

# WENDRON PARISH EVIDENCE OVERVIEW REPORT

No 7: Climate Change  
Evidence Summary

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IMPORTANT NOTE: THIS IS A 'LIVE DOCUMENT' THAT IS CONTINUOUSLY UPDATED AS NEW DATA BECOMES AVAILABLE. THE VERSION ON THE NDP WEBSITE WILL BE UPDATED REGULARLY.

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### 1. Introduction

**1.1 Climate change is one of the most significant long-term issues affecting the future of Wendron Parish.** It is both a global environmental crisis and a local land-use issue, with direct implications for how development is located, designed and managed. In practical terms, climate change affects the pattern of future development, the resilience of infrastructure, the efficiency of buildings, the security of local energy supply, the management of flood risk and water resources, the condition of soils and habitats, and the day-to-day wellbeing of residents.

**1.2 For Wendron, these matters are especially important because the parish is rural, dispersed and in part physically exposed.** It contains a scattered settlement pattern, a strong agricultural base, older building stock, valued landscapes and areas of heritage sensitivity. These characteristics mean that climate change is not simply a matter of reducing carbon emissions. It is also about ensuring that homes, businesses, farms, roads, drainage systems and community facilities are resilient to hotter summers, heavier rainfall, stronger storms, water stress and energy system change.

**1.3** A robust response to climate change in Wendron needs to address two connected objectives. The first is **mitigation**, reducing greenhouse gas emissions through better design, improved building performance, renewable energy, lower carbon travel and more efficient use of resources. The second is **adaptation**, preparing the parish for the climate impacts that are already occurring or are expected to intensify over coming decades, including flooding, heat, drought, ecological change and infrastructure disruption. These two aims need to be pursued together through the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### 2. Planning Policy Background

**2.1** The policy framework for climate change is extensive and gives neighbourhood plans a clear role. Internationally, action has been shaped by agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Accords, and by the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In the United Kingdom, the Climate Change Act 2008 created the legal framework for emissions reduction and adaptation planning, including legally binding carbon budgets and the long-term target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Government has also committed to reducing emissions by 78% by 2035 compared with 1990 levels.

**2.2** The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, produced on a five-year cycle under the Climate Change Act, identifies six priority areas requiring further action: flooding and coastal change, heat-related health impacts, water shortages, harm to natural capital and biodiversity, risks to food production and trade, and pests, diseases and invasive species. Each of these has relevance to Cornwall, and several are directly applicable to Wendron, especially flooding, water availability, ecological resilience and the effect of a changing climate on farming and infrastructure.

**2.3** National planning policy requires all plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development which mitigates climate change and adapts to its effects. The planning system is expected to support the transition to a low carbon future, shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, encourage the reuse of existing resources and buildings, and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Plans are also expected to take a proactive approach to adaptation, including the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity, landscape and overheating. A sequential, risk-based approach is required in relation to flood risk, and community-led renewable energy is expressly supported through neighbourhood planning.

**2.4** The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 reinforces this by amending the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 so that neighbourhood plans must be designed to secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to both the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. Climate change is therefore not an optional or peripheral subject for plan-making, but a core consideration.

**2.5** At Cornwall level, the policy context is particularly strong. Cornwall Council declared a Cornish climate emergency on 22 January 2019 and set an ambition for Cornwall to become carbon neutral by 2030. The Cornwall Local Plan supports this through Objective 9, which seeks both to reduce energy consumption and increase renewable and low carbon energy production, and to increase resilience to climate change. Policy 2 supports renewable and low carbon energy and energy efficiency as part of resilient communities. Policy 14 strongly supports renewable and low carbon energy proposals, while also applying safeguards in relation to the AONB, the World Heritage Site and other sensitive environments. Other relevant policies include Policy 15 on safeguarding renewable energy, Policy 25 on green infrastructure, and Policy 26 on flood risk management and coastal change.

**2.6** The Cornwall Climate Emergency Development Plan Document provides the most detailed local policy framework. Policy RE1 supports renewable energy schemes that contribute to Cornwall's target of 100% renewable electricity supply by 2030, subject to mitigation of significant adverse impacts, continued agricultural use where relevant, appropriate decommissioning and restoration, and community ownership opportunities for larger commercial schemes. Policy AL1 addresses regenerative low impact development. Policies SEC1 and CC4 set out a strong approach to sustainable design, requiring development to minimise energy demand through layout and orientation, incorporate on-site renewable or low carbon technologies, use water reduction and reuse measures, reduce overheating risk, use high quality thermally efficient materials, incorporate natural SuDS, and sensitively retrofit heritage buildings. The Wendron NDP can therefore add value by providing locally specific detail which complements this strategic framework.

**2.7** Other relevant guidance includes the Cornwall Climate Change Action Plan, the Carbon Neutral Cornwall Call to Action, the Cornwall Climate Risk Assessment Report, the Cornwall Local Area Energy Plan, the emerging Cornwall Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Cornwall Council's advice

note on Climate Change and Neighbourhood Plans, and Historic England guidance on improving energy efficiency in traditional buildings. Together, these support an approach which is locally specific, evidence-based and integrated with wider landscape, heritage, design and infrastructure considerations.

### **3. Baseline**

**3.1 Wendron Parish is estimated to produce around 24,340 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions annually from local activity.** This is a substantial figure for a rural parish and underlines the importance of land-use planning in reducing emissions. It indicates clear scope for carbon reduction through improved building energy efficiency, changes in travel patterns, reduced waste, lower carbon heating, local renewable energy generation and a more efficient local energy system.

**3.2** The parish's **existing building stock** is a significant part of this picture. A considerable proportion of homes fall within the lower EPC bands, reflecting the prevalence of older properties. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity. It suggests relatively high existing energy demand and potential fuel poverty, but it also indicates that retrofitting homes, improving insulation and replacing fossil-fuel heating systems could make a significant contribution to emissions reduction while improving comfort and affordability.

**3.3 Climate Change Impacts.** Climate projections indicate that by the period 2040 to 2059 South West England is likely to experience average annual temperatures around 2 to 3°C higher than the 1981 to 2000 baseline, together with wetter winters and drier summers. For Wendron, this is expected to translate into a wide range of local consequences. These include more frequent and intense heatwaves, increased heat-related illness, greater exposure to harmful ultraviolet radiation, worsening summer air quality, stronger and more damaging storms, and reduced summer water availability.

**3.4** The likely impacts extend across land, water and infrastructure. Heavy rainfall is expected to increase the risk of flooding, overloaded drainage and sewer systems, water quality decline and soil erosion. Rural roads may be blocked more often by flooding or fallen trees, affecting access for residents and deliveries. In a dispersed parish such as Wendron, these disruptions may have disproportionately serious consequences because alternative routes and services are limited. Households reliant on off-grid energy sources may be especially affected if supply chains are interrupted. Agriculture may face both drought and flash flooding, reducing productivity and damaging soils. Biodiversity may also change as some species decline and others shift northward in response to a warming climate.

**3.5 A climate-responsive approach to planning and design** is central to the parish's future resilience. Development should minimise energy demand through siting, orientation, massing and landscaping, maximise passive solar gain where appropriate, and incorporate renewable or low carbon technologies. In Wendron, this is particularly important because of the parish's exposed rural setting, traditional building patterns and need for durable, practical development solutions. Well-designed development should reduce heat loss in winter, avoid overheating in summer, manage water efficiently and use green infrastructure to improve both environmental performance and local amenity.

**3.6** A wide range of practical measures can support more sustainable living, including rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, efficient fittings and appliances, composting, recycling provision, green roofs or living walls, and drought-tolerant planting. These measures help translate climate policy into the everyday functioning of homes, workplaces and community buildings. The residential water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day is relevant here, while non-household development can also contribute through strong BREEAM water performance.

**3.7** The evidence supports a positive approach to renewable energy, but one that is carefully calibrated to Wendron's landscape and heritage context. National and Cornwall-level policy encourage renewable and low carbon energy, community-led generation, and the co-location of producers and users. **The issue for Wendron is therefore not whether renewable energy should form part of the climate response, but how it should be designed and located so that benefits are secured without causing unacceptable harm.**

**3.8 The Cornish Renewable Energy Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2020** is particularly important in this respect. Renewable energy proposals can have very different effects depending on landscape type, topography, field pattern, settlement pattern, enclosure, openness, skylines, visibility and cumulative change. In a parish such as Wendron, where the landscape includes exposed upland areas, strong rural character, mining heritage and locally valued views, sensitivity is not simply a matter of whether a proposal can be seen. It also concerns whether development fits the scale and grain of the landscape, whether it disrupts the reading of landform or settlement pattern, whether it erodes tranquillity, and whether it affects the appreciation of heritage assets or the wider mining landscape.

**3.9** The banding approach used for wind and solar development illustrates that both height and site area matter greatly in assessing likely effects. A small turbine or modest solar site may be experienced very differently from a larger installation. The implication for Wendron is that renewable energy cannot be approached on a one-size-fits-all basis. Scale, siting, cumulative impact and relationship to landscape character are all critical. Particularly in sensitive areas, proposals should demonstrate that they have been shaped by a clear understanding of landscape capacity and of the resilience, or robustness, of the receiving landscape to absorb change without undue harm. This is especially relevant in relation to the parish's rural setting, mining landscape heritage, historic field patterns and any proposals affecting prominent slopes, ridgelines or open countryside.

**3.10 Local energy storage** is likely to become an increasingly important part of a lower carbon and more resilient energy system. Battery storage can absorb surplus renewable generation when production exceeds demand, and release it when generation is low or the wider grid is under pressure. In rural areas it may also improve energy security during outages and reduce dependence on external supply. This is particularly relevant in Wendron, where severe weather can affect the reliability of electricity supply and where dispersed development patterns make resilience especially important.

**3.11** There are many sites in the parish potentially suitable for low-power local storage serving the community, farms and the holiday sector. However, connection to such units requires a three-phase 415v supply, which may in turn require infrastructure investment. Even so, there is an opportunity here not only for resilience, but also for local economic benefit, since excess stored power may be sold back into the grid. Local energy storage may therefore become an important part of the parish's

future energy economy, particularly if combined with renewable generation and community benefit models.

**3.12 Decarbonisation of transport** is another major part of climate policy. The UK Government has confirmed that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will end from 2035, making the roll-out of electric vehicles a key element of the national response to climate change. For Wendron, the implications are significant because the parish is rural and residents are often dependent on private vehicles. A lack of charging infrastructure could therefore become a serious disadvantage over the coming decade, affecting residents, businesses and tourism.

**3.13** The baseline position in Wendron is weak. Existing electricity infrastructure is predominantly domestic in character. There are some private charging points, but no public EV chargers in the parish, and no publicly available charging points are currently identified. Holiday and hotel chargers may be available in surrounding parishes, but this does not provide a reliable parish-wide solution. Home charging at 7kW is generally straightforward where there is off-street parking, but households without driveways may face difficulties, including the practical and safety problems of trailing cables over pavements. Rapid and ultra-rapid charging infrastructure presents a greater challenge because it commonly depends on three-phase supply and substantial connection costs, factors that can be particularly problematic in rural areas.

**3.14** Cornwall Council's Drive EV2 project has funded a large number of charging points in Cornwall Council car parks, but none are currently located within Wendron Parish. Unless this changes, Wendron's dispersed rural community could face growing social and economic disadvantage as vehicle electrification accelerates. The parish's tourism economy may also become less competitive if visitors travelling by EV cannot charge conveniently. This identifies a clear infrastructure gap with direct relevance to the NDP.

**3.15 Flooding, drainage pressure and water management** are likely to become increasingly important local issues. National policy requires development to avoid flood risk where possible and to be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The Flood and Water Management Act also supports a broader approach, including runoff reduction, wetland storage, building resilience, rollback from vulnerable areas and sustainable drainage systems.

**3.16** According to the latest version of the Cornwall Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), properties located near the main watercourses in the Parish, including in the centre of Penmarth, and various roads close to rivers and streams are at risk from both 1 in 30-year and 1 in 100-year flood events. A broader area of the Parish falls within the 1 in 1,000-year surface water flood risk zone. This creates the potential for villages and isolated dwellings to be cut off during prolonged periods of adverse weather. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of surface water flooding, exacerbating the economic and health impacts associated with property inundation. While engineered flood defences can reduce risk, they often appear unsympathetic to the local natural and built environment. In contrast, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) offer more environmentally sensitive solutions, helping to manage surface water, improve water quality, support biodiversity, and strengthen the green infrastructure network, while also enhancing the area's distinctive character. Best practice promotes managing water above ground wherever feasible, as this allows for easier maintenance and delivers greater environmental and amenity benefits. Soakaways and underground storage should only be used as a last resort where above-ground options are not viable.

**3.17 Climate mitigation and adaptation must also work with, rather than against, Wendron's historic environment.** A whole building approach to energy efficiency in traditional homes and historic buildings is important because poorly conceived retrofit can cause unintended harm, whereas carefully designed improvement can reduce emissions while sustaining significance. In a parish with older housing stock and heritage assets, the relationship between climate policy and conservation policy is therefore a practical one. Measures such as improved glazing, insulation and low carbon heating may often be appropriate, provided they are designed with proper regard to traditional materials, fabric performance and heritage significance.

## **4. Community Feedback**

**4.1 Community feedback demonstrates clear support for a locally beneficial response to climate change and sustainable infrastructure.** In the first community survey, 80% of respondents supported the principle of local renewable energy generation where it would benefit the community. However, support was more mixed when this was translated into specific policy areas. Only around half of respondents considered that the Neighbourhood Plan should include a policy relating to wind turbines, whereas there was stronger support for policies addressing drainage, utilities, broadband, solar power and geothermal energy.

**4.2** The second, more detailed survey reinforced this overall picture. There was broad support for incorporating renewable energy into new development, and again 80% of respondents supported local renewable energy generation where the benefits would be felt by the community. Solar and geothermal energy attracted the strongest levels of support, while views on wind turbines remained more divided, with approximately 50% in favour of supportive policies. Responses also indicated a clear wish for the Neighbourhood Plan to promote sustainable infrastructure more generally, including green energy generation, drainage improvements and better utility provision.

**4.3** The business survey points in a similar direction. A substantial majority of businesses, 80%, regarded renewable energy provision as important to the future of their business. There was also evidence of an emerging transition towards lower carbon transport. Half of business respondents anticipated introducing electric vehicles within the next five years, although only 10% had already done so at the time of the survey. Notably, none of the surveyed businesses currently provided EV charging for staff or customers. This highlights both support for the direction of change and the present weakness of local infrastructure needed to enable it.

**4.4** Taken together, the survey evidence suggests that the community is strongly supportive of climate action in principle, particularly where it delivers practical local benefits and is focused on measures such as solar energy, geothermal energy, improved drainage, upgraded utilities and better infrastructure. At the same time, it indicates a more cautious and divided view in relation to wind energy. The evidence therefore supports an NDP approach which positively addresses climate mitigation and adaptation, encourages community-benefiting renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure, and recognises that different technologies command different levels of local support.

## **5. Implications for the NDP**

**5.1 Integrated climate response.** Climate change should be treated as a cross-cutting issue in the NDP rather than as a narrow specialist topic. It affects site selection, building design, energy policy, transport infrastructure, drainage, green infrastructure, biodiversity, heritage and landscape. The



Plan should therefore integrate mitigation and adaptation into its overall spatial strategy and policy framework.

**5.2 Locally specific sustainable design.** The evidence strongly supports a policy approach requiring climate-responsive design in all new development. This should include minimising energy demand through layout, orientation and form, encouraging on-site renewable or low carbon technologies, supporting water efficiency and reuse, reducing overheating risk, promoting natural SuDS, and encouraging high quality low-embodied-carbon materials. In Wendron, these requirements should be expressed in a way that responds to exposed rural conditions and local building character rather than as generic technical aspirations.

**5.3 Retrofitting existing buildings.** Because a substantial proportion of local emissions are likely to arise from the existing building stock, the NDP should recognise the importance of retrofit, including better insulation, improved glazing where appropriate, and replacement of fossil-fuel heating with low carbon alternatives. The policy approach should also acknowledge the need for sensitive retrofit in traditional and historic buildings.

**5.4 Renewable energy with landscape safeguards.** The evidence supports a positive strategy for renewable and low carbon energy, but one that is carefully tied to landscape capacity, scale, cumulative impact, heritage setting and local distinctiveness. The Cornish Renewable Energy Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2020 points clearly towards the need for differentiated judgement rather than blanket support or blanket restraint. The NDP can add value by expressing how landscape sensitivity, settlement pattern and heritage context should be taken into account in Wendron.

**5.5 Support for local energy storage.** Local battery storage has a potentially important role in improving resilience, supporting renewable energy and benefiting farms, businesses and the community. The NDP should therefore be supportive in principle, while requiring careful siting, attention to amenity and landscape effects, and appropriate re-use of existing buildings or previously developed land where possible.

**5.6 Electric vehicle infrastructure.** The absence of public EV charging in Wendron is a clear infrastructure gap. Given the shift away from petrol and diesel vehicles, this could become a substantial social and economic disadvantage for residents, businesses and tourism unless addressed. The NDP should therefore support appropriately sited public charging infrastructure and encourage new development to make provision for EV charging, while recognising the particular challenges of rural grid capacity and three-phase connection.

**5.7 Flood resilience and water management.** The NDP should support a proactive approach to flood resilience based on risk avoidance, sustainable drainage, runoff reduction, water storage and natural flood management. This is likely to be particularly important in Wendron because of the interaction between heavy rainfall, rural catchments, drainage pressure, soil erosion and dispersed settlement.

**5.8 Community-led action.** Communities can play a substantial role in delivering renewable energy, energy resilience and wider climate action. The NDP should therefore support community-led renewable energy and related initiatives where they are well-managed, locally beneficial and compatible with landscape, amenity and heritage considerations.

**5.9 Rural resilience and fairness.** A final implication is that the NDP should recognise the risk that rural communities can be disadvantaged in the transition to a low carbon economy if policy change is

not matched by infrastructure and investment. In Wendron, this is especially relevant to EV charging, grid capacity, power storage, transport dependence and off-grid households. The Plan should therefore support climate action in ways that are realistic, equitable and capable of delivering practical local benefit.

#### Appendices

1. Carbon Footprint Report
2. Climate Emergency DPD Renewable Energy Sensitivity Assessment Helford Ria Climate
3. Emergency DPD Renewable Energy Sensitivity Assessment Carnmenellis

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