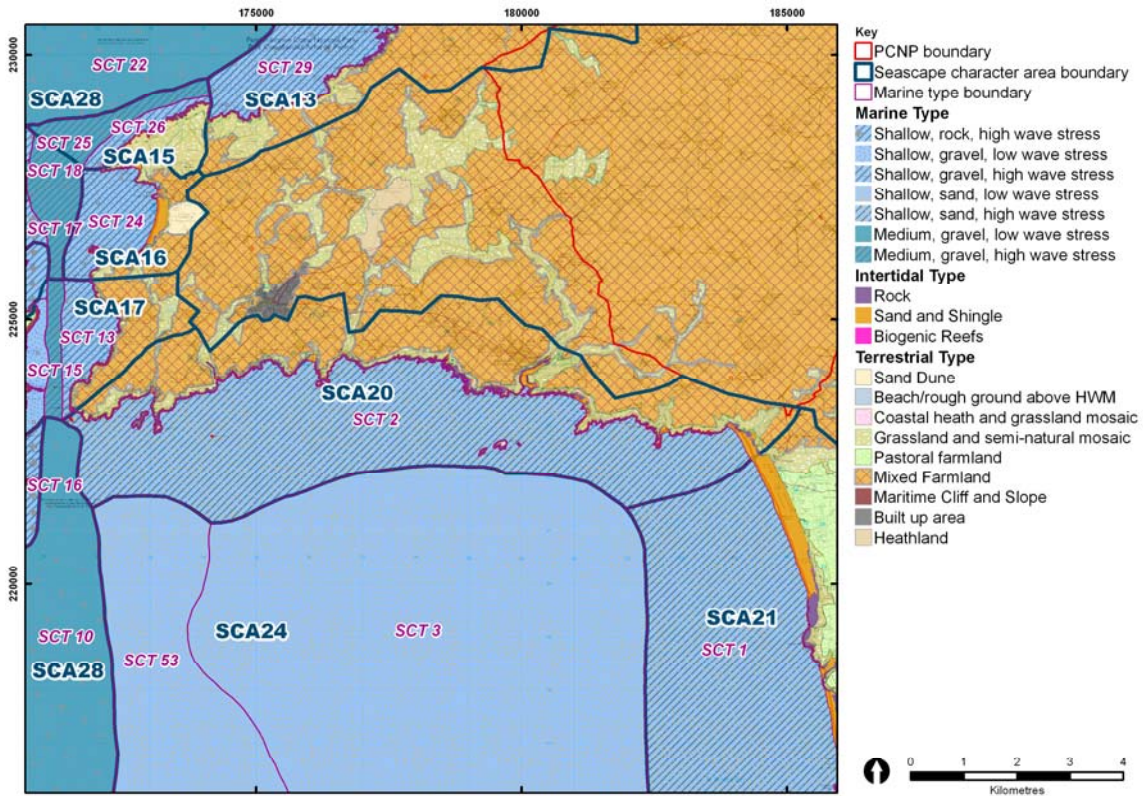


No: 20 Seascape Character Area Name: St Brides Bay coastal waters north



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SCA 20: St Brides Bay coastal waters north



Looking west from near Caerfai to Ramsey Island in distance



East from Caerfai Bay



East from near Dinas Fach



Solva harbour

Summary Description
<p>The north coast of St Brides Bay has a coastline of jagged cliffs and promontories and small sheltered bays and inlets with some offshore islands and rocks. There are panoramic views from many headlands, contrasting with the narrow sheltered wooded valleys and inlets and the gentle pastoral plateau hinterland. The sea area is relatively exposed to southerly winds but there is shelter in several locations. It includes visitor honeypots such as Solva and lies close to the cathedral city of St David's.</p>
Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indented jagged cliffs, small promontory headlands, islets, and bays with narrow inlets with semi-natural heathland and coastal grass vegetation with a series of national nature conservation designations. • Gently sloping plateau hinterland with incised valleys and farmland of mainly pasture with some arable. • Dispersed farmsteads with popular traditional village of Solva in a wooded steep sided inlet but new development extends up onto the plateau. • Caravan parks are visible near the coast in several locations. The A487 runs close to and parallel with the coast. • The sea is relatively exposed to southerly winds, with some wave disturbance near the coastal edge, but affords shelter to northerlies. Drying or submerged rocks are shipping hazards. • Marine activity is focussed on Solva which is a honeypot for visitors with sail cruising routes and slipways for other craft. Porthclais also has a small harbour. Fishing is mainly potting. • The Coast path is particularly well used, especially near St David's and Solva and allows access all along the sea edge and around the indented inlets. • Views are panoramic from several high viewpoints, and narrowly channelled in inlets. The view from around Newgale is one of Pembrokeshire's iconic views.
Physical Influences
<p>The northern coastline of St Brides Bay is composed of an east-north east -west-south west striking, faulted Precambrian to Cambrian succession of tuffs, sandstones and mudstones. The south facing coastal plateau averages 30 to 80m AOD, with cliffs generally 30 to 50m high although reaching 85m. The rocky headlands have steep cliffs and indented bays with rock boulders and tidally exposed rocks. There are small rocky promontories like Dinas Fawr and Dinas Fach, stacks, arches, caves and drying rocks. The narrow, steep incised valleys of the Solva and Alun provide small, sheltered harbours where they meet the coast. Intertidal areas are dominated by rocky shores (76%), with minor sandy coves. Wind and wave erosion take place through abrasion, attrition and hydraulic action.</p> <p>The shallow (<20m), sand to gravelly sand sea floor overlying tuffs, sandstones and mudstones shelves gently (<1°), with some exposed islets (e.g. Green Scar 33m aod, Black Scar, The Mare) and areas of shallows over submerged bedrock. The seas are exposed to high wind and wave stress. Tidal currents in the outer bay set north and south. In the bay, small tidal flows set east and west along the coast. Tidal range <6.5m.</p> <p>The sea forms part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC and the coast is part of the St David's SCA, the Ramsey and St David's Peninsula SPA and the St David's Peninsula Coast SSSI. The cliffs are also an Important Bird Area. The coastal strip of semi-natural heathland and coastal grass vegetation and rough grazing extends in places to promontories such as Pen Dinas. There are a number of disused quarries along the coastal edge. Priority species include chough, peregrine falcon, rare lichens and invertebrates.</p> <p>The hinterland is predominantly pasture, with some arable. The field pattern varies from medium sized and more rectilinear to smaller organic shaped fields, with low hedgerows and</p>

some areas of deciduous woodland, especially associated with the narrow, short, steep sided stream valleys.

Cultural influences

St David's cathedral just to the north was established on the great seaway of the early Christian church in Wales and Ireland. It is a historic landscape containing extensive and well-preserved evidence of land use and intense ritual and religious activity from the prehistoric period onwards. The area includes Neolithic chambered tombs and settlement; Iron Age forts and field systems; and St David's Cathedral and city and their settings nearby which are of continuing supreme cultural significance and importance in Wales as Dewisland. Promontory forts such as Gribin and Porth y Rhaw indicate the need to defend this coastal area in prehistory.

Scheduled monuments include:

- PE013 (St Non's chapel): community: St David's
- PE043 (chambered tomb): community: Solva
- PE272 (motte): community: Brawdy
- PE273 (Porth y Rhaw promontory fort): community: Solva
- PE294 (Caerfai promontory fort): community: St David's
- PE378 (kiln): community: Solva
- PE395 (farmstead): community: Solva
- PE410 (Gribin promontory fort): community: Solva
- PE429 (mill): community: St David's
- PE480 (enclosure): community: Solva
- PE539 (Dinas Fach promontory fort): community: Brawdy
- PE540 (enclosure): community: Brawdy
- PE548 (promontory fort): community: Solva

The Gribin ridge fort is yet to be scheduled. The western part of this area lies within the St David's Peninsula and Ramsey Island Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest.

The associations of the area are above all with the history of the church at St David's and its marine links. St Non's Chapel is reputedly built on the site where St Non gave birth to St David. St Bride's Bay takes its name from St Brigit of Kildare, who was venerated throughout Europe. Graham Sutherland painted along the coast such as around Port Clais eg 'Welsh landscape with roads'. A current artist, John Knapp Fisher, has painted scenes including Solva.

Wrecks are clustered around Portlysgi Bay at the western end of the area [7] and around Solva [4]. In the former area the wrecks include the St George, Portland near the bay and Prince Cadwgan, and the Lewis and Whiteplain further offshore. The Vernicos Alexia, Vernicos Barbara IV and Vernicos Giorgis all lie west of Solva.

The main settlement is Solva, which has a traditional character with small cottages although 20c estate development has expanded onto the plateau to the west. Static caravan parks and camping sites are located close to the coast at Caerfai and Porthclais. The popular A487 linking St Davids with points east runs close to the coast but does not generally impinge on tranquillity at the sea edge.

Solva has a small natural harbour with approx.50 swinging moorings for recreational boat owners and inshore fishermen located up the waterway which dries out at low water. There is a yacht club at the seaward end of the village with a car park. Dinghy sailing and motorised day boats come out of Solva. There is a coastal cruising route linking Milford/Skomer with Solva and points north across St Brides Bay and beyond Ramsey Sound and sailing yachts use this and other anchorages along this stretch of coastline. Porth Clais is a small tidal inlet with a small seawall offering protection for a few inshore fishing boats. There are slipways at Porth Clais and Solva which are used for launching kayaks, day boats, sailing dinghies and a few jet skis. Sea angling off boats and the rocks is popular along all this coastal area, as is diving and snorkelling. Porthlysgi Bay is a good anchorage before going north through Ramsey Sound. Dinas Fawr also affords shelter to boats from N and E winds, and Dinas Fach from W and N.

Caerfai Bay offers a small, but the only moderately accessible beach along this coast. The Pembrokeshire Coast Path runs along the top of the cliff edge and is popular and accessible on

licence area may result in exploration and subsequent extraction with associated effects.			selected special quality
Key sensitivities			
Factors contributing to sensitivity		Factors detracting from sensitivity	
<p>Unspoilt rural character of sea edge with highly indented, rocky character with cliffs and features.</p> <p>Wide views across St Bride's Bay.</p> <p>Historic character of Solva and St David's Conservation Areas and other historic features.</p> <p>Coast Path as a sensitive receptor.</p>		<p>Housing development, visitor activity and recreational use at Solva and Caerfai, and caravan parks.</p> <p>Noise and movement on the A487.</p>	