



CFE County Priorities for Cornwall

1. Aim

This document has been drawn together by the CFE Local Liaison Group for Cornwall with input for all LLG members and their respective organisations. The aim is to ensure that all advisers and partners have a clear, concise and consistent message about the aims of CFE in Cornwall that can be used by farmers and landowners to ensure their actions deliver maximum benefit to the environment. The action undertaken on each farm may differ depending on the farm type and enterprise.

2. County Overview

Cornwall is a diverse county with a landscape and climate that provides both opportunities and constraints for farming. Traditionally a county dominated by livestock, which is still the most common form of agriculture, however Cornwall is becoming increasingly interspersed with pockets of arable and vegetable growing. This provides contrast to the upland moors of Bodmin, extensive lowland heaths and moors of West Penwith and the Lizard peninsula, and narrow wooded coastal valleys. Soil quality ranges highly with little grade 1 land, the hilly topography benefits from grassland and provides good opportunity for bulbs, potatoes and brassicas.

Traditional Cornish farms typically have small fields bounded by Cornish hedges, however these are giving way to larger mixed and arable units. The coastal regions offers the greatest biodiversity resources in terms of semi-natural grassland and arable plants, pollinating insects, and farmland birds including corn bunting, ciril bunting and chough.

3. County designated sites and partnerships

County Designated Sites: There are many designated, statutory and non-statutory: Cornwall AONB which encompasses West Penwith, Lizard Peninsula, Bodmin Moor and the vast part of the coast.

Ramsar: Isles of Scilly

The key biodiversity assets including the 422 mile-long coast, Lizard Peninsula, Fal and Helford River, Penhale Dunes, Isles of Scilly, Marazion Marsh and numerous Moors including Bodmin, West Penwith and Goss Moor are covered under a range of SSSI, SAC and SPA designations.

4. County Priorities

The following sections aim to define the county priorities by theme.

a) Theme: Priority farmland habitats and description

Habitat	Actions required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unimproved grassland/ lowland meadow Cornish hedges Lowland heathland, acid grassland and moors Arable and grass margins/ fallow land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain permanent pasture and improve wildflower abundance Protect historic boundaries and traditional practices Manage scrub encroachment on heathland and moors Maintain or adapt arable practices to support key plant and animal species.
Priority habitat	CFE VM code and Description
Lowland meadow and unimproved grasslands	VM19 Fertiliser-free permanent pasture T&T
Cornish hedges	Good practice
Lowland heaths and acid grasslands	VM19 Fertiliser-free permanent pasture
Arable and grass margins/ fallow land	VM6 Wildflower mix VM7 Pollen & nectar mix VM10 Wild bird seed mix and maize-free game strips VM11 Skylark plots VM12 Lapwing plots VM13 Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands VM14 Cultivated margins VM15 Over wintered stubble VM17 Field corners VM18 Beetle banks

Any specific action required:

Preserve Cornish hedges

Working with grassland and vegetable/ bulb growers to discourage converting permanent pasture to veg. Where already grown, follow best practice, cover crops and cache crops.

b) Theme: Priority species and requirements

Species	Actions required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chough • Corn and cirl bunting, plus wider farmland birds • Bees – nationally and locally rare species • Arable plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain permanent pasture, fertiliser free. Coastal particularly important for chough. West Penwith and The Lizard. • Wild bird seed mixes, hedgerow management, insect rich breeding season habitat. • P&N mixes • Maintain or adapt arable practices to support key plant and animal species. Rotating fallow land; margins.
Priority species	CFE VM code and Description
Chough	VM19 Fertiliser-free permanent pasture
Corn and cirl bunting	VM6 Wildflower mix VM7 Pollen and nectar mix VM10 Wild bird seed mix and maize-free game strips VM13 Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands VM16 Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds Hedgerow management
Bees and pollinators	VM6 Wildflower mix VM7 Pollen and nectar mix VM10 Wild bird seed mix and maize-free game strips VM13 Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands VM16 Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds Hedgerow management
Arable plants	VM13 Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands VM14 Cultivated margins VM21 Selective use of spring herbicides

c) Theme: priority river catchments

Cornwall's rivers are subject to a range of pressures from historic and current industries. An additional incentive to protect them is the dependence of the local economy on the coastal waters that these rivers flow into. There are issues common across all of the county's rivers, and across the UK, including sedimentation, point source and diffuse pollution from agriculture and urban environments, invasive non-native species and flood management. There are specific issues also, such as e-coli affecting shellfish fisheries on the Fal River, nutrient levels causing enrichment of Marazion Marsh SSSI, mineral deposits downstream of former and current quarries, and pesticide peaks in reservoirs on which the local population are highly dependent.