

WENDRON PARISH EVIDENCE OVERVIEW REPORT

No 4: Community Facilities and Infrastructure

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Community Facilities and Infrastructure Evidence Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This section summarises the available evidence on community facilities, open space, recreation, transport, access and digital infrastructure in Wendron Parish, and identifies the principal issues to be addressed through the Wendron Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan.. It should be read in the context of Wendron’s dispersed settlement pattern, rural character and long-established network of community relationships, all of which shape how facilities and infrastructure are used and valued across the parish.
- 1.2 Wendron does not function as a single compact village. Rather, it comprises a number of distinct settlements and clusters, including Wendron village itself, Porkellis, Trenear, Burras, Carnkie, Trewennack and other smaller groups of development, each contributing to the parish’s identity and everyday functioning. This dispersed pattern means that access to local services, meeting places, rights of way, digital connectivity and safe transport links is especially important. In a rural parish of this kind, community infrastructure performs a wider role than in more urban areas, because it helps sustain social contact, inclusion, resilience and the practical viability of settlements that are physically separate from one another.

2. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 National planning policy supports the retention and development of accessible community facilities and services in rural areas, and requires planning policies to promote healthy, inclusive and safe places. The evidence note explains that this applies not only to community buildings and local services, but also to open space, recreation, active travel routes and communications infrastructure. It also records that Cornwall Local Plan Policy 4 supports the retention, enhancement and development of community infrastructure that contributes to inclusive and thriving communities.

- 2.2 The evidence for open space and recreation also refers to the role of planning in supporting healthier lifestyles and implementing local health improvement strategies. It notes that Cornwall Council has adopted an open space framework based on typologies and standards for quantity, quality and accessibility, and that an Open Space Assessment for Wendron Parish was completed in 2025 to provide a local basis for future provision and contributions from development. The evidence makes clear that open spaces in Wendron are not simply recreational assets. They also contribute to biodiversity, climate regulation, flood mitigation, cultural heritage, social interaction and quality of life, and are therefore part of the parish's wider green and social infrastructure.
- 2.3 For transport and access, the evidence refers to the Cornwall Transport Plan to 2030, the South West Rural Mobility Strategy, and Cornwall Climate Emergency DPD Policy T1. Together, these promote safe, inclusive and lower-carbon travel, while recognising the importance of better connectivity between homes, services, workplaces and community facilities. The evidence also highlights the need for a pragmatic approach in dispersed rural areas, where dependence on the private car remains significant and where improvements to walking, cycling and public transport must be tailored to local realities rather than assumed to operate in the same way as in larger settlements or towns.
- 2.4 For digital connectivity, the evidence notes that national policy recognises advanced, reliable communications infrastructure as essential to economic growth and social wellbeing. The NDP evidence therefore places digital infrastructure alongside other essential forms of rural infrastructure, particularly given the increasing importance of online access to work, education, services and emergency communications. In Wendron, this is especially relevant because digital connectivity can help overcome some of the disadvantages of distance and rural remoteness, reduce the need to travel, and improve resilience for residents and businesses alike.
- 2.5 The policy context also supports a preventative approach. In rural communities, the loss of a facility or service can have effects beyond the immediate loss of its primary function, because it may also remove a social meeting point, reduce informal support, weaken active travel connections, or undermine the ability of a particular settlement to function sustainably. The policy framework therefore supports not only the provision of new infrastructure, but also the retention, adaptation and better use of what remains.

3. Baseline Conditions

Community facilities

- 3.1 The evidence shows that Wendron is a dispersed rural parish where access to local services is especially important. Community facilities are described as central to the health, resilience and cohesion of the community, particularly where settlements are scattered and alternatives may be distant. Over the past two decades, the Parish has experienced a gradual loss of facilities, including village shops and Post Office counters at Carnkie, Carnmenellis, Treneer and Trevenen, the former filling stations at Trevenen and Rame, several chapels, the recent closure of the New Inn at Wendron, and the loss of Porkellis Village Hall. A single combined shop and Post Office remains at Rame, while the Star Inn at Porkellis, the Halfway House at Rame and the Golden Lion near Stithians Reservoir continue

to serve their communities. Carnkie Hall is identified as the only dedicated indoor meeting venue remaining in the Parish.

- 3.2 These losses are significant not simply because of the reduction in service choice, but because each of these buildings and uses has traditionally played a wider role in rural community life. Small shops, halls, churches, pubs and chapels often function as informal meeting places, points of local information exchange, venues for events, and locations where everyday social contact takes place. Their erosion therefore affects both service access and the social infrastructure that underpins cohesion and mutual support.
- 3.3 The primary schools at Wendron and Halwin remain open, although the evidence notes that Halwin School reportedly faces a declining pupil roll. At the same time, the Parish continues to benefit from strong social capital, expressed through clubs, venues, traditions, informal support networks and regular community events. The evidence indicates that, despite facility loss, Wendron retains a relatively resilient community structure, supported by churches, schools, sports clubs, seasonal events, volunteering and local traditions.
- 3.4 This is important because the continuing strength of local social capital helps to offset some of the effects of service loss. Events such as harvest festivals, carol services, craft fairs, the West Cornwall Family Motor Show and the long-established Ram Buck Fair help maintain shared identity and inter-generational contact. Informal support for older neighbours, local walks and small-scale community initiatives also contribute to the day to day resilience of the parish. The evidence therefore suggests that Wendron's community infrastructure should be understood broadly, as comprising not just buildings, but the activities, relationships and traditions that make those places meaningful.

Open space and recreation

- 3.5 The 2025 Open Space Assessment found that Wendron Parish benefits from an extensive network of natural and informal open spaces, including approximately 283 hectares of natural green space comprising moorland, commons and the margins of Stithians Lake. These areas are recognised for their ecological, recreational and heritage value. They also make a major contribution to the character of the parish, providing a setting for walking, outdoor recreation, quiet enjoyment, biodiversity and landscape appreciation. In a rural parish such as Wendron, this extensive network of natural green space is one of the area's defining assets.
- 3.6 The evidence also shows, however, that there are gaps in more formal and equipped provision. Formal park and amenity provision is limited mainly to Park an Daras and a small landscaped site at Edgecumbe. Children's play provision exists but is unevenly distributed, with a well-maintained play area at Carnkie, a currently closed facility at Porkellis, and unequipped play spaces at Penmarth and Park an Daras that offer scope for improvement. The assessment identifies no dedicated recreation space for teenagers and no allotments or community growing spaces, both of which are treated as notable weaknesses in current provision. These shortfalls matter because they affect the balance of provision across age groups and settlements, and because they limit opportunities for informal recreation, food growing, social contact and youth activity close to where people live.
- 3.7 Churchyards and cemeteries are also recognised as making a positive contribution to green infrastructure, biodiversity and heritage appreciation. In a parish with a strong historic

identity, these spaces carry added significance as places of remembrance, tranquillity and visual continuity, as well as part of the wider open space network.

- 3.8 Overall, the baseline evidence suggests that Wendron is relatively well supplied with natural green space, but less well provided for in relation to formal recreation, equipped play, teenage provision and community growing. This points to the need for a more balanced pattern of provision, especially where new development generates additional demand.

Regional sports facilities

- 3.9 The evidence identifies two major sports and recreation assets of more than local importance. The Wendron Cricket and Football Club complex at Carnkie covers approximately 11.28 hectares and is described as a regionally significant multi-sport hub serving a catchment of around 121,900 people across West Cornwall. It includes multiple pitches, all-weather provision and pavilion facilities, and has an active development plan focused on inclusion, youth and volunteer development, facility enhancement and sustainability. Recent investment in all-weather infrastructure and future aspirations for energy-efficient technologies and electric vehicle charging underline its importance as both a community facility and a strategic asset.
- 3.10 The Stithians Water Sports and Visitor Centre forms the Parish's other main public sports facility, supporting sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, paddleboarding, fishing and cycling. Together, these two facilities form the backbone of formal sports provision in the area and support health, leisure and tourism. They also help compensate for the lack of other public sports facilities within the parish and contribute to Wendron's wider role as a centre for recreation and outdoor activity.
- 3.11 These facilities have significance beyond sport alone. They support social inclusion, volunteering, youth participation, community events and local identity, while also drawing visitors and reinforcing the rural leisure economy. Their continued viability and enhancement are therefore material not only to recreation policy, but to broader questions of community wellbeing and resilience.

Transport, footpaths and access

- 3.12 The evidence presents Wendron as a rural parish with a dispersed settlement pattern, limited bus service frequencies and a strong reliance on private vehicles for everyday travel. It notes that this reflects the realities of rural life, where jobs and services are often not within walking distance. This is not simply a matter of travel behaviour, but a structural feature of the parish's geography and settlement pattern. For many residents, particularly those outside the larger village clusters, the private car remains essential for accessing employment, education, shopping, healthcare and social opportunities.
- 3.13 At the same time, the evidence supports the need for safer walking and cycling connections, better links to bus routes, appropriate road widths, traffic calming and layouts that remain accessible to all users, including those with protected characteristics. Consultation evidence records particular concern about speeding in villages, poor maintenance of narrow rural lanes, the condition of unadopted roads, and places where walking feels unsafe or impractical. These issues affect not only convenience, but also inclusion, because people without easy access to a car, including some older residents,

younger people and lower-income households, are especially affected by poor local connectivity.

- 3.14 The Parish also has an established network of footpaths, bridleways and other routes which play an important role in recreation, active travel and ecological connectivity. The evidence stresses that these routes should be protected from severance or degradation and enhanced where possible, including by applying the principle of Least Restrictive Access. Rights of way are particularly valuable in Wendron because they link settlements to the surrounding countryside and to natural green spaces, while also contributing to health, wellbeing and the rural character of the area. The evidence notes that such routes also function as wildlife corridors and part of the parish's green infrastructure.
- 3.15 The baseline position therefore suggests that the NDP should not assume that active travel can replace car use in all circumstances. Instead, it should support realistic improvements that make walking, cycling and public transport more attractive and safer where feasible, while ensuring that development responds properly to the constraints and needs of the rural road network.

Digital connectivity

- 3.16 Digital infrastructure is presented as essential rural infrastructure. The evidence states that only 23.1% of community survey respondents considered existing broadband and mobile services sufficient for household or business needs, and that 67% of business respondents identified improved connectivity as essential to future operations or growth. Particular problems are reported in valley locations and other areas with poor coverage. In practice, this means that a large proportion of households and businesses do not consider current digital provision adequate for modern needs.
- 3.17 This is especially significant in Wendron because digital connectivity is closely tied to other aspects of parish life. It affects home working, access to education, contact with public services, the viability of local businesses, social inclusion and emergency resilience. In a parish where many people rely on remote access to services or wish to reduce travel, poor connectivity can compound rural disadvantage.
- 3.18 The evidence also notes the implications of the move away from traditional landlines toward internet-based telephony, especially in areas prone to power cuts. This creates a resilience issue for emergency communication, particularly for older or more isolated residents. The evidence therefore goes beyond a simple broadband policy issue and identifies a wider concern about communications resilience, backup power and emergency continuity.
- 3.19 The associated mobile signal policy reflects the fact that improving coverage may require infrastructure in visually prominent locations. The evidence therefore supports a balanced approach, one that recognises the necessity of better mobile communications while seeking to minimise harm to landscape and village character. This is an important consideration in a parish where scenic quality and rural distinctiveness are major local assets.

Wider demographic context

- 3.20 The Wendron CC 10km ONS profile indicates a catchment of approximately 15,200 people and around 6,150 households, providing a wider context for understanding service demand and the role of larger community and sports facilities. This wider catchment helps explain the more than local significance of certain assets, particularly the major sports facilities, and indicates that Wendron's infrastructure is used not only by parish residents but by a wider rural hinterland.
- 3.21 The profile also indicates a population with generally good health overall, though with a significant minority in fair, bad or very bad health, reinforcing the relevance of accessible recreation, inclusive infrastructure and local community support. This is important in a policy context because it points to the need for facilities and routes that are usable by people of different ages and abilities, and for local provision that can help reduce isolation and support wellbeing.
- 3.22 More broadly, the evidence from the parish suggests that the infrastructure needs of older residents, families with children, people with limited mobility, and those living in more remote parts of the parish may differ considerably. This supports an approach that gives weight to accessibility, proximity, flexibility of use and resilience, rather than focusing only on numerical provision.

4. Community Views

- 4.1 Community consultation identified strong support for protecting and improving the social and physical infrastructure of the Parish. The evidence reports that transport and traffic featured prominently in consultation responses, with over half of respondents identifying transport as a key issue and more than three quarters expressing concern about traffic conditions. Issues included speeding in villages, poor maintenance of narrow rural lanes, the condition of unadopted roads, and inadequate pedestrian safety. These responses indicate that transport is experienced locally not merely as a technical issue, but as something that directly affects quality of life, safety and confidence in moving around the parish.
- 4.2 Consultation also showed that open spaces, countryside views, transport, walking trails and rights of way are among the most valued aspects of life in Wendron. Specifically, the evidence records positive responses for open spaces (58.8%), countryside views (56.9%), transport (56.9%), walking trails (54.9%) and rights of way (52.9%). There was strong support for improved pedestrian access and better maintenance of footpaths. These findings suggest that residents value not only the built community infrastructure of the parish, but also the wider landscape setting and access network that help define Wendron's rural character and support everyday wellbeing.
- 4.3 The evidence also indicates concern about the adequacy of public transport, both for residents and for businesses. Local businesses highlighted inconvenient bus stop locations, infrequent services, poor connections to premises and timetables that do not fit normal working hours. This reinforces the wider consultation evidence that, although reliance on the car is expected in a rural parish, there remains a strong desire for safer and more practical alternatives where these can realistically be improved.

- 4.4 On digital matters, community survey results indicate widespread dissatisfaction with broadband and mobile signal quality, and free text responses raised concerns about impacts on home working, education and inclusion. This mirrors the business evidence, which also identified digital connectivity as a significant operational issue. The consistency of these responses across households and businesses suggests that digital infrastructure is now one of the parish's most important infrastructure deficits.
- 4.5 Community views also point to the continuing importance of local clubs, churches, sports provision and traditional events. Although consultation statistics in the extracted text focus mainly on transport, access and environment, the broader evidence base shows strong attachment to community identity, local traditions and meeting places. This suggests that residents value the parish not only for its landscape and tranquillity, but also for the social life and shared institutions that continue to bind its settlements together.
- 4.6 Overall, the evidence suggests that residents place high value on Wendron's rural setting, open countryside, local clubs, sports provision and community traditions, but are concerned about the loss of facilities, weak digital connectivity, transport limitations and uneven access to recreation and local services. The overall picture is of a community that remains socially strong, but increasingly aware of pressures on the physical and service infrastructure that supports that strength.

5. Key Issues to be Addressed in the NDP

- 5.1 The evidence points to a number of key issues for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Protection of community facilities. Wendron has experienced a long-term attrition of local services and meeting places, and the remaining facilities perform an important role in sustaining community life in a dispersed rural parish. Their value lies not only in their individual uses, but in their combined contribution to social contact, civic life, inclusion and the viability of individual settlements.

Flexible and multi-functional infrastructure. There is a need to support shared use, the re-use of vacant or underused buildings, and improvements that help community facilities remain viable and relevant to changing local needs. In practice, this means that the NDP should support adaptation as well as protection, recognising that smaller rural communities often depend on facilities being capable of serving more than one function over time.

Gaps in recreation and open space provision. Although natural green space is abundant, the evidence identifies deficiencies in formal parks, children's play provision in some settlements, dedicated facilities for teenagers, and allotments or community growing space. A key issue is therefore not the overall absence of open space, but the imbalance between types of provision and the uneven distribution of equipped and community-focused facilities.

Strategic sports assets. The Plan should continue to recognise and support strategic sports assets, especially the Wendron Cricket and Football Club complex and the Stithians Water Sports and Visitor Centre, both of which make an important contribution to sport, health, tourism and community participation. These facilities should be treated as

major social and recreational assets whose continued development can benefit both local residents and the wider catchment.

Transport safety, access and connectivity. There is a need to improve transport safety, access and connectivity. This includes better pedestrian links, safer crossings, appropriate traffic calming, improved public transport access where possible, and layouts that respond to the constraints of narrow rural lanes while remaining inclusive. The issue is not simply movement efficiency, but ensuring that rural settlements remain safe, usable and connected for a wide range of residents, including those less able to rely on private car travel.

Rights of way and active travel. The NDP should support the protection and enhancement of the rights of way network, ensuring that new development is well related to it, does not damage it, and where possible extends access to natural green space and active travel opportunities. The evidence supports treating this network as part of the parish's wider infrastructure, with landscape, recreational, ecological and social importance.

Digital infrastructure and communications resilience. There is a strong need to improve digital infrastructure and communications resilience. Poor broadband and mobile coverage are already affecting residents and businesses, and the shift to internet-based telephony increases the importance of resilient infrastructure and backup power arrangements in emergencies. This is both an economic issue and a matter of safety, inclusion and service access.

Assets of Community Value. The evidence supports the safeguarding of community assets that may in future merit recognition as Assets of Community Value. This provides an additional route for acknowledging the importance of valued local facilities and may assist in resisting unnecessary loss or change of use where community wellbeing would be harmed.

Infrastructure for changing needs. The evidence supports a broader objective of ensuring that infrastructure keeps pace with changing needs, including the needs of an ageing population, people with mobility impairments, households without easy access to private transport, and those who depend increasingly on digital services. In Wendron, infrastructure planning must therefore be sensitive to settlement pattern, accessibility, resilience and the cumulative effects of losing smaller local facilities over time.

- 5.2 Overall, the evidence indicates that Wendron's social infrastructure remains a major strength, but one under pressure from service loss, cost pressures, ageing infrastructure and rural accessibility challenges. The NDP therefore has an important role in protecting valued assets, addressing gaps in provision, improving access and resilience, and supporting the facilities and infrastructure needed for a healthy, connected and sustainable rural community.

Appendix 1, Community Facilities and Local Services

The evidence identifies a continuing reduction in traditional local facilities over recent decades. Closed facilities include a number of village shops and Post Office counters, filling stations, chapels, the New Inn at Wendron, and Porkellis Village Hall. Remaining assets include the combined shop and

Post Office at Rame, the Star Inn at Porkellis, the Halfway House at Rame, the Golden Lion near Stithians Reservoir, Carnkie Hall, Wendron School, Halwin School, St Wendrona's Church, Penmarth Chapel, Porkellis Chapel and the Penmarth Free Church Hall. Together these remaining facilities provide the core of the parish's current local service and meeting-place network.

The evidence also highlights the ongoing importance of sports clubs, churches, fairs, social events and informal support networks in maintaining community cohesion and identity. These are treated as part of the wider social infrastructure of the Parish. In Wendron's case, this wider understanding of social infrastructure is particularly important because the parish's resilience depends heavily on the interaction between formal venues and informal community activity.

Appendix 2, Open Space and Recreation Summary

The 2025 Open Space Assessment concluded that Wendron benefits from extensive natural and informal open space, including around 283 hectares of natural green space, but has notable gaps in formal and equipped provision. It recommends maintaining Cornwall Council's open space standards, improving access to natural green space, requiring children's play provision in larger developments, improving existing play areas at Porkellis, Penmarth and Park an Daras, promoting provision for teenagers, setting a higher-than-average allotment standard, and supporting continued investment in the Wendron and Stithians sports hubs.

The assessment therefore points toward a strategy of retaining the strengths of the existing natural environment while using development and investment to address specific deficiencies in formal recreation, youth provision and community growing space. This is consistent with the wider evidence that community wellbeing in Wendron depends on both access to countryside and the availability of local, settlement-based facilities.

Appendix 3, Transport, Rights of Way and Digital Connectivity Summary

The evidence records strong community concern about transport, traffic, speeding, road condition and pedestrian safety, and identifies the rights of way network as a valued local asset. It also records substantial dissatisfaction with broadband and mobile coverage, with only 23.1% of respondents reporting that current services meet needs and 67% of business respondents seeking improved connectivity. These findings support policies on transport, access, digital resilience and communications infrastructure.

Taken together, these issues point to a common theme of rural accessibility and resilience. In Wendron, transport, rights of way and digital connectivity are interrelated rather than separate concerns. Better digital provision can reduce the need to travel, improved walking routes can strengthen access to services and open space, and safer roads and better public transport links can help maintain the viability and inclusiveness of dispersed settlements. The evidence therefore supports an integrated approach to infrastructure planning within the NDP.