

Five Acres, Allet, Truro, Cornwall TR4 9DJ

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**Cornwall
Wildlife Trust** 

*Protecting Cornwall's wildlife
and wild places*

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 26th January 2017

Time to act to protect Cornish hedges

Cornish hedges provide vital refuge for many of Cornwall's native species. Without them many animal species; birds, beetles, bats, bees, moths and butterflies and small mammals, would not exist.

It is time to act state Cornwall Wildlife Trust who are aiming to raise £20,000 to carry out vital work to protect the county's iconic hedges.

An estimated 30,000 miles of hedges criss-cross Cornwall, but Cornish Hedges are not protected by the national Hedgerow Regulations (1997) and are therefore threatened by removal and neglect. Development, road building schemes and implementation of utility services has taken its toll. Drift of fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide used in adjoining fields has led to loss of biodiversity.

These iconic structures not only form a sanctuary for many animal species, nearly 200 flowering plant species have been counted in just one mile of an ordinary roadside hedge. An estimated 10,000 species of insects can be supported by the floral and habitat diversity in Cornwall's hedges. This in turn attracts mammals such as dormice and hedgehogs, birds like the song thrush, and reptiles to forage and to hide their homes and nests in the greenery and in stony crevices.

As well as being a valuable habitat in their own right, well-managed hedges act as a network across which wildlife can move between fragmented semi-natural habitats. Hedgerows also prevent soil erosion, capture pollutants such as fertilisers and pesticides



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running off fields, store carbon to help combat climate change, and provide homes for predators of many pest species.

Ruediger Wohlers, Cornish Bard, Friend of Hedges and long term supporter of Cornwall Wildlife Trust says,

“Cornwall’s hedgerows are corridors for wildlife that connect habitat; they are home to the badger, the butterfly, the gorse and red campion amongst many. They are part of Cornwall’s character and charm and attract people from all over the world. We must keep these hedgerows thriving for future generations, a challenge for us all!”

The iconic Cornish hedge is found all over Cornwall forming field boundaries and road verges; it is a defining feature of the Cornish landscape and many hedges date back to the Bronze Age. It represents a wealth of diversity both in its function and in its style of construction, ranging from the classic form with an earth-cored bank faced in local stone, often with a row of shrubs and trees, to dry stone walls.

The Trust will act in a number of ways, including:

- Carry out hedge surveys where mapping of Cornish hedges will provide an accurate picture of hedge resource across the whole county. This will give the necessary evidence to inform and influence individuals, communities, farmers and local government and decision makers, as well as lobbying for legal protection.
- Carry out practical work on their nature reserves. At Bartinney and Caer Bran Nature Reserves the Trust will carry out stone faced Cornish Hedge work and introduce two new granite stiles, while at Helman Tor and Prideaux Wood Nature Reserve hedge restoration work will be carried out.
- Raise awareness of Cornish hedges. The Trust will host a workshop promoting the importance of Cornish hedges and assessing the ecological, historical and cultural value of a hedge within the landscape.
- Create Fox Club events so local children can be made aware of the importance of hedges within the landscape both now and in the future.



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- Support from the Wildlife Information Service. The Trust will provide information and expert advice on Cornish hedges and their management for farmers, general public and organisations.

Please donate and help the Trust raise the vital funds needed to protect Cornish hedges before they disappear forever.

Donate online at www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/cornishhedgesappeal. Call the Trust on 01872273939 credit card donations only. Or text Hedg17 followed by £5 or £10 to 70070.

ENDS

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Photographs:

Coppicedash Cornish hedge by Jan Dinsdale

Hazel Dormouse by Ian Pratt

Hedgehog by Jeremy Northcott

Lanyon flowery hedge by Jan Dinsdale

Editors Notes:

Cornwall Wildlife Trust

- Cornwall Wildlife Trust has been protecting Cornwall's wildlife, both on land and in our seas since 1962.
- It is the county's leading wildlife conservation charity, with over 17,000 members which includes over 4,500 junior members and over 150 Business Supporters.
- The charity manages 57 nature reserves all over the county, including a range of habitats such as woodlands, meadows, wetlands and heaths.
- The Trust runs a number of marine and terrestrial based conservation projects.
- The Trust hosts the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS).
- The Trust relies on charitable donations, grants and the generous support of its members and the general public to raise more than £2.2 million every year. Money

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raised is spent on wildlife conservation and education in Cornwall, for present and future generations.

- The Trust is one of 47 in the UK. Together, they make up the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust has Local and Specialist Groups based around the county. All play an important role in the Trust's work and are always looking for more volunteers.
- To find out more about Cornwall Wildlife Trust's work, events and news visit www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk
- Press contacts at the Trust: Chris Betty (01872) 273939 ext 251, chris.betty@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk

