

# China Clay Area

The aim of this area of work is to take advantage of a once in a lifetime opportunity to create an Eco-community that will deliver radical change for the Clay Area in mid Cornwall, and open up a bright new future for all. Building on the recent success of the 'Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage' and the 'China Clay Woodlands Project' the aim for the St Austell Clay Country area is: "To create a sustainable community that builds on the strengths of the area to ensure a more prosperous and sustainable future".

Based on disused clay extraction sites careful redevelopment aims to build a thriving rural community. This aims to bring benefits to all stakeholders through the creation of a strong economy and a sustainable restored environment. The development will encourage inward investment opportunities to maximise social and economic growth and environmental management, and facilitate a more prosperous and sustainable future for the Clay Country communities.

The St Austell Clay Country Eco-community spans five sites, over approximately 700ha of former minerals land within the Clay area. The six sites are: Baal and West Carclaze, Par Docks, Blackpool, Goonbarrow, Drinnick and Nanpean. At the 6 sites, new developments are proposed that will include new housing, employment, leisure, community and transport infrastructure and facilities, all within close walking distance of existing local settlements, designed to achieve exemplar sustainability standards.

An Eco-community should demonstrate a net gain in Ecosystems and Ecosystem services, including local biodiversity. A strategy for conserving and enhancing local biodiversity will be produced to accompany planning applications for the Eco-community. For the purpose of this project the China Clay Mining and the Goss and Red Moor Landscape Character Areas have been used as boundaries and it is the

aim that biodiversity gain should occur in these areas. Work can continue on from previous projects such as 'Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage' and the 'China Clay Woodland Planting' to ensure current management of these sites and to fund further habitat creation. A full target species list will be drawn up and considered within management plans.

Community engagement is a key element of this project to generate opportunities to create and maintain green spaces and access to nature.

Lead organisations are Ecobos, Natural England, with the Environment Agency, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Forestry Commission, Cornwall Council, Eden Project and the China Clay Local Action Group identified as partners.

## Key BAP Habitats:

- Lowland Heathland
- Woodland – Upland Oakwood, Upland mixed Ashwood, Wet Woodland, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

## Key BAP species groups:

- Mammals – otter, dormouse, pipistrelle, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe
- Birds – skylark, bittern, nightjar, willow tit, linnet, reed bunting, woodlark, spotted flycatcher, bullfinch, song thrush, curlew
- Butterflies - pearl-bordered fritillary, marsh fritillary, silver-studded blue, dingy skipper
- Moths - narrow-bordered bee hawk, waved carpet, double line
- Vascular plants - vigur's eyebright, western ramping-fumitory, marsh clubmoss, pennyroyal, pillwort, three-lobed water-crowfoot
- Lower plants – western rustwort



China clay area. Photo by Cornwall Council Historic Environment Service