

# Trebartha's Conservation Strategy

## Robert Latham

### 1. Introduction

Trebartha has a number of listed properties:

- Two are Grade 2\*: Trebartha Barton and Battens Mill. The Threshing Barn at Trebartha Barton is separately listed.
- Twenty three are Grade 2: Trevadlock; Glubhole; Trebartha Farmhouse; Trebartha Farm Cottage; East Castick; West Castick; Trekernell; Battens Farmhouse; West Berriow Farmhouse; Knighton Farmhouse; Trevague Farmhouse; Tolcarne Farmhouse; Treswell Farmhouse; Trebartha Lodge<sup>1</sup>; High Park Lodge; No.1 The Close; North Lodge; Postmans; Mill Cottage; Lower Mill Cottage; Stonaford Manor; Lemarne; South Battens; Clitters. Twenty three additional structures are listed.

In November 2016, Trebartha commissioned an Estate Condition Survey which estimated the cost of putting all the properties and barns in a proper state of repair at £1.6m.



The listing relates not only to the residential buildings, but also extends to any outhouse within the curtilage. This includes a large number of barns which are not suitable for modern agricultural use. It is not economically viable to convert these barns for rentals as homes.

Keeping the residential properties in a proper state of repair is a challenge. Trebartha must use traditional materials. Listed building consent is required for anything other than the most basic repairs. Trebartha Barton Farmhouse was recently re-roofed with external repairs at a cost in excess of £100k.

The further challenge, to which Trebartha has not found a solution, is what to do with our barns.

- Trebartha Barton and West Castick – identifying short term and long-term solutions.
- East Castick – Trebartha has just re-roofed the farmhouse. We had hoped to stabilise the barns by removing the slate and providing a temporary roof covering, using the slate on more valuable properties.

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<sup>1</sup> Trebartha Lodge, Stonaford Manor and Postmans are owned by members of the Latham Family



### Trebartha Barton

The Threshing Barn which is considered to be of particular interest, and a second barn.



In January 2018, at **West Castick**, the roof collapsed after snowfall. The building was made safe with the approval of Cornwall Council.



In 2018, Trebartha re-roofed the farmhouse at **East Castick**. Trebartha had hoped to stabilise the barns by removing the slate and providing a temporary cover. Trebartha does not have the resources to re-roof the barns, which are a lower priority than Trebartha Barton.



Trebartha has found the following solutions for some of its barns:

- Family members have converted some outbuildings at their own expense for their own use: The Stables; The Coach House; Stonaford Barn; and Rylands.
- Trebartha Farm – repaired at considerable cost (£65,000) as a heritage project, but with no economic return.
- Tolcarne – Stabilised, but still awaiting conversion to residential units. Planning consent was obtained some 10 years ago. The resources are not currently available for the conversion. It could be considered for alternative leisure use.

Apart from a modest dividend (equating to around 4% of turnover) the family/shareholders reinvest all income in to maintaining and improving the fabric of the Estate. This is improving increasingly difficult as building costs increase and compliance requirements raise the standards of internal works required to residential property.

The Estate does not seek to sell properties. Selling off residential property would have a major socio-economic impact on the area. Estate cottages would likely be bought by private purchasers and displace tenants who pay low rents and are long term residents of the community.

	
<b>The Coach House:</b> a family conversion	<b>The Stables:</b> a family conversion
	
<b>Trebartha Farm:</b> a heritage project	<b>Tolcarne –</b> a barn awaiting conversion

## **2. What is Trebartha?**

### **2.1 The Name**

Trebartha appears in the 1086 Domesday Book. The name is derived from two old Cornish words: “Tre” – house or homestead and “Bartha” – stream or fountain.

A talk which I gave to the North Hill Local History Group in October 2011 is available at <http://www.northhillhistory.co.uk/tt06.htm>.

### **2.2 Trebartha Hall**

C.S.Gilbert in “Historical Survey of the County of Cornwall” (1838) described how Colonel Rodd had erected “a large tasteless building which appears to be deplorably destitute of architectural ornaments. The front opens into a large paddock, the soil of which is rather swampy and a dampness prevails even in the dry seasons”



In 1945, Trebartha Hall was largely derelict. The family were paid £5,000 for the damage. It was offered to the County, but this offer was declined.

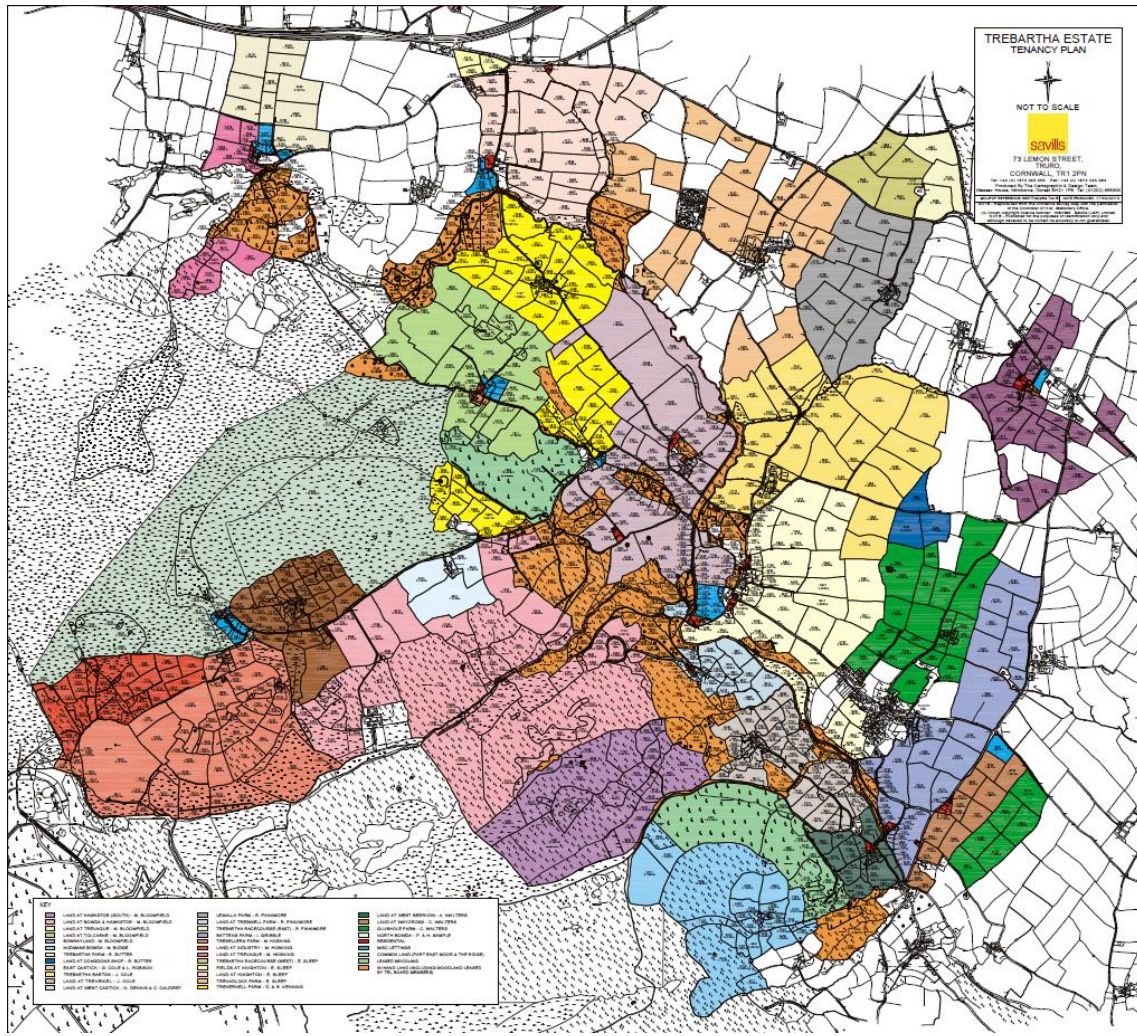
On 1 November 1948, the Board agreed to pay Demolition & Construction Co Ltd of London £50 to complete the demolition by 1 September 1949. All salvaged materials became the property of the purchaser, save for the roof slates which were carefully removed and handed over to the Estate. These became invaluable for repairing roofs elsewhere.

### **2.3 The Estate**

Trebartha extends to some 4,100 acres, including 3,120 acres of agricultural land, 460 of common land, 510 acres of forestry; and 30 acres of gardens.

There are 13 farms (three of which are small holdings) and 30 residential properties. Family members own an additional 10 properties, four of which are barn conversions.





The Estate Map

### 3. The History of the Trebartha

**1066** (Battle of Hastings): “Wulfnoth” occupied Trebartha.

**1086**: “Turstin” was the Lord of the Manor – Wulfnoth having been dispossessed by the Normans.

**1271** – the reign of Edward 1, Henry Trebartha was Lord of the Manor.

**1494** – no male heir so the Estate passed to Anna Trebartha who married Thomas Spoure.

**1729** – it passed to the Rodds on the death of his betrothed Mary Spoure. I would emphasise the word **betrothed** as Mary died of small pox before the marriage could be arranged.

**1941** – it was acquired by the Latham family for £60,000.



Four of the properties at Trebartha are mentioned in the Domesday Book: “Triviniel” (Treveniel); Trevagau” (Trevague); “Talgar” (Tolcarne); “Tribbertham” (Trebartha Barton probably being the Domesday manor, with a holding of half a hide (348 acres).

Documentary evidence dating back to 1304 place long Houses at Stonaford Manor (earlier known as “Stenaford”) and Tresellern.

	
<b>Tolcarne</b>	<b>Treveniel</b>
	
<b>Trevague</b>	<b>Stonaford Manor</b>

#### **4. The Arrival of the Lathams**

Bryan Latham, in his book “Trebartha - The House by the Stream” (1971) describes how the Latham family were acquiring an estate which had only changed hands three times over the previous thousand years, once at the Norman Conquest and twice by marriage.

He describes in “Trebartha - how in 1940, he saw an advertisement in the Times offering for sale 500 acres of mature woodlands, hardwoods and softwood. War had been declared 10 months earlier. Imported timber was becoming increasingly scarce and the Latham family timber firm

was looking for a supply of imported timber. Over the subsequent days, he was persuaded to buy the Estate.

During the 1930s, agriculture was depressed. By 1940, the rent roll had dropped to the same level as it had been in 1870.

In 1949, there was a backlog of repairs. Few of the properties had electricity, internal toilets, bathrooms or adequate supplies of water. Michael Latham, my cousin, recalls his first visit to Trebartha in 1941, aged 11. He stayed at Lower Mill cottage. There was no electricity. There was a supply of oil lamps and they cooked by calor gas.

The gardens were in a similar condition, albeit that it was not recognised at the time. The fine trees which had been planted in the 1820s were not replaced.

All the properties now have electricity and internal bathrooms and toilets. But even as late as 2007, there was no electricity at Lemarne.



**Lemarne in 2007**



**Lemarne today.** Trebartha have granted a tenancy for life to Robert and Moira Latham who paid for the cost of the refurbishment and pay a rent representing its unimproved condition (£4,300 pa). On their deaths, Lemarne will revert to the Estate



As later as 2010, there was no bathroom or internal toilet at No.1 South Battens. This had been occupied since 1928 by Gladys Peters who had been the daughter of the Rodd's groom. Ms Peters had not wanted these facilities to be installed. South Battens has now been reconverted into a single unit. Consent was required to remove the roof of the outhouse which was in a dilapidated condition.



**South Battens**

The remote dwelling at Clitters still has no running water, electricity or internal toilet/bathroom. It cannot be let as a dwelling and can only be occupied up to 10 weeks a year. It has been licenced to the Hazlewood family since the 1930s. The family are related to Kate Mackenzie who was the tenant at Stonaford Manor between 1927 and 1993. The Hazlewoods do not want any changes. This is an excellent solution for the conservation authorities, as the dwelling is retained in its original condition as a remote C18 farmhouse.



**Clitters**



The Estate is still largely on a private water supply. This is good news for our farmers as it is much cheaper than the South West Water supply. It is less good news for the state as the cost of supplying it to our residential properties is increasing with statutory compliance.

## **5. The Governance of Trebartha**

Edward Locks-Latham, my grandfather, decided to set up a separate company, Trebartha Estates Limited (“Trebartha”), allocating shares to eight members of the family. There are now 60 shareholders, all of whom are members of the extended Latham family, spanning three generations.

As a result of this structure, the Estate does not need to support any individual. Rather, the family see themselves as custodians of Trebartha.

Trebartha is governed by a Board of five Directors: Robert Latham (Chair since 2013); Caroline Latham (Gardens); Jolyon Barker (Strategic Direction); Andrew Robson (Agricultural Advisor), Patrick Latham (Chair of Trebartha Hydro Limited) and Clare Latham (Heritage Strategy). None receive any remuneration. The Company Secretary is Richard Latham.

Since 2011, Trebartha has been managed by Savills with Michael Greet currently responsible for Trebartha. Michael describes how Trebartha is unique in that its ownership is shared by so many members of the family who are actively involved in the running of the Estate. The family’s objective is not to derive an income from the estate, but to act as custodians for the future and invest income back into the community. The family foster a true community spirit. They encourage the next generation of younger farmers through “starter farms”. Farms and any additional land are let internally. Trebartha is run prudently and professionally.

## **6. Trebartha’s Objectives**

After a Strategic Review in 1999, the shareholders agreed the following:

- (i) **Vision:** a self-supporting haven that the family can be proud to pass on, improved, to future generations;
- (ii) **Mission:** Trebartha aims to manage the farms, residential accommodation, forestry and amenities at Trebartha in a financially prudent manner for the benefit for shareholders, and with due regard to the interests of tenants and employees, developing the estate in a manner consistent with its character and tradition.
- (iii) **Core Values:** stewardship; community; calm; respect and trust.

Trebartha’s priority is to invest in the Estate for future generations. Trebartha seeks to retain Trebartha as a viable working estate. Trebartha has therefore decided not to sell of any of the core properties in the centre of the Estate.

The viability of the farms at Trebartha is central to its character. Over the past twenty years, as farms have fallen vacant, the land has been redistributed to existing farms and the farmhouses

have been let for residential use. The farmhouses at Trevague, Tolcarne, Knighton, Treveniel, Midway, and Treswell are now residential properties.

Trebartha will support our farmers and assist them to adapt to the new subsidy regime that will be introduced post-Brexit. “Public Benefit” is likely to be an important element of any new regime.

The land should be farmed in a sustainable manner. An organic farm at the core of the Estate encourages a wide diversity of wildlife.

## **7. The Challenges**

The major challenges faced by the Board are:

- (i) Ensuring that the farms remain economically viable;
- (ii) Maintaining the residential properties in a proper state of repair;
- (iii) Maintaining the forestry;
- (iv) Developing the gardens for future generations; and
- (v) Identifying long term uses for the listed barns.

Trebartha has to find an appropriate balance between expenditure, on the one hand, on homes and farm buildings which are in use, and, on the other hand, on historically important buildings which currently have no practical use, and could be dangerous. It is not easy to weigh up the options and reach decisions.

In 2018, the income from rents was £431k (2017: £429k). The major items of expenditure were repairs and renewals: £355k (£214k) which is increased by the irrecoverable VAT: £34k (£57k) and professional fees: £13k (£12k). The other significant items of expenditure are estate management fees; staffing (two gardeners); insurance, and forestry. A dividend of 4% £18 (£18k) is paid, but £5k of this is waived by shareholders.

In 2018, Trebartha had a planned loss of £63.5k (2017: profit of £29k). The Board is planning for a similar loss for 2019. This can be financed from the sale of the land at Trebartha Close.

## **8. The Conservation Strategy**

A conservation strategy is being developed with support from Historic England and Cornwall Council, which will help Trebartha to prioritise the most important buildings, whilst taking protective measures to stabilise others.

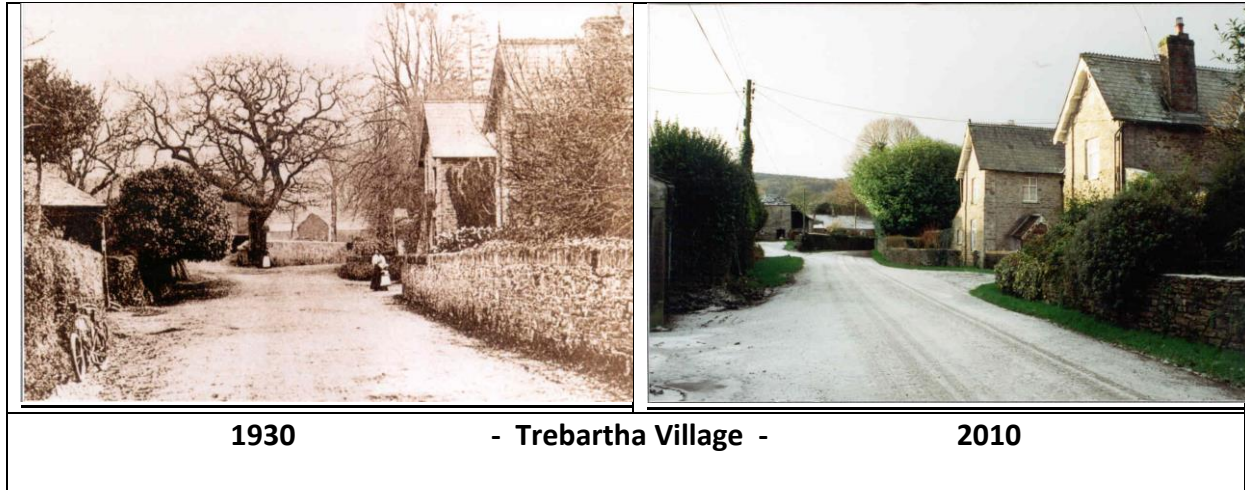
The Conservation Officer has visited Trebartha as a result of which the barns at Trebartha Barton have been put on the “at risk” register. Battens Mill was noted, but not considered to be at risk.

Trebartha is seeking to agree a planning performance agreement with Cornwall Council which will identify the “key milestones”. This may lead to an application to have some of the less important buildings de-listed.

The key elements are to:

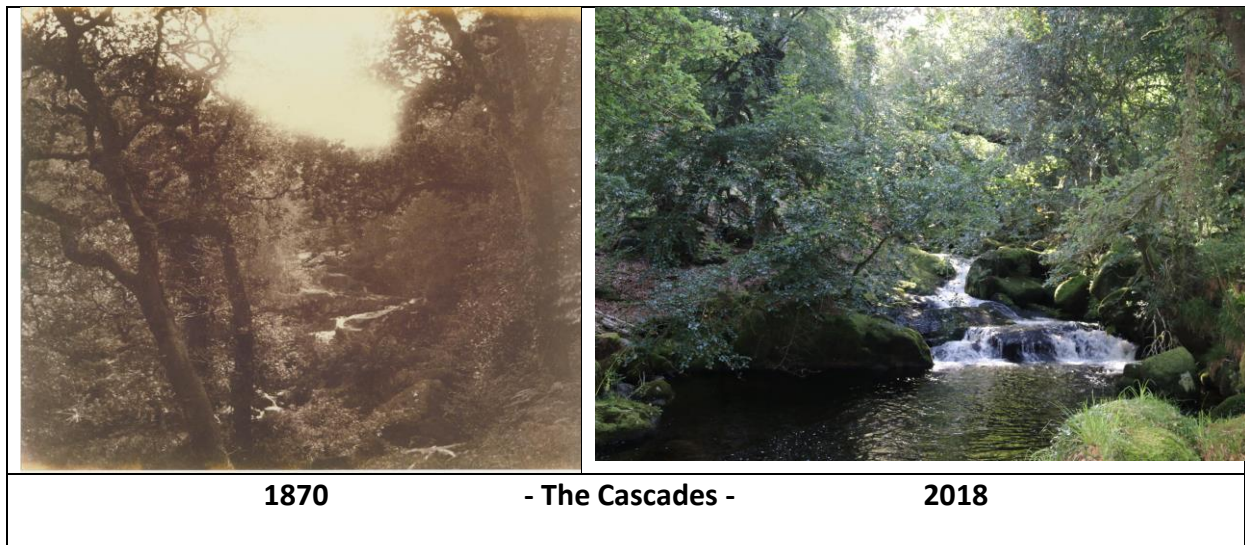


- Retain Trebartha as a viable working Estate which retains its existing character;
- Maintain all the existing residential properties in a proper state of repair;
- Identify alternative uses for the barn;
- Secure some funding for the strategy through enabling development.



## 9. The Gardens

Trebartha has been described as one of the finest landscape gardens in Cornwall. The gardens extend to some 40 acres.



The family have agreed that the Trebartha should remain a private garden. To open the gardens on a commercial basis would change their character.

For over 50 years, the gardens have been opened under the National Gardens Scheme. Trebartha welcomes visit by special interest groups. **The NGS Open days in 2019 are at 14.00 – 17.00 on 12 May and 8 September.**

The gardens are currently in a state of transition as a result of (i) Clearance of all the rhododendron ponticum because of Phytophthora ramorum (sudden oak death); and (ii) The hydroelectricity scheme to ensure the long-term viability of the Estate.





There is a limit to what Trebartha can spend on the gardens and family amenities from its own resources. Shareholders supplement the income available through an amenity charge, waiving their dividends and through contributing to a Gardens Fund.

**10. The Forestry**

Trebartha has 510 acres of forestry. In 1961, Trebartha granted the Forestry Commission a 999-year lease of 225 acres at a rent of £43 pa (now £1,885 pa). In 1988, the Forestry Commission sold part of their holdings. As Trebartha could not afford to acquire them, they were rather acquired by members of the Latham Family.

Of the 510 acres: (i) 284 acres are in hand: (ii) 160 acres are leased to Forestry Commission (DEFRA), namely Stonaford Plantation and Bowdanoddon Wood, and (iii) 64 acres are leased to members of the family (Dawes Wood to Paul Latham; Upton Wood to Peter Latham).

	
<p><b>Trevague (Trebartha)</b></p>	<p><b>Bowdanaddon Wood (Forestry Commission)</b></p>



The forestry is managed on commercial grounds, albeit that it recognised that in the short term, it will not generate a profit. The forestry is currently expected to operate within a budget of £16k. The Board recognise that there may be a case for extending the land allocated to forestry.

**11. The Hydroelectricity Scheme**

In 2013, Trebartha Hydro Ltd (THL) was established as a separate company to develop and operate the scheme. To finance the scheme, 51% of the shares are currently held by family members. The pipeline takes water from the Withey Brook below Hawks Tor and runs it through a 1.3km pipe with a drop of 95m into the turbine house in the American Garden.

THL has been generating electricity since January 2016. In the short term, THL will not generate significant additional income for Trebartha. However, this will increase in 2030 when a £450k loan to finance the scheme is repaid and in 2036 when the scheme will revert to Trebartha.

	
The Intake at Bryce's Crossing	Laying the pipeline (2014)
	
The Outflow in the American Garden	The Turbine

**12. Current Projects**

The priorities for the current year have been set by the decision of Brian and David Venning to surrender their holdings at Trekernell and Stonaford on 29 September 2018. In 1936, William Venning, their grandfather, was granted the tenancy at Trekernell. In 1952, Alan Venning, their father, took over the tenancy at Trekernell. In 1985, Alan was granted a tenancy of Stonaford Farm and Brian occupied Stonaford Farmhouse. In 1993, Alan retired and David and Brian were treated as “first successors” under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

The farmhouse at Trekernell is Grade 2 listed. It is believed to have C15 origins. Inside the porch, there is a granite chamfered two-centred arch. One room is believed to have been used as a Methodist Chapel with a vestry at the end of the property. number of barns which are also listed.



**Trekernell Farmhouse**

**Barns at Trekernell**

Little is known about Stonaford Farmhouse. Examination of the roof timbers have revealed some C17 ship timbers. It is not listed. In 1806, the Rodds acquired it from William Colling. Stonaford has a number of interesting features including a slate porch and dairy with a slate table and benches.



**The Farmhouse at Stonaford**

Graham Cole and Lizzie Robson are to move from East Castick to Trekernell. In due course, Neil Dennis and Hanna Caudrey will move from West Castick to East Castick.

The 2019 programme includes the following:

- (i) Trekernell – a major refurbishment is planned
- (ii) Stonaford to be refurbished for residential use.
- (iii) Stabilising the barns at Trebartha Barton.
- (iv) North Lodge – re-roofing the property. Part of an on-going programme.



(v) Mill Garage – re-roofing and repairs. The roof is in danger of collapsing.

These projects are in addition to our ongoing expenditure in respect of reactive repairs, our external repair and redecorations programme and statutory compliance.

	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>North Lodge</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mill Garage</b></p>

### **13. Two Challenges**

#### **Challenge 1: What to do to the barns at Trebartha Barton?**

The Grade 2\* listing extends not only to the barns, but also to two cottages which have been derelict for 70 years. The barns are not suitable for modern agricultural use. Even if a long-term alternative use could be identified, this would not be possible whilst Trebartha Barton is occupied as a farmhouse.

The short-term strategy is to safeguard these important buildings. The cost of these works is likely to exceed £100k, with no economic return. These works can only be viewed as a heritage project. This property is within the centre of the Estate and the family would not wish to dispose of the site.

	
<p style="text-align: center;">The Barns</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">- Trebartha Barton - The Derelict Cottages</p>

## Challenge 2: West Castick

West Castick is a fine Grade 2 listed building. It will fall vacant in some twelve months when the current tenants move to East Castick. The listing includes a derelict dwelling immediately in front of the farmhouse. There are also a number of barns.

Trebartha will shortly be advertising this property with 8 acres of land for letting on a long-term basis, whether as a dwelling, or as a commercial/holiday letting business or other leisure facility. We welcome innovative ideas as to how this site could be used to its full potential.



**West Castick**

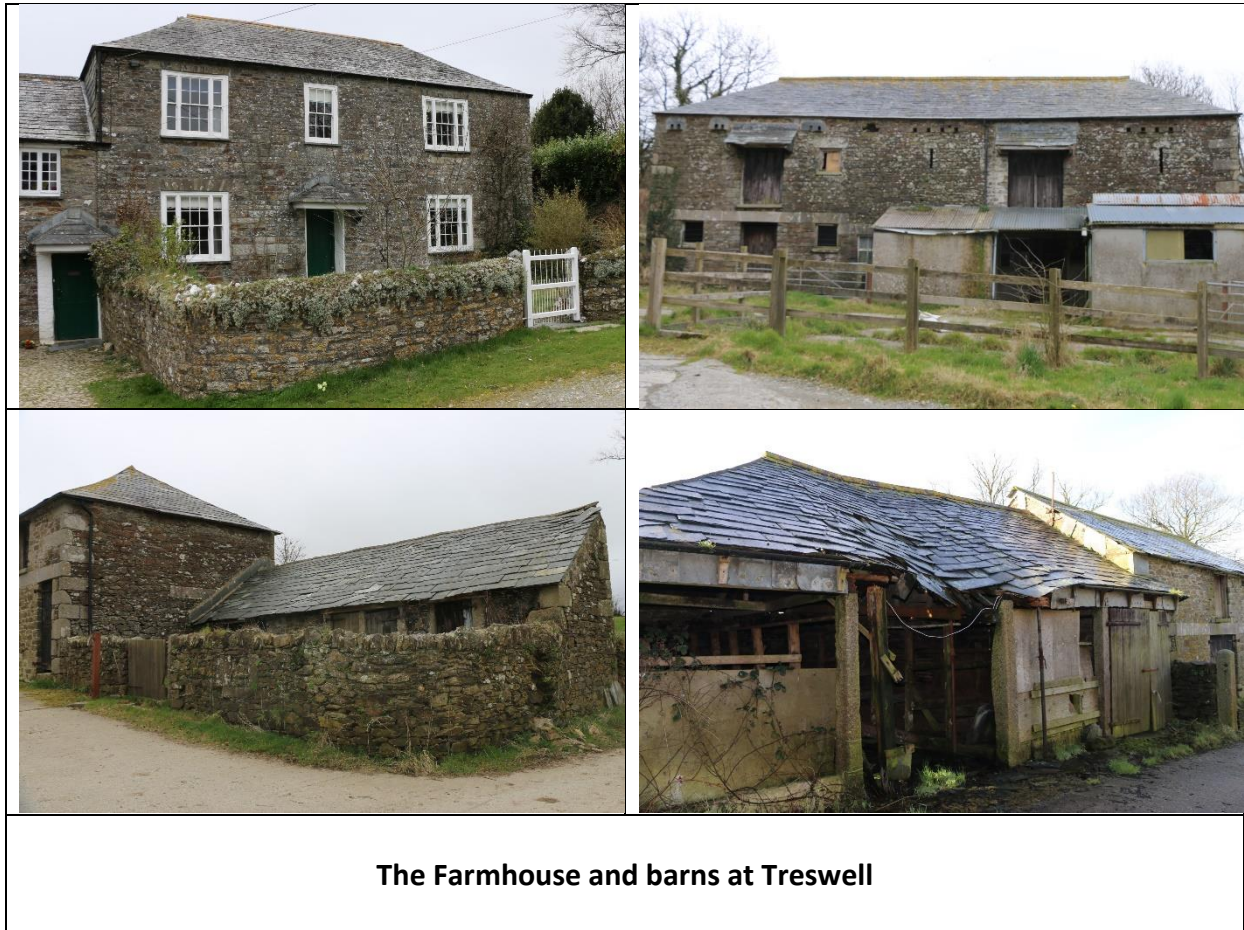
## 14. Identifying Additional Sources of Income from Capital Disposals

Trebartha needs to generate some additional income if it is to finance its ambitious conservation programme. Plans include:

- (i) Enabling Development at Treswell including the barns and some new dwellings. The farmhouse was refurbished in 2013 and is now let as a residential letting. Trebartha is particularly concerned about the state of the barns as these are close to a public footpath.



(ii) Possible disposal of some outlying barns with planning permission for residential use.



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**27 January 2019**

### **Points Raised in Discussion**

1. Robert Latham ("RL") stated that the planning application for the installation of the temporary roof coverings for the barns at East Castick had been put on hold pending this meeting. Trebartha would now be reinstating it and he hoped that the parish Council would reconsider its objection.
2. Barbara Bloomfield shared her recollections of when the derelict cottages at Trebartha Barton were occupied. At one time, members of the Bloomfield family farmed at Tolcarne, North Bowda, Lemarne, Treveniel and Bowhayland. The only remaining Bloomfield is Martin at Bowhayland.
3. Kevin Tharme suggested the following uses for barns: (i) an area farm shop – local farmers selling direct to consumers; sale of local craft products; (ii) Tourist attractions a working farm or a working/living museum; (iii) an arts and craft centre; (iv) a micro-brewery - this could also

be a bonus to formers as waste products tend to be used for animal feed; (v) a climbing centre, similar to the barn on the way out to Milton Abbot.

4. Richard Randall noted to the state of the barn roof at Battens Farm. Planning consent had been obtained in 2009. RL stated that he was not aware whether any repairs had been executed at the time, but this barn was not currently a priority. Houses have been prioritised over barns. He accepted that Battens was in the middle of the village and would inspect the barn.

5. Brian Ruby stated that he was astonished how much Trebartha had achieved given the limited income available to the Estate.

6. There was a general discussion about rights of way:

(i) RL stated that Cornwall Council had recently registered all rights of way and agreed to make a copy of the plan available. Rights of Way are clearly marked on the Ordnance Survey maps. They can also be found on the Cornwall Council website – see [link](#).

(ii) Whilst Trebartha seeks to ensure that the rights of way are not obstructed by fallen trees, it is Cornwall Council's responsibility to repair styles and to maintain signage. Jono Cole pointed out that on his land, there were a number of styles and signs that required attention.

(iii) Farmers were concerned that people were trespassing where there is no right of way. They had been subjected to abuse when they politely remonstrated with trespassers. The farmers needed the support of the Parish Council.

(iv) A question was raised about the absence of signs. RL stated that Trebartha was planning a new set of signs. In the past, "No Access" signs were removed by those who wanted to trespass. Trebartha was considering a positive approach. Signs should not merely state where there is no right of way, but should highlight where there is such a right. would also highlight where there is a right of way. RL would be happy to consult on the signs which were proposed. RL inquired whether the Parish Council might be willing to put some resources into this.

(v) Farmers expressed concern about the risk to their cattle from dog faeces. Some walkers let their dogs exercise freely in fields where there is no right of way. Others, put faeces in bags, but then threw the bags into bushes.

(vi) Caroline clarified the limited rights of access afforded by the "right to roam". This is restricted to specified "mountains, moors, heaths and downs" which are privately owned. Details can be found at this [link](#). RL suggested that it would be possible to display maps.

(vii) Brian Ruby confirmed that irresponsible walkers are an issue. RL stated that Trebartha would welcome further discussion on the issues raised.