



Minera - Gwynfryn - Bwlchgwyn

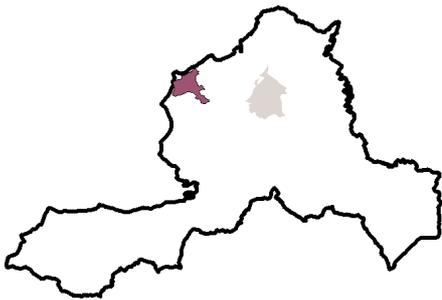
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This is one of a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes based on Wrexham LANDMAP (adopted November 2004), setting out recommendations for each Landscape Character area.

A history of limestone and sandstone quarrying, lead mining and farming link the villages at the head of the Clywedog Valley, overlooked by a prominent north-facing limestone scarp.

Landscape context

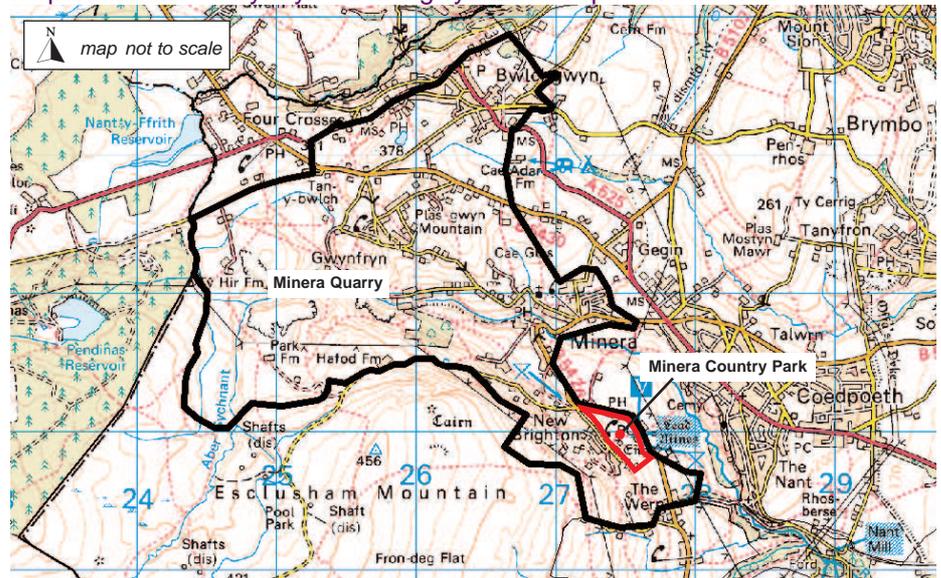
Although small in extent, this is the only significant area of limestone in Wrexham, and contains habitats not found elsewhere in the county borough, as well as distinctive scenery and settlement patterns. The character area also includes the head of the Clywedog Valley where, historically, land use and settlement has been influenced by exploitation of limestone and associated minerals, particularly lead.



Minera, Gwynfryn & Bwlchgwyn summary:

- Landscape strongly influenced by geology
- Legacy of lead mining and quarrying
- Prominent north facing limestone scarp
- Highest villages in Wrexham
- Area of landscape contrasts
- archeological and recreational potential
- Outstanding wildlife value

Map of Minera - Gwynfryn - Bwlchgwyn Landscape Character Area



Character Area boundaries should be considered transitional rather than precise.
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NOTE: For clarification purposes, the Country Park is Located at Minera lead mines adjacent to New Brighton. Public access elsewhere through this character area including Minera Quarry is restricted to public footpaths. Countryside access land lies within the character area. For details see The Countryside Council for Wales website.



Key characteristics

Visual character:

- The limestone scarp, and the adjoining head of the Clywedog valley are of different character but visually linked.
- Open and exposed on higher ground with a lack of tree cover and sparse hedgerows.
- Villages with dispersed settlement pattern, stone buildings frequent, built of Cefn sandstone
- Some old stone walls as field boundaries, generally in poor repair
- Quarries provide strong contrasts in terrain and colour in the landscape

- Pylons and overhead lines on poles often clutter skyline

Geological character:

- Varied topography, between 250 and 350 m above sea level, with stepped north-facing Carboniferous limestone scarp, a continuation of the Eglwyseg Crags in Denbighshire, separated by the Minera Fault from the Millstone Grit (Cefn-y-Fedw sandstone) landscape to the east
- Much geological interest - mineralogy, mines, caves and limestone pavement.
- Extensive evidence of former lead mining, limestone and sandstone quarrying, particularly Minera and Bwlchgwyn quarries

Ecological character:

- Complex area with a variety of fragmented habitats, including heath, acid and calcareous grassland, caves, bracken, woodland, scrub woodland and bare rock
- The only area in Wrexham County Borough with lowland calcareous grassland and areas of limestone pavement
- Birch woodland of high value covers the slopes around the entrance to Minera quarry

Historical character:

- Villages have mainly 19th - 20th century origin, associated with lead mining and subsistence farming. Resulting in a settlement pattern of clustered small villages and scattered roadside properties
- Many archeological sites, including prehistoric caves at Minera the disused limestone quarry with its lime kilns Minera lead mine with Hoffman kilns, engine houses, disused railway and other industrial archaeology features.
- Military border area - outer banks and ditches of Fron Heulog Iron Age Hillfort (Bwlchgwyn quarry) can still be seen

Cultural character:

- Agriculture, mainly upland grazing, is the main land use
- Minera lead mines country park includes preserved lead mining features
- The area is linked to Wrexham by the Clywedog Trail
- Area of rich historical and cultural heritage.

Overall management strategy:

Conservation and Enhancement

Management Guidance

Aims	Guidelines
Minimise skyline clutter and conserve rural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take opportunities where possible to remove existing overhead power lines and telegraph poles, resist siting of new ones ● Resist new telecommunications masts in locations where they would be prominent on the skyline or within an open landscape ● Any new development is to avoid effecting natural skylines and key views
Preserve character of existing settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain dispersed settlement pattern and character of vernacular buildings ● Encourage use of local building materials, particularly Cefn sandstone. Consider small scale working of local quarries to supply local needs
Enhance remaining areas of mining dereliction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carry out ecological and archeological surveys in advance of work and preserve features of value
Conserve geological interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain continuity and integrity of geological exposures, landforms, mines and caves ● Protect and manage rare limestone pavement features and associated flora in accordance with RIGS and SSSI designation recommendations ● Raise awareness of the geological heritage of the area
Conserve and extend habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop links between vulnerable natural habitats to increase sustainability ● Protect bats in urban areas, limestone caves and archeological features ● Natural sites identified within the Green Network Strategy are to be conserved
Safeguard industrial archeological heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Archaeology should be assessed where development takes place over early mining ● Liaise with local history societies, Welsh Mines Preservation Trust, Clwyd Powys archeological Trust and County Archaeologist
Encourage recreational uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate Minera limestone quarry into the Clywedog Trail and develop footpath links to moorlands ● Develop new uses for old mineral sites, taking land ownership and safety into consideration ● Refer to Local Access Forum and link with adjoining areas ● Refer to Green Network Strategy and implement new links

Landscape sensitivity

The area is high and exposed, so is sensitive to development of masts and overhead power lines, which could be prominent. Pressure for standardised residential infill development could change the distinctive character of the settlements. Quarries and geological exposures are sensitive to landfill or other inappropriate development.



For further information contact:

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All our information is available in accessible formats

