

Torquay Neighbourhood Plan: Wellswood & Torwood

The area of Wellswood and Torwood covers two rocky headlands on the southeast perimeter of Torquay, bordered on one side by Sea. The ward covers an area of 414 hectares, of which almost 1/4 is green space. This important publically accessible space gives a distinctive character to the area and much is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

Over 40,000 years ago early man found shelter in the deep caves at Kent's Cavern in the Ilisham Valley. Today this forms the gateway to UNESCO's English Riviera Global Geopark. The area also has the highest density of internationally important geosites of any ward in Torbay; and most of its 4.75 mile of coastline is designated as being of national importance.

In the early 1800's, as Torquay began to develop as a holiday destination, prosperous families began to build detached villas on the wooded slopes overlooking the harbour. The design and layout of the Warberries and the adjoining Lincombes, essentially between 1840 and 1860, are cited as "the single most important stage of development in Torquay's rise as one of England's most fashionable resorts" (Torbay Council, 2006). The scale of building in an extensive landscaped setting, and its confident execution over nearly 170 acres, became the hallmark for the mid 19th century vogue resort. Although some of these villas have been redeveloped into hotels or apartments, thanks to the designation of the Lincombes and Warberry Conservation Areas, the spacious open nature has remained largely intact.

The accommodation provided by major hotels, including two with four stars, combined with this unique setting plays an important part in Torbay's holiday offer.





At the heart lies Wellswood Green with its shops, primary school and church. The A379, descending towards the harbour, links Wellswood with Torwood. Home to Torquay Museum and a high density of restaurants, bars and food outlets this area includes a number of redevelopment opportunities. The architecture, open spaces, woodland and pine clad rocky coastline provide the essence of the “English Riviera”.



Images clockwise from above left: Meadfoot Beach, Kents Cavern, Monterey Pines, Torquay Museum on Torwood Street, Thatcher Rock, Fossilised coral on Meadfoot Beach, Ilisham Valley, Warberry Villa

POLICIES

1. Retain all Public Green areas for the benefit of visitors and residents, improving waste management and toilet facilities
2. Retain existing conservation areas and density of development
3. Continue to allow small hotels and brownfield sites to be redeveloped for family housing, whilst preserving building density and character
4. Encourage continued maintenance and upgrading of South West Coast Path and associated areas e.g. Hope’s Nose
5. Actively encourage diversity and prosperity of local businesses in Wellswood
6. Remove onstreet parking meters

SITES

7. Encourage and promote redevelopment of Torwood Street area and Terrace Car Park whilst retaining sufficient parking for local businesses
8. Redevelop the brownfield site on Babbacombe Road, adjacent to Wiltshires, as mixed housing or an innovative covered wet day sporting and leisure facility with educational links
9. Give consideration to any future proposals for redevelopment of the Palace Hotel and grounds, retaining a hotel
10. Give consideration to proposals for Kent’s Cavern to enhance Tourism and Education, in line with its importance within the English Riviera Geopark, and improve the access strategy to limit impact on the surrounding neighbourhood

PROJECTS

11. Re-open Redgate Beach and Footpath to Walls Hill
12. Provide a Pedestrian “safe transit” pathway along Ilisham Road from its junction with Ilisham Marine Drive to the Ilisham Valley
13. Provide a natural Footpath linking Ansteys Cove Car Park with Ilisham Road along the side of Stoodley Knowle Playing Fields
14. Address traffic management through Wellswood (Ilisham Road), improving character and environment