

**MEVAGISSEY**  
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**2017 – 2032**

**April 2017**

# MEVAGISSEY

## LOCAL LAND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

### 1. Introduction

Developing a neighbourhood plan for Mevagissey has allowed people to come together in the parish and say where they think new houses, businesses and shops should go and what they should look like. This process is not possible without a clear and detailed understanding of landscape context information that is required for planning and decision making.

The landscape is the most fundamental and crucial aspect of any area but this is particularly true of Mevagissey. It is our most tangible link to the past and our cultural heritage; it nurtures our present and is the setting for our lives; but it is also our link to the future and the reason why it's careful and considered management is so important.

The Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA) underpins the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) by providing evidence, support and guidance to deliver good quality sustainable development that respects and, where possible, enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the landscape. It brings together information relating to the physical, natural and historic environment enabling a more integrated approach to be taken towards decision-making. On this basis, judgements can then be made on how local distinctiveness and local character can be safeguarded, improved and enhanced through the development process. It reflects the parish's diversity, giving clear and accessible information relating to key existing characteristics, conditions, pressures and provides guidelines for future planning and land management.



Aerial view of Mevagissey harbour.

## **2. Local Land Character Assessment**

### **2.1 What is the Mevagissey landscape?**

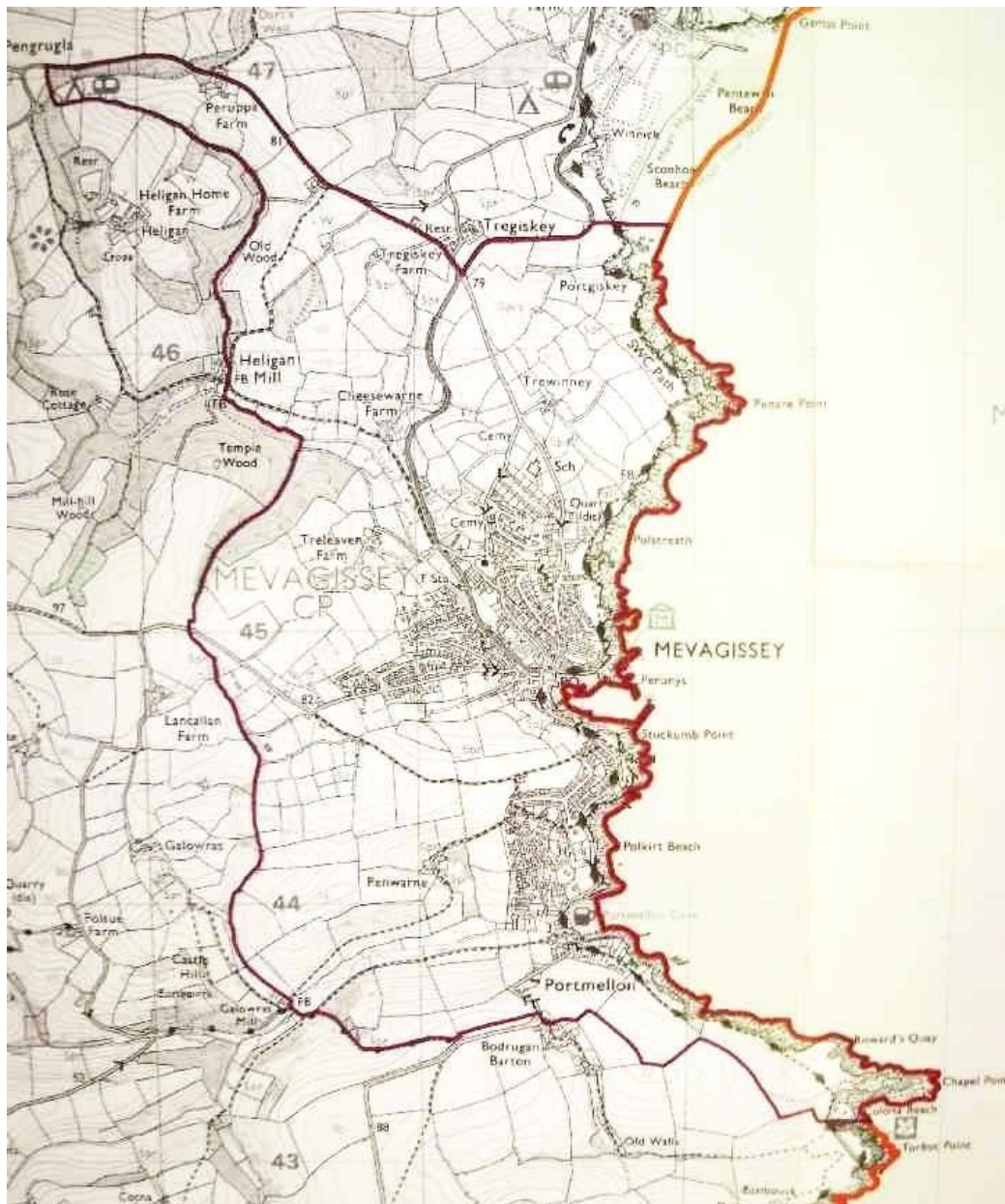
Landscape is more than just scenery. It is the unique combination of elements and features in the parish of Mevagissey that makes it distinctive, recognisable and precious. More importantly it reflects the relationship between people, the land and the sea over centuries. It is an expression of the diversity of a shared cultural, natural heritage and the foundation of Mevagissey's identity and sense of place.

### **2.2 What is landscape character assessment?**

- 2.2.1** Landscape character assessment (LCA) is an accepted framework and process for identifying and describing variation in character of the landscape and everything that makes it distinctive. This LCA document identifies and explains the unique combination of elements and features that make Mevagissey distinctive and how its people have combined with the forces of nature over time to create a sense of place; perceived, experienced and valued by residents and visitors alike.
- 2.2.2** The natural beauty of the landscape includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographic features but is also dominated by the seascape. This LCA has evolved from the Natural England National Character Area No. 152 (Cornish Killas), the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- 2.2.3** Management Plan 2011-16 – South Central Coast and the Cornwall Council Landscape Character Assessment 2007 CA40 – Gerrans, Veryan and Mevagissey Bay.
- 2.2.4** The documents referenced in 2.2.2 do not provide a sufficient level of detail to inform the Mevagissey Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and this document therefore focuses on a comprehensive assessment of the landscape character of the parish of Mevagissey and how it relates to both the surrounding areas of South Central Cornwall and the seascape.

### **2.3 The Mevagissey Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA)**

**2.3.1** The Mevagissey LLCA describes in detail the special qualities of the landscape which it will be important to conserve and enhance in order to retain Mevagissey's unique, locally distinctive sense of place. It includes the seascape and the way in which man and nature have combined to create an environment that displays centuries of history, tradition and culture as well as a sensitive evolution to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A landscape sensitivity consultation was undertaken to identify highly sensitive landscape areas, please see the associated document, [Local Landscape Sensitivity Survey](#).



Mevagissey Parish.

**2.3.2** The character of the parish of Mevagissey is divided into five generic landscape ‘Character Types’ which define the area through similar characteristics of topography, vegetation cover and land use.

- (i) Coastal fishing village at the mouth of a stream
- (ii) Highly articulated cliffs and headlands
- (iii) Undulating and often steep-sided fields of a mixture of arable and pastoral farmland
- (iv) Woodland mainly located in valleys with some trees and copses around farmsteads and ancient woodland on the slopes
- (v) Steep stream valley bottoms with associated wetland vegetation with remnant pastures.





Coastal fishing village at the mouth of a stream.



Highly articulated cliffs and headlands.



Undulating fields, a mixture of arable and pastoral farmland.



Woodland mainly located in valleys with some trees and copses.





Steep stream valley bottoms with associated wetland vegetation.

**2.3.3** To complement the map and photographs which visually identify each ‘character type’ a description of the main elements of character which make each ‘character type’ distinct has been referenced. These detailed descriptions were prepared by local volunteers going out into the landscape and recording their findings under the headings of the Character Area descriptions within the 2007 Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment, providing more local perspectives.

**2.3.4** This descriptive work is supplemented by the important aspects of value and emotional perspective about how the community experiences the landscape, what they enjoy and what they wish to retain in terms of the essential character of the area, whilst positively planning for future development. These perspectives were recorded during consultation events and focused on  economic value – what the landscape means for business and tourism

- social and community value – contributes to our sense of identity, place and well-being and brings enjoyment and inspiration
- environmental value – home for wildlife and a cultural record of the community’s use of the land and sea.
- the built environment and man-made features

## **2.4 How will the Mevagissey LLCA be used?**

**2.4.1** The Mevagissey LLCA is an essential document to inform, support and underpin the policies within the NDP. It provides descriptions of the elements and features which make up the unique landscape of the parish of Mevagissey along with the identification of future development pressures, guidance for land management and planning for a sustainable future while conserving what is most precious about the past.

**2.4.2** The landscape characterisation creates an evidence base to be used as a tool for considering development proposals, assessing their impact and therefore guiding decision-making. The information can also be used to demonstrate the sensitivity to change and therefore guide design at an early stage.

**2.4.3** The LLCA sets the context for the NDP policies and supports community led planning where local people provide the evidence base that:-

- supports the setting of priorities for future land management and siting of development;
- objectively guides the right development to the right place;
- ensures the quality of design and respect for local character, materials and vernacular development styles
- informs decisions on the environmental implications of a development application;
- describes the important relationship between people and the land;
- defines the locality highlighting what creates Mevagissey's sense of place;
- gives value to what is important to the local community and visitors
- provides environmental information relating to designated land and seascapes

## **3. Mevagissey Local Landscape Character Assessment**

### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 The village of Mevagissey was originally two distinct settlements – Lamoreck and Porthilly – nestled between two hills at the opening to the steep, wooded Cheesewarne valley. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century as the two settlements expanded and joined, they became known as Mevagissey.

3.1.2 The development of the area has been tied to the marine location and the growth of the fishing economy. The inner harbour walls were completed in 1776 and shipyards and warehousing developed around the harbour and its thriving fishing industry. The outer harbour was added at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and since then the overall decline in the fishing industry has given way to an increase in tourism.



- 3.1.3 The parish is dominated by the coastal settlements and includes the adjacent village of Portmellon which is accessed via the narrow streets of Mevagissey. From Portmellon the valley is wooded on the south side up to Galowras Mill from where it extends to both sides of the valley and the Portmellon stream.
- 3.1.4 The valleys and surrounding areas are of very high environmental quality. The land beyond the coast is a farmed landscape, intersected by stream valleys. The undulating landform has a transport system of narrow, winding lanes that dip into the woodland concentrated in the valley sides and bottoms. This is a medieval landscape of largely ancient, enclosed land with fields of small to medium size and irregular shape, bound in most places by typical Cornish hedgerows.
- 3.1.5 As outlined in chapters 1 and 2, an assessment of the local landscape has been undertaken by local people. The details of this LLCA are provided under the five types of landscape found in the parish of Mevagissey, described covering the relevant elements and key characteristics from the following:-
- 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
  - Views
  - Pressure and forces for change
  - Landscape management and development considerations

Five landscape types:

1. Coastal fishing village at the mouth of a stream -3.2
2. Highly articulated cliffs and headlands – 3.3
3. Undulating, and often steep-sided fields of a mixture of arable and pastoral farmland – 3.4
4. Woodland mainly located in valleys with some trees and copses around farmsteads and ancient woodland on the slopes. – 3.5
5. Steep stream valley bottoms with associated wetland vegetation with remnant pastures – 3.6

### **3.2 Landscape Type – coastal fishing village at the mouth of a stream**

It is not possible to assess the character of the landscape in this area without including the harbour and the historic buildings surrounding it. It has been the

beating heart of the village since the very earliest times and the focus of the major economies of fishing (and smuggling!) and tourism throughout its history.

Since Mevagissey is the dominant feature of the parish and the harbour, built into the natural landscape, is the nucleus of the village, the harbour and surrounding buildings (not the wider village) are included as a character type in their own right.

### 3.2.1 Key characteristics

- Working fishing village
- Inner harbour
- Outer harbour
- Cottages built into the cliff
- Wharves, warehouses, storehouses, sail lofts
- Cliff paths and cobbled streets

### 3.2.2 Character of the Landscape Type

#### Topography and Drainage

Mevagissey sits at the opening of the Cheesewarne valley and development has been tied to the marine location and growth of the fishing economy. It has an intricate, historic core and harbour providing a natural amphitheatre surrounded by green valleys and dramatic cliffs.

The current inner harbour was built on the site of a medieval quay in 1774 which benefited the fishing and boat building industries and also the commercial cargo trade.

The outer harbour was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and given charitable status in 1988. It provides 3-4 hectares of sheltered water but in easterly storms becomes overrun and the outer breakwaters over-topped.

Flooding of the central part of Mevagissey as a result of high tides, sea state and heavy rainfall, is a problem.



Flooding in Mevagissey.

#### Biodiversity

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the pilchard fishery contributed significantly to the local economy but by 20<sup>th</sup> century the fishing industry targeted a greater

diversity of species, in particular crab and lobster. Small boats work lines of pots close inshore and a fleet of small boats catch primarily mackerel, pollock, bass and squid but also sole, plaice, brill, cod, whiting, monkfish and turbot.

Large sea mammals can sometimes be spotted close inshore and seals occasionally enter the harbours. The rocky outcrops within the outer harbour reveal rock pools at low tide teeming with the typical flora and fauna of the habitat

Seagulls are the most obvious birds both visually and aurally and make a very significant contribution to the landscape. A very wide variety of other birds are present but less obvious in the harbour area.

### Land Cover and Land Use

The success of the pilchard industry provided the impetus for the development of Mevagissey as a fishing port and harbour. The increase in boats necessitated a small harbour wall (probably around mid 16<sup>th</sup> century) but this was replaced 200 years later and another quay built out from the west side thereby forming what is now the inner harbour. Wharves and a jetty were constructed along the harbour frontage.

The enclosure of The Pool to form the outer harbour took place towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This addressed the overcrowding of boats in the inner harbour, relieved the pressure for space for the boat building industry, protected the inner harbour from exposure to the south east gales and alleviated reliance on the tides in some situations.

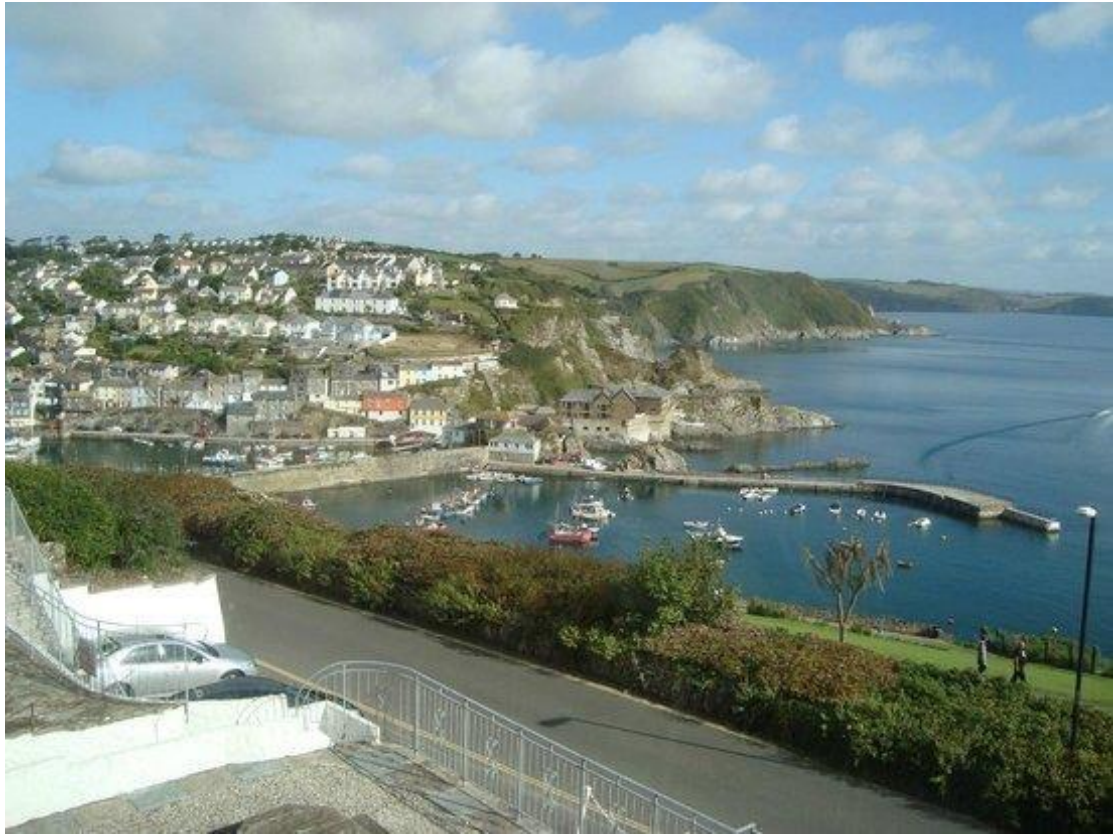
Substantial storehouses, sail lofts, barkhouses, fish curing and packing cellars and fish merchants stores were erected along the front of the quays and there were several shipyards close to the waterfront. These buildings still exist but have mostly become cafes, restaurants, gift shops and other tourist outlets.

Most of the buildings around the quay date from the 10-20 years following the completion of the harbour when the few old cob-walled buildings in the area were pulled down. The stone cottages crammed along Cliff Street and The Cliff are mostly fishermen's cottages dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Battery Terrace, higher up on the cliff facing south east, takes its name from a battery of six cannons which was established in 1803 to protect the harbour during the Napoleonic wars.

Many of the village's largest houses were built on the southern side of the harbour during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to house ship-owners, mine captains and industrialists. The most significant is Polkirt House built in the 1730s. Myrtle Court with its 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages grouped around a cobbled yard is a typical example of the old housing patterns. Building extended to the top of the hill by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Cliff Park, overlooking the harbours, was donated to the people of Mevagissey by Howard and May Dunn, in memory of Matthias Dunn the Elder, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1925. The Dunns lived in Honeycombe House, which is now a Bed & Breakfast business. At the time however, the house was the last house on Polkirt Hill.





Polkirt Hill today



Polkirt Hill in the 1890s.

### Transport Pattern

The south-west coastal path enters this character type at the top of Polkirt Hill and descends to the outer harbour on lighthouse quay. The path goes round both harbours and leaves the village over The Cliff on the opposite side.

The streets leading to the harbour are extremely narrow and these cobbled alleys and 'opes' leading from Fore Street and Polkirt Hill were lined with warehouses, fish cellars and net lofts and it's still possible to pick out the wide doorways of the 18<sup>th</sup> century fish cellars.

Cars can enter the village centre from the B3273 but the single track lanes in the centre leading to the harbour can be very congested and difficult to negotiate.

### Settlement Pattern

The cottages nestling into the hillside looking south over the harbours; the fisherman's buildings along the quays and the buildings in Fore Street and St Georges Square give this area the unique and quintessential character of the village and despite many being focused on the tourist industry now, the settlement pattern is precious and loved by residents and visitors alike.

### Historic Interest

Almost everything about this character type is of historic interest and is covered in detail elsewhere in the document and will not be repeated here.

Those features not mentioned elsewhere are:-

An unbroken tradition of boat building on Island Quay since 1745 and although much of the site has now been built over, the tradition is retained by John Moor and Sons

The Mevagissey Museum is housed in a workshop and yard which date back to the original form of boat builders in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the old Watch House was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a response to the flourishing smuggling industry. It housed the customs boat and provided a look out for the excise men in the heart of the harbour.

The harbour aquarium is housed in the old RNLi lifeboat house which was completed in 1897 and housed three different lifeboats until 1930 when the advent of motor lifeboats led to its demise. Since the 1930s the lifeboat house has had many uses from café, shop and gun emplacement during the second world war, manned by the Home Guard, before becoming an aquarium in the 1950s.

### Condition

The present outer harbour defences are regularly swamped during severe easterly or south-easterly winds and offshore generated swells often restrict

access to the harbour. These conditions also put the inner harbour at risk of flooding and storm damage.

It is estimated that the inner harbour quays may fail as soon as five years after the failure of the outside piers.

The effects of tidal and fluvial flood events severely disrupt wharf operation and cause commercial damage. If sea levels rise as predicted, tidal flooding will increase in frequency and severity.

The severity of wave overtopping at the North Pier and lack of navigation safety is mainly due to breakwater height and wave breaking on the nearby field of rocks.



Mevagissey harbour during an easterly storm.

### Aesthetic and Sensory

Surveys indicate that the main reasons for visiting Mevagissey are the harbour and boats and the surrounding scenery and landscape.

The tranquillity of the water in the harbour contrasts with the hive of activity being undertaken by those working with the boats and everything associated with the fishing and pleasure boat industry. The scene is colourful, interesting and often exciting for both residents and visitors alike.



The seagulls are in constant motion following the fishing boats, soaring on the winds and thermals and pestering visitors for their pasties! They are fascinating to watch and provide background music to the business of the harbour.

### **3.2.3 Pressures and Forces for Change**

- Need to improve the working capacity of the harbour
- Development of fishing industry support infrastructure and access for distribution
- European Union fishing regulations
- Victorian outer harbour arms overrun by severe easterly and southeasterly storms
- Traffic in the village centre and around the harbour
- Available facilities for existing and new visitor markets
- Support infrastructure for local business
- Level of second home ownership and use of second homes
- Tourist pressure leading to conversion of dwelling to holiday homes

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

- Create opportunities for sensitive development of facilities and attractions for visitors to facilitate longer stays (accommodation) and an extension of the season
- Improvements to the quality of the environment in and around the harbour, as the harbour is the key attraction
- Conservation of the harbour's heritage and enhancement to accommodate the needs of new visitor markets such as fishing, diving, boating, art, rock climbing and walking
- The tension between conservation of the harbour's heritage and large vehicular access for the fishing industry
- Symbiotic relationship between fishing and tourism requires that fishing standards and legislation are of paramount importance to remaining competitive.
- Mitigation and impact of fluvial and tidal flooding
- Improvements to the condition of the harbour defences

## **3.3 Landscape Type – highly articulated cliffs and headlands**

### **3.3.1 Key characteristics**

- Stunning views from every point along the coastal boundary of the

## LLCA

- Small coves and sandy beaches exposed at low to mid tides, some with very difficult access down steep cliffs
- Unspoilt cliff scenery, inaccessibility, teeming wildlife and timeless tranquillity
- Dramatic, rugged and symbiotic relationship between sea and land
- Big, open skies and expansive sea views
- Relatively large tidal range - sheltered from the prevailing southwesterly wind but changing to experience the dramatic impact of an easterly wind change



Polstreath beach.

### **3.3.2 Character of the landscape type**

#### Topography and Drainage

Small scale, rugged and steep cliffs at Chapel Point through to higher and more imposing cliffs at Penare Head.

Small coves (Colona beach, Portmellon cove, Portgiskey) and larger beaches (Polstreath) with only moderate accessibility and mostly covered at high tides

Extreme low tide exposes ancient petrified forest remains at Portmellon

Central to the coastal edge of the LLCA is the inner and outer harbour of Mevagissey

Streams in valleys run into the sea, also springs and land drainage run off from cliff faces.

High tide, sea state and heavy rainfall can cause flooding in central low area of Mevagissey where the stream runs into the harbour.

### Biodiversity

Predominantly sandy, shallow bays, separated by more steeply shelving rocky outcrops and the coastline is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It features complex geographical terrain which supports rare and scarce plants on land and unusual algae, seaweeds and marine invertebrates in the sea.

Cliff faces support a varied flora such as the sea-thrift (*Armenia Maritima*), coastal gorse and tussocks. Considerable areas of low, windswept, ancient native scrub and bushes on the cliff faces. Occasional stunted tree groups, shaped by the prevailing winds and through which the coastal path passes. This provides a habitat for birds and small invertebrates.

Natural scrub habitat comprising bracken, bramble, gorse and stunted blackthorn on the cliff tops where the pastoral farmland has retreated, provides food and cover for birds.

Coastal edge supports a variety of sea birds including guillemot, razorbill, cormorant/shag, rare divers, great black-backed gulls and herring gulls. Other birds around the coast include buzzards, peregrines and choughs

Sea supports wide variety of fish, crustaceans, squid, seals, porpoises and basking sharks.

### Land Cover and Land Use

Conservation mainly with some leisure activities – walking, rock climbing, water sports, bird-watching, photography and art

South West Coastal Footpath along entire eastern edge of the Parish

Some stunted trees, bushes, scrub and dense undergrowth on cliff tops.

### Fields and Woodland Pattern

There are few fields and only remnant boundary hedges of earth and grass, frequently eroded and in poor condition. There are no woodlands but considerable areas of low, windswept ancient native scrub, plus occasional stunted tree groups through which the coastal path passes.



### Settlement Pattern

Coastal village of Mevagissey and Portmellon dealt with under 3.2 and chapter 6

Chapel Point, at the southern coastal edge of the parish is an isolated rocky spit of land reaching out into the Atlantic and is a spectacular setting for a small group of houses

Mevagissey lighthouse was built in 1896 to mark the south breakwater that protects the harbour. It is 8 metres high and the light can be seen for 12 nautical miles.

Coastguards House – built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in prime clifftop location and dedicated to Stuart Ingram, a coastguard for 37 years.

### Transport Pattern

There are no roads along the cliff top. A minor, single track road from the B3273 follows the cliff top up Polkirt Hill in Mevagissey and winds its way round to Portmellon before turning inland again, where it becomes single track for much of its route to Gorran Haven.

The south west coastal path is well used and in good condition with occasional direct access paths to minor roads and difficult access to coves. The path becomes a minor single track road at Portmellon (travelling north) and leaves the road to travel over the cliffs at the entrance to Mevagissey and passes around the outer and inner harbour before rising over the cliffs again on the other side of the valley mouth.

Footpaths are well maintained and traditional footpath signage is comprehensively provided.

### Historic Features

Portmellon has a long history of boat building and there is a slipway for launching boats that is now out of use.

All the houses along the sea front have stout wooden shutters on the windows which are closed when storms drive the waves over the sea wall.

Petrified forest at Portmellon visible at extreme low tides.

Disused stone quarry at Polstreath.



Portmellon beach.

### Condition

Natural coastal erosion is a part of the character.

Litter and flotsam washed up during high tides is a minor problem but well managed.

The coastal path is well maintained and very well used.

### Aesthetic and Sensory

Aesthetically the experience is one of an expansive and dramatic view across Mevagissey Bay to Black Head and beyond across St Austell Bay towards Fowey. This is combined with stunning views of the cliffs and rocky outcrops that provide picturesque and often striking wave action.

The sensory experience is largely determined by the tides and weather ranging from calm and totally tranquil to wild, stormy and exhilarating with a raw power.

Many parts of the cliff edge and coastal path are exposed, rugged, windswept and have been sculpted by the elements over centuries. This gives a feeling of enduring, ancient history and culture together with a timelessness that inspires a deep

appreciation of the present at the same time as evoking scenes of invasion, smuggling and toil from the distant past.

The cry of gulls dominates other birdsong and the sound of the sea and wind predominate. Light pollution in some areas of the cliffs looking out to sea, is minimal and the stars are magnificent and, facing east the full moon can be seen rising over the horizon on clear nights.

#### Distinctive Features

Phenomenal views together with evidence of how man and nature combine to create community and harmony.

Soaring seabirds finding the thermals and providing the background chorus to the landscape

### **3.3.3 Pressures and Forces for Change**

- Less than a mile and a half of undeveloped coastline exists within the parish boundaries. Development close to the cliffs and on the coastal edge would have an enormous impact on the character type and seriously affect the south west coastal path.
- Tourism access and parking
- Wind turbines
- Redevelopment / expansion of established tourism facilities
- Need for an additional breakwater to protect Mevagissey harbour from tidal impact
- Light pollution of the night skies

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

- Development on the coastal edge and its immediate hinterland should have regard to its prominence, the special and protected importance of the landscape and its largely undeveloped characteristics
- The open, often high and exposed nature of the coast provides extensive panoramic views of the surrounding area and is a significant tourist attraction.
- Location of development on prominent skylines with distinctive historic and / or cultural features
- Analysis of the impact of development on key views from important viewpoints, popular tourist and scenic routes and the settlements of Mevagissey and Portmellon



- Careful consideration for the need for creating access tracks across coastal rough ground
- Conserve coastal heath and coastal field patterns by re-establishing grazing on the coastal strip at appropriate stock levels

### **3.4 Landscape Type – undulating, and often steep-sided fields of a mixture of arable and pastoral farmland**

#### **3.4.1 Key characteristics**

- Long-standing area of pastureland with hedgerows, managed and unmanaged, leading down to wooded valleys.
- Gentle rolling farmland with long views to headland and the sea
- Farming adapted to the steep contours of the fields without destroying the woodland.



Woodland and rolling farmland.

### **3.4.2 Character of the landscape type**

#### Topography and Drainage

Rolling, undulating landform with varied gradients of slope from relatively shallow to steep-sided fields.

In parts of these areas, springs and small streams emerge flowing down to give wet, marshy areas. In other locations there is no water present.

Some areas in the character type have a plateau leading to undulating fields, descending eventually to valley bottoms draining into streams.

Hedges often form permanent vegetation on the farmland in contrast to the regularly grazed, cropped and cleared fields.

#### Biodiversity

Grassland and arable with well developed and continuous managed hedgerows, although some have been allowed to develop trees such as blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, oak, ash and elm.

Unmanaged hedgerows which provide good wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors leading to woodland in the valley.

Main type of hedge is the Cornish hedge with its distinctive wide, stone banks filled with earth, stone hedges, turf hedges and earth banks. There is a strong relationship between age and species richness. The hedges support important populations of flowering and lower plants and animals.

Field margins where they exist provide nesting and feeding sites for birds. Many butterflies, grasshoppers and plant bugs associated with the habitat.

#### Land Cover and Land Use

The land is largely mixed farming, arable and pasture, with isolated farmhouses, ancillary farm buildings and residences. Some of the properties have holiday accommodation annexed.

There are some woodland copses varying in density.

Farms and occasional large properties and holiday accommodation at the edge of the settlement of Mevagissey and Portmellon.

### Field and Woodland Pattern

This is a medieval landscape of largely anciently enclosed land with fields of small to medium size and irregular shape bounded in most places by typical Cornish hedges.

Woodland in small, isolated copses, larger ribbon strips, hedges and around farmsteads gathering particularly in the lower part of the sloping fields.

### Settlement Pattern

Within the LLCA the major and dominating settlement is Mevagissey with Portmellon. However, within this character type most settlement is restricted to farmhouses, ancillary buildings and occasional annexed holiday lets.

### Transport Pattern

The stream valleys give rise to an undulating landform and a transport pattern of tight, winding lanes which become steep hills towards the settlements. The lanes dip into woodland that is concentrated in the valley sides and bottoms and around the farmsteads.

With the exception of the B3273 from St Austell, the roads are mostly single track with passing places and varying gradients. They follow old field boundaries with straight sections and sharp S-bends. The sides are bounded by high hedges and occasional trees. There are no verges, no pavements or lights.

The public footpaths are well used and largely well maintained with modern signs but can require appropriate footwear where livestock roam such as towards Chapel Point.

### Historic Features

The only significant historic feature is the unchanging nature and function of the area. The farms and woodland have a timeless quality and have changed only in the method with which they go about their business and the way in which they relate to and support the parish and beyond.

### Condition

The landscape is generally well managed farmland. Hedgerows and associated trees are also generally well managed.

### Aesthetic and Sensory

Tranquility is the predominant feature of this character type – quiet and undisturbed apart from the occasional noise of tractors and agricultural machinery.

Sloping fields on the valley sides can be both sheltered or exposed depending on the prevailing wind direction – usually south west but can be subject to colder, drier winds from the east.

Seasonal changes bring variety, colour and each its own attractive distinctiveness. The sensory impact of weather patterns, the sights and sounds of the natural world, both wild and domesticated give this area a timeless and peaceful, undisturbed quality with very little noise or light pollution.

### Distinctive Features

Secluded, unspoilt, small scale farmland with Cornish hedges, shrubs flowers and trees through the seasons. There is a quiet contentment about this area typified by the cattle grazing peacefully, birdsong and the sights and sounds of the natural world.

### Views

Views down valleys to the sea and headlands such as Chapel Point. From high points some more sweeping and distant views across the countryside, towards the sea and to the clay country at St Austell.



Chapel Point.



### **3.4.3 Pressure and Forces for Change**

- Housing development which extends above the valley to the higher ground breaking the skyline.
- Extensions and alterations to existing dwellings
- Increased urbanisation due to pressure for affordable homes, holiday accommodation, caravan parks and camping grounds
- Pressure to convert non-permanent touring caravan sites for permanent accommodation and static caravan sites
- Accumulation of modern structures including wind turbines, solar arrays, overhead cables and telecommunication masts
- Realignment, widening of highways
- Removal of trees and hedges
- Increased field sizes involving the removal of Cornish hedges and changes in traditional farmland management

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

- Consideration for the scale and design of development, how it impacts on its setting in the landscape, use of locally occurring materials and how it reflects the landscape character and settlement pattern
- Impact of any diversification of farmland on historic character of the area and the current undulating pastoral scene
- Retention and enhancement of small and medium sized field pattern with Cornish hedges, native shrubs and trees
- Limit the amount of farmland to amenity use in the area and resist development which would make existing sites more permanent
- Support for the management, and where appropriate, the extension of broad-leaf woodlands. Avoid the removal of ancient woodland
- Careful approach to proposals to widen or straighten characteristic narrow, winding lanes, associated damage to Cornish hedges, trees, gateposts and feature, finger signposts
- Protection of ‘tree tunnels’ that may be damaged by large vehicles

## **3.5 Landscape Type - woodland mainly located in valleys with some trees and copses around farmsteads and ancient woodland on the slopes**

### **3.5.1 Key characteristics**

- The abundance of trees and natural ancient woodland

- Farming has adapted to the steep contours of the area without destroying the ancient woodlands which creates outstanding beauty and varied habitats for flora and fauna
- Density of the vegetation and in some areas the presence of water / springs.



Mevagissey woodland.

### **3.5.2 Character of the landscape type**

#### Topography and Drainage

Steep and intermediate sloping valleys with varying undulations. The valleys all contain water in the form of streams with many springs on the steep slopes.

The area is at risk of both tidal and fluvial flooding. (ref. Mevagissey Flood Plan)

Steep up and downs with some walking in very quiet lanes

#### Biodiversity

Sanctuary Wood, to the south west of the area, is a broad leafed wood with excellent views available from the plateau. It adjoins West Brodugan Wood Nature Reserve and has a small stream running through the valley. The wood spans two steep-sided valleys.

The north west of the area includes the south-eastern part of Temple Wood, Mill Hill Wood and the Treleven Plantation. The parish boundaries merge here with the Heligan Estate Parkland and Woods which has an important impact on the character of the landscape in this area.

There are pockets of ancient woodland including oak, ash, sycamore and alder, on the valley sides usually close to and descending to water courses. Thick areas of scrub, including gorse, bracken and bramble, separate hedges and woodland in some areas.

The relative remoteness and the density of indigenous trees protect a wide variety of mammals (eg. badgers, deer, foxes, stoat and weasels), birds (eg falcons, owls, woodpeckers, black caps, kestrels) and a rich and diverse ground flora. The bluebells and primroses are a good indicator of an ancient woodland.

The Cheesewarne Stream is classified as an ordinary watercourse with water of good quality suitable for all species of fish. There are no active mineral workings or historic metalliferous workings within the Mevagissey Stream catchment

#### Land Use and Land Cover

The steep wooded slopes abut the steep sided, irregular fields of arable and pastoral farmland in 3.5.

Many of the woodland habitats have footpaths running through them for public use and enjoyment.

Little management or felling has taken place in the ancient woodlands and therefore the soil profile could still hold primary seed beds – an important and irreplaceable resource.

The woodland is not used and is largely natural, unmanaged and undisturbed.

#### Field and Woodland Pattern

The woodland is predominantly native trees extending up the steep-sided slopes from the valley bottom with ribbons of trees following the streams and farmsteads.

There are no field patterns within the wooded valley slopes but the woodland abuts small and medium sized, irregular farmland fields.

### Settlement Pattern

There is no development on the steep wooded slopes but farmsteads and associated buildings are often surrounded by small copses and ribbons of trees that follow, or are part of the established hedges.

### Transport Pattern

Limited number of minor roads, all single track, very narrow, steep and winding.

Rights of way through parts of the woodland regularly used by walkers and in generally good condition although waterlogged by streams and springs at times during the year.

### Aesthetic and Sensory

Peaceful and irresistible, the woodland slopes teem with the sights and sounds of the natural world and the experience of weather patterns and the seasonal changes in the landscape. The sensory perception of other landscape types in the parish are never far away but it is possible to become immersed in the environment and feel a tangible link between the past and the present.

### Distinctive Features and Views

Secluded, small scale and thoroughly unspoilt, the area of ancient woodland around Temple, Treleven and Horsemoor Woods is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

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

- Availability of land for development
- Tourist accommodation, caravan parks, camping sites and log cabins
- Facilities for countryside pursuits and visitors
- Improvements in the transport network
- Intensification of farming and conversion to arable or horticulture resulting in clearance

### **3.5.3 Landscape Management and Development Considerations**

- Enhance wooded area by providing guidance on appropriate woodland management to ensure mixed age structure. Where appropriate encourage the extension of broad-leaf woodlands. Avoid the removal of ancient woodland



- Careful consideration for the need for creating access tracks across coastal rough ground
- Where changes to the highways network are proposed, protection of ancient woodland and ‘tree tunnels’ that may be damaged by large vehicles
- Encourage sustainable transport and enhance local distinctiveness through programme of restoration and maintenance of metal fingerposts
- Impact of loss of ancient woodland if cleared for holiday accommodation
- Consideration for the sensitive habitats and the impact of loss of woodland on flooding and land erosion.

### **3.6 Landscape Type - Steep stream valley bottoms with associated wetland vegetation with remnant pastures**

#### **3.6.1 Key characteristics**

- Quiet, undisturbed and secluded natural space
- Vegetation density high and the presence of water is normal
- Natural, ancient woodland with a wide variety of wild flowers and plants
- The lower part of the Cheesewarne valley bottom closest to the village is the main entrance to Mevagissey from Heligan and the B3273 and leads onto the recreational space of the Mevagissey Activity Centre (MAC)



Cheesewarne valley.

### **3.6.2 Character of the landscape type**

#### Topography and Drainage

Valley bottoms are limited in extent and are flat, narrow areas with a gentle gradient, streams and springs. These areas change rapidly to the more prevalent steep-sided valleys in 3.5 and 3.6

Small streams run permanently through valley bottoms and are often waterlogged and are liable to flooding.

#### Biodiversity

The streams, principally Cheesewarne (Mevagissey) and Portmellon, marshy wetland to either side and wet woodland are significant within this character type. They are semi-natural providing a relatively rare and important habitat.

Being damp and relatively warm and woody, these areas support a variety of small and large mammals such as badgers, foxes, stoats, deer and even otters; fungi and birds such as peregrine falcons, barn owls, woodpeckers, blackcaps and kestrels.

The water, marshland and woodland provide food and cover for the birds in particular.

#### Land Cover and Land Use

The woodland located in the valley bottoms is largely deciduous, self-seeded and unmanaged and extends to the steep-sided slopes of 3.6. Ancient oaks are present within the type.

The adjacent muddy banks and marshy areas, particularly in the Portmellon stream, support wetland plants and tough grasses. The valley bottom of the Portmellon stream now forms a conservation corridor right up to Galwras Mill and Scotland Woods.

With the exception of the lower end of the Cheesewarne Valley where it enters Mevagissey, the land is not used and is largely natural, unmanaged and undisturbed.

#### Field and Woodland Pattern

The valley bottom is largely wooded with undergrowth of shrubs, ferns, nettles and wild flowers

Significant areas of marshy land with reeds and associated plants.

Woodland located in the bottom of the valley and into the valley edges is mostly native trees, some ancient woodland and a few conifers on some valley sides.

### Settlement Pattern

The southernmost part of the Cheesewarne valley bottom at the entrance to the village of Mevagissey has been developed to a certain extent providing sports and leisure facilities, the activity centre and some accommodation

Portmellon, small settlement of farming, fishing and boat building at the base of the Portmellon Stream. This has now merged with Mevagissey

Almost no other development, these are wild, undisturbed woodland areas.

### Transport pattern

B3273 enters Mevagissey from St Austell at the lower end of the Cheesewarne valley.

Footpaths and bridleways well managed, well signed and well used although waterlogged by streams in places.

### Condition

The valley bottoms are a natural, generally unmanaged landscape of largely deciduous wooded areas with an unspoiled appearance

### Aesthetic and Sensory

Calm, undisturbed and mostly sheltered by trees.

The area is rich in the sound of birds, the sounds of moving water and the wind in the trees.

Seasonal leaf cover and wild flowers produce a riot of colour and the sunlight filtering through the trees gives a dappled movement, especially in the late spring and summer.

The streams are susceptible to flooding after heavy rainfall at certain times of the year.

### **3.6.3 Pressures and Forces for Change**

- Extension to the development of the valley bottom at Portmellon and the Cheesewarne Stream at the entrance to Mevagissey
- Increased urbanisation due to pressure for affordable homes and holiday homes
- Increased car use and tourism leading to demand for more car parks and road straightening and widening
- Tourism accommodation, access and car parking
- Changes to farming practice and surface water run-off from fields
- Clearance of the woodland associated with the character type and subsequent loss of wildlife habitats

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

- Ensure development enhances the natural beauty, character and special qualities of the character of these areas
- Maintain stream valleys and protect important wetland habitats
- Consider transport and access issues and the impact required to make development of these areas viable



## **4. The Importance of the Mevagissey Landscape**

- 4.1 The whole of the area in the parish of Mevagissey is part of the South Coast Central section of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Its landscape is recognised to be of such national importance that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing its natural beauty and conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations. This landscape is given the highest level of protection, the same protection as awarded to our National Parks.
- 4.2 The economy of Mevagissey depends largely on fishing and tourism. Local businesses have a strong dependency on the harbour for revenue and as a tourist attraction. These are interdependent. The fishing industry is reliant on the presence of the harbour and infrastructure and the tourist industry is sustained by the presence of the fishing fleet and the fact that it creates a ‘working harbour’ thereby enhancing tourist interest. The revenue created by tourism contributes to the local economy thus benefitting the community. The key factor which underpins the chain is the presence of the harbour and associated infrastructure.
- 4.3 Mevagissey is, however, unique and distinct, not just because of the harbour. It is steeped in history and the landscape effortlessly evokes a time when fishing, farming and smuggling sustained the community. The harbour may be at the very heart of the area but this natural amphitheatre is surrounded by green, wooded and pastoral valleys and dramatic cliffs. The preparation of a Local Landscape Character Assessment for Mevagissey provided the opportunity to reflect the views of local people and visitors to gain a better understanding of what they value about their landscape and what is important to them. People view, value and enjoy the landscape based on a range of factors and for most this would include a combination of:-
- Landscape and scenic quality
  - Historical and nature conservation interests
  - Recreation value
  - Perceptions, memories and associations
- 4.4 A public consultation event was held for local people to confirm what they valued in the landscape and raise any new issues. The findings are attached and the response summarised below.
- 4.5 The consultation findings can be summarised as follows with the issue
- Conserving and enhancing the character of the village epitomised by the harbour and surrounding buildings and the old village centre

- Supporting sustainability of the fishing industry, the harbour and the marine infrastructure which provides Mevagissey with its year-round vitality
- Encourage and support tourism; the most significant provider of employment and prosperity for the Parish.
- Support and enhance agricultural activity and diversification to sustain the landscape setting for the Parish and allow it to thrive
- Maintain and respect the status of the area as an AONB and the Conservation Area in the heart of the village; the natural context for Mevagissey
- Safeguard open spaces within the villages of Mevagissey and Portmellon
- Maintain a balanced community by providing for young people in terms of housing, employment, education and leisure activities
- Encourage and support entrepreneurial activity, small business opportunities and local shops and services for economic well-being. Improve transport infrastructure and access. Provide for sustainable energy provision and use.
- A separate consultation was held to determine local opinion of the areas of landscape considered most sensitive to development. These results are presented as Annex 9 to the main NDP document.

4.6 The findings and comments from the public consultation in February 2015 provided part of the picture of what is valued in the Mevagissey Landscape. The public consultation event in July / August 2015 on the draft plan and character assessment will provide an opportunity to comment further and gain more information about what the community and visitors value about the Mevagissey landscape. There will be other future opportunities as the plan develops with a design guide etc. for the community to contribute further.

## **5. The Relationship between the Mevagissey Local Landscape Character Assessment and the Mevagissey Neighbourhood Development Plan**

5.1 The Mevagissey landscape has evolved over time and it will continue to evolve. The management of change is essential to ensure that the community achieves sustainable outcomes – social, environmental and economic. Decision makers need to understand the baseline and the implications of their decisions for that baseline. Assessing landscape character provides that baseline and has an essential role to play in managing and guiding change.

5.2 Under the Localism Act 2011, the government permitted local communities to propose a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) with a view to providing locally based guidance on where new development might take place and what any

such development should look like. The Mevagissey LLCA will be used to inform the policies set out in its NDP and form part of the evidence base for the proposed plan.

5.3 The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) forms the primary national planning policy in respect of new development and seeks to promote sustainable development across the country. Local Plans prepared by Cornwall Council are in turn required to be in line with the NPPF. The Mevagissey NDP has to be in line with both the NPPF and the Local Development Framework for Cornwall and supports the principle that *decision making should be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area.*

5.4 This system allows local communities and individuals to contribute a relevant interpretation of the local environment, what is important to them, how they experience the landscape and how well planned development can conserve and enhance the diverse character of the local landscape. While the policies in the NDP only relate to the development and use of land requiring planning permission, a good landscape character assessment also helps identify relevant projects that the community may wish to focus on to improve other aspects of the landscape.

5.5 We hope that together the LLCA and the NDP will support and inform decision making in planning and managing development that seeks to:-

- Protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the parish of Mevagissey and its setting in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Provide higher protection to the most valued and sensitive areas
- Ensure high quality and relevant design using local materials, traditional building styles and methods and the planting of native species
- Respect and enhance cultural heritage, sense of place and local distinctiveness

## **6. Mevagissey Settlement Assessment**

### **6.1 Background**

6.1.1 The parish of Mevagissey is dominated by the village settlement and the village of Portmellon which is now considered to be part of Mevagissey. Such is the importance of the harbour and surrounding buildings, historically, culturally, economically and socially, that the inclusion of this area as a character type in the landscape was justified. However, Mevagissey is much more than the harbour and its associated buildings.

6.1.2 While the landscape underpins the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), the character of the villages of Mevagissey and Portmellon are equally important to the community and visitors to the area. Since the overall purpose of this work is to inform and support the future planning and development of the area, it is essential to include a summary of the village settlements and an understanding of their relationship with the landscape in which they are situated.

6.1.3 The focus of this section is to describe the character of the settlements in order to understand what makes them individual and distinctive. To ensure that we can maintain Mevagissey's unique character for future generations a design guide will be developed to support planning management and the development of proposals in the future.

## **6.2 Mevagissey Parish Profile**

### **6.2.1 Demographics**

The villages of Mevagissey and Portmellon have physically merged into one although there is still felt to be a local distinctiveness between them. Portmellon is very small by comparison to Mevagissey and easy access is difficult, being largely made through the narrow streets of Mevagissey, and has therefore been limiting in terms of development.

An analysis of the 2011 population data showed that there was a population of 2157 and there are 1191 households in Mevagissey. The resident population of Mevagissey has fallen by 18% over the past 200 years but the number of households has increased by 120% as households reduced in size and occupancy.

House prices in various categories appear to be much the same as the Cornish average (2009). Mevagissey second homes are relatively high for Cornwall at 24.6%. This compares to 11.2% for Cornwall and 4.3% for England.

Mevagissey has relatively low levels of both Local Authority and Housing Association housing. Only 1.6% of homes are rented from the area Local Authority compared with 5.6% in Cornwall and 9.6% in England. Similarly 4.8% are rented from a Housing Association compared with 6.4% in Cornwall and 8.3% in England.

Mevagissey has a larger than average proportion of pensioners. 31.3% are aged over 65 years whereas the proportion of people of pensionable age in Cornwall is 21.7% and 16.3% for England. Only 13% of Mevagissey pensioners claim pension credit compared to 25% for England. Disability and care statistics seem to show greater than normal independence. Those with long term illnesses number 25.6% compared with 21.4% for Cornwall and 17.6% for England. However, 11% benefit from social care provision while the figure for both Cornwall and England as a whole is 17%.



### 6.2.2 History

Mevagissey began life as two distinct settlements: the first known as Lamorrick or Lamoreck, was a small religious community in the area around what is now St Peter's Church which would have been established around a thousand years ago; then later a fishing hamlet called Porthilly began to cluster around the northern side of the cove, in what is now the Church Street / Cliff Street area.

The name Mevagissey, which united the two settlements (the name coming from the two saints Meva and Issey to who the church was once dedicated) was not in common use until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Mevagissey's fortunes have always been firmly tied to the sea and fishing in particular. At times in its history it has been a major fishing harbour in the South West, such boom years being reflected in spates of house building and improvements to the harbour and village.

The fishing industry used to involve nearly the entire community with fish curing of the main catch of pilchards, Coopers, Boat Builders, Net makers, Ropemakers, Sailmakers, Blacksmiths, Net bakers and Fish merchants and of course the fishermen themselves. Mevagissey suffered first when hefty taxes were introduced, particularly for salt for curing and smuggling became a major industry in the area to avoid the taxes. Smuggling history left its mark on the landscape and settlement but was eventually quashed by the authorities after the Napoleonic wars. The shoals of pilchards began to disappear towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but after a post 2<sup>nd</sup> World War depression, following failure of both pilchard and herring fisheries, the trade began to pick up again.

The mackerel boom that lasted into the mid-nineties, saw many working boats back in the harbour and a much greater variety of fish landed including Pollack, Monkfish, Turbot, Sole, Plaice, Brill, Cod, Whiting Cuttlefish and Squid. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a resurgence of the Pilchard fishery and this is now marketed as the Cornish Sardine. Investment to modernise the industry and its support infrastructure has been fundamental in Mevagissey remaining a very busy fishing harbour and also seems unique in that it is attracting youngsters, which hopefully will keep the fishing industry alive.



Mevagissey fishermen in the 1900s.



Mevagissey fishermen today.

### 6.2.3 Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

The conservation area is primarily based on Mevagissey's medieval village centre and includes the inner and outer harbours. The area extends along the rising ground of the coastal path both north and south of the harbour. It also follows the course of the Cheesewarne river inland, as far as the 13<sup>th</sup> century church of St Peter's. The whole area stretches inland from the harbour 0.56km from the point where the river enters the harbour. To the north of the harbour, the conservation area extends along the harbour edge upwards 0.2km and also 0.31km in a south-easterly direction.

Buildings in the conservation area are made of a variety of local materials including stone, cob and slate and the terraces represent a typically Cornish vernacular style. They are variously finished in natural stone, hanging tiles or render. Many are now holiday homes or apartments although their original use was as fishermen's homes, fish processing buildings, materials storage and occasionally merchant's houses. The many ancient pubs in the village are now reduced to a few, either in their original form or converted from businesses previously dependent on fish processing. There are four grade two star listed buildings in the conservation area and 131 listed buildings in total.

Many narrow alleys exist and even the key routes through the village are single track. Walkways climb between buildings and link with alleys and roads, many of which do not offer through access. Green spaces have been preserved for public enjoyment either through donation or in association with the church.

*Holy Wells* - hidden away in the corner of the garden of Mevagissey Vicarage, just below a natural spring, there is a Cornish Holy Well. It's not known whether its origins date from the Celtic Saints who founded the village in the 14<sup>th</sup> century or from an even earlier time when people worshipped water and other elemental forces. Many Holy Wells in Cornwall existed before Christianity arrived and were used in healing rituals, forecasting the future and fertility rites.

Brass Well – a well of great reputation, known as the Tunbridge Wells of the West. The name 'Brass Well' arose from the peculiar appearance of the sulphurous scum which floated on its surface. Many were the cures resulting from the use of Brass well waters. The well still exists on the Treleven estate but is never now used medicinally.

Lady's Well – this well was doubtless one of those dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. It is situated about a quarter of a mile from Mevagissey on the manor of Treleven, and the water, which gushes out from a rock at the foot of a steep hill, has never been known to fail. The well was said to possess great healing powers.

#### 6.2.4 Local Character

Mevagissey is defined by its coastal location in the centre of Mevagissey Bay (between the two headlands of Blackhead and Chapel Point) and its maritime traditions and cultures over centuries. It has successfully evolved and developed over time to meet the challenges of the present while, at the same time, conserving and protecting its heritage as a working fishing village in the heart of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the South Central coast of Cornwall.

The village embraces change and diversifies (eg. smuggling in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and tourism today) while retaining its core maritime industries in scarcity and glut. The fishing industry and tourism today are interdependent and both rely heavily on the harbour and surrounding area which are variously described by the community and visitors alike as historic, quaint, charming, stunning, tranquil, colourful and dramatic. It is a welcoming refuge from the sea sitting proudly in an almost medieval agricultural setting with the most beautiful views in every direction from every vantage point and has a strong visual relationship with its neighbouring parishes.

The Cornwall Council has suggested that the character of the village has been *“weakened by tourist development such as the proliferation of B&Bs and holiday homes, which although small in scale is having an incremental impact”*. We feel this is an unfair and negative opinion given the efforts to manage development appropriately and the perception of both visitors and the community of Mevagissey having a timeless quality that serves the present well while evoking all of its heritage and historic culture.

#### 6.2.5 Village Edge

To the east the village edge is clearly defined by the sea with the stunning impact of the harbour wall emerging in the middle of dramatic and rugged coastline with sandy beaches and coves. Inland to the south-west, west and north-west the village edge merges fairly suddenly into steep-sided valleys, uplands and plateaus that are defined by medieval field patterns and farmland and ancient woodland covering some slopes, ribbons of trees and copses surrounding farmsteads. It is a rural, largely pastoral scene of great beauty and timeless tranquillity.

#### 6.2.6 Village Centre

The old village centre is a picturesque scene characterised by its narrow, cobbled streets, corner-stones to keep the wheels of horse-drawn vehicles away from the dwelling houses, worn doorsteps and crooked walls that are a legacy of medieval times and a major attraction for visitors. The centre backs onto the harbour and the buildings of substantial storehouses, sail lofts, barkhouses, fish curing and packing cellars and fish merchants stores that support the fishing industry. These buildings still exist but have mostly become cafes, restaurants, gift shops and other tourist outlets.



Most of the buildings around the quay date from the 10-20 years following the completion of the harbour when the few old cob-walled buildings in the area were pulled down. The stone cottages crammed along Cliff Street and the Cliff are mostly fishermen's cottages dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These cottages give Mevagissey its quintessential character treasured by the community and visitors and many of the cottages are now refurbished as holiday lets.

Small businesses of local shops and services, gift and craft centres, restaurants, cafes and coffee shops crowd into the village centre and rely on both visitors and locals. The local community focuses in this area because of the harbour, all the facilities and nearby is the doctors surgery, the Jubilee Hall, Social Club and Model Railway visitor attraction.

#### 6.2.7 Housing

The 2011 census showed that there are 1191 households in the parish, and owner occupation is 72.3% which is a little higher than for Cornwall and the rest of England – 69.6% and 64.1% respectively. Privately rented accommodation is also slightly higher in Mevagissey at 21.2% compared with 18.4% for Cornwall and 18.2% for England. Only 1.6% of homes are rented from the area Local Authority compared with 5.6% in Cornwall and 9.6% in England. Similarly 4.8% are rented from a Housing Association compared with 6.4% in Cornwall and 8.3% in England. As many as 25% of homes in Mevagissey are second homes and many of these are let to holiday makers.

#### 6.2.8 Community, Recreation and Leisure

St Peter's Church, dedicated in 1259, is the ancient church of Mevagissey, sheltered in the valley at the foot of a steep incline that used to be the main access to the village. It was also at the heart of the original settlement of Lamorreck. St Andrew's Church, a Methodist and United Reform Church is a fairly traditional and non-conformist chapel, built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has been extensively re-ordered to provide worship space upstairs in the old gallery of the chapel and a church hall downstairs. The rooms downstairs are used for a variety of community events including rehearsals for the Mevagissey Male Voice Choir and Ladies Choir, a Friday coffee morning amongst others.

The Mevagissey Activity Centre (MAC) is situated at the edge of the village at the bottom of the valley road hill and on the playing field. The MAC, sponsored by millennium funding, is a purpose built building housing changing rooms, meeting rooms, training facilities, a multi-purpose main hall, and computer suites. It is licensed and can host a wide variety of community events. Outdoor amenities include the playing field, bowling green and tennis courts.

The Jubilee Hall is the village hall, built in the 1890s as the village school. It has now been used for community events for over 50 years, conveniently situated in Chapel Street. It has been completely renovated over the past few years and now has the facilities to host any event from wedding receptions to stage shows. It has a

central heating system, kitchen, full stage, computerised lighting and sound system together with completely refurbished toilets. The hall is a registered charity governed by a management committee operating under a long lease from Cornwall Council.

The Mevagissey Social Club is a licensed private members club situated in Jetty Street adjacent to the harbour. The club has a main downstairs bar with Sky TV and an upstairs bar and function room. There is also a reading room and snooker rooms. Visitors are welcome on a temporary basis.

#### 6.2.9 Transport and Car Parking

The B3273 enters the village from St Austell and almost immediately, after the main car park, the roads become narrow and single track. There is a very limited one way system for traffic entering the village at the lower end of Church Street but the majority of roads within the village centre and leading out of the village are two-way traffic areas often on steep, single track roads with limited passing places. Since the main exits (or alternative entrances), other than the B3273 are via Polkirt Hill, Tregony Hill, School Hill and Vicarage Hill, all of which are single track, development is limited by access issues and the already severe congestion particularly in the spring and summer. This is particularly relevant for access to Portmellon via Polkirt Hill. The narrowness of the roads and the lack of alternatives can also be a problem with size of vehicles, deliveries and distribution systems for businesses.

Car parking is provided at the main car park at the entrance to the village from the B3273 and also with a number of smaller car parks in the village centre and on the harbour walls. For most of the year this has not caused the community too many problems other than access and narrow streets but at peak times of the year availability of space is an issue.

The South-West Coastal Path runs right through the parish and there is a ferry between Fowey and Mevagissey which runs from May-September other than during adverse weather conditions.

#### 6.2.10 Utilities

*Broadband* – ‘superfast broadband’ was provided to Mevagissey in 2013/14. This has improved internet access by the installation of local hubs to group lower speed copper circuits into fibre transmission lines. These improvements are not available to all owing to premiums (over EG 4G to mobile device) and the further premium cost of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).

*Energy* – Access to the national electricity network is available throughout the parish and, in the absence of piped gas, many properties are dependent on bottled gas, oil, coal and wood for heating and cooking.

*Renewable Energy* – This is predominantly provided through the installation of domestic solar panels.

*Telephony* – Landline communication is good throughout the parish but mobile phone reception is variable

*Waste* - The majority of properties have mains drainage and sewerage facilities with a small number of properties relying on septic tanks. The relatively high cost of water services in Cornwall means that there is an economic incentive for many without mains drainage to retain septic tanks.

*Waste Recycling* – for both commercial and domestic waste there is a bi weekly collection of recyclable waste and there are two recycling facilities opposite the main car park. Household waste is collected weekly.

*Water Supplies* – Drinking water is supplied by South West Water and is provided through a pressurised piped water main network, part of the national supply.