

NEWS RELEASE

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Community creates dune art to mark St Piran's Day

Cornwall's coastal dunes and their links to the legend of Saint Piran are being celebrated in a community art exhibition organised by Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

The paintings, created by schoolchildren, community groups and local residents, are currently on display at Livingstone St Ives gallery in Perranporth, to coincide with this year's St Piran's Day celebrations on March 5.

Last month, as part of a nationwide project called Dynamic Dunescapes, the Trust worked with a local environmental artist to lead a series of public art workshops at Penhale Dunes. Participants were encouraged to explore the landscape's unique history, geology and wildlife, which included a visit to remains of St Piran's Oratory, before using paint made from Cornish earth pigments to create their works of art.

Nearly 400 paintings were produced by 100 attendees from Perranporth Art Group, Perranporth Community Primary School, Richard Lander School and members of the public.

Andy Nelson, People Engagement Officer for the Dynamic Dunescapes project at Cornwall Wildlife Trust, is confident these popular workshops and other upcoming events will help people better understand the importance of sand dunes:

"Our work is all about getting people outdoors to experience their dunes, which has become ever more important since the pandemic. These workshops have done exactly that – getting those from the community to connect with their local wildlife, to love their coastal spaces, and to learn about Cornish identity and history through the stories of Saint Piran.

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“It’s small-scale but meaningful projects like this one that will allow people to appreciate these threatened places and, in turn, help keep them special in the long-term.”

Healthy sand dunes with moving sand are a sanctuary for rare plants and animals like the silver-studded blue butterfly and scrambled egg lichen. Yet they are considered as one of the most at-risk habitats in Europe, threatened by climate change, increased vegetation growth, development and invasive species.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust is working to bring wildlife back to two of Cornwall’s largest sand dune systems: Penhale Dunes near Perranporth and ‘The Towans’ near Hayle. The restoration work comes as part of the UK-wide £10 million Dynamic Dunescapes project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the EU LIFE programme.

The three-year project in Cornwall is also encouraging people to access and enjoy their local dunes and take an active part in their conservation. With help from FEAST Cornwall, the team has commissioned artists to run creative sessions aimed at increasing public interest in, and support for, these precious landscapes.

Artist Peter Ward, who led the recent workshops, said: “The primary motivation behind my art is engagement with local ecologies and so this project with Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Dynamic Dunescapes was a great opportunity to share my own knowledge and experience.

“What has surprised me is the fantastic response from every aspect of the community and the wonderful artwork created. It has been a pleasure to work with the team and to see the whole project come together so beautifully.”

According to popular legend, Saint Piran, the patron saint of Cornwall and Miners, landed at Penhale Dunes in the 4th Century after a voyage from Ireland. He was befriended by a badger, fox and bear who became his disciples and went on to build a chapel in the dunes, evidence of which still remains today.

The art exhibition is open until Sunday 13th March, with Cornwall Wildlife Trust staff and volunteers in attendance from 1-4pm each day. For more information about the event, visit www.dynamicdunescapes.co.uk/event/st-pirans-day-community-arts-exhibition-cornwall

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The exhibition in Perranporth is running until Sunday 13th March, which press and media outlets are invited to attend. Cornwall Wildlife Trust staff and the team behind the art workshops and exhibition are available to answer questions both in-person and through alternative mediums (Zoom/Teams/Phone Calls):

- **Andy Nelson**, People Engagement Officer for the Dynamic Dunescapes project at Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Available to speak about the Dynamic Dunescapes project in Cornwall, the importance of sand dunes, Penhale Dunes and their link to Saint Piran and the purpose of community outreach initiatives such as the exhibition and art workshops.
- **Peter Ward**, local environmental artist. Available to speak about the public art workshops in celebration of St Piran's Day, promoting nature and conservation through the use of art and working with Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Dynamic Dunescapes as a commissioned artist.

Photographs:

Available to download for the next week here: <https://we.tl/t-KCdZgH2bbx>

- Artwork inspired by the dunes and Saint Piran displayed at Livingstone St Ives gallery in Perranporth, credit Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Individuals creating their art using paint from Cornish earth pigments, credit Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Saint Piran and his disciples, credit Peter Ward
- Saint Piran's Oratory at Penhale Dunes, where it was previously completely buried by sand, credit Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Schoolchildren learning about St Piran's Oratory, credit Perranporth Community Primary School
- Students from Richard Lander School exploring the dunes, credit Cornwall Wildlife Trust

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Notes for editors:





**Cornwall
Wildlife Trust**



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Cornwall Wildlife Trust

- Cornwall Wildlife Trust has been protecting Cornwall's wildlife, both on land and in our seas since 1962.
- It is Cornwall's leading wildlife conservation charity, with over 17,000 members which includes over 4,500 junior members and 160 Business Supporters.
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust has local and specialist groups based around Cornwall. All play an important role in the Trust's work and are always looking for more volunteers.
- The charity manages 59 nature reserves, including a range of habitats such as woodlands, meadows, wetlands and heaths.
- The Trust runs a number of marine and terrestrial based conservation projects in partnership with others – these include [Upstream Thinking](#) and [Penwith Landscape Partnership](#).
- 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 public to raise more than £2.2 million every year. Money raised is spent on wildlife conservation and education in Cornwall, for present and future generations.
- The Chief Executive sits on the board of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Natural Partnership who launched "[Cornwall's Environmental Growth Strategy](#)" in 2016
- The Trust is one of 47 in the UK. Together, they make up the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.
- Since 1992, the Trust has had its own consultancy arm - [Cornwall Environmental Consultants Ltd.](#) The consultancy business provides ecological, landscape and tree advice and consultancy services to developers, utility companies, landowners and farmers.
- To find out more about the Dynamic Dunescapes project at Cornwall Wildlife Trust visit www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/dynamicdunescapes

Dynamic Dunescapes

- Dynamic Dunescapes is a partnership project restoring sand dunes across England and Wales for the benefit of wildlife, people and communities, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the EU LIFE Programme. Project partners are Natural England, Plantlife, National Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Cumbria Wildlife Trust.
- The coastal dunes of England and Wales are internationally important habitats for wildlife, listed as one of the most threatened environments in Europe for biodiversity loss. These dunes are a sanctuary to rare species like the natterjack toad and sand lizards.
- Over many decades, dunes have stabilised with increased vegetation, invasive species and nutrient deposition – all of which has put dune-specialist species at risk. Healthy sand dunes need natural dynamism, including areas of open sand, low grassland and open slack pools, so





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this project is bringing life back to the dunes by creating areas of open sand, improving pool spaces and removing overgrown vegetation to support wildflower grasslands.

- We work with skilled local and national experts, and involve schools and local groups, volunteers and visitors of all ages and abilities to help rejuvenate our dunes.
- Follow [@dynamicdunes](#) on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

