

Tamar Valley Centre

What is the Tamar Valley Centre?

- A gateway for visitors to the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Drop in to find out what there is to see and do in the area; be one of the first to walk the new 30km of tracks and trails in Cornwall and Devon.
- A space to showcase and celebrate all our landscape has to offer, through seasonally changing displays and exhibitions.
- A resource for the community, with 100m² of exhibition space for local artists and public event organisers to hire, plus space to hold meetings.
- A new home for the Tamar Valley AONB team, Calstock Parish Archive Trust, Calstock Parish Council and forthcoming Tamar Community Trust, who will own and manage the Centre.

Using local resources

The Tamar Valley Centre is a modern building for a modern age; an example of how locally-derived materials can be used in new ways.

The materials used, both inside and outside, are robust, and chosen for minimum maintenance. All materials are sourced and supplied from the AONB and surrounding area wherever possible, including:

- Western Red Cedar, grown in Tavistock, cut at Crocadon sawmill, for the external timber cladding.
- Douglas Fir, from Tavistock Woodlands, for ceiling cladding.
- UK Larch, from Tavistock Woodlands, for the mezzanine floor.
- 'Spolsted' Cornish Beech for the reception desk.
- Killas stone from Yennadon Quarry, near Yelverton, for the stone plinth.

Works were carried out by Midas Construction's Plymouth office using largely local labour. The Cornish hedges around the Centre, were built by contractors from north Cornwall.

How energy efficient is the building?

The Centre meets the Zero Emission Development (ZED) standards, which the architects, London-based Bill Dunster Associates and ZEDfactory, have been working to for many years.

It has been designed as a low energy, zero fossil emission building. Some energy efficient features of the building include:

- Sedum Roof – this succulent is very adaptable, can survive extreme weather conditions and it looks after itself. It has the added ability to absorb moisture, so less water ends up down the drain. The sedum was grown in Devon.
- Biomass Boiler – the wood pellets used to fuel the boiler are from a Cornwall manufacturer.
- Renewables - with the boiler and solar panels, the Centre benefits from carbon neutral heating, where all the heating and hot water demands of the building are met from renewable sources. With the forthcoming wind-turbine working with the photovoltaic cells, all of our electricity needs should be provided through these means.
- Ventilation – the innovative and trademark cowls you see dotted around the walls allow for healthy passive air exchange. They also contain a heat exchanger

that takes warm air out of the building through a honeycomb structure, and allows fresh air to be drawn back in through the same structure. This allows warm air to be absorbed, so the building loses less heat, and ensures air flows effectively throughout the building on hot summer days.

- Thermal mass – rather than pouring concrete into the ground for anchorage, a heavy structural frame has been created above ground enabling thermal mass, where the building absorbs warmth and coolness until it's needed, saving on heating and cooling costs.

How can I use the Tamar Valley Centre?

If you are organising an exhibition, public event or meeting and would like to use the Tamar Valley Centre, please contact the Tamar Valley AONB team to check availability and costs, and to discuss your requirements.

t: 01822 835030, e: bookings@tamarvalley.org.uk

How was the building funded?

The Centre was built as part of the East Cornwall Regeneration Project, the £1.8 million project, run by Cornwall County Council, to improve mine sites and create new tracks & trails.

Key funders have been Objective 1 ERDF, Rural Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Partnership (Rural Renaissance), Cornwall County Council, Caradon District Council, North Cornwall District Council, Calstock Parish Council, the Tamar Valley AONB (Natural England and Defra), Virador, Low Carbon Building Programme Phase 2, EDF Green Energy Fund and the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. The overall cost of constructing the Centre, including car parking and landscaping, was £900,000.

Thanks must go to Peter Sainsbury and Jeremy Williams from Cornwall Council who did much of the work on the funding bids with the Tamar Valley AONB team. Also, to Chris Hariades, who project-managed the build, and Midas Construction, who were the main contractors.

Why couldn't an old engine house be used for the Centre?

Old mine remains are listed structures. Only in very exceptional circumstances would the World Heritage Site office grant permission for an old mining feature to be re-used in this way.

The engine houses near the Centre are also not big enough – if we were able to extend, this would have compromised the setting of the building. They also do not allow for disabled access.

The World Heritage Site office were very heavily consulted during the planning process of the Centre, setting constraints and boundaries and looking at possible sites.

How can I find out more?

If you would like to know more about the Centre and how it came to be, please pick up a copy of The Valley (summer 2009), browse the plans or contact the Tamar Valley AONB team – 01822 835030, enquiries@tamarvalley.org.uk

Tamar Valley Centre, Cemetery Road, Drakewalls, Gunnislake, Cornwall
t: 01822 835030 e: enquiries@tamarvalley.org.uk

Just 5 minutes walk from Gunnislake Train Station on the Tamar Valley Line.