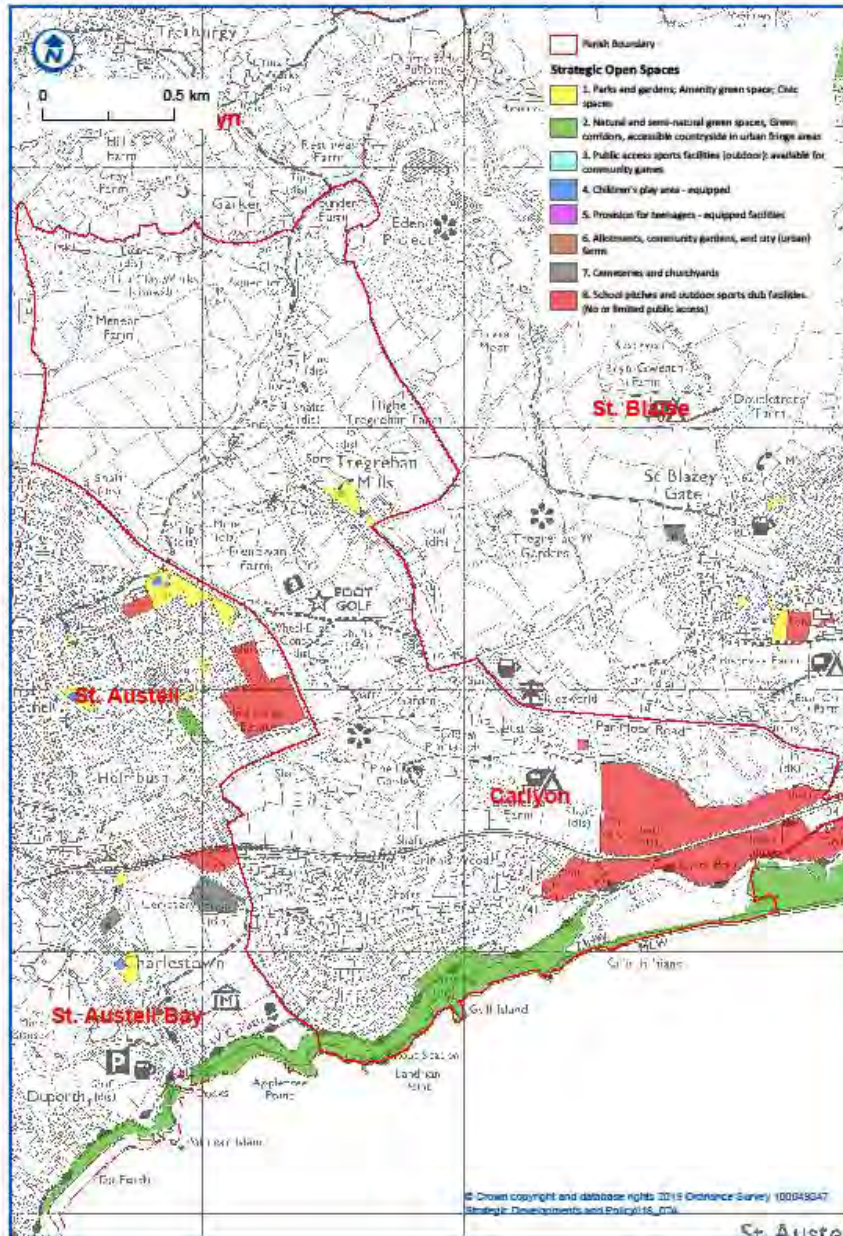


LOCAL GREEN SPACES AUDIT

Carlyon Recreation Area and Coastal Path

The Carlyon Recreation Area consists of two “fields”, one to the south of the Carlyon Bay Hotel, the other west of the hotel which includes the South West Coast Path which runs through them and continues west towards the World Heritage Site of Charlestown.



On the above map of St Austell's Strategic Open Spaces, it is shown as the green area on the cliff top to the west of Crinnis Beach. The site is owned by Percy R Brend & Sons (Holdings) Ltd. The “field” to the west of the Carlyon Bay Hotel is leased and maintained by Carlyon Parish Council; the lease began on 1st January 2012 and runs for 15 years.

(We need to ask the Brend group about any objections)

The area known as the fields including the hedging and scrub comprises 8.1 acres. Not including the hedging and scrub it is 6 acres. The coastal path runs for approx. a quarter of a mile from the western edge to the lookout point above Appletree Beach.

The fields, coastal path and beach foreshore are described on the map as "*Natural and semi-natural green spaces, Green corridors, accessible countryside in urban fringe areas*".

There are no current planning applications for the Recreation Area and it is not allocated for development in the Local or Neighbourhood Plans.

Description of site

The Carlyon Recreation Area is a grassed area known locally as the fields. The eastern field lies to the south of the Carlyon Bay Hotel and its grounds and is surrounded by hedges comprising small trees such as holm oak, sycamore and hawthorn and hedgerow shrubs such as blackthorn, bramble, ivy, with the addition of fencing on the cliff edge. The site, on a clifftop overlooking St Austell Bay, gives users extensive views of the sea and the Bay's two headlands. It has two memorial benches which are popular resting places for walkers.



Figure 1 View of Black Head from eastern field

A footpath between the cliff edge and the hotel grounds connects this area to the western field, which lies on the southern side of Sea Road. This area is bound by the fencing of the hotel on its eastern side, and a deep hedgerow and small trees (hawthorn, sycamore, crab apple) on the other three sides. It is regularly maintained and is popular with walkers, dog walkers and families. It is mostly flat which makes it useable for small children and people with limited mobility.



Figure 2 The western field looking east, with Sea Road to the left.

There are five benches with extensive views of St Austell Bay and its two Areas of Natural Beauty (AONBs) to the Gribben and Black Head. It is easily accessible via three gates adjacent to roadside parking and a privately owned car park (currently charges for this only apply during the summer holidays). Parts of the area can become very muddy and slippery in wet weather, but most of it is still easily useable. However, people who use wheelchairs can only access the fields from the narrow Coastpath where it meets Sea Road on the western edge of the Parish boundary and is really only suitable for a powered chair. Two of the gates mentioned above are 'kissing gates', not useable in a wheelchair. The third is a locked field gate on Sea Road which allows access by the emergency services and has a narrow pedestrian opening. A key is kept at the Carlyon Bay Hotel for emergencies.

The South West Coast Path (SWCP), a Public Right of Way, crosses the site connecting it to the east with the continuation of the SWCP through the Carlyon Bay Golf Course and on to Par. From the western side of the fields, the Coastal Path becomes narrower where it runs behind the houses of Sea Road on the landward side and the wildlife corridor of hedgerow and small trees on the cliff edge on its seaward side. There are intermittent sea views. It rises to the National Coastwatch Institution lookout which has a grassed area on its seaward side with a bench and information board for public use.



Figure 3 Benches looking out over St Austell Bay from a wartime structure

Just west of the Coastguard lookout is a circular concrete structure which was once a WWII gun platform but is now furnished with two benches affording fine views of St Austell Bay and the World Heritage Site of Charlestown.

The Recreation Area and Coastal Path is well used by residents of Carlyon Bay, hotel guests and visitors but also by many from the wider St Austell area – as there are few open areas with sea views which are accessible by the general public. In particular dog owners who need an area to exercise their animals but who themselves cannot walk very far, find its easy accessibility essential. It is also an area where it's relatively safe to let dogs off the lead to get proper exercise.



Figure 4 The fields are popular with dog owners

Its Local Character

The Recreation Area is one of only two open spaces in the Parish which can be used by walkers and dog walkers (the other is the Carlyon Bay Golf Course). The Recreation Area or “fields” are closely connected to local residents as they lie on the southern edge of Sea Road with its approx.. 200 households.



Figure 5 The western field on the southern edge of Sea Road

They are a vital local amenity and part of the character of the area. The houses along that part of the road overlook the site and the hedgerow on the field's northern edge form the southern boundary of Sea Road and are part of the road's character. The area gives residents from Carlyon Bay and the wider St Austell area access to the vistas across St Austell Bay and its two headlands, which are Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The views, combined with the sound of the sea and the birdlife, attract many people who appreciate the beauty and tranquillity of the site.

Regular users, in particular those who use the fields for exercising dogs, become known to each other and stop and talk. Therefore the fields provide opportunity for social interaction which would not happen in the same way if people were walking along a linear path.

Particular local significance

It allows residents and visitors coastal views and provides the opportunity for exercise whilst enjoying the beauty of St Austell Bay.

It is also a wildlife corridor with nesting gulls, kestrels, peregrine falcons and owls all known to be present, as well as badgers, slow worms, foxes, rabbits and deer.

There are disused mine shafts beneath the fields, historic relics of the copper mines which once covered the area. There are also two World War 11 structures – a lookout on the south east corner on the cliff overlooking Crinnis Beach (although it is now obscured by vegetation). There is also a gun emplacement to the west of the Coastwatch lookout overlooking Charlestown Harbour.

The visual beauty and historic remnants can be supported by photographs as can the site's proximity to local homes. The numbers of people who are attracted to the site for walking and recreation can also be demonstrated by ad hoc surveys carried out by members of the NDP.

Evidence to show it is "demonstrably special" to the community

The importance of these green spaces to the community is amply demonstrated by the response to the questionnaires carried out for the NDP. 99% of those who responded either agreed or agreed strongly that the open spaces and coastal views were important aspects of the area. The numbers of people using the recreation area in all weathers are shown in ad hoc surveys and photographs.

(We need supporting emails etc from Parish council, local councillor, MP, maybe CPRE, CWT, Ramblers??)