

Cornwall Wildlife Trust Who we are...

Cornwall Wildlife Trust is the leading local charity working to protect and enhance Cornwall's wildlife and wild places. We have helped people to enjoy nature for over 50 years. We are passionate about all aspects of nature conservation and work only in Cornwall.

What we do...

Conserve habitats

- by managing 55 nature reserves, covering over 5,000 acres, giving refuge to rare and endangered species.
- by advising landowners on how best to manage their land for wildlife.

Protect wildlife

- by campaigning and running projects on land and at sea to protect wildlife and its environment.
- by recording and monitoring wildlife, allowing us to share our information, knowledge and expertise.

Inspire people

- by encouraging locals and visitors to explore and enjoy Cornwall's natural heritage.
- by helping children to have fun with nature through Fox Club, aimed at primary school aged children.

Find out more at...

- www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk
- www.facebook.com/CornwallWildlife
- www.twitter.com/CornwallNature
- www.youtube.com/CornwallWildlifeFilm

Join us at...

- www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/join

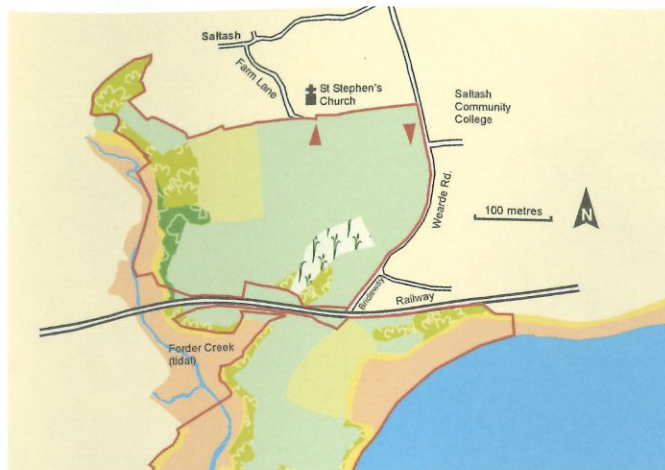
Five Acres, Allet, Truro, Cornwall, TR4 9DJ

Tel: (01872) 273939

Email: info@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk



How to get to Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve



Directions:

From Carkeel roundabout on the A38, follow Callington Road towards Saltash straight over the roundabout and then straight on at the traffic lights. Then turn right at the mini roundabout by the fire station into Church Road, following signs to St Stephen's. Follow Church Road past Saltash College and straight over the mini-roundabout.

For the entrance to reserve behind St Stephen's Church turn right at the T-junction to St Stephen's Road and park in front of Church. Follow the road around to the Cecil Arms Pub and walk left up Farm Lane past the cemetery. The entrance to the reserve is at the end of this lane.

For the Wearde Road entrance turn left at the T-junction to St Stephen's Road. Take the second turning right into Wearde Road. Continue down the road and park on the left hand side before left hand turn to Saltash Community School. Entrance to reserve on right hand side of the road.

Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve is supported by Cornwall Council and Saltash Town Council.



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Photography by Sean O'Hea, Peter Kent, Jan McLaughlan
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Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve, Saltash



Protecting **Cornwall's** wildlife for the future

Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve is an important place both for people and wildlife. The Reserve has a wide variety of different wildlife habitats, mostly hay meadows with arable fields, woodland, wetland, scrub, rocky shoreline, mudflats and an extensive network of hedgerows. There is a rich history of quarrying, farming and maritime activities and the site's two quarries and the headland running around the west and south shores of the reserve are County Geological Sites. From the reserve there are extensive views over the River Lyhner, Antony Passage, Forder Creek, the River Tamar and beyond to Devonport and Plymouth. Its location on the edge of Saltash now makes it an ideal place for people to escape for a bit of peace and quiet.

The site falls within the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the estuary fore shore lies within the Tamar Estuary candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), a designation of international significance. As a nature reserve with this kind of protection, the site will be safeguarded for its resident wildlife and its visiting public.

The Friends of Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve

The Friends Group was established by Cornwall Wildlife Trust to form a link between the local community and the Trust. Through the Group local people are guiding the development of this nature reserve by assisting with the management of the site.

The Group warden the nature reserve and contributes to wildlife monitoring. The Group also raises awareness of the nature reserve by organising an annual events programme including guided walks and practical work days. These events are for the local community to enjoy and be inspired by this wonderful place.

For more information call (01872) 273939, email churchtownfriends@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk or visit www.churchtownfarmsaltash.org.uk

Visitor guidelines

Access

The nature reserve is covered by a network of footpaths. There are two Public Rights of Way and the remaining are permissive footpaths. Horses, bicycles, vehicles, camping and lighting of fires are not permitted on the nature reserve.

Walking with your dog

The Trust understands that this nature reserve is a great place to walk dogs and that it is well used by the local community for this purpose. Presently, dogs are allowed on permissive paths at most times of the year. There are some areas of the nature reserve where we restrict access for dogs so that the wildlife, particularly ground nesting birds such as skylarks, is not disturbed.

Disturbance can lead to:

- Birds permanently abandoning their eggs and chicks which then won't survive.
- Birds leaving their nests whilst brooding, leaving them open to predation.
- Birds being interrupted whilst feeding their chicks which may lead to a lower chick survival rate.

Nationally the skylark population has declined by 60% since the 1960s, and we are very fortunate to have this enchanting bird nesting on this nature reserve.

Please help the nesting birds by following the restrictions marked on the map:

PR (Permanent Restrictions): Please keep your dog on a lead at all times in these fields to minimise disturbance to wildlife. They have a high conservation value and are periodically grazed by livestock.

SR (Seasonal Restrictions): Please keep your dog on a lead and keep to the paths in these fields from 1st March to 30th September. This is to minimise disturbance to ground-nesting birds during the nesting season.



Hay meadows...

The Trust's vision is for the meadows to be wildlife oases, swarming with butterflies and exploding with colourful plants. There has been a huge decline in hay meadow habitats nationally - over 95% of traditional hay meadows which existed in Britain before the war have been lost mainly due to intensive farming practices and this is reflected in Cornwall. To achieve this vision, we are allowing the grass to grow long, then in late July cutting it and leaving it to dry. This hay is then turned to encourage the seeds to drop and then it's taken away for animal fodder. This process will gradually deprive the soil of nutrients, leading to increased competition between plants and eventually more diversity. The change will take time. See if you can notice a difference as the years go by... Look out for the marbled white butterfly.

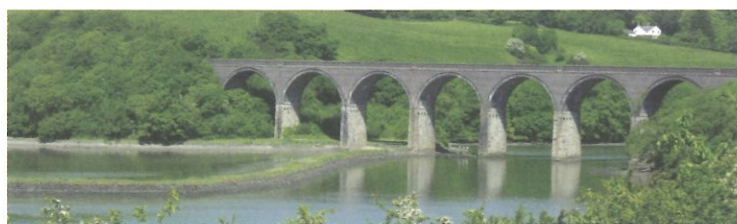
Wetlands...

A couple of springs on the site have created a wetland habitat in the valley bottom. You can clearly see the different plants growing there, and in the summer you can see the swallows feasting on the insects that thrive in the damp conditions. To keep this wetland healthy we are grazing it with cattle. This will control the plant growth and the cattle's hooves will disturb seeds hidden in the ground - you never know what may start growing there!



Rocky shoreline...

The sheltered headland running around the southern boundary of the reserve shows vegetation typical of those affected by the tides and salty environment. Colourful plants can be found scattered above the high tide mark on the low rocky cliffs, such as red fescue and thrift. At low tide on the southern shore of the headland an area of seaweed dominated by bladder wrack can be found covering the rocks. The rockpools here are home to common shore crabs.



Cornish hedges...

The hedgerows on the site are very old and very important for wildlife, providing shelter for mammals, food for birds with an abundance of flowers and trees. Traditional Cornish hedges have a bank with a stone face. You can see these all over the reserve, though some of them are in a poor state of repair. Some hedges are being restored and the trees cut back to encourage new, bushy growth. Look out for the cornish elm and sparrowhawks hunting along the hedges.



Arable fields...

There are three fields on the reserve which have been sown with arable crops. This has twin benefits for wildlife. Under intensive management, arable fields would have been repeatedly sprayed with herbicides and pesticides to kill off unwanted competitors to the growing crops. This has meant that nationally, once-common arable weeds have declined dramatically.

However, the seeds of these plants can survive in the soil for a long time. Once ploughed up and disturbed the seeds germinate again, and at Churchtown Farm a number of rare plants have been found on the arable fields. These fields are also important for birds. Modern methods of harvesting crops are very efficient, removing almost all of the corn, oats or barley seeds. In the past, inefficient methods would have left plenty of seeds for birds to eat over winter. This reduction in winter food has been matched by a reduction in once-common farmland birds. Our crop will be left for the birds at Churchtown Farm - look out for flocks of goldfinches.



Mudflats...

Estuarine mudflats are highly productive ecosystems, providing a great deal of food for birds. A winter visit to the mudflats at Churchtown Farm will regularly reward you with sightings of little egrets, greenshanks, redshanks and curlew, to mention just a few.

Geology...

There are two County Geological Sites within the boundary of the reserve. Lowhill Quarry located on the western side of the reserve was worked up until 1915 for dolerite (greenstone), used in road building. The quarry has a special ambience being cool, dark, damp and sheltered, factors which allow the development of an impressive collection of ferns including hart's tongue, soft shield fern and common male fern. Now the Quarry has an important educational value, clearly showing where the sandstone has been folded and cleaved by the dolerite, which forced its way in as larva millions of years ago. The slates along the foreshore from the point fields are also designated because they contain fossils called ostracods, this rare presence of fossils allowing accurate dating of the rock.

