

**PRESS RELEASE – 18th DECEMBER 2017**

**Local Partnership awarded National Lottery support to enhance unique Penwith landscape**

Confirmation that Penwith Landscape Partnership has secured a National Lottery grant of £2,529,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the First and Last – Our Living Working Landscape scheme, was announced last week.

Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, the partnership now have a significant opportunity to conserve, protect and enhance Penwith's ancient farming landscape and field systems, its archaeology and natural environment for future generations.

The Landscape Partnership is made up of a number of enthusiastic and experienced local people together with representatives from a number of organisations, such as the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, CASPN and Farm Cornwall to name but a few. It is chaired by Cllr Jim McKenna.

The funding will be available from January 2018 for five years. One of the first tasks will be to recruit several project officers who will work together as a team from a base in Penwith. Projects will include:

- Surveying and improving knowledge of the archaeology and ancient sites in Penwith
- Improving access to the landscape through footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes, as well as creating links to public transport
- Helping Parishes to survey and care for the heritage and wildlife within their areas
- Improving the landscape for wildlife by working with farmers and landowners to promote good soil, nutrient and habitat management
- Recording the value of Cornish hedges and “upskilling” volunteers to repair and rebuild hedges and reinstate gateposts
- Researching historic place-names to discover what they can tell us about the landscape and the history of the area
- Encouraging everyone to explore the landscape through the arts
- Helping farmers and landowners find economic uses for redundant farm buildings and also manage rough ground through controlled burns, scrub cutting and clearing by hand
- Supporting the growth of efficient, resilient family-farm businesses through setting up monitor farms and discussion groups

The Partnership will be actively seeking the involvement of local people, as well as visitors to Penwith, through a wide range of volunteering opportunities. Support and encouragement to learn new skills through training and practical experience will be offered.

Penwith has:

- The densest concentration of stone-built prehistoric sites in Britain with around 5,500 records of monuments ranging from standing stones to 19th century engine houses

- 250 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, around 1,500 listed buildings and over 200 farms and buildings that are of medieval and earlier origin.
- Over 2000km of ‘Cornish hedges’ supporting 600 species of flowering plants and ferns of which 25 are nationally scarce and 9 nationally rare.
- More than 100 sq. km of pre-historic field systems which continue to be used for farming today.

Cornwall Council has generously provided an additional grant as match funding to ensure that the benefits of Lottery funding extend as widely as possible. Commenting on the news of the award, Jim McKenna said:

“Penwith, in the far west of Cornwall is a special place with a unique landscape. The area has long needed a more integrated, joined-up approach to supporting its fragile rural economy and long-standing farming communities. The Landscape Partnership has spent several years working collaboratively with many individuals, interest groups and organisations to develop the proposals which have now been endorsed by the Heritage Lottery Fund. As Chair, it has been a privilege to work with so many dedicated and committed people, a number of whom have contributed their time and expertise voluntarily and this funding award reflects their collective efforts...We can’t wait to get started!”

Sue James, St Just-in-Penwith Councillor and Cabinet Member for Environment, also welcomed this announcement: “As the local Cornwall Councillor within the area of benefit, I am delighted that the merit of the projects proposed by partnership members has been recognised and this Lottery Award made. The potential benefits of this project are also relevant to the Environment Portfolio I now hold in the Cabinet. I am optimistic this project will help us develop good practice to protect and enhance our heritage and special landscapes as well as increasing opportunities to grow nature as part of the delivery of our environmental growth strategy.”

Delivery of this Partnership scheme will be led by Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Nick Tregenza, a Wildlife Trust Trustee commented: “We are delighted to have landed this funding for Penwith, and to be able to work in cooperation with so many partners at a time when traditional farming in Penwith is facing unprecedented difficulties.”

Nerys Watts Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West said: “Penwith’s beautiful landscape is full of ancient monuments shedding light on thousands of years of human history and important habitats for local wildlife. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we’re delighted to support this project that will protect this precious landscape for future generations, and reconnect people with the natural heritage all around them.”