

## Section 14 Tourism, Recreation & Interpretation

### Guiding Principle

**To ensure that the needs of the visitor are integrated with the needs of the community, and the development and promotion of recreation and tourism is achieved whilst sustaining the natural environment**

The tourism and recreation industries are vital sectors of the local economy of the Harbour area and its associated communities. Employment is provided directly through boatyards and related industries as well as indirectly through a wide range of businesses reliant on tourist and leisure spending to maintain their livelihoods. Recreation and tourism are often closely related activities. However, an important difference between them is that irrespective of the presence or absence of tourists, there is a need to provide for the recreational needs of the local population.

### 14.1 Tourism

The coastal area is heavily used for a variety of water-based recreations and encouragement is given to recreational pursuits away from the coast. Promotion of the estuary and the surrounding area is the responsibility of the County and District Councils. Cornwall County Council have played an important role in the promotion of activities in the area throughout the year, ranging from walks in the countryside to illustrated talks on the area. The Friends of the Fowey Estuary organise and advertise year round talks and walks around the estuary, highlighting the flora and fauna and natural ecology of the area. Lostwithiel and Fowey both have tourist information centres, where information on accommodation, places to visit and information on surrounding towns and villages may be sought. There is also a Youth Hostel at Golant.

The development of green sustainable tourism needs to be a priority. Many encourage promotion of the Fowey Estuary as a whole, as this may result in the boosting of the local economy. Fowey, Lostwithiel and the villages around the estuary are popular tourist destinations, particularly with yachts people, and many return year after year. The Eden Project has played an important role in bringing tourists to the area; the estuary area has taken some advantage of this and has seen an increase in year round tourism.

### 14.2 Water based recreation

The demand for water-based recreation is increasing and the extensive use of private transport by visitors and local people puts areas under stress at peak

times of the year. The beauty and relative shelter of the Fowey Harbour makes it an attractive area for boating of all kinds, the most popular being sailing. Much of the harbour cannot be used over large parts of the tide, resulting in congestion of the lower harbour, especially in the area around Caffa Mill, where the car ferry to Bodinnick is located. The pressure on Caffa Mill has eased since the purchase and improvements by Fowey Harbour Commissioners of the Mixtow (Penmarlam) boat storage and launching site.

Rowing and canoeing activities extend along the whole of the river, and sub-aqua diving takes place by permission of the Harbour Master. The Harbour Authority upholds the six-knot speed limit, a byelaw made under statutory powers. This precludes activities such as water-skiing, jet-skiing, parascending and speed racing, allowing the environment to be protected and the peace and quiet maintained. Boat trips are available, both around the Harbour entrance and along the river at low and high tides. A ferry between Fowey and Mevagissey also operates in the summer season.

The moorings in the estuary are controlled and maintained by the Harbour Authority. The number of moorings and their positions are constantly under review but the areas remain constant. There are approximately 1500 moorings in the estuary, with more available for visiting yachts. In 2002, there were 9624 overnight stays during the course of the season, with a total of 18,770 persons on board. The number of visits has been steadily increasing and the facilities are constantly reviewed to ensure they are sufficient. The moorings in the Harbour are fixed, and anchoring is discouraged. This limits the detrimental effects on marine habitats, particularly in the *Zostera* beds, where the disturbance is limited to around the mooring blocks and chains.

The Harbour is not ideal for swimming due to the numerous leisure and tourist craft. There are a few small beaches in the lower harbour, with Readymoney Cove being the only beach designated under the EC Bathing Waters Directive. In summer months, Readymoney is closed to boating and has a floating platform for swimmers to swim out to. Past problems with sewage and associated health problems have been alleviated since the completion of the new sewage system under South West Waters Clean Sweep programme.

### **14.3 Land based recreation**

Land based recreation generally takes the form of walking or rambling. The recreational use of the Heritage Coast that stretches from Gribben Head to Portnadler Bay near Looe is fairly moderate considering the proximity to the tourist centres of Fowey and Looe. There are several well-known footpaths in the area, for example the Saints Way, the South West Coastal Path and those promoted by the National Trust such as Hall Walk. A new footpath was built and opened in 2001 in Ethy Woods, which are owned by Forest Enterprise, and it is now possible to walk from Lerryn to St. Winnow along the edge of the estuary. The path allows access for disabled visitors and is well used.



*Ethy Wood footpath, opened in 2000*

Multi-use leisure trails are being promoted as part of the Restormel Local Plan, for walking, horse riding and cycling. The Bodmin Moor to the coasts LEAP encouraged traffic-free routes wherever possible. Demand is high for identified cycle routes, one of which is promoted by Project Explore, a circular route using the ferries in Fowey and the quieter roads around the estuary.

#### **14.4 Interpretation**

Interpretative strategy is an ongoing process, reflecting the changing needs of visitors, the estuary environment and information available. Each interpretative method should be updated according to its longevity and should be maintained to a high standard.

Proposals to improve the interpretative information available around the estuary were initiated in 1999, with several objectives. These objectives were to provide information panels, interpretative panels, a visitors guidebook to the estuary and a leaflet promoting tourism and leisure use of public transport in the area. The projects outputs and strategies reflect the main elements of existing tourism strategies for the area. The project was run by a partnership between the Falmouth-Fowey Countryside Service, Restormel Borough Council, Caradon Countryside Service and LEADER. The project has filled major gaps in the existing visitor information network for the Fowey Estuary, thereby assisting the development of tourism.

Currently, there are sufficient information and interpretation boards in the estuary as a result of the above objectives being achieved (Figure 5). It would not be acceptable to have a plethora of boards, but maintaining the high quality and standard of the boards is desirable. Consultation with the Partnership and interpretative strategy is encouraged to maintain standards and avoid duplication.

**Figure 5: Summary of Interpretative facilities**

**Information Panels**

Fowey	Town Car Park
	Caffa Mill Car Park
	Readymoney Beach Car Park
	Town Quay (ferry landing)
	Whitehouse Quay (ferry landing)
Lostwithiel	Main Car Park
	Railway Station

**Interpretative Panels**

Fowey	Seating area, Caffa Mill Car Park
	Harbour Wall, Town Quay
Bodinnick	Ferry slipway
Polruan	Nr St Saviours Chapel
	Polruan Wharf

**Visitors Guidebook to the Fowey Estuary** - Published in 2000, the guidebook has proved popular, with over 2500 copies sold. It is very comprehensive and has proved a great success.

**Leaflet promoting tourism and leisure use of Public Transport** - the Out and About leaflet has been produced yearly by Cornwall County Council since 2000 and provides a comprehensive list of activities in the south east Cornwall area. This includes useful advice on public transport as well as events organised by both local interest groups and established tourist attractions.



*St. Winnow Church, St. Winnow*

## Section 15 Access

### Guiding Principle

**To maintain and extend the accessibility of the estuary for all, where possible, without compromising the nature and landscape conservation interests**

The towns and villages around the estuary are served by narrow winding access streets, which can become congested in the summer months. The west side of the river is accessed by the B3269, entering Fowey via the dock road at Caffa Mill, where Restormel Borough Council controls the car park. Access to Fowey from St. Austell is via the A3082. The main Pay & Display car park for Fowey is situated at the top of Fowey in close proximity to Readymoney Beach and St. Catherine's Castle. There are two short stay car parks on Town Quay and Albert Quay. Lostwithiel is served by the A390 and has a large free car park. Access to Polruan is along narrow winding roads through Lerryn and Penpol or from Looe. There is limited parking in Golant, and at Pencarrow Head and Coombe Farm there are National Trust car parks for users of coastal footpaths. Parking in Fowey becomes more difficult in summer with the rise in visitor numbers.

### 15.1 Footpaths

The nature of the landscape around the Fowey estuary affords limited access to the foreshore in many places. Footpaths are widely used and some form circular walks (Section 14). The Countryside Access section at Cornwall County Council has the responsibility of maintaining public rights of way around the estuary.

### 15.2 Ferry services

There are two ferry services operating across the Harbour, and these have been in operation since the communities there were established. A car ferry operates between Fowey and Bodinnick, and a passenger ferry operates between Town Quay and Polruan.

A privately owned water taxi service was established in 1988, ferrying passengers between their yachts and the shore. The operator worked closely with the Harbour Master in setting up this service and the Harbour Commissioners gave their support and encouragement. Those on permanent moorings as well as those visiting the harbour use this service, which is safer than rubber dinghies or small tenders in poor weather. It also reduces the pressure for landing arrangements and landing areas.

### 15.3 Launching and landing

There are numerous launching and landing points within the Plan area. These vary in size and accessibility and some may only be suitable for small craft (Tables 1 and 2). This table does not include private launching sites. The public landings are mainly quays, steps or ladders. There are several slipways around the estuary available for use by the public. Some access points in the upper estuary are limited due to the tidal range, these are indicated by '\*’.

The relatively poor access to the Harbour and estuary area has probably contributed to its unspoilt nature. Care should be taken when considering the improvement of roads and access points to ensure this unspoilt nature is maintained. The Harbour Commissioners will liaise closely with Highway and Local Authorities and Parish Councils to ensure that the best facilities and access are made available within the environmental objectives of the plan.

Table 1: Launch & Recovery Points

	LOCATION	SIZE OF CRAFT	NOTES
A	LOSTWITHIEL *	DINGHIES CANOES	SMALL SLIP TO NORTH OF RAILWAY BRIDGE
B	LERRYN *	20-25 FT SHALLOW DRAFT CANOES	NO MADE UP SLIPS - LAUNCHING FROM FORESHORE
C	ST. WINNOW *	LARGE CRAFT	BY ARRANGEMENT SOME LIFTING EQUIPMENT
D	GOLANT *	UP TO 25 FT	VERY LIMITED PARKING TIDAL AREA QUAY & SLIP
E	MIXTOW *	UP TO 15 FT	DIFFICULT ACCESS LAUNCHING FROM FORESHORE
F	MIXTOW / PENMARLAM	UP TO 30 FT	SELF LAUNCH, WITH ASSISTED LAUNCHES BY ARRANGEMENT. CONCRETE SLIP AND SPECIALISED BOAT HANDLING EQUIPMENT
G	BODINNICK	DINGHIES CANOES	FERRY SLIP
H	FOWEY-CAFFA MILL	ALL CRAFT	CAN BECOME CONGESTED LIMITED PARKING
I	FOWEY- NORTH STREET YARD	DINGHIES SMALL CRAFT	ACCESS THROUGH ONE-WAY SYSTEM SAILING SCHOOLS ALSO USE FACILITY

\* indicates the access point is limited according to the tide

Table 2: Landing Sites

	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>FACILITIES</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>READYMONEY COVE</b>	BEACH	LIMITED ACCESS
<b>K</b>	<b>BERRILLS YARD</b>	PONTOON, FRESH WATER, SEWAGE PUMP-OUT FACILITY, WASTE OIL & BATTERY COLLECTION POINT	SHORT STAY FACILITY OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY FHC
<b>L</b>	<b>STEP ASIDE</b>	STEPS	LITTLE USED DESIGNATED LANDING
<b>M</b>	<b>ALBERT QUAY</b>	PONTOON, STEPS, LADDER, FRESH WATER	SHORT STAY, INSIDE BERTHS FOR SMALL CRAFT/TENDERS. OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY FHC
<b>N</b>	<b>TOWN QUAY</b>	2 SETS OF STEPS & LADDERS SLIP AT LOW WATER	FERRY LANDING POINT FOR LICENSED PASSENGER BOATS. SELF-DRIVE HIRE BOATS. OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY RBC
<b>O</b>	<b>INCHES QUAY</b>	HISTORIC LANDING FOR FERRY	TIDAL RESTRICTIONS ROCKY LANDING
<b>P</b>	<b>WHITEHOUSE QUAY</b>	SLIPWAY, SMALL STEPS IN CORNER	TYING UP RESTRICTED - FERRY LANDING POINT IN SUMMER CAN BE UNSAFE IN BAD WEATHER
<b>Q</b>	<b>POLRUAN QUAY</b>	PONTOON, SLIPWAY, STEPS, LADDERS PLACED SEAWARD	STEPS USED EXTENSIVELY BY PASSENGER FERRY-CLEAR ACCESS REQUIRED
<b>D</b>	<b>GOLANT *</b>	SLIPWAY, QUAY, STEEL AND CONCRETE WALKWAY	MANAGED BY GOLANT QUAY USERS ASSOCIATION ACCESS TO FRAPES
<b>F</b>	<b>MIXTOW / PENMARLAM *</b>	STONE QUAY AND SLIPWAY	BOAT STORAGE AND LAUNCHING FACILITY, AVAILABLE ALL YEAR
<b>G</b>	<b>LOSTWITHIEL</b>	STEPS AND LADDERS	

\* indicates the access point is limited according to the tide