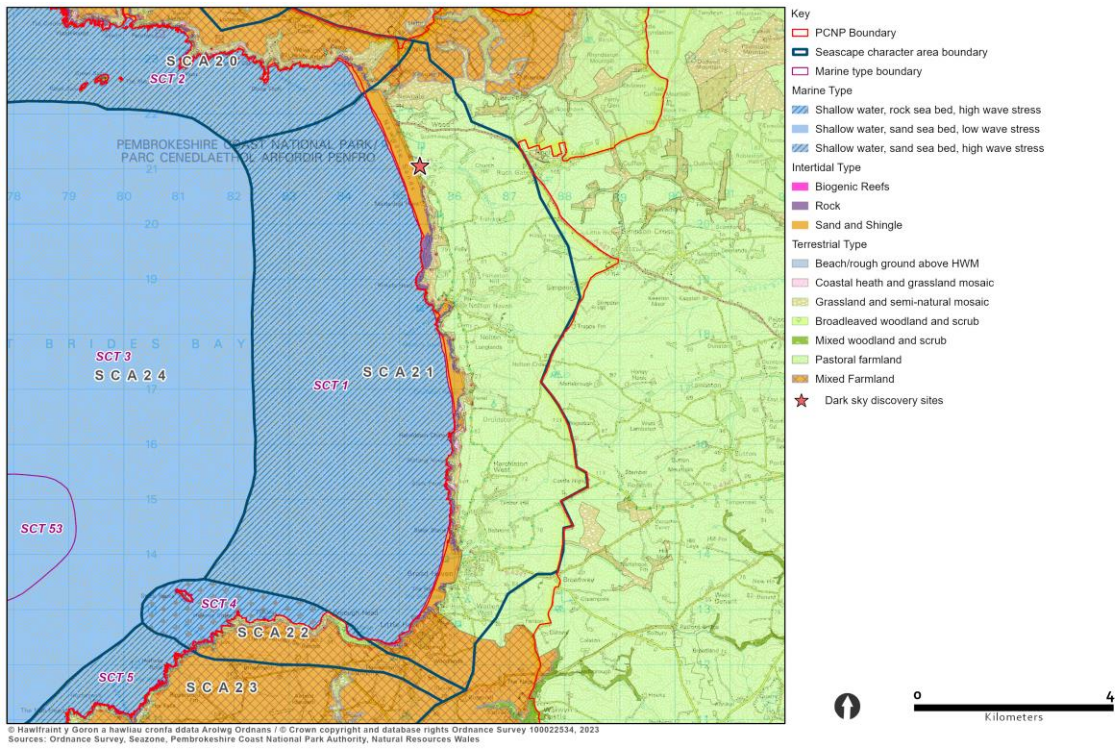


No: **21** Seascape Character Area Name: **St Brides Bay coastal waters east**



SCA21:St Brides Bay coastal waters east



Looking south from Newale



Nolton Haven



View from Little Haven across St Bride's Bay



View across Broad Haven beach

### Summary Description

The west facing coast of St Brides Bay has a series of long beaches interspersed with short sections of cliffs with distinctive profiles such as Ricketts Head. There are wide and open views across the bay, with the cliffs and headlands of the south and north coasts containing the view. The beaches such as Newgale are popular surfing locations with associated holiday accommodation, with some lowland valleys and low rolling pastoral hills in the hinterland. Large ships at anchor deeper in the bay are visible from the shore.

### Key Characteristics

- Long sandy beaches interspersed with cliffs and rocky foreshores.
- Low rolling hills running back from the coast are mainly pasture with some arable, with some narrow wooded valleys and the flat valley of Brandy Brook with marsh vegetation.
- The sea is relatively exposed to westerly winds, with strong surf over long shallow beaches. Drying or submerged rocks are boating hazards.
- Popular visitor destination with small coastal settlements and associated visitor facilities such as cafes, holiday homes and caravan/camping parks.
- Popular beaches for surfing, swimming and beach activities with some dinghy sailing, rowing, kayaking and jet skis.
- Fishing includes beach seining and beach nets, set nets, lobster and crab potting.
- Access along the sea edge on Coast Path or shared with minor road and A487 in places.
- Views are long across St Bride's Bay and contained by the distant high ground of the north and south coasts.

### Physical Influences

The west facing, broad, linear, inner sweep of St Brides Bay is dominated by east-west striking Upper Carboniferous Millstone Grit and Coal Measures sandstones and mudstones. River valleys drain into the bay at Newgale, Nolton Haven and Broadhaven. The hinterland slopes gently back from the coast. The bay is fringed by Newgale Sands, and the sandy beaches at Druidstone Haven and Broadhaven. Cliffs which rise to 50m AOD around the distinctive form of Ricketts Head and become more rugged towards the south close the Broad Haven. The coast is rocky and indented in places, with resistant sandstone rock cuestas prominent on foreshores. There are also natural arches and caves in these areas. The intertidal areas are dominantly sandy beach (73%), with areas of rocky foreshores. Wind and wave erosion take place through abrasion, attrition and hydraulic action. Beaches are depositional areas with sediment transported through traction, saltation and suspension. Newgale's pebbly storm beach reflects exposure to westerly gales. Sediment transport is swash aligned with little net longshore drift.

The shallow waters (<20m) of the inner bay, covering Upper Carboniferous sandstones and mudstones, have a gently west-sloping (>1°), sandy sea floor. The sea is exposed to wind and high wave stress. Tidal currents are set north and south in the outer bay, with some residual rotary tidal movement in the inner bay. Tidal flow is low, with the southern coast generally protected except from westerly winds. The tidal range <6.5m. The long sandy beaches are shallow, creating surf in westerly winds and swell.

The sea forms part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC and the coast is part of the Aber Bach/Newgale to Little Haven Coast SSSI. Land habitats include coastal cliff heath and grassland, deciduous woodland and scrub, with habitats of nature conservation interest including marshy grassland and reed bed along the Brandy Brook. The hinterland is predominantly pasture, with some arable. The field pattern is medium sized and quite rectilinear, with low hedgerows and narrow valleys with deciduous woodland.

#### Cultural influences

The area is rich in defensive remains from Iron Age raths to the Second World War. Nolton Haven is the sea-terminus of the pre-Norman 'causeway' from the western Cleddau. In more recent times coal was worked in St Bride's Bay; at Ricket's Head, the chimney and a tip at Trefrane coal mine survives. Trade included coal export and fishing. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the area became popular with holidaymakers.

Scheduled monuments include:

- PE134 (standing stone): community: the Havens
- PE265 (Black Point rath promontory fort): community: the Havens
- PE362 (Harold Stone standing stone): community: the Havens
- PE456 (unenclosed hut group): community: the Havens
- The bay takes its name from St Brigit of Kildare, who was venerated throughout Europe.

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The wreck of the Increase at Nolton Haven in 1791 and the consequent explosion caused by pillagers was described by the incumbent of Nolton Parish, the Rev Moses Grant. There is one recorded extant wreck- on Newgale Sands- the Attacker which was a range target vessel which ran ashore in 1974.

The main settlements are Newgale and Broad Haven, with smaller settlements at Nolton Haven and Little Haven. The latter with its cliffs is a Conservation Area. These settlements appear to have a focus of holiday homes, with static caravan parks and camping sites in several locations such as Broad Haven and Newgale. A minor road runs close to the coast and joins the busy A487 adjacent to the beach at Newgale.

Newgale Sands are very popular with surfers, kite-surfers and windsurfers as it is exposed to westward seas. Use of stand up paddleboards is increasing. Sea angling also takes place off the beach. There are 3 car parks and a camp site behind the tall shingle bank that separates the land from the sea. Broad Haven is popular with surfers, kite-surfers and windsurfers. Dinghy sailing, kayaking, snorkelling, swimming and sea rowing take place out of Little Haven. An inshore lifeboat operates out of Little Haven. Motor and sailing cruisers anchor off the beaches as well as inside Borough Head. Dive boats go out from Broad Haven and Little Haven to visit wrecks off Skomer Island and the closer Stack Rocks. Beach activities are popular on Nolton Haven, Setlands and Druidston Haven with associated swimming. Nolton Haven, Little Haven and Broad Haven all have a slipway for small boats such as dinghies and kayaks but do not offer an anchorage for large boats. Motor and sailing cruisers are to be found throughout St Bride's Bay and there are some jet skis. The Coast Path runs along the top of the sea edge and around settlements and wildlife such as diving Gannets to be seen.

Fishing in the area comprises of beach seining and beach nets, set nets, lobster and crab potting and potential for light otter trawling. The area has a previously been granted a Round 24 Oil and Gas licence and future applications may be made.

#### Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities

The area has a large scale, with the long stretches of beach looking out to the wide bay with its broad contained views. The textures at the sea edge vary between smooth on the beaches to rough in the cliff and rocky coast areas, with a gently rolling landscape behind.

It is generally open and exposed in westerly winds, but has a feeling of safety at the sea edge, with the exception of some of the higher and more rugged cliffs. The area has a slightly unbalanced seascape, with contrasts between the open beaches and small bays with the



sometimes detractive settlements and visitor facilities.

Views are generally wide at the sea edge such as along Newgale Sands, but narrower at the small bays such at Little Haven. The hinterland slopes up from the coast more than in most parts of Pembrokeshire so there is potential for more open views inland to and from the sea.

Tranquillity is limited on the busy beaches and associated visitor areas, such as Newgale where the A487 runs along the back of the beach, particularly in summer. There is some on lesser used stretches of the Coast Path. Large ships such as tankers at anchor deeper in the Bay are visible from the shore, which detracts from the feeling of remoteness in the bay.

The crashing sound and sight of the surf are powerful senses. At sea there would be a feeling of openness but never being far from land. Landmarks viewed from the sea would include housing running up the slopes at Broad Haven and the caravan park south of Newgale but these noticeable features are also detractors.

**Cultural benefits and services**

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of beach activities and visitor accommodation, to natural heritage in the form of the long beaches and wide bay views, and to spiritual services through a sense of spaciousness and connection with the powerful force of the sea.

Forces for change									
Summary	Key forces for change								
	Special Qualities	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	Offshore energy	Development pressure	Land management changes	MOD use	
<p>Slow coastal erosion of headland cliffs, more in back of bays. Little net longshore drift of sediment. The shoreline management plan: states mostly 'do nothing', locally 'hold the line' (e.g. Nolton Haven, Broadhaven, Newgale).</p> <p>At Newgale there is a possible threat to the integrity of the shingle beach and wall which may allow incursion and flooding to Newgale and Brandy Brook valley behind.</p> <p>Development pressure and visitor activity at Newgale and Broad Haven in particular affect the scenic quality of the seascape.</p> <p>Inappropriate development at Little Haven has an impact on the character of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The coast path is worn by users in this popular stretch of coast.</p> <p>Future licences for oil and gas would change the character of the area if exploited.</p>	Coastal Splendour								
	Islands								
	Diversity of Landscape								
	Remoteness, Tranquillity and Wilderness								
	Diverse Geology								
	Richness of Habitats and Biodiversity								
	Rich Archaeology								
	Distinctive Settlement Character								
	Cultural Heritage								
	Accessing the Park								
	Space to Breathe								
	<b>Key</b>		Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality						

**Key factors to be taken into account when assessing sensitivity to change**

Open and wide unspoilt views along the coast, out to sea and back inland, juxtaposed with smaller scale visitor facilities.

Long stretches of open, accessible beaches and natural rhythm of the surf.

Little Haven Conservation Area.

Coast Path as a sensitive receptor.

Biodiversity, historic and landscape designations.

Housing and visitor activity and recreational facilities at Newgale and Broad Haven, and caravan parks.

Settlements at Broad Haven, Little Haven and Nolton Haven in valleys and contained by higher ground to an extent.

Large ships at anchor in the bay.

Road running close to the beach especially at Newgale.

Intermittent views to refinery chimneys at Milford Haven.