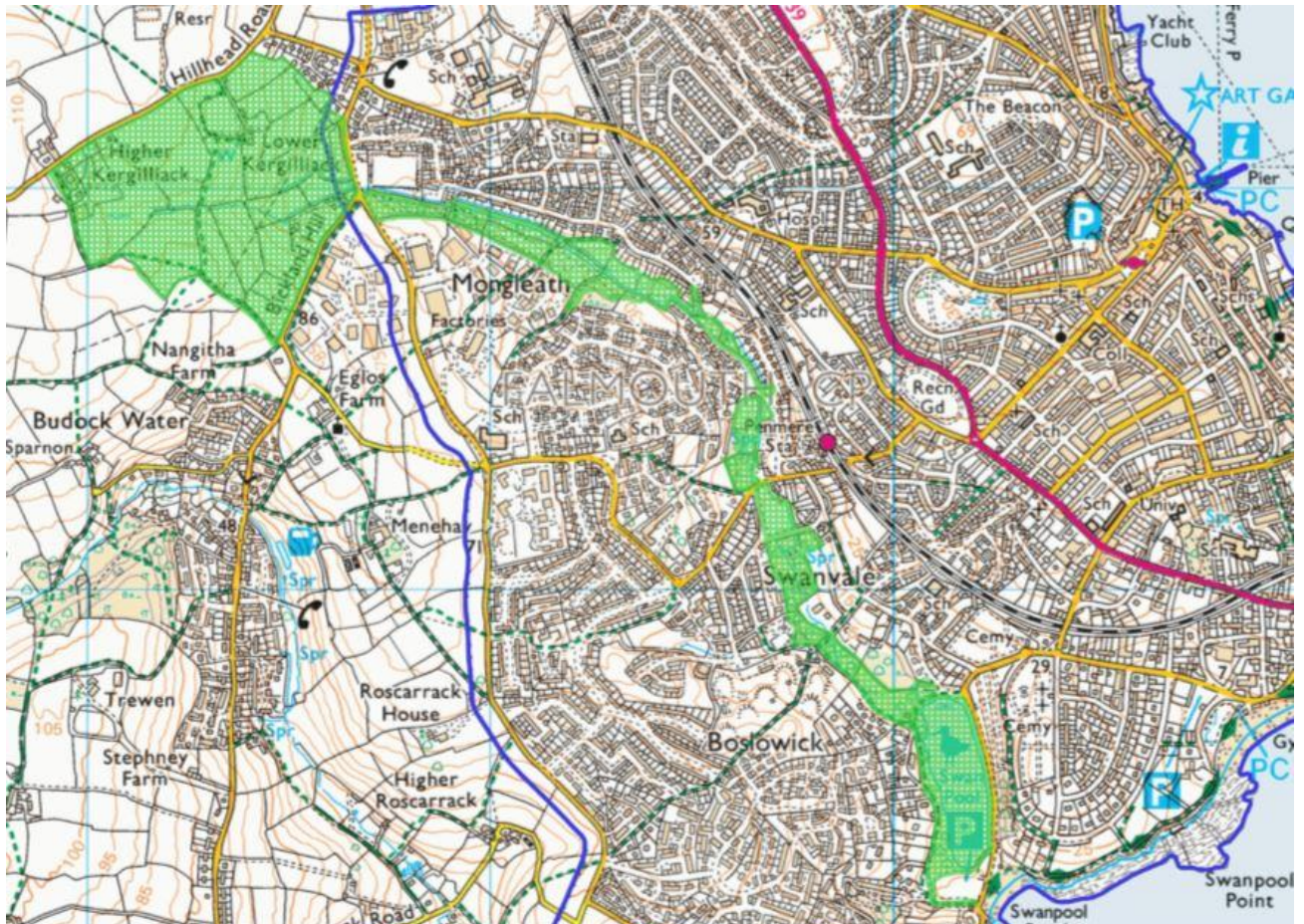


Falmouth Green Corridor Forum

Proposals for the recognition, promotion and enhancement of the Falmouth Green Corridor (rev 3 30/04/19)



1. BACKGROUND

The green corridor initiative is being promoted and managed by Falmouth Green Corridor Forum, a volunteer organisation dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the corridor in accordance with proposals established in the Falmouth Neighbourhood Plan

The location of the green corridor is shown in Fig. 1 and is described in fuller detail in later sections of this report.

The principal benefits of establishing the Falmouth Green corridor are as follows:

Falmouth Green Corridor benefits summary:

- Establishes a single, high profile, nature area within Falmouth's urban heartland, containing both terrestrial and aquatic habitats.
- Enhances biodiversity, enabling numerous species of wildlife to benefit from habitat mobility.
- Provides a focus for ecological and environmental education and learning.
(Three junior schools and a senior school all within 300m of the corridor)
- Increases opportunities for exercise and relaxation to a number of adjacent residential areas.
- Enhances Falmouth's natural environment to strengthen its appeal as a tourist destination.
- Brings together volunteer groups for the various component sites to share ideas, pool resources and generate common management plans. Promotes community cohesion.
- Whole site monitoring and awareness of invasive species, water pollution and other potential hazards and threats.

2. DESCRIPTION of the GREEN CORRIDOR

The proposed green corridor comprises a number of separate sites, some well- defined, others less so. In total there are nine distinct sites, the locations of which are shown in Fig.2.

Outline details of the sites are summarised in the table below, followed by fuller descriptions:

Site Ref. (Fig. 3)	Name	Area (m ²) (approx.)	Grid reference location (mid points)
A	Bickland Stream upper catchment	320000	SW 78320 33007
B	Tregoniggie Woodland	65000	SW 78681 32994 to SW 79465 32656
C	Shelburne Road	4100	SW 79596 32616
D	Queen Anne Gardens	11600	SW 79638 32376
E	Swanvale amenity area	7700	SW 79691 32173
F	Prislow Woods	21100	SW 79744 32061
G	Link woodland	8500	SW 79824 31873
H	Swanvale Nature Reserve	7900	SW 79958 31797
I	Swanpool SSSI	21300	SW 80158 31549

A. Bickland Stream upper catchment

The Bickland Stream arises around 200 metres SE of Higher Kergilliack. The stream flows in an almost due east direction for around 500 metres where it passes under Bickland Water Road and enters the western end of Tregoniggie Woodland.

The area of the upper catchment is around 32 hectares, as shown in Fig 3. The true geographic area of the catchment is actually a little larger than that, but for ease of management, the boundary has been adjusted to fit with certain delineating features (roads, field boundaries, housing/industrial areas).

Until early 2018, over 80% of the area was traditional farmland, comprising small to medium-sized fields bounded by Cornish hedges; most of it is grassland and was predominantly grazed by cattle. The underlying geology (Mylor slates) and clay soil make for acid soils of poor quality. The fields appear to have been under the plough at some time and possibly subject to artificial fertiliser application, thus have a relatively low floristic diversity. That said, by virtue of their connection with the open countryside to the north, west and south, this area of agricultural land represents a key natural bridge between the essentially urban environment of Falmouth and the wildlife-rich habitats beyond.

However, since 2018, a significant amount of development has commenced on much of the catchment, leaving around 14 hectares of the original area still in agricultural use. the connectivity of the rest of the Green Corridor (from Swanpool through Prislow Woods and Tregoniggie Woodland) is becoming compromised by this development.

It is hoped that the housing development adjacent to the Bickland Stream will be conducted in such a way as to maintain a suitable margin of semi-natural vegetation alongside the watercourse, to help ensure that wildlife migration can continue along the stream edge.

Another element of semi-natural habitat which provides a key link to open countryside is the narrow strip of woodland to the east of Bickland Hill (from Bickland Water Road to Eglos Farm).

One other area which has some natural interest and is unlikely to be developed in the short-term is the former quarry to the north-west of Lower Kergilliack. The quarry has since been used as a landfill site, supposedly of inert material, although a number of steel pipes are visible, presumably to vent any gases generated from the spoil. The quarry comprises secondary woodland, with an adjoining area of rough grass.

Fig 3 shows the proposed boundary to the Bickland Stream Upper Catchment. The letters indicate which fields are currently being developed and those which are still in agricultural use:

Agricultural Use: A, B, C, D, F

Under Development: E, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R

B. Tregoniggie Woodland

Tregoniggie Woodland is a popular woodland amenity area in Falmouth, much used by local residents and visitors for woodland walks, picnics, dog-walking and other recreational activities. The Bickland Stream runs through the woodland, flowing into the local nature reserve at Swanpool.

The woodland contains a variety of trees including Alder, Oak, Willow and Hazel some of which are quite ancient, with a very old Ash, known locally as the

Tregoniggie Titan. Lots of wildlife have made their home here, including foxes, squirrels, voles, woodpeckers, grey wagtails and many other species.

In Spring there are drifts of daffodils, a mixture of wild and cultivated, as well as other native flowers, like the lesser Celandine and the beautiful snake's head Fritillary, which is rarely seen growing in the wild, but happily survives here.

A volunteer group. The Friends of Tregoniggie Woodland was formed in 2013 and has been working to improve the site by arranging a whole range of events to encourage community involvement. Additionally, the group has prepared a detailed management plan for the woodland in conjunction with Cornwall Council and Cormac. The annual Tregoniggie Woodland Fair is held in May, when people in the local community (and from further afield) can enjoy a guided walk around the woods, see woodland crafts in action , purchase plants and have a cup of tea!

C. Shelburne Road, D. Queen Anne Gardens, G. Link woodland

These sites are less well defined and monitored than the more prominent sites highlighted in this section of the proposal. However, each of these sites comprise woodland habitats and natural green areas and play a vital role in linking the other sites in the green corridor. Each of these sites also host the Bickland Stream together with a number of pathways, dog-walking areas and green verges.

E Swanvale amenity area

This grassed, open amenity area is mainly occupied by an informal football pitch which is well used by the local community. A drainage ditch on the eastern border feeds into the Bickland Stream which runs underneath the site. This eastern strip could provide adequate habitat for species moving through the corridor.

F. Prislow Woods

Prislow woods is a substantial (2.11 hectares) tract of wetland and woodland habitat bordering the stream, about halfway down the Bickland water catchment (between Swanvale amenity area and Swanvale nature reserve).

This area supports a multitude of flora and fauna and is a crucial link in the Falmouth Green Corridor.

Until recently this area had been neglected for many years with fly tipping and a considerable amount of invasive species gaining a foothold.

Since October 2018 the Prislow Woods Community Project has been constituted and with volunteers from the locality held regular work days in the woods; clearing them of waste, tackling invasive species, and reinstating the historic pathway to link up the areas above and below to allow a pathway along the entirety of the FGC.

H. Swanvale nature reserve

This reserve, less than one hectare in area, comprises mostly willow carr, which provides shelter for many small birds and mammals. Mosses and ferns thrive in the humid atmosphere of this wet woodland. The facility is managed by Cornwall Wildlife Trust, an organisation which has also been involved with other sites in the proposed green corridor.

I. Swanpool SSSI

This site is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). The area was cut off by a shingle bar which formed after the last Ice Age, and a freshwater lake was created. At high spring tides, sea water rises above the culvert and flows back into Swanpool. As a result the pool is now brackish - a mixture of salty and fresh water.

Over a hundred types of bird have been seen at Swanpool; the familiar moorhen and coot are present throughout the year, together with water rail and kingfisher. A resident pair of mute swans (cob and pen) and their cygnets are a feature of the pool from which it takes its name. The surrounding wood is home to a host of plants, in particular the brightly coloured yellow iris and the huge clumps of greater tussock sedge.

Swanpool LNR is the only location in Britain of the trembling sea-mat, a small and very primitive creature, resembling a thin layer of jelly, which looks more like a plant than an animal.

The reserve is managed by Swanpool Forum whose members include local residents, councillors, representatives of Natural England, and other community groups. The costs of maintaining the LNR are provided solely by public donations and other fundraising

activities. Recently, the Forum has been registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

3. PROPOSALS

The three principal sites in the green corridor, Tregoniggie Woods, Prislów Woods and Swanpool SSSI have management organisations which have identified certain improvements and enhancements which are independent of each other, and other sites in the corridor. They are “stand alone” proposals which will bring benefits to the community irrespective of the establishment of the green corridor. Additionally, the central site in the corridor, the Swanvale amenity area, may also be upgraded as a community facility in a manner which would not prejudice any future development of the green corridor.

Proposals for other sites are dependent on the feasibility of developing the green corridor and the manner in which this may be executed. Movement of species through a green corridor, character of habitats and management of water courses are complex issues requiring expert analysis and input. Consequently, Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) was engaged to prepare a study on the Falmouth Green Corridor and to provide opinion on its feasibility and implementation. A copy of their proposal is included as Annex 1 of this report. Costs for implementation of the proposals may only be assessed on completion of the survey. It should also be noted that the scope of the survey will need to be expanded to include the Bickland Stream upper catchment.

Once the feasibility and guidelines have been determined for establishing the green corridor then, in addition to the site specific proposals, a programme will be proposed for the recognition, establishment and promotion of the green corridor. This programme will include such items as the preparation of a descriptive pictorial map of the corridor, a promotional leaflet, interpretation boards at various strategic points along the corridor, some form of website presence, press articles, etc.

A summary of the proposals is shown in the following table:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	<p>Tregonigge Woodland</p> <p>Upgrade pathways and improve disability access Create ponds to provide wetland habitats Restoration and repair of Cornish hedging Provide new/refurbished seating benches Signage and interpretation boards. (Full, detailed proposals are contained in the official woodland management plan which may be accessed by making an enquiry to: clethrionomys@btinternet.com)</p>
2	<p>Prislow Woods</p> <p>Re-instate pathway from entrance of woods (East Rise) to top of Swanvale Nature Reserve, as a substantial link towards the completion of the Falmouth Green Corridor.</p> <p>Promote community engagement, education and awareness raising to encourage appreciation, protection and participation in the local green infrastructure.</p> <p>Undertake reduction and management of invasive species.</p>
3	<p>Swanvale amenity area</p> <p>Relaying of playing pitch. New goalposts. General landscaping Fencing off green corridor area on eastern border together with tree planting and general landscaping</p>
4	<p>Swanpool SSSI</p> <p>Provision of a viewing platform/education area at the north end of the pool together with terracing, lectern and interpretation boards. Conduct a programme of willow coppicing to maintain current coverage and quality of reedbeds,</p>
5	<p>Falmouth Green Corridor study</p> <p>Commission the study proposed by Cornwall Environmental Consultants (commercial arm of Cornwall Wildlife Trust)</p>
6	<p>Falmouth Green Corridor Establishment and Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of a descriptive pictorial map of the corridor • Publication of a promotional leaflet • Design and siting of interpretation boards at various strategic locations • Website presence • Press articles

4. JUSTIFICATION/CONCLUSION

There are a multitude of benefits for consolidating a protected Green Corridor following the route of the Bickland Stream, including social and health related aspects as well as wildlife and the economy.

First and foremost the Green Corridor would provide a protected habitat for a range of common and rarer species, as well as the nearby habitats of residential gardens, etc.

In addition to the wildlife benefits, the green corridor would provide a feature that can be used by local people and visitors for recreation. This in itself would have benefits in the areas of community and health, encouraging people to get involved in activities in the green corridor, and thereby developing more of a sense of community and helping to reduce pressure on local health care providers.

Yet wider benefits will come from the 'ecosystem services' that a green corridor would provide, for example, helping to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, potentially helping to alleviate flooding problems and also resulting in cleaner water reaching the lagoon at Swanpool and the sea beyond.

FIGURES AND ANNEX

Fig. 1 Location of Falmouth Green Corridor

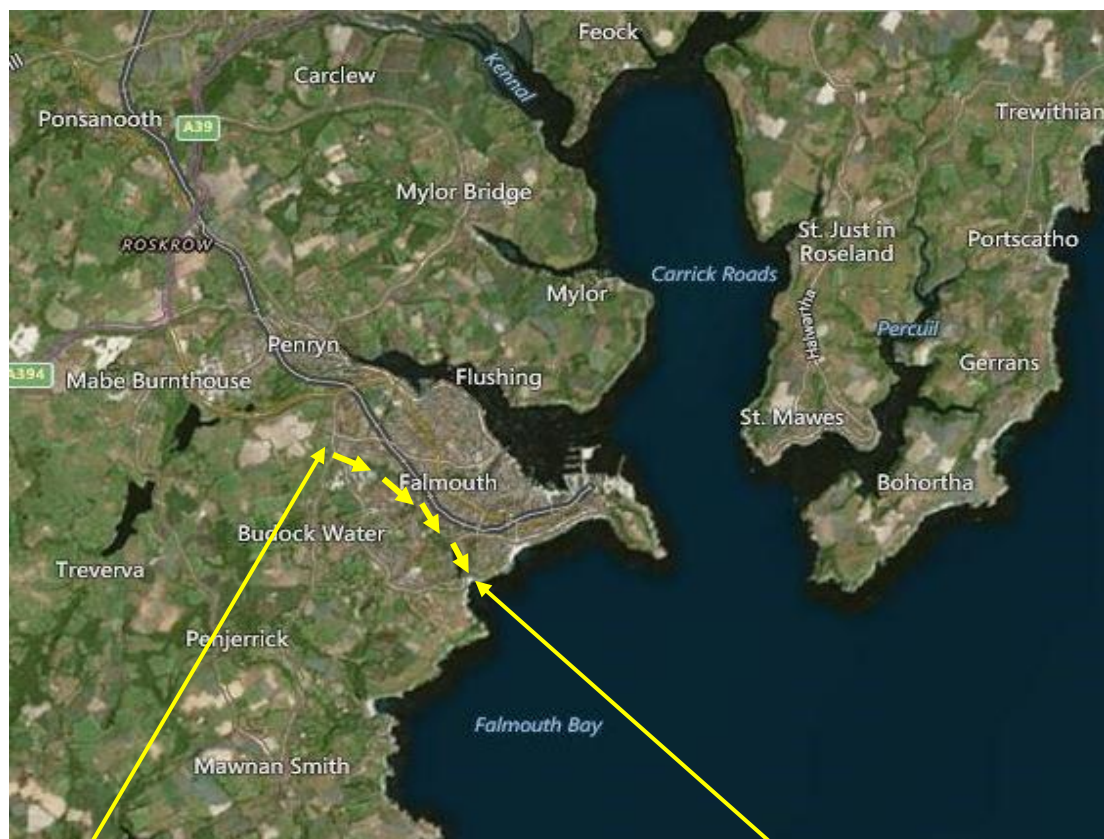
Fig. 2 Green Corridor component locations

Fig. 3 Bickland Stream Upper Catchment

Fig. 4 Green Corridor images

Annex 1 Cornwall Environmental Consultants quotation

FIG. 1 LOCATION OF FALMOUTH GREEN CORRIDOR



BICKLAND STREAM UPPER CATCHMENT

SOUTH END OF SWANPOOL SSSI



FIG. 2 GREEN CORRIDOR COMPONENT LOCATIONS

Site Ref.	Site Name
A	Bickland Stream upper catchment
B	Tregoniggie Woodland
C	Shelburne Road
D	Queen Anne Gardens
E	Swanvale amenity area
F	Prislow Woods
G	Link woodland
H	Swanvale Nature Reserve
I	Swanpool SSSI



FIG 3 BICKLAND STREAM UPPER CATCHMENT

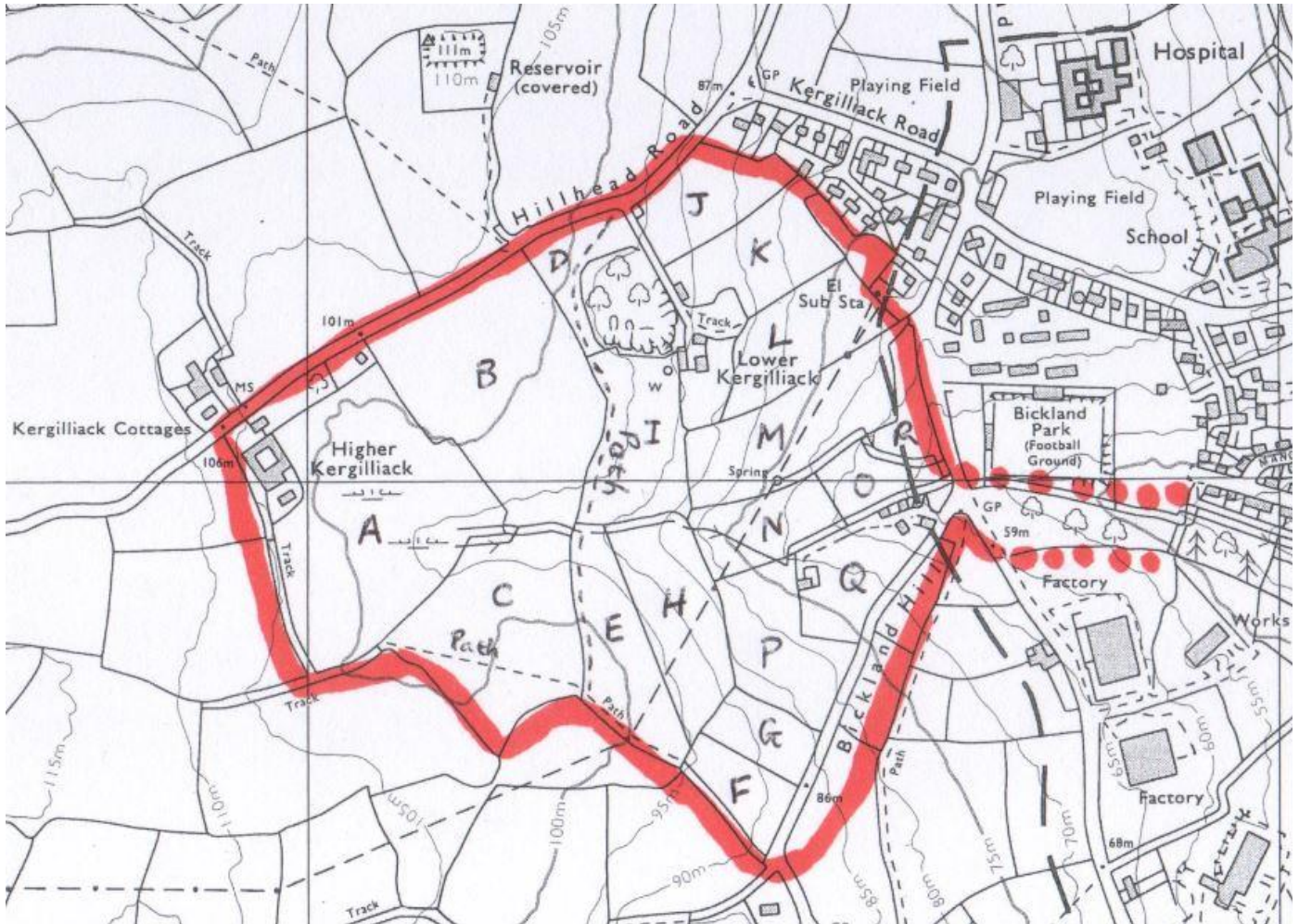


FIG 4 GREEN CORRIDOR SITE IMAGES



BICKLAND STREAM UPPER CATCHMENT



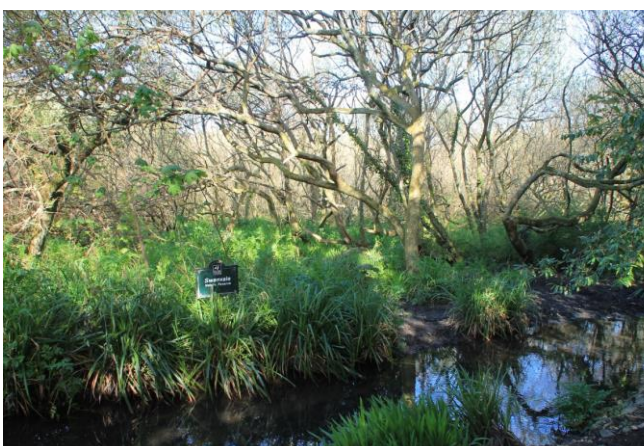
TREGONIGGIE WOODLAND



SWANVALE AMENITY AREA



PRISLOW WOODS



SWANVALE NATURE RESERVE



SWANPOOL SSSI

Annex 1 Cornwall Environmental consultants Quotation

Quote Ref:T6507

17 June 2016

Ref	Work	Units	Cost
Fees			
1 Survey			
1.1	Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Undertake extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey	15 hours	£675.00
Sub Total		15.00	£675.00
2 Reporting and Project Management			
2.1	Desk Study Review of desk study information from ERCCIS	2 hours	£90.00
2.2	Preparation of draft report Preparation of report to set out: ~ Survey methodology and results ~ Evaluation of results ~ Recommendations for maximising the benefits of the proposed Green Corridor	30 hours	£1,350.00
2.3	Mapping Preparation of maps to show distribution of phase 1 habitats and ecological constraints and opportunities	22.5 hours	£1,012.50
2.4	Final report Amendments to report following client feedback and issue of final report	4 hours	£180.00
2.5	Project Management Liaison with client, administration, risk assessments, etc	4 hours	£180.00
Sub Total		62.50	£2,812.50
Expenses			
3 Expenses			
3.1	Desk study requisition If not already obtained from ERCCIS, the 'Wildlife Resources Map' should be purchased.	1 item	£80.00
3.2	Mileage expenses		
	Mileage expenses for 2 site visits, 40 miles/visit @ 50p per mile Note mileage is estimated and will be charged as incurred	80 miles	£40.00
3.3	Purchase of mapping Purchase of OS mastermap to allow production of maps (estimate)	1 item	£150.00
Sub Total			£270.00
Sub-Total Expenses (exc. VAT)			£270.00
Total (exc.VAT)			£3,757.50