

Gwennap Parish Neighbourhood Priority Statement

1. Introduction

Gwennap Parish is a historic rural community located between Truro, Falmouth, and Redruth. Following the completion of the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council began developing this Neighbourhood Priorities Statement (NPS) in 2025 to set out a clear, long-term vision for the area through to 2050.

The purpose of this NPS is to safeguard Gwennap's distinctive character, protect its natural and historic assets, and guide sustainable development that meets the needs of current and future residents. Through surveys, business engagement, community events, and parish-wide consultation, residents have voiced their priorities regarding housing, transport, green spaces, community facilities, and the quality of the built environment. This document summarises those priorities and outlines opportunities for enhancing Gwennap over the next 25 years.

2. Our Vision for 2050: "Your Parish, Your Choice"

By 2050, Gwennap Parish aims to be a thriving, rural, and tranquil community that celebrates its mining heritage, natural landscapes, and strong sense of place. Our vision focuses on:

- **Prioritising Local Needs:** Delivering truly affordable, high-quality housing for young people, families, older residents, and those with disabilities.
- **Enhancing Community Life:** Centrally anchoring parish life in a state-of-the-art **Community Hub** and modernised facilities.
- **Championing Connectivity:** Improving transport options and establishing safe active travel routes to regional hubs.
- **Protecting the Environment:** Safeguarding our UNESCO World Heritage status, SSSIs, and vital green spaces through proactive stewardship.

3. Key Parish Data

The following snapshot informs our planning and infrastructure priorities through 2050:

Category	Data
Total Population	1,539 (approx. 2,000 in wider area)
Current Housing Stock	689 homes (5% affordable)
Affordable Housing Demand	58 households on Homechoice register
Demographics	28% Over 65; 14% Under 18; 58% Working Age
Recent Growth	44 homes built since 2014 (0% affordable)

4. The New Central Community Hub

A cornerstone of our vision is the **Modernisation and Expansion of Parish Facilities** to foster social cohesion and inclusion.

- **The Parish Hall Project:** We aim to transform the existing parish rooms at Pulla Cross into a modern, accessible community hub and business centre.
- **Integrated Health & Services:** The hub will seek to incorporate health-focused amenities, such as a permanent Doctor’s Surgery or health outreach hub, to meet the needs of an aging population.
- **Youth Engagement:** Dedicated spaces will be created for a future Youth Council and organised activities to foster a sense of belonging among young residents.
- **Working & Learning:** The facility will provide co-working desks for home-based workers and digital access points to support the local economy.
- **Outdoor Integration:** Improvements will continue at the Richard Jory Playing Field to ensure it remains a premier site for sports, events, and family recreation.

5. Sustainable Housing & Growth

Residents recognise the need for new homes but demand development that is parish-led and meets specific local needs.

- **Location:** Priority will be given to infill and brownfield sites within Frogpool, United Downs, and Crofthandy.
- **Affordability:** We will focus on 2–3 bedroom family homes and accessible single-storey dwellings for older residents.
- **Design Standards:** All new builds must reflect traditional Cornish materials (local stone, granite, slate, and cob) and remain generally low-rise.
- **Innovation:** We will explore partnerships with local housing associations or a **Community Land Trust (CLT)** to deliver truly affordable, parish-led housing.

6. Environment & Heritage Preservation

We are committed to protecting the "green heart" of the parish and its historic mining landscape.

- **Total Protection:** Key areas designated for protection from development include the Cusgarne County Wildlife Site, Wheal Maid Valley, Richard Jory Playing Field, and Frogpool Cemetery.
- **Nature Recovery:** We will launch a **Gwennap Nature Recovery Initiative** to restore hedgerows, plant native trees, and improve habitat connectivity.
- **Strategic Recreation:** The development of the **Wheal Maid Mountain Bike Hub** will regularise recreational use while protecting the landscape from legacy mining contamination.

7. Connectivity & Infrastructure

- **Active Travel Plan:** We will develop safe, off-road cycling and walking "quiet lanes" to local schools and colleges in Truro and Redruth.
- **Public Transport:** We will lobby for a consistent 7-day bus service connecting all hamlets to major regional hubs.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** Our goal is to ensure 100% fibre-optic broadband coverage and eliminate mobile signal "dead zones".
- **Safety:** We will continue the "20 is Plenty" campaign and implement speed-reduction engineering in key areas like Crofthandy.

8. Gwennap Parish Today, SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Active and engaged Parish Council providing strong local governance, proactive planning input, and community leadership.
- Exceptional heritage and landscape setting, rooted in mining history and surrounded by attractive countryside, green spaces, and protected environments.
- Low crime rates and strong community safety, contributing to a secure and desirable rural living environment.
- Well-used recreational assets, including the Parish Field at Pulla Cross with its popular play area, the Wheal Maid area, and an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways supporting walking, cycling, and equestrian use.
- Strong community infrastructure, with two community halls and additional meeting spaces, including places of worship, hosting a wide range of clubs, societies, and community events.
- Thriving business parks providing valuable local employment opportunities and supporting the parish economy.
- Vibrant small business sector, including two public houses, a garden centre, plant nursery, cafés, and other independent enterprises contributing to local character and economic resilience.
- Effective community communication, including a thrice-yearly parish newsletter delivered by volunteers to households across the parish.
- Strong agricultural presence, with working farms and farming families playing an important role in shaping the parish's rural character, local economy, landscape stewardship, and heritage.

Weaknesses

- The Parish suffers from a lack of specialised amenities and services, compounded by limited public transport options and connectivity issues, which together hinder residents' access to essential facilities and broader opportunities.
- Traffic and road safety concerns exist regarding traffic and road safety, including persistent speeding, the absence of pavements for pedestrians, and the unauthorised use of public rights of way by motorcycles, all of which compromise the safety and accessibility of local roads.
- There are significant challenges relating to housing need and affordability within the parish, as evidenced by 58 households currently registered on the housing need list, while only 9 affordable homes are planned, highlighting a considerable shortfall in meeting local demand.

Opportunities

- Well-designed affordable housing.
- The proposed new Parish Rooms are set to feature a dynamic community hub, thoughtfully designed to provide dedicated space for specialised amenities and services, thereby enhancing local access and fostering community engagement.
- Enhance the green spaces and trail network within the Wheal Maid area by upgrading pathways, increasing biodiversity, and installing informative signage. This will create a safer and more welcoming environment for all users, including walkers, cyclists, and horse riders, encouraging greater community use and positive interactions among different groups.
- Increasing the accessibility of the play area through improvements and the inclusion of specialised equipment
- Actively support and promote high quality tourism by celebrating the parish's rich heritage and mining history, safeguarding its unique cultural assets and natural landscapes, and developing initiatives that attract visitors while ensuring the ongoing protection of local historic sites and traditions.
- Community events and initiatives and youth engagement.
- Climate and sustainability projects.

Risks

- The sustainability of the Parish's once-thriving Primary School is under significant threat, primarily due to a continual decline in pupil numbers. This decrease stems from both a falling birth rate and an increasingly ageing population, which together jeopardise the school's long-term future and its vital role within the community.
- Severe weather conditions, such as storms and heavy rainfall, can result in power outages and flooding across the parish. These events pose significant risks to all residents, with particularly serious implications for vulnerable individuals, including the elderly and those with limited mobility, who may experience heightened difficulties accessing essential services and support during emergencies.
- Reduced maintenance of highways and byways, resulting from budgetary constraints and adverse weather conditions, may lead to deteriorating road surfaces, increased safety hazards, and restricted accessibility for residents, businesses, and emergency services.
- Overdevelopment threatens the distinctive character of the parish, particularly through the potential encroachment on areas currently safeguarded by the development boundaries outlined in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Such expansion risks undermining the parish's unique identity and heritage, as well as compromising protected landscapes and community spaces.
- The parish faces the dual challenge of an ageing population and the migration of young people away from the area, both of which are exacerbated by a shortage of affordable housing. This demographic shift not only threatens the vibrancy and sustainability of the community but also reduces opportunities for intergenerational engagement and local economic growth.

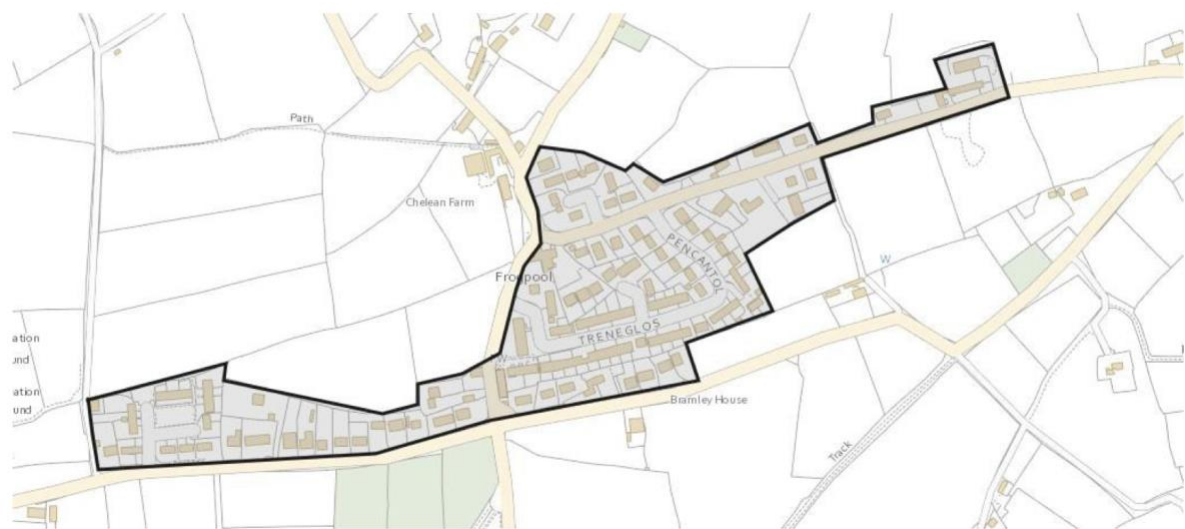
9. Conclusion: A Roadmap to 2050

By 2050, Gwennap aims to deliver homes that local people can afford while preserving its rural and historic identity. This Neighbourhood Priorities Statement represents the collective voice of Gwennap's residents, setting a clear direction for how the parish should develop and improve over the decades ahead. Through the creation of a central Community Hub, the protection of our natural landscapes, and the improvement of sustainable transport links, we will strengthen community life and resilience for all residents.

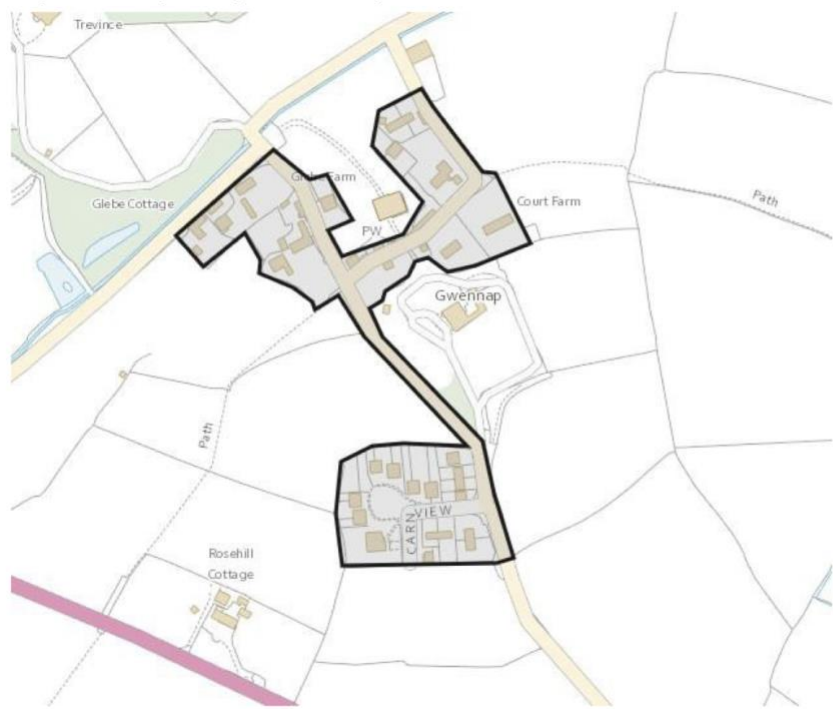
Map 1 - Designation Area Map



Map 2 – Frogpool Development Boundary

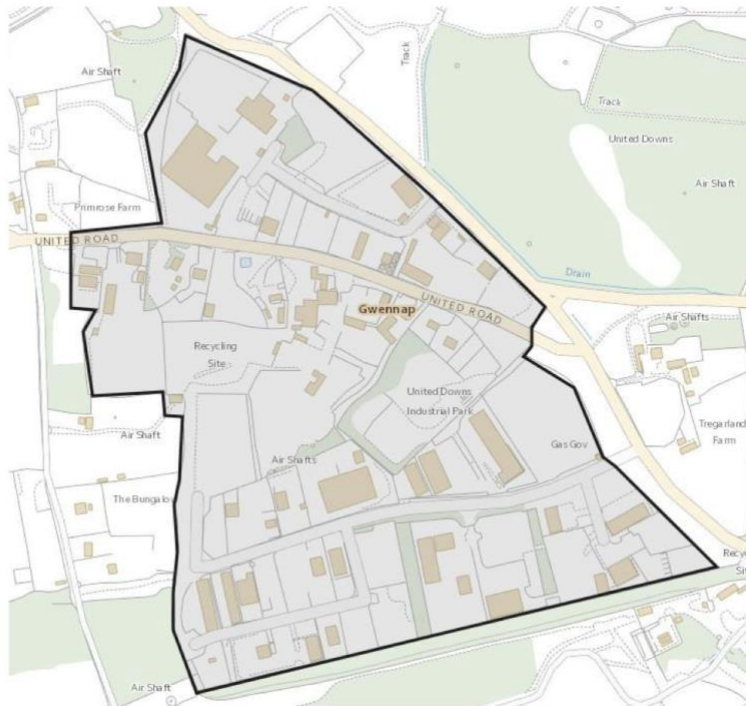


Map 3 – Gwennap Development Boundary

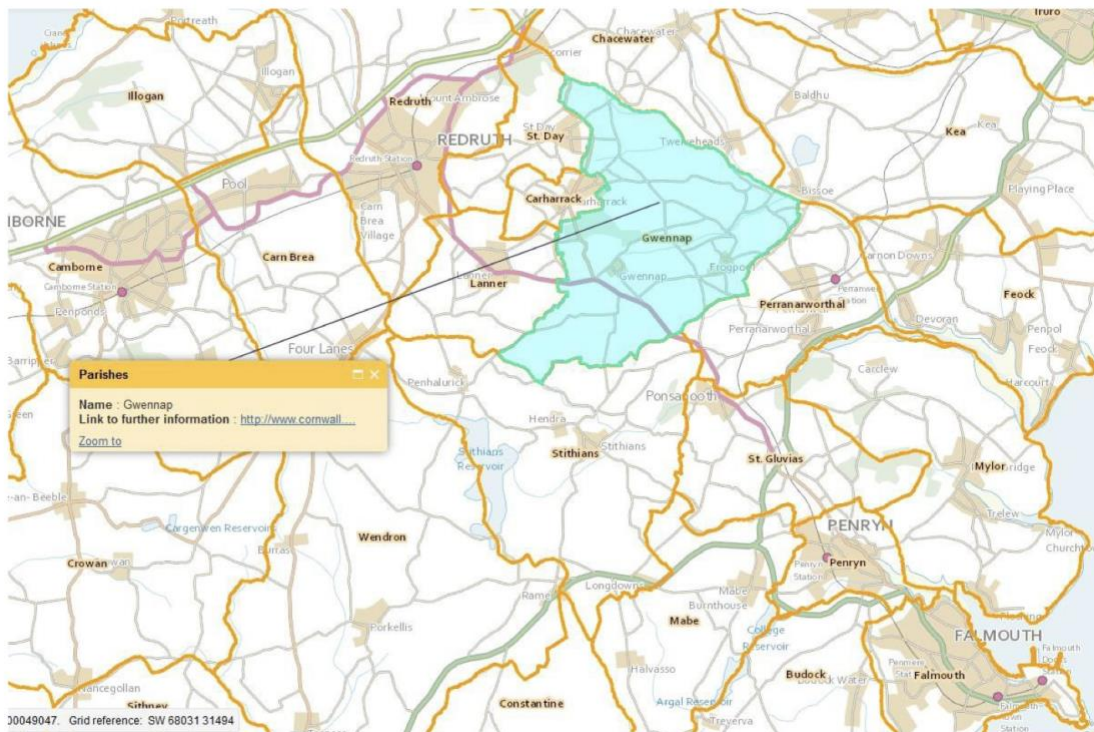


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Map 6 - United Downs Industrial Estate Development Boundary

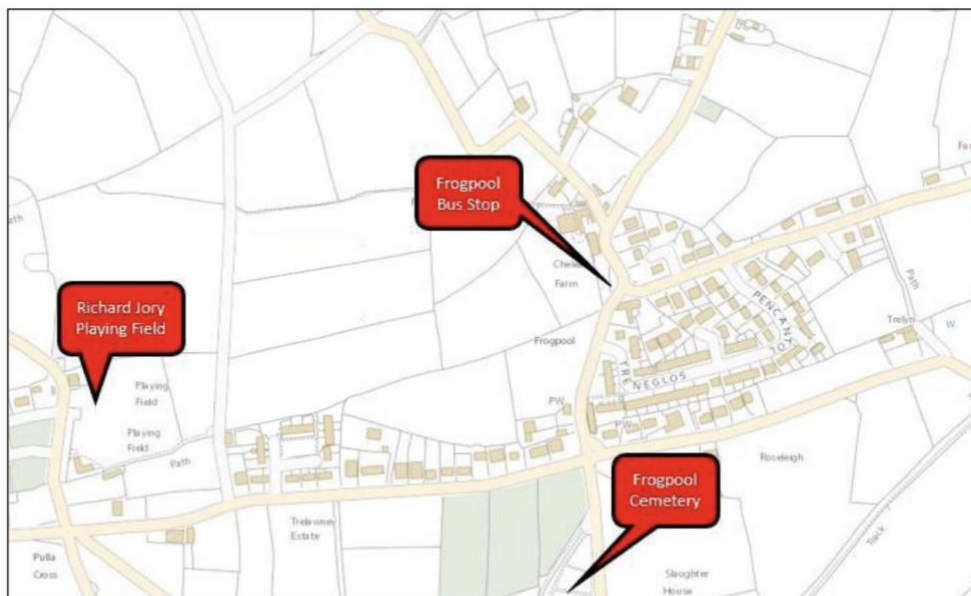


Map 7 – Gwennap Parish in Cornwall

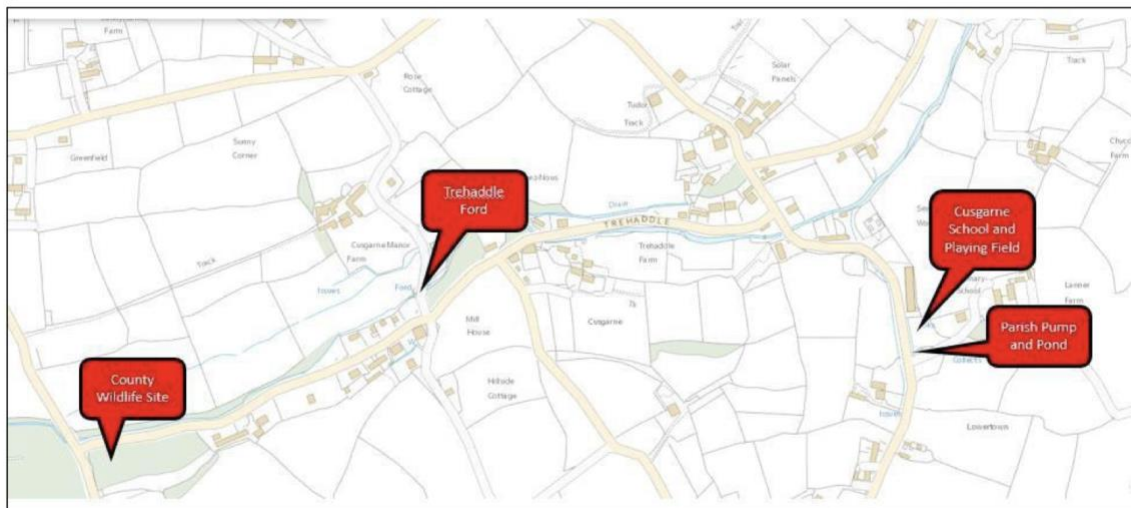


Map 8 - Local Green Space Designations

(A) Frogpool Area



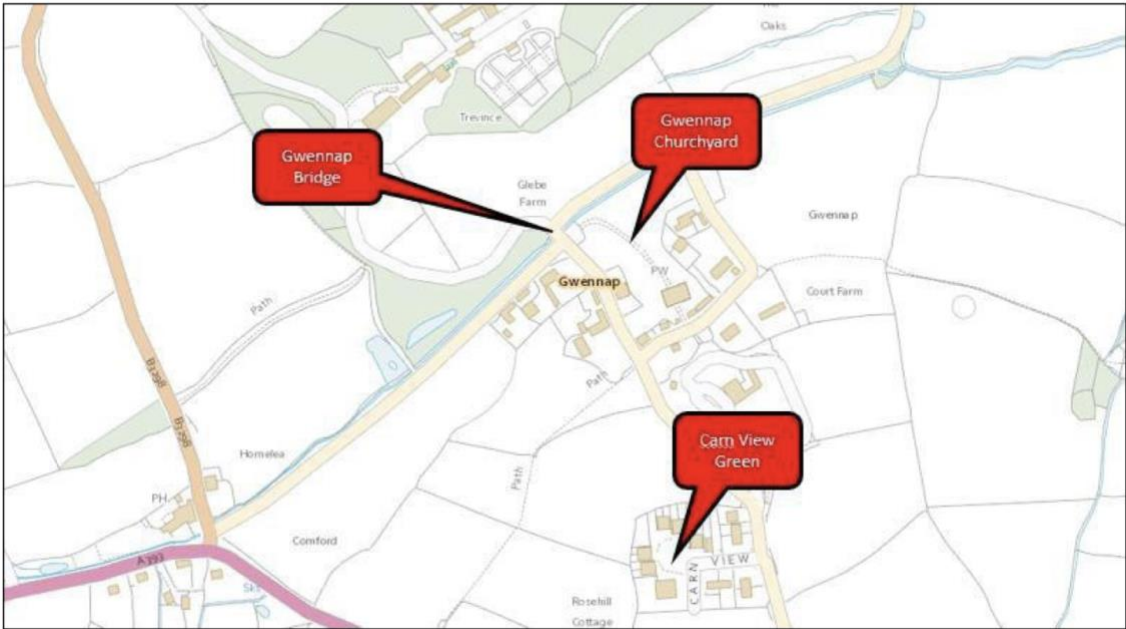
(E) Cusgarne Area



(J) Crofthandy Area



(L) Gwennap Area



Map 9 – (A) Parish Recreational Spaces - 1

