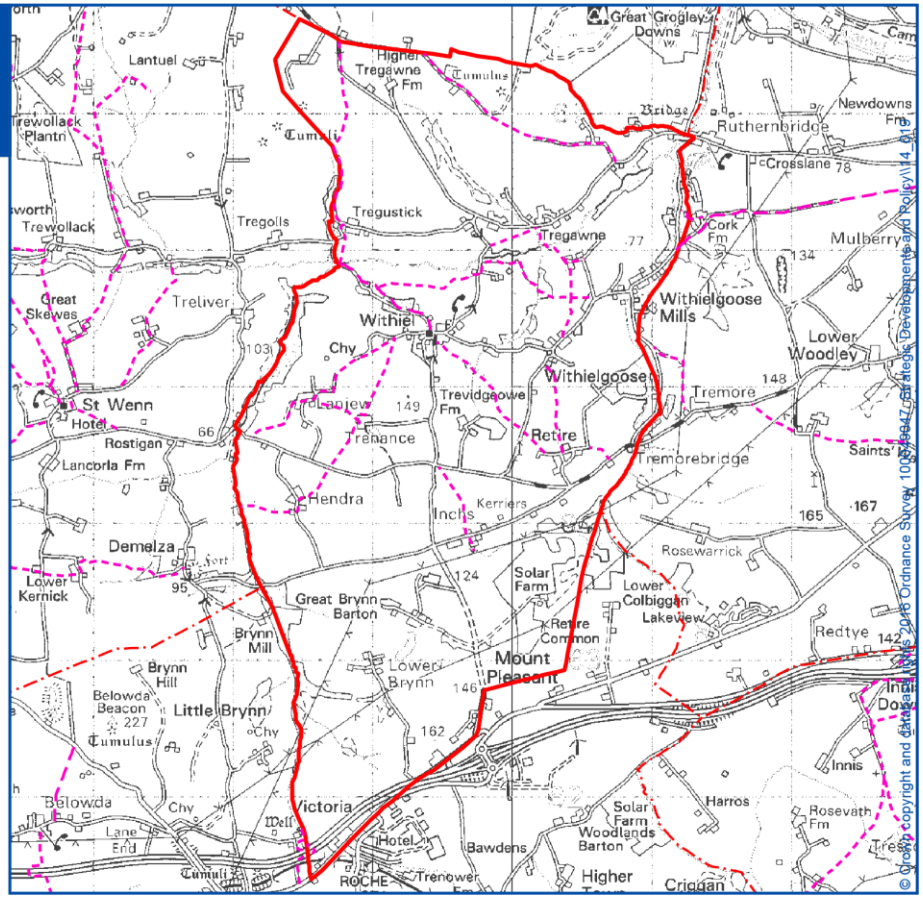
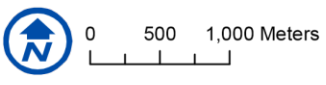
#### **14. Community Actions on Environment and Community Facilities**

51. Specific projects which flow from our approach to environment and community facilities will include

- C.2. 52. In consultation with Cornwall Council, to develop and publish a definitive footpath map of the parish.
- C.3. 53. To identify which paths do not yet meet a satisfactory standard of accessibility and usability, and work together with landowners to upgrade them to a satisfactory standard.
- C.4. 54. To examine the feasibility of establishing facilities for tourists and walkers passing through the village e.g. information leaflets, hot drinks dispenser, map of footpaths and bridleways. This will necessarily be a medium- to long-term project and subject to a consultation exercise to gauge community opinion as to desirability, location and cost.
- C.5. 55. To improve the quality of signage within the parish (repair, replacement and cleaning as necessary) and also arrange for the hamlets of Withielgoose and Retire to be better served than at present.
- C.6. 56. Together with local wildlife groups, to develop literature which can be displayed in the bus shelter.
- C.7. 57. To investigate ways of preserving and maintaining the disused red telephone box in the village, so that it can be put to some practical use and enhance the look of the village. Initially, a consultation exercise will have to be held to gauge community opinion and generate suggestions.

# Map C1: Footpaths and Bridleways

- Key**
- Withiel Parish
- Public Rights of Way**
- Footpath
  - Bridleway
  - By-way





## Withiel Neighbourhood Development Plan

### D. Heritage and Tourism

#### 15. Description of Relevant Features of Parish



58. The Historic England database lists 26 sites of historical or archaeological importance within the parish, a diversified group which includes farmhouses, a Methodist chapel, a mill, the main parish church, several village houses, a 19th century railway carriage, guidestones or wayside crosses, bridges, a paleolithic barrow, a holy well, and a 19th century lavatory. Nearly half (11) of the sites are located in the principal settlement, Withiel (Churchtown), making this small rural village an

important centre from an historic and archeological point of view, well worthy of particular care and protection. Another four sites are located within the Withiel parish part of the hamlet of Ruthern Bridge; these include the 15th century bridge which has been described as “one of the best preserved of Cornish bridges.” There are three listed sites at Bosneives. The remaining eight sites are scattered across various parts of the parish. In addition to these nationally-listed sites, Cornwall Council records a number of lesser sites in the parish, including prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval, and former mining sites. Together these all add up to a rich historical heritage in the parish.

59. The Cornish language and Cornish culture are embedded within the Withiel landscape and are an important part of the heritage of the parish. There are a large number of historic place names and in modern times the practice is widespread of giving house names in the language. Field names such as ‘Gear/Ker’ meaning ‘fort’ make explicit the link with Iron Age settlement. Withiel is also host to a number of folk traditions, including Sunday School tea treat picnics at the holy well on the south west boundary of the parish; a tea treat community dance called the ‘Snail Creep’; and the annual ‘Crying the Neck’ custom (still being followed) which celebrates the harvest.

60. The most important feature of the parish from a heritage and tourism point of view is the Saints’ Way, a medieval path, approximately 30 miles long, that links Padstow on the north coast to Fowey on the south coast. It was originally a pilgrim travel route between Ireland and the European mainland. About half of the path as it passes through the parish is across fields and open land, and about half along quiet country lanes. The northern section in particular offers often spectacular views of the north Cornwall countryside. The Saints’ Way is managed by Cornwall Council, however it is incumbent on parishes through which it passes to work to ensure that it is kept as an attractive enhancement in their area.

## **16. Policies on Heritage and Tourism**

61. The UK government has recognised Cornwall's cultural distinctiveness as an important factor in the local economy that "underpins tourism and is a key driver that attracts other businesses to the location". This, together with the Council of Europe's ratification of national minority status in April 2015, drives Cornwall Council's 'Cornish Distinctivity Project' and the parish plan aims to align with this project by engaging with local heritage and promoting a sense of place.

62. The general policy areas underlying parish issues on heritage and tourism are that

### **D.1. Heritage - General Principles**

63. Any new development should be consistent with, and make a positive contribution to, the character of Withiel and respect the history, traditions and landscape of the parish.

### **D.2. Protection of Historic Infrastructure**

64. Repairs of and alterations to existing historic buildings or structures, including guide posts, way markers and post boxes, should accord with Cornwall Local Plan Policy 24 (Historic Environment).

### **D.3. Development of Tourism**

65. Proposals that aim to develop facilities to encourage tourists to enjoy the local natural and historic environment will be supported where there are no significant adverse impacts on the local landscape. Such proposals could include signage, street furniture and lighting as well as larger commercial developments provided they are of an appropriate scale to their location and accessible by a range of transport modes.

66. The following specific projects are identified to underpin these policy areas:

D.4. 67. Create an illustrated historical map to bring the parish history and heritage to a wider audience and to encourage enjoyment by use of the footpaths and bridleways.

D.5. 68. Collaborate with the Cornish Language Partnership to undertake and publish a detailed study of place, field and road names in the parish.

D.6. 69. Encourage the tradition of using Cornish names for properties by making information and advice readily accessible through, e.g. the parish website and parish newsletter.

- D.7. 70. Make a detailed record of roadside heritage such as cast iron finger posts, post boxes and stone crosses.
- D.8. 71. Compile a history of Withiel that will serve as a record for future reference, to be published online both for local interest and tourist information.

## Withiel Neighbourhood Development Plan

### E. Green Assets and Sustainable Development

#### 17. Description of Relevant Features of Parish

72. The parish contains a number of designated special landscapes and biodiversity designations:



73. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): The River Camel and Tributaries SSSI lies along the tributary valleys of the river Ruthern northwards on the western boundary of the parish, then eastwards on the north side of Withiel village, to Ruthern Bridge, at the boundary with Lanivet and St. Breock parishes. Retire Common lies to the south of the hamlet of Retire. These sites are defined in the landscape assessment as upland rough ground and/or plantations and scrub. In early 2017 the Retire Common site was redesignated as part of the mid-Cornwall Moors SSSI. The Common is an area of wet and dry common land of approximately 62 hectares (152 acres) containing a natural (mesotrophic) pond which provides rare amphibian habitats, and is surrounded by several rare

species of flora. An SSSI is a nationally important area identified by English Nature for its flora, fauna, geological or physiographic features.

74. The southern third of the parish, between the main road from Retire to Roche and the southern boundary of the parish, was formerly designated as an Area of Great Scientific Value (AGSV), however this designation has not been formalised in the Cornwall Local Plan.

75. Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV): The northwestern part of the parish, approximately of a line from Ruthern Bridge, through Withiel, to Hendra farm, is included in this area. Most of this is defined in the landscape assessment as medieval or post-medieval farmland with occasional small areas of scrub or upland rough ground. An AGLV is defined in the Cornwall Council plan as a landscape deemed to be of importance, or considered to have a particular scenic value.

76. The Camel river flows close to the north east boundary of the parish and draws some of its headwaters and a substantial tributary (the river Ruthern) from springs originating in Retire common. These are classified as SSSI sites and also have SAC (Special Area of Conservation) status under European Community habitats directives, for their populations of Atlantic salmon, bullhead, and breeding otters.

77. Cornish hedges are widespread throughout the parish and provide important habitats and migration routes for flora and fauna. They contribute importantly to the character of the parish and are protected by legislation. The plan area contains a number of ‘priority habitats’ including upland heathland, semi-improved grassland, lowland heathland and purple moor grass and rush pastures.

78. The development and installation of wind turbine power has been an issue of significant concern in the parish in recent years. Over-enthusiastic promotion of wind turbine power by government and lobby groups, inadequate controls over the approval process, and an absence of coherent planning as to their location, have resulted in large numbers of turbines being built in the parish; by end-2015 there are an estimated 41 turbines in the parish or visible close to its boundary, theoretically generating considerably more power than is needed for this part of north Cornwall or than the national grid can absorb. However, government policy changed with a new Ministerial Statement in June 2015 which determined that installation of wind turbines should only be approved where the proposed location is designated as suitable in a local or neighbourhood development plan; that there has been consultation with the local community on potential impacts and their concerns addressed; and that the proposal in consequence has community backing.

## **18. Policies on Green Assets and Sustainable Development**

### **E.1. Sites of Special Scientific Interest**

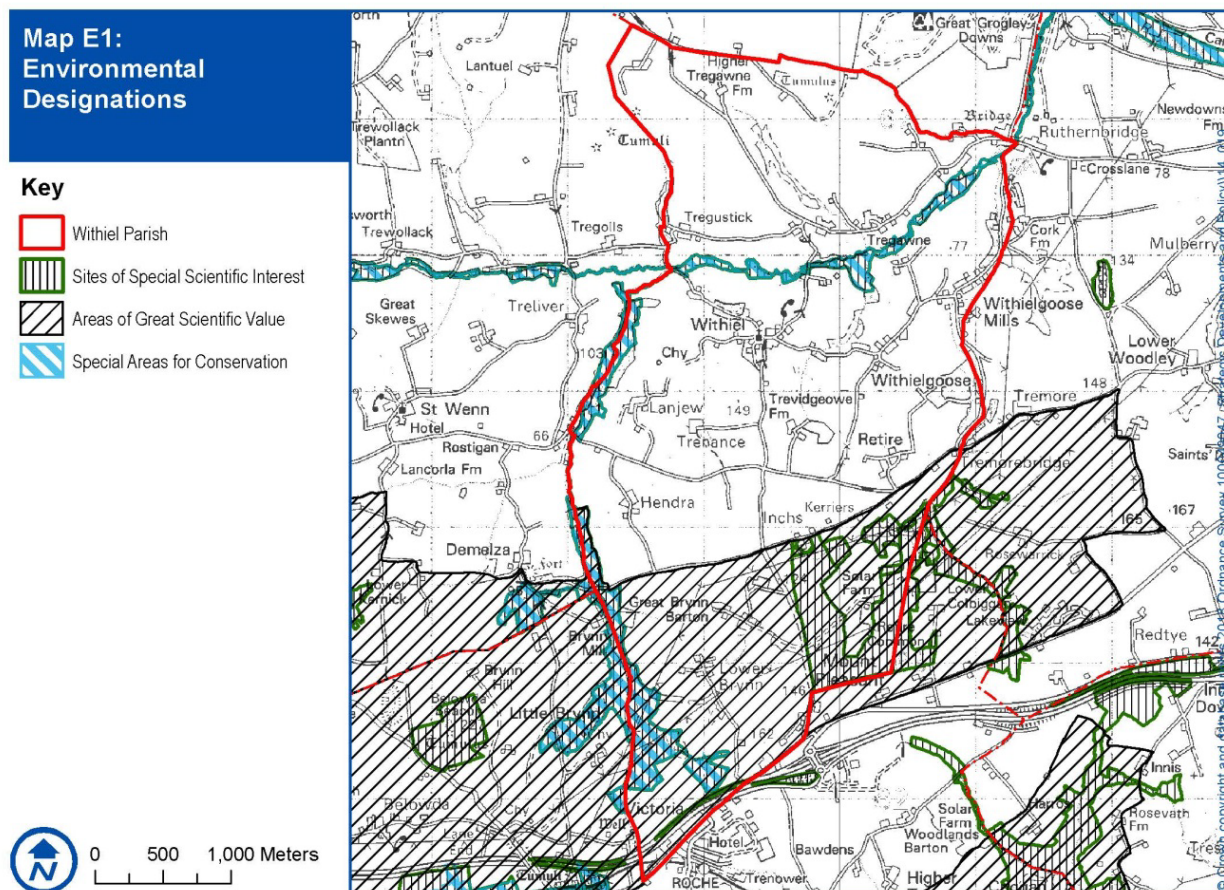
79. Development proposals within or outside the designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest which would be likely to adversely affect the site (either individually or in combination with other developments) will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh both the adverse impacts on the site and any adverse impacts on the wider network of SSSI’s.

### **E.2. Area of Great Landscape Value**

80. Development within the Area of Great Landscape Value should maintain its character and distinctive landscape qualities. Any such development must be undertaken in accordance with, and carefully monitored in line with, the applicable components and guidance contained within Landscape Character Assessments covering the parish, and the principles, policies and requirements of the Cornwall Local Plan and the Cornwall Council and Withiel parish design guidance.

### E.3. Landscape Character, Geodiversity and Biodiversity

81. Applications for development must take account of the need to protect and enhance landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity. In particular, consideration of planning applications should take into account the need to protect Cornish hedges and the species they support from loss or damage, and maximise the opportunities for enhancing wildlife, geodiversity and landscape creating new areas of public space and across the parish.



## **Appendix A1: Directory of Businesses located in/working from Withiel Parish**

Capillary Tube Supplies Ltd: Stockholders and distributors of small-diameter glass capillary tubes used in X-ray diffraction analysis to universities, research bodies and government organisations.

Tel: (01208) 832924

Website: [www.capillarytubes.co.uk](http://www.capillarytubes.co.uk)

Cornish Masonry Stove Company: Design, build and install ceramic masonry stoves – the first such eco stoves to be built in Britain – and heaters using locally-sourced materials and engineering skills, with a commitment to encouraging the spread and use of sustainable and renewable energy sources. Managing director lives in the parish and the business operates from here.

Tel: (01208) 831303

Website: [www.cornishmasonrystoves.com](http://www.cornishmasonrystoves.com)

Cornwall Defence Solicitors LLP: Legal office of around eight solicitors, general, criminal, conveyancing etc., specialising in all areas of road traffic law and motoring offences. Based in Victoria Square.

Tel: (01726) 892842

Website: [www.cornwalldefencesolicitors.co.uk](http://www.cornwalldefencesolicitors.co.uk)

Green Waste Company: Specialist green waste recycling business on a county-wide scale, working with local authorities, farmers and landowners, builders etc., taking green waste for recycling and supplying compost, mulch and woodchips to business and individual customers. Based in Higher Brynn Farm Industrial Estate.

Tel: (01726) 752393

Website: [www.greenwastecompany.com](http://www.greenwastecompany.com)

Henry's Cattery: Specialised purpose-built cattery emphasising feline health care as well as boarding facilities, in a rural location.

Tel: (01726) 891542

Website: [www.henryscattery.co.uk](http://www.henryscattery.co.uk)

Fairweather Media Ltd: Publishing company whose owner/director lives in the parish. The company has been described “right from the start three years ago, it has been a reference point for others in this field, achieving measurable success.”

Tel: (01208) 832995

Halo Design Ltd: Design and project management of bespoke portable buildings (huts, pods, caravans etc.) for additional living/working space on a temporary or permanent basis. Based in Higher Brynn Farm Industrial Estate.

Tel: (01726) 893101

Website: [www.halodesign.co](http://www.halodesign.co)

James Darling Photography: Wedding, family and commercial photography in Cornwall and nationally, specialist photojournalist emphasising naturalistic and reportage style.

Tel: 07799 674826

Website: [www.jamesdarlingphotography.com](http://www.jamesdarlingphotography.com)

Magnet Ltd: One of three centres in Cornwall of nationwide supplier, specialising in design, manufacture and installation of kitchens to industrial and domestic customers. Based in Victoria Square.

Tel: (01726) 890573

Website: [www.magnet.co.uk](http://www.magnet.co.uk)

Manor Bakeries Ltd: Storage building for the main site in Roche, bakery and confectionery supplies. Based in Victoria Square.

Tel: (01726) 890847

Website: [www.mrkipling.co.uk](http://www.mrkipling.co.uk)

Mid-Cornwall Self-storage: Secure storage facilities for antiques, general household, furniture etc., for domestic and business customers. Based in Victoria Square.

Tel: 07802 308775

Website: [www.midcornwallselfstorage.co.uk](http://www.midcornwallselfstorage.co.uk)

PH Media: Part of a national company widely recognised as one of the UK's largest independent prepress suppliers with a prestigious client list, working with leading publishers and designers on leading-edge printing techniques. Based in Victoria Square.

Tel: (01726) 891111

Website: [www.phmedia.com](http://www.phmedia.com)

Poultry Patch Ltd: tourist attraction based around rare breed poultry and other animals, with an educational focus, and children's playground; together with a shop selling poultry-related equipment, homewares and gifts; and cafe selling locally-sourced and home-produced products.

Tel: (01208) 831542

Website: [www.thepoultrypatch.com](http://www.thepoultrypatch.com)

Pro Lift Access Ltd: Short or long term hire and sale of all types of powered access aerial platforms throughout the south west, also servicing and maintenance, and training in lift equipment operation. Based in Victoria Square.

Tel: (01726) 890899

Website: [www.proliftaccess.co.uk](http://www.proliftaccess.co.uk)

Real Food Garden: fresh locally-grown and chemical-free organic produce supplied to restaurants, shops and caterers as well as individual customers, with delivery or free pick up at local schools. Market garden based near Retire hamlet.

Tel: 07725 857637

Website: [www.realfoodgarden.co.uk](http://www.realfoodgarden.co.uk)

Be Reem Hair Nails and Tanning Studio: men's and women's hairdressing, manicure etc., inspired by ITV show 'The Only Way Is Essex'.

Tel: (01726) 893090

Website: [www.bereemhairnails&tanning](http://www.bereemhairnails&tanning)

Roche MoT & Tyre Centre Ltd: MoT and vehicle servicing and repairs, refitting brakes, clutches and exhausts, supply tyres, with 5-star ratings from customers. Based in Victoria Square.

Tel: (01726) 890000

Website: [www.rochemotandtyrecentre](http://www.rochemotandtyrecentre)

Three Cheers Pubs: A chain of seven high-end gastropubs in the south London area, emphasising quality sustainably-sourced food, own-brand beer, cordials and spirits. One of the three partners in the business lives in the parish and carries on the business from here.

Tel: (020) 7819 9312

Website: [www.threecheers.co.uk](http://www.threecheers.co.uk)



Timberstore (UK) Ltd: Suppliers of timber products (flooring, furniture, decking, fencing etc.) to industry and DIY throughout Devon and Cornwall. All timber is sourced from certified sustainable products suppliers. Based in Higher Brynn Farm Industrial Estate.  
Tel: (01726) 890052 Website: [www.timberstoreuk.co.uk](http://www.timberstoreuk.co.uk)

TOLRA Micro Systems: We mention this website design, hosting and maintenance business as an example of leading-edge microbusiness which was operating in Withiel at the inception of the neighbourhood development plan in 2015 but moved away to another area because of the lack of superfast broadband.  
Website: [www.tolranet.com](http://www.tolranet.com)

Total Development South West: Design, manufacture and build timber frame structures. In-house architectural design service including planning and regulatory submissions and project management, from individual self-build to large-scale development. Based in Higher Brynn Farm Industrial Estate.  
Tel: (01726) 891609 Website: [www.tdsw.co.uk](http://www.tdsw.co.uk)

Yvonne Arlott.com: Internationally-known wood-turning artist and publisher of books and DVDs on advanced wood-turning techniques.  
Tel: (01208) 832315 Website: [www.yvonnearlott.com](http://www.yvonnearlott.com)

Withiel Commercials: Storage and other portable container solutions for hire and sale, also haulage services throughout the south west.  
Tel: 07883 075922 Website: [www.withielcommercials.co.uk](http://www.withielcommercials.co.uk)

Withiel Sculpture Garden: The owners of the internationally-recognised Lemon Street Gallery in Truro have established at their home in the parish the Withiel Sculpture Garden, which they say “marries contemporary art with landscape in a unique and spectacular way.”  
Tel: (01872) 275757 Website: [www.lemonstreetgallery.co.uk](http://www.lemonstreetgallery.co.uk)

## APPENDIX D.1: Historic England Listed Sites in Withiel Parish

Site Summary	Listing No	Listing Date	Grade
Garden wall and gateway, Bosneives farmhouse	1143072	1988	II
Group of farm buildings west of Bosneives farmhouse	1143073	1988	II
Wesleyan Methodist chapel and attached coach-house, Ruthernbridge	1143074	1988	II
Tregustick farmhouse	1143075	1988	II
Mill southwest of West Ruthern farmhouse, Ruthernbridge	1143076	1988	II
Gateway with gate, south entrance to Withiel House	1143077	1988	II
Church of St. Clement, Withiel	1143078	1969	I
Meneghyjy (house)	1143079	1988	II
West Ruthern farmhouse, Ruthernbridge	1158350	1988	II
Wall with gateways and attached privy, south side of St. Clements churchyard	1158415	1988	II
Lavender Cottage and Withiel (old) Post Office	1311487	1988	II
South View (house)	1311492	1988	II
The Old Rectory	1311505	1969	II
Withiel House and outbuildings attached to rear	1311539	1969	II
The Hawthorns (farmhouse), nr Ruthernbridge	1311550	1988	II
Swindon Villa (railway carriage)	1311557	1988	II
Bosneives farmhouse	1311581	1988	II
Guidestone at SW997624	132339	1987	II

Tremore bridge	1327921	1988	II
Pair of gate piers, gate and garden walls attached to east of the Old Rectory	1327927	1988	II
Buscomb monument in churchyard east of south aisle of St. Clement's Church	1327928	1988	II
Bowl Barrow at Tregawne	1004232	1976	-
Holy well northwest of Roche station	1004342	N/A	-
Wayside cross in grounds of former Rectory south west of house	1006626	1934	-
Inchs cross south west of Inchs	1007969	1932	-
Ruthern bridge with adjacent ford	1020810	1926	-