

## CPI21 Poltesco Footbridge



The bridge behind Carleon Cove, on the east coast of the Lizard Peninsula, was nearing the end of its useful life, there being significant rot within the main cross beams. The 6 metre softwood timber footbridge built in the 1980s carried the South West Coast Path across Poltesco River adjacent to the ruins of the once thriving Victorian serpentine stone factory. The bridge is located on a well-used stretch of the coast path, linking the popular sandy beach at Kennack to the picturesque fishing village of Cadgwith. The bridge is also a vital part of a 1 mile circular walk beginning at The National Trust carpark at Poltesco. This route is much loved by locals as well as being frequently used by the Trust and others for community activities e.g. primary school groups, nature trails and other kids holiday events, guided walks. In contrast with more windswept sections of the coastpath, Poltesco Valley offers a sheltered wooded haven, with the footbridge forming an essential part of the public access to the area.

Construction of a replacement bridge was necessary to avoid closure or diversion inland of the SWCP at Carleon Cove. Whilst maintaining access was the principle aim of the project, there was a strong desire to use this opportunity to create a new structure that is fitting and appropriate for its surroundings with an exemplary and unique design. This remit is in-keeping with the Trust's desire to give great attention to detail in the design of all structures within the valley, exemplified by the recent installation of a bench carved with a shoal of pilchards which reflects the valley's history as an 18<sup>th</sup> Century fishing cove.

The new bridge has been designed by a local architect, who specialises in the use of natural materials, in consultation with local NT staff. The remit has included use of hardwood timber and design elements that take inspiration from the natural surroundings as well as the industrial heritage. The design includes the use of curved lines for the oak and larch structure as well as metal tension wires.

The project has gone according to plan and is fairly close to our original costs estimates. One unexpected additional cost has been the need to reinforce the supports with concrete pads (under advice from the project engineer). There was also a need for some minor landscaping / drainage works to the coastpath as it approaches the bridge.

The new bridge offers much more than the utilitarian previous structure and it is a striking conversation point that greets walkers as they explore this busy section of the SWCP. The bridge has been well received by locals and walkers, and we would like to acknowledge the role this grant has played in enabling the construction of the bridge.





