

# Invitation to adopt ancient monuments

PEOPLE living in West Cornwall are being invited to take a very personal interest in the area's historic sites, to ensure that they are preserved for future generations.

The Cornwall Ancient Sites Protection Network (CASPN) has launched Adopt-a-Site, a new scheme that will see individuals take on the role of monitoring the conditions at any of Penwith's vast array of sites, ranging from the famous like Lanyon Quoit and Men-an-Tol, to the smaller and lesser known.

According to Cheryl Staffron the intention is that each site will be assigned a monitor who will make regular visits to check on conditions.

Each volunteer will be asked to fill out a survey that covers potential problems such as burrowing animals, erosion, metal detector activity and other disturbances.

Said Cheryl: "We've probably got more sites in West Penwith than there

are in the rest of the British Isles; there are hundreds if not thousands of well known and less well known ones.

"Fortunately we have recently had some funding, and as part of that we have been able to set up this project, which is something we have wanted to do for a long time."

According to Cheryl some of the sites have suffered from visitors "loving them to death", while others have been deliberately vandalised or had fires lit nearby.

She said: "The most memorable incidents were at Lanyon Quoit and Men an Tol when they were set alight in 1999, that sent seismic shock waves through the whole community.

"The problem is that people do a lot of thoughtless and irresponsible things."

In the past the job of keeping an eye on the up keep on the sites has been unstructured, but under the new scheme a database has already been created which will be kept updated with details on several hundred sites.

Said Cheryl: "Adopt-a-Site is a formalisation of how we look after our sites; the idea is that people will become our eyes and ears.

"We would ask volunteers to come forward and offer their support on a regular basis. If people are willing to participate they have to think about what site they would like to adopt and care for."

The scheme will be coordinated by Paul Bonnington who is an archeologist for the National Trust and a member of CASPN.

Cheryl said he is in the best position to contact the relevant bodies which could help.

"Hopefully it will work for everyone and it will get local people involved so that these important sites can be properly looked after."

For details on becoming a CASPN site monitor contact Paul Bonnington on 01736 796 993 or by e-mail at [paul.bonnington@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:paul.bonnington@nationaltrust.org.uk).

The Cornishman 6/7/06