



Dorset National Landscape

Dorset National Landscape Partnership
Hosted by Dorset Council
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Dorset National Landscape Board Meeting, 10.00am, Thur 16th May 2024

**Dorchester Cricket Club Pavilion, Sawmills Lane (off Weymouth Avenue)
DT1 2RZ**

The meeting will start at 10.00 am sharp; the meeting room will be open from 0945. If you are unable to attend it would be helpful if you could send a briefed representative or an update. Please send apologies to Kate Townsend on kate.townsend@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

AGENDA

TIME	ITEM	TITLE	Purpose
1000	-	Chairman's welcome, introduction & apologies	
1015	-	Minutes of the last meeting	
1025	1	Brit Catchment Recovery Project (external presenter)	Info
1040	2	Team activity update, featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 23-24 Annual Review• Fingerpost Project• Brit Catchment Natural Flood Management programme	Info
1115	3	Partnership accounts 2023-2024	Decision
1120	4	Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Statement update	Info
1130	5	Terms of Reference update	Decision
1140		Break	
1200	6	Interim management plan	Decision
1215	7	Management plan review	Decision
1220	8	Legislation update: LUR Act amendments to the CROW Act	Info
1235	-	Partners' 2-minute updates	
	-	Any other business	
1300	-	End of meeting	

APPENDIX 1: further team activity detail

Proposed dates of next meetings:

	Winter	Spring (TBC)
AONB Steering Group	15 th October 2024	24 th April 2025
AONB Partnership Board	14 th November 2024	22 nd May 2025

If you wish to have items added to the agenda for the Board, please ensure suggestions are sent to [Tom Munro](#), [Kate Townsend](#) or the [Chairman](#) at least 7 days before the date of the Steering Group meeting which precedes the Board meeting, so they may be considered for timetabling by the that group.

Minutes of the Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 21st November 2023 (Cricket Club Pavilion, Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester)

Board attendance:

Organisation	Representative	Status	2023-11
Independent chairman	Dr Phil Sterling	Voting member	Present
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Ray Bryan	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Piers Brown	Voting member	
Dorset Council	Cllr Roland Tarr	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Jeremy Pope	Voting member	Present
Environment Agency	Keith Calder	Voting member	
Forestry Commission	Roly Boughton	Voting member	Apologies
Historic England	Ross Simmonds	Voting member	
National Farmers' Union	Robert Lasseter	Voting member	Present
Natural England	Robert Lloyd	Voting member	Apologies
Natural England	Tania Carvisiglia	Voting member	
The National Trust	Hannah Jefferson	Voting member	Present
Dorset Race Equalities Council	Vacant	Voting member	
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Imogen Davenport	Attending member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Giles Nicholson	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Country Land and Business Association	Mark Burton	Supporting Officer	Present
National Farmers' Union	Gemma Harvey	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Neil Wedge	Supporting Officer	Apologies
LAF	Janet Davis	Supporting Officer	Present

DAONB Team: Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink), Sue Dampney (Culture, Communications & Learning Officer), Rachel Janes (FIPL Officer), Pia Lindstrom (FIPL Support Officer), Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), Jill Hearing (Project Officer), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in May 2023 were agreed as a true record. No matters arising.

Partners' 90 second updates

- JPope (DNHAS): New director at the museum who has put in place a new marketing strategy, already seeing an increase in footfall as a result.
- CllrRTarr (DC): At Parish level the ROW law is being discussed; many believe it's outdated and a new Countryside Act is needed.
- CllrCTurner (DAPTC): Agree with Cllr Tarr, it needs to be redesigned. Encouraging developers to be green by design and install electric charging points / solar panels etc.

- d. GDickinson (CPRE): Kate Adie has been enrolled as the new President of CPRE. Encouraging roof top solar as does not impact countryside. Incinerator appeal coming up and battery storage issue continues.
- e. WBond (DLNP): With basic payments declining, farmers feeling the pinch and may need help from the AONB to help them diversify. LNRS / nitrate mitigation may provide an income but there's no certainty.
- f. MBurton (CLA): More engagement in the Poole Harbour nutrient mitigation scheme. Ensuring all parties talking to each other & sharing resources. Rock Review of recommendations to Defra around tenant farming may lead to changes in the sector.
- g. CllrRBryan (DC): In past 3 weeks won 5 awards around the climate agenda, an example of councils punching above weight despite limited resources. Recently secured additional DfT funds for highways, but there are testing times ahead, and an election coming.
- h. RLasseter (NFU): Seeing an increase in land abandonment and decreasing production levels in this country (pigs, eggs, salad and cereals). Re KMC, need to develop a long-term vision for a land-based education college. 'Dorset College' would be a merger between Kingston Maurwood & Weymouth College (talks ongoing).
- i. HJefferson (NT): Team dealing with the aftermath of the recent storms in particular at Burton Bradstock, Cogden and Ringstead. In general visitor numbers are down across the southwest, both in terms of visitors and stays and the Trust predict that this trend will continue next year and is a reflection of the cost-of-living crisis. Team has a new office at Kingston Maurwood college.
- j. JDavis (LAF): Looking into shared use issues along ROW so that maximum number of users can access the countryside. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) due in the new year and will comment on this once published.
- k. GNicholson (DC): ROWIP will be published next year and includes practical ways of implementation. Working with Buglife as a leader to advise on increasing biodiversity of motorway verges on a national level. Landscape Recovery application bid in for Portland, expecting to hear outcome in next few weeks. Strong support DAONB and for FiPL projects & outcomes which could be rolled out nationally.

Comments:

- CllrRTarr: Attended meetings with National Highways on managing verges for wildlife, flooding & drainage issues.
- PSterling: Also attended meetings with National Highways and advised on their Biodiversity and Net Zero policy e.g. not using topsoil.
- JPope: BT Openreach wanted to install a new pole-mounted line on the verges around West Compton Hill but are re-routing thanks to intervention from the AONB team & local opposition.
- CllrRBryan: The Greenspaces team are working on a Hedge-to-Hedge review and a new policy on weed maintenance on edge of tarmac roads.
- GDickinson: Concerned over land abandonment and importing food. Solar panels being installed on the ground needs to change.
- CllrCTurner: There should be legislation to ensure that new builds have solar panels installed.
- CllrRBryan: Please feed these comments into the Local Plan when out for consultation. Believe government guidance on sustainable development is due imminently.

1. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery report. In addition, team members updated the board.

a. Rachel Janes: Farming in Protected Landscapes

Link to presentation [here](#)

Rachel outlined some of the positive outcomes of the Farming in Protected Landscape programme so far, giving examples of projects which have benefitted Climate, Nature, People and Place across the Dorset AONB. These include innovative projects such as funding for a compost turner to improve soil health/reduce reliance on artificial fertiliser, a brush harvester for wild seed collection, a hemp trial to investigate if this could be a climate change resilient crop, funding for new audience farm visits and

restoration work to Holditch Tower, removing it from the Buildings at Risk register. In total 124 projects have been awarded funding across the Dorset AONB. The scheme (funded by Defra) has been extended to run until March 2025 (4 years total), with a total grant funding pot of £2.18 million.

Comments:

- MBurton: The finding of research projects funded by FiPL could be of national interest and benefit. Findings need to be circulated nationally.
- CllrCTurner: Does the compost turner support no till farming? RJ: Yes, as it limits soil disturbance, feeds it with nutrients and improves soil health.
- CllrRBryan: Proud of team for the work they've done on this and want it to continue. Please promote the success to MP Simon Hoare who now has a ministerial position.
- WBond: Sit on the local panel and find it very interesting and rewarding. Good panel debate.
- GNicholson: Some of the compost is made from arisings from roadside verge management.
- CllrRBryan: A challenge for the FiPL team - please set up a webinar for Members to let them know how good this scheme is.
- TMunro: 15% of farmers across the AONB engaged with the project, will be 20% by the end.
- CllrCTurner: Benefits of the compost turner are that it will also use less fuel / miles and avoid use of huge tractors.
- GNicholson: Another benefit is the reduction in artificial fertilisers being used.
- RLasseter: It's a success because AONB team appointed good people who get to know local area. Just like in times gone by and that is the key.
- HJefferson: Could this be replicated nationally? TM: Yes
- JPope: I chaired England Farming & Food partnership in 2000s. Getting farmers working in collaboration is very good. It worked well at that time and generated income.

Published after the board meeting: case study on compost turner project.

b. Caroline Richards – Flavours: project update

Link to presentation [here](#)

Caroline highlighted the rich, positive and joyful experiences undertaken by participants during farm visits as part of the Flavours project. These visits, organised primarily for new & diverse audiences, have taken place at farms and country parks across the Dorset & Cranborne Chase AONB and have opened up opportunities for conversation, collaboration and a deeper understanding of cultures both for participants and organisers as they have explored and enjoyed both the landscape and food together.

Comments:

- CllrRTarr: This work is so important and helps people to live peacefully together.

c. Kate Townsend – AONB Photo Competition

Link to presentation [here](#)

Kate presented the winning entries from the recent AONB photo competition to the board. There will be an exhibition of the photos in the springtime at Durlston Castle, Swanage. More details to follow

RESOLUTION:

The Board approves and notes the progress made towards delivering the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024.

2. 2022/2023 AONB Partnership accounts

TM presented the paper.

Comments:

- CllrRBryan: Advise Tom to speak to Steven Ford at DC re. funding.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approve the proposed budget and funding priorities for 2024-25.

3. AONB Management Plan Review Process

TM presented the paper. He advised he will be establishing a Management Plan Review Group and will be looking for board members and other experts to sit on this. Some additional online partnership meetings may be needed during the process. The recent Annual Forums were a good starting point for conversations with the public around the review.

Comments:

- WBond: Advise caution over treating all consultee feedback equally at Stage 4 of the process.
- HJefferson: The Trust has recently published its 10-year strategy. They undertook a large amount of consultation, there may be useful learning points about the process for the AONB team.
- CllrRTarr: In general the public are tired of consultations. Check what else is on the DC calendar for this period to avoid clashes. TM: we could extend into 2025 if needs be.
- PSterling: Consider reviewing the panel procedure. TM: I will seek advice from the Steering Group and come back with a proposal.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approve the proposed intention to review, the timeline and broad outline of the process.

4. National Landscapes Re-branding

The rebrand launch takes place tomorrow when we will be known as Dorset National Landscape. This is an opportunity for us as a landscape family to restate and clarify our purposes and intent as landscapes for everyone and for nature.

Alongside this, the briefing note (appendix 2) explains how the duty of regard to AONBs is changing and strengthening on the back of the government amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. In the New Year we expect to have more information from government around this and we will circulate guidance to partners. We hope to receive additional funding from Defra to back up the extra responsibilities.

5. Any other business

- MBurton: Could there be a dial in facility for these meetings as it's not always easy to make them in person?
- CllrRBryan: Would this work legally if making decisions?
- TM: advisory group only so yes it could be an option. We will look into it.

ITEM 1: Brit Catchment Recovery Project

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	West Dorset Wilding
SUMMARY	<p>Landscape Recovery is the 'top tier' of UK Government's Environmental Land Management programme. The Brit Catchment Recovery Project is one of 3 live Landscape Recovery pilots in/partly in the Dorset National Landscape. Wareham Arc & the Upper Axe Landscape Recovery projects were from the first tranche of pilots; this project is from the second tranche.</p> <p>Each of the pilot projects are seeking to develop a single land management agreement between multiple landowners / land managers and Defra for funding long-term (20yrs+) land management change with priority outcomes for nature and climate.</p> <p>The pilot projects have 2 yrs' funding from Defra to facilitate this work, to undertake feasibility/detailed design and to establish baselines for effective monitoring.</p>		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>No direct implications for the Dorset National Landscape Partnership budget. The Brit Recovery Project has close synergies with Dorset National Landscape projects.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>The Board approves and notes the progress made towards delivering the Management Plan</p>		

This will be a presentation from Sam Rose, Executive Director of [West Dorset Wilding](#) which is the lead body for the Landscape Recovery pilot. West Dorset Wilding is a landowner-led charitable organisation established in 2021.

[illegible]

ITEM 2: Delivering the AONB Management Plan - annual report for 2023-2024

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	Dorset National Landscape team
SUMMARY	The AONB team is leading, coordinating, promoting and supporting delivery of the actions and intent of the AONB Management Plan as the central part of its core duties and through specific projects.		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Delivery based on agreed budget and business plan.		
RECOMMENDATION	The Board approves and notes the progress made towards delivering the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024		

This new presentation format is hopefully more digestible. Further detail is appended to the rear of these papers

2.1. NATURE

The AONB's wealth of wildlife is one of the outstanding qualities that underpin its designation, including the extent and diversity of semi-natural habitats and the wide array of species. The UK's most diverse grid square (vascular plants and mammals) is in the Dorset AONB to the south and west of Wareham.

The AONB team leads strategic nature-focussed partnerships in Wild Purbeck and the Dorset Downs and Vales Conservation Forum, and contributes to many others (SNCI Forum, Jurassic Coast Nature Recovery Network, Dorset Local Nature Recovery group, Dorset Local Nature Partnership, etc). The AONB Partnership also directs significant funding towards nature outcomes through Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL), the Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Enhancement Fund and other ad hoc funding streams.



a. ISLE OF PURBECK LANDSCAPE RECOVERY

Through the team's lead of the Wild Purbeck Partnership, we were invited to lead a bid to the [second round Landscape Recovery Pilot](#).

Landscape Recovery is one of the elements of the Environmental Land Management Scheme, designed to support transformational land management change at scale. The object of the pilot is to support the development and design of a long-term (20+ years) funding agreement between one legal body responsible for delivery (on behalf of all participants) and government and private finance backers.

This Isle of Purbeck Landscape Recovery bid covers an area of over 8,000 hectares, broadly covering the coast from Durlston to the army ranges, parts of the vale including Corfe Common and farms to the north of Swanage, parts of the Purbeck Ridge, the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve (NNR) and its surrounds. Within this there are 40 participants including the NNR landowners, 20 tenants farming 3 private estates and the tenanted National Trust estate.

These participants have come together around a common vision for expanded natural habitats, high nature value grasslands and woodlands and areas of regenerative farming where food production remains the priority.

The bid was unsuccessful but the vision prevails. Aspects of this vision are being delivered through new Countryside Stewardship agreements. A bid to an expected third round of Landscape Recovery Pilots will be submitted.

This work is also supporting progress towards the declaration of a new 'super' National Nature Reserve across the coastal area between Durlston NNR and St Aldhelm's Head. Key landowners of this area are National Trust and Dorset Council.

Highlights:

- 40 individuals and organisations came together for the Landscape Recovery Pilot opportunity
- These people share and have started to implement a vision for a high nature value landscape over 8,000 hectares

This project area connects the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve with a much wider area, linking the Purbeck coast, vale, ridge and heaths.

**b. WEST DORSET RIVERS & COASTAL STREAMS**

The Dorset National Landscape is the catchment host for the [West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams](#) operational catchment, and supports action to improve the condition of our rivers and streams, guided by issues appraisals that are updated every five years.

Two communities have been particularly motivated to improve their rivers: those along the River Asker, and those along the River Char, and we are expanding our efforts to the communities along the Swan Brook too, in partnership with Swanage Town Council, Planet Purbeck, and the National Trust. Through partnership working with [Dorset Wild Rivers](#), we have supported landowner advice, improved land management, habitat management, river restoration, and invasive species control. We also support the community-led 'Clean Rivers of West Dorset' group, which has the support and involvement of Chris Loder MP.

A focus over the past year has been on the wider River Brit Catchment, which includes the Simene, Mangerton and Asker as well as the Brit. We have led a successful bid to the Environment Agency for a Natural Flood Management Project. At the same time, West Dorset Wilding have successfully secured funding from Defra for the Brit Catchment Recovery Project. We are leading on citizen science initiatives in Bridport and have trained a cohort of volunteers to better understand the threats facing the rivers. In supporting these citizens, we are also working on the establishment of a community laboratory.

Highlights:

- Through the Natural Flood Management investment from the Environment Agency, we will deliver:
 - Four hectares of land use change that will support storage of excess rainfall in the field;
 - One hectare of in-field flood storage, through the creation of small bunds that will hold back water on high-risk overland flow routes;
 - 12km of leaky dams to slow the flow of water through the catchment, trapping sediment along the way;

- Five hectares of floodplain reconnection, lowering riverbanks to allow more water onto the floodplain, and stored in wetland areas, scrapes, and ponds. This increases storage capacity of flood waters in time of need.

The total value of delivering these solutions is £280,000. Furthermore, £215,000 has been allocated to detailed monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of these measures. Staff time to design, secure permissions, and oversee delivery, as well as enable wider community engagement, come to a further £117,000. With a 10% contingency, the overall budget of the project is £673,000.

- The Brit Catchment Recovery Project is working in the same catchment as the Natural Flood Management Project through partnership with 53 landowners over 3,700 hectares. They have secured funding for two years to develop details and secure funding for the following 20 years of land management.
- With support from Wessex Water, we have supported the development of a citizen science hub in Bridport. We have trained over 30 people in a number of monitoring methods and engaged with over 100 at various events in Bridport. In addition, we are working with Pineapple Estate and Dorset Wildlife Trust on the establishment of a community river laboratory, having been donated the carcass of an ex-demonstration professional laboratory carcass.
- Following a meeting on the Swan Brook, organised by Sustainable Swanage with 30 attending, we have developed an issues appraisal that sets out what community action can do to help the state of the river. This will tie in with the National Trust's Natural Flood Management Project, which has also recently been awarded funding. Also in the partnership are Swanage Town Council and Planet Purbeck.

"This wet winter's floods have shown us how important it is to slow the flow of water across entire catchments, reducing flood risk to vulnerable roads and properties. We're proud to host the Dorset National Landscape Partnership and be part of this project." Cllr Ray Bryan, Dorset Council's Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment (to May 2024)

www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/project/rivers/

c. WYTCH FARM LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS ENHANCEMENT FUND

The Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Enhancement Fund was established through a section 106 agreement associated with a planning application to extend the working life of the Wytch Farm oilfield by a further 20 years, the fund opened in January 2018. Perenco, the oilfield operator, provided a sum of £1.7 million for landscape, biodiversity, and sustainable transport projects to enhance the landscape. Since then, there have been a total of 36 successful project applications, 29 of these have been completed and there are 7 currently in progress. To date, a total of **£1,539,354.63** grant funding has been offered, towards total project costs of **£3,227,974.16**.

Highlights:

- Dorset **Peatland Restoration project** has had lots of news coverage ([Press Release](#) | [Media](#) | [National Trust](#), [Dorset Peat Partnership receives funds for £1million project](#) | [Bournemouth Echo](#), [Rare species set to benefit from £1m Dorset peatland restoration - BBC News](#)) produced a short video [The Dorset Peat Partnership \(youtube.com\)](#) and NE have launched a game for young people 'Peat the Lapwing' <https://sea-bunny-stories.itch.io/peatlands>



- **Purbecks Precious Past** – Veteran Tree project delivered a total of **86 events** (x6 training, x3 guided walk, x12 seed gathering, x17 surveys, x23 Veteran tree surveys, x24 tree nursery days) involving at least x**50 individuals** (no repeats), **376** trees surveyed and **1000+ volunteer hours!**



See an emerging list of case studies on the AONB website:

[Case study: Destination Kimmeridge | Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty \(dorsetaonb.org.uk\)](#)

[Case study: RSPB Arne Middlebere 'Lookout' | Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty \(dorsetaonb.org.uk\)](#)

d. **LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE**

National Grid, through their [Landscape Enhancement Initiative](#), have supported three projects in the Dorset AONB that enhance landscape around their infrastructure. These are focussed in and around the Marshwood Vale and along the South Dorset Ridgeway, and consist of meadow restoration, dry stone wall restoration, hedgerow planting and management, river restoration, and other beneficial activities that deliver management guidelines set out in our [Landscape Character Assessment](#).

Two projects have completed delivery, with one – Linking Chalk, River & Vale – underway. The projects are delivered in partnership with local farmers and landowners, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West and the National Trust. In total we have secured £600,000 of investment from the National Grid, matched by £300,000 of in-kind support, resulting in £1M of investment in the protected landscape since 2018.

Linking Chalk River & Vale - delivery completed:

- 2 pond restorations
- 10ha of grassland restoration

- 1.9km of hedge laying
- 39 new hedgerow trees
- 2.8ha of scrub clearance

Investment through the LEI has allowed us to deliver significant landscape enhancement in the Dorset AONB, and we hope to apply for further funding from the National Grid in the future to continue this good work.

www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/project/reconnecting-the-landscape/

e. NATURE RECOVERY PLANNING – local and national

Production of a Nature Recovery Plan is part of our [Colchester Declaration](#) commitment. Every National Landscape in England is committed to producing a plan that will set out the important areas for wildlife and opportunities for enhancing the landscape for them.

The Dorset National Landscape has been working on the plan in-house and it is in the final stages of production. It will comprise of an introductory section, details for semi-natural grassland, broadleaved woodlands, wetland, lowland heathland, urban, coastal, and the farmed environment, for the whole AONB plus more detailed sections for each of the 35 terrestrial landscape character areas of the Dorset AONB. We have also been working with Dorset Environmental Records Centre to better incorporate details species information into our plans.

Information on the plan was presented in the [November 2022 Partnership Board](#).

Dorset Council has been designated the responsible authority for the development of [Dorset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), which will incorporate the ambitions set out in Dorset National Landscape's Nature Recovery Plan.

Highlights:

- *Representing Dorset National Landscape on the National Landscapes Association Climate and Nature Panel.*
- *Supporting Dorset Council's production of the Local Nature recovery Strategy by chairing the data and mapping expert advisory group.*
- *Consulting with experts on Dorset National Landscape's Nature Recovery Plan.*

Dorset National Landscape team are providing really valued contributions to the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy, sharing expertise and lessons learned from planning and delivering nature recovery in their special landscape to benefit the whole county.

2.2. CLIMATE

The AONB Partnership has recognised the need to reduce emissions from this landscape, enhance carbon sequestration and storage and adapting the landscape and our activities to enhance resilience in the face of a changing climate. In addition, we recognise in both policy and practice the need for additional renewable energy generation, and support applications which are of the right scale and materials for their location. One of the major opportunities for this landscape is to harness natural solutions which store and sequester carbon as well as absorb water and mitigate extreme heat events.

The AONB team has also provided input to the Dorset Council Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plan – the plan and reported actions can be found on the [Dorset Council website](#)



a. FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) is a national initiative funded by Defra through which the English National Landscapes and National Parks are supporting farmers, landowners and others to deliver projects which meet the programme's outcomes for People, Place, Climate and Nature. The scheme runs until March 2025 (4 years total), with a total grant funding pot of £2.3 million. 130 projects were completed (102) or live (28) by end of 23/24 with a further 13 having been awarded funding for 24/25 delivery only.

Originally Dorset NL were awarded £635k to allocate for Year 3 but secured an additional £122k funding for emergency works on the Grade 1 Listed Manor Barn at Winterborne Clenston, resulting in a total grant spend of £757k for 23/24. Nearly 90% of the £885k grant pot for Year 4 has been allocated.

Highlights:

- 8.2 km of new native hedgerow has been planted to date with a further 3km hedgerow planting planned for 24/25,
- 3489 trees have been planted to date (1088 in 23/24)
- 150m of the river Axe restored so that it connects with the floodplain, preventing flooding downstream, capturing carbon and increasing biodiversity, with a further 100m funded for restoration in summer 2024.
- 18.46 ha of species rich grassland sown – 11.4h of which sown with FiPL funded brush-harvester collected seed (FiPL total is 33.68ha).
- Two compost turners are now operational in Dorset with farmers making great use of farmyard manure, sharing equipment and learning – leading to healthier soils and reduced reliance on artificial inputs.
- 57 projects improve understanding of carbon storage, carbon emissions and climate change impacts.

[Dorset AONB FiPL webpage](#). includes a series of films and case studies detailing key projects - [The Hogchester Meadows Expansion Project](#), [Farming, food and education at Middlebere & Turnworth](#), [Restoring the River Axe at Mosterton](#) & [Emergency Works at Winterborne Clenston Barn](#)

b. COMMUNITY TREE PROJECT

Following consultation with parish and town councils, we have developed a project to support communities to plan for and plant trees that will contribute to nature recovery and survive our future climate, as well as being 'the right trees in the right places', appropriately cared for. The project is supported by Dorset Council, co-ordinated by the Dorset National Landscape Team, and covers the Dorset Council area. There are two main strands: a small grant fund to support the planning of tree planting projects, as well as community planting and engagement activities; and a pilot Volunteer Tree Warden scheme offering training and support for those parish and town councils who wish to participate. We are also working with Public Health Dorset to engage with five schools in West Dorset, raising the profile of trees and the benefits they bring with largely Reception/Early Years Foundation Stage classes.

Highlights:

- 15 volunteer tree wardens attended an online induction session with presentations from the Tree Council and Dorset Arboriculture and Tree Teams; this will be followed up by a tree identification workshop in June.
- 6 advisory visits have been completed or are in progress to support parish/town councils and schools to develop their plans for tree planting projects.
- Following the delivery of 5 'welly walks' with West Dorset schools, a tree planting day was held in February for all the Early Years Foundation children who have participated – a great day was had by all!

We'll continue working with communities to roll out the training and support offer, as well as completing delivery of the West Dorset schools project.

c. LOW CARBON DORSET

Originally, Low Carbon Dorset was a five-year programme of activities to help stimulate growth in Dorset's low carbon economy and reduce its carbon footprint. It ran between 2018 and Spring 2023. With additional funding of £856k from the Shared Prosperity Funding, the programme is continuing until March 2025.

The programme offers free technical support and grant funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to businesses, public-sector and community organisations across Dorset Council area. Dorset National Landscape sit on the grant decision panel.

Highlights:

Over the lifetime of the Low Carbon Dorset (January 2018-present), it has delivered:

- 241 grants awarded totalling £6.77M, and £18.93M total investment in low-carbon projects in Dorset.
- 984 applications for support from Dorset's business, community, and public sector organisations.
- 10,231 tonnes annual reduction of CO₂e
- 12.98MW of renewable energy capacity installed

Activity and Outputs – 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

I can confirm that the works have now been completed, both the pv/battery and floodlight replacement. We're very pleased with the works and surprised at the amount of electricity generated even during the recent bad weather. The work would not have been possible without your help so many thanks (Dorchester Tennis and Squash Club).



- 174 applications for support from Dorset's business, community, and public sector organisations.
 - Business – 56
 - Community – 13

- Public Sector - 105
- 23 grants awarded totalling £501k.
- £1.54M total investment.
- 42.5 tonnes annual reduction of CO2e (completed projects).
- 0.159MW of renewable energy capacity installed (completed projects).

<https://www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk/>

2.3. PEOPLE

This section explores the team's work in helping people make a connection to this nationally-important landscape and its special qualities. Some activities are specifically focussed on reaching underserved audiences in support of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles.

Team members provide strategic input to Health & Nature Dorset, the Dorset Tourism Association, Food from England, etc.



a. STEPPING INTO NATURE

Over the last 7 years, Stepping into Nature has been working in partnership to provide opportunities for older people, people living with long term health conditions and carers to enjoy nature. This year saw the end of National Lottery Community Fund support in September, so the Stepping into Nature team are developing new projects to build on their learning and enable more people to access and enjoy nature.

Highlights:

- To finish off the Stepping into Nature project, we created self-led nature inspired activities that have been shared widely, such as the 'Walk Dorset's History' guides and films showing the beauty and accessibility of 10 locations across Dorset.

- Secured £102,606 from Farming in Protected Landscapes programme to help adults with disabilities explore and understand the farming environment in Dorset, and train and support farmers to safely run farm events, opening the countryside to a wider range of people.
 - In February, 13 farmers have been trained through the Countryside Education Visits Accreditation scheme (CEVAS) and will each be hosting their first visits later this year.
 - Around 7 groups of adults living with disabilities have been engaged and we are cocreating their farm visits to take place this year. Disabilities of groups include; sight impaired, hearing impaired, learning disabilities and autism and mental health issues.
- Coordinated a Nature Buddies Network Steering Group to collaboratively build a model for how we think a Nature Buddies Network could be delivered across Dorset, thanks grants from Natural England and Farming in Protected Landscapes grants. As a reminder, Nature Buddies are volunteers embedded into existing organisations who will provide personalised support to help overcome barriers to help people connect with nature.
- Following the creation of this Nature Buddies Network model, we have applied to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for £248, 810 with match of £133, 643. We will find out if successful in June/July of 2024.
- We continue to build work through the Health and Nature Dorset collaboration through delivery of staff wellbeing projects and research into barriers people with long term conditions experience to access nature. We published a report looking at the barriers people living with long term health conditions face when trying to engage with nature. [Read the full research report.](#)

"It's been fantastic to widen who we work with through new projects. We are keeping our fingers crossed that we'll be successful in securing funding to allow us to grow the wellbeing work of the Dorset National Landscape"

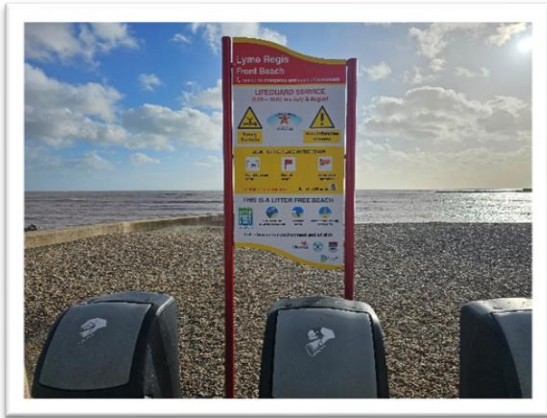
[Read more here.](#)

b. VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Dorset's outstanding landscape is the main reason most people visit the area. The landscape underpins the tourism economy and plays a huge role in supporting local services. Visitor management is a loose term which encompasses many different projects. In essence, it is about managing the impact of visitors so that Dorset National Landscape retains its natural beauty and special qualities, while helping people to enjoy, understand and engage with the place. Given the popularity and volume of visitors to the coast, it is unsurprising that much of the work is focused along the Jurassic Coast. Dorset National Landscape, through the Visitor Tourism and Access Manager, oversees delivery of visitor management projects along the whole of the Jurassic Coast, including East Devon.

Work has mostly focused on:

- Reducing, rationalising and improving interpretation
- Replacing/ improving coastal safety signage
- Improving Access for All in the landscape through improved multi-user routes



Highlights:

- New (replacement) beach safety sign installed Lyme Regis Front Beach
- Work can commence on replacement of Lyme Regis safety information (5 panels on East Cliff) following approval of PSPO guidelines
- New (replacement) interpretation panel installed Budleigh Salterton near Fossil Roots
- Work commenced on Charmouth signage improvements- 4 interpretation panels and 2 safety panels
- Access for All improvements to multi-user routes at Hilfield Nature Reserve
- Five exciting new Access for All capital projects selected for 2024/25

Full details in Appendix

"Some excellent practical improvements have taken place (despite the weather!), which will help more people access, enjoy, and understand Dorset's beautiful natural landscape." Sally, Visitor Tourism and Access Manager

c. ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Finding out what young people think about the countryside was the starting point to a new strand of work aimed at increasing our engagement with 11-24 year olds.

The findings of the youth-led survey done in 2022 provided the evidence for a second FiPL grant award, to explore one of the priorities highlighted in the survey – the need for events focussed specifically at 11-18 year olds. Over the coming year, we will connect up with 3 youth groups to support them to create pilot age-appropriate events in their area. The first youth group was the Weymouth-based Curtain Raisers drama group, who developed their first outdoor performance at Culliford Tree Barrow (which unfortunately was cancelled due to bad weather).



Highlights:

- Over 40 young people engaged in the outdoor drama performance.
- New partnership with Public Health Dorset, enabling us to provide tree focussed curriculum activities for Reception aged children in West Dorset.

Planned 24-25

- June 1st X1 group event at Buckland Newton - Owl pellet dissection, star grazing, bird ID, bat detection, a campout and hedgehog monitoring.
- June 29th x1 group event T Bridport creative writing workshop outline with themes of owl cam, piglets, sunflowers, habitats, wheat, climate resilience and machinery!

"We're delighted to see that the survey has also kickstarted new conversations between organisations and landowners in Dorset. A long-term Vision has been developed in Purbeck, led by the National Trust, to help define opportunities for young people to explore and enjoy the landscape." Sue Dampney, Dorset National Landscape Culture, Community & Learning Officer

d. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

To help keep the National Landscape special for future generations, each year the Sustainable Development Fund supports projects that will help to conserve, enhance, protect and celebrate the National Landscape by furthering the aims of the Management Plan. In 2023/24 we supported 9 different projects to the value of £14,354.00

Highlights:

- 6 projects engaged 835 young people in the National Landscape
- Habitat monitoring carried out across 2,000 ha of the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve
- 2 [new walking trails](#) with podcasts produced
- Creation of a Food Security Plan for Bridport
- Heritage and traditions celebrated and promoted through dance, song, poetry and arts projects.

"The freedom we all felt working on site outdoors, in the elements, connected us to the bigger story of the beach and was a felt experience that has lasting resonance." Caught in the Net Project founder

A selection of case studies of several previous projects supported by the Sustainable Development Fund [here](#)

e. **FLAVOURS: A taste of Dorset's outstanding landscape**

The FLAVOURS project invites ethnically diverse communities to explore Dorset's outstanding landscape. Focusing on food, we're launching a season of taster activities that will introduce participants to the beauty of our natural surroundings. This exciting initiative is made possible through collaboration between the Dorset National Landscape team, Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC), Dorset Food & Drink, and Activate Performing Arts. As we enter the co-created stage of the project, we look forward to fostering connections, celebrating culture, and savouring delicious local flavours.

Highlights

Farm-based Taster Events:

- With support from FIPL, the project team organised 4 on-farm events in the summer & autumn for over 120 people from ethnically diverse communities. The FLAVOURS project is drawing on these developing relationships and valuable insights gained. These events enabled the team to better understand participant preferences and refine active engagement approaches with attendees, to better identify opportunities going forward.

Co-Created Phase:

- The project is now entering the co-created phase with targeted engagement with The DREC global cafes and groups a priority. Collaborating with colleagues at the Dorset Race Equality Council helps ensure inclusivity, as we encourage and invite people to discover the countryside and enjoy local food and drink.

Curated Menu of Places and Spaces:

- To help our target audiences gain a better understanding of what and where the Flavours offer is and refers to. We are offering a curated menu of green and open spaces in Dorset, where diverse groups will be invited to explore and connect with nature. Some participants may be experiencing these places for the first time. These walks and visits provide an opportunity to connect with nature and learn about local food production.

Rang Barse - Colours over Corfe Castle Event:

- The recent Rang Barse event in March 2024 celebrated spring and the Hindu festival of Holi. Vibrant colours marked the occasion as the BPC Indian Community organised a spectacular community event at the iconic Corfe Castle.
- The Flavours team were invited to attend, along with our partners from Activate - who ran a Rangoli and garland making activity, giving us an opportunity to start conversations about FLAVOURS.

Upcoming Multicultural Events:

- Late spring and summer 2024 will see the FLAVOURS team attending various multicultural events. Notable ones include World of Love, The Dorset Mela, and the One World festival. These events provide an opportunity to connect with diverse audiences and promote the FLAVOURS project.
- In October, we plan to host a 'Cultural Dorset Apple Cake' celebration that highlights connections with our local orchards. But it's more than just cake-it's an exploration of how multicultural communities incorporate apples into their cultural food and recipes.

f. **PROMOTING THE AONB**

Engaging people in the landscape is central to many of our projects but we also ensure core communication and engagement work reaches out to people who live, work or visit the AONB, often linking to local and seasonal opportunities as they arise.

The rebranding of AONBs to National Landscapes has been a significant activity for the Dorset National Landscape Team. In November 2023, high profile launch marked the simultaneous roll out of the new name and brand across National Landscapes in England and Wales. An initial campaign to launch the brand was successful nationally and in Dorset the new brand has been well received. The essential rebrand of website, workwear and email signatures has been achieved with National Landscape Association funding support. Further roll out of the brand on other promotional material will be done as and when stocks of the old publications run out.

The Take a Dorset View Photo Competition has been central to our communications since it launched in April 2023, with support from Dorset Magazine and Castle Cameras. Over 700 photos were entered, by 126 photographers, giving the judges a very difficult decision. Winner and Runner Ups in both the Open and Youth categories will be shown at the meeting. These will be showcased in a Take a Dorset View exhibition together with the Highly Commended entries, at Dorset County Hospital (opened April 2024) and Durlston Country Park (autumn 2024).

Social media engagement has increased by 161% across Facebook and 89% across Instagram compared to 2022/23. A series of campaigns highlighting the special qualities of the AONB have had outstanding reach.

- Increased engagement across all social media platforms: 280 posts published; total followers for X 9665, Facebook 5,100 and Instagram 2175; 25,597 engagements (likes, shares, comments) and 1,490,106 impressions (no. of times content viewed).
- New social media campaigns focussed on Seasonal wildlife, Springwatch, FIPL case studies, Beautiful Places to Explore reels, South Dorset Ridgeway (Hidden in the Hills), Take a Dorset View Photo Competition winning entries, Winter, SDF fund promotion, event promotion, news and updates.
- Dorset Magazine continues to support us with a page or spread dedicated to the Dorset AONB in each issue to cover elements of the Dorset AONB special qualities as well as our active projects.

'I had been on an outing with my family at Brownsea Island when I caught a glimpse of a magical view of a hidden entry way to the most beautiful landscape. I like discovering and photographing hidden sights that people are not usually looking for'. Mia Lyon (age 12), Take a Dorset View Youth Category Runner Up

<https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/news/take-a-dorset-view-2023-photo-competition-winners-announced/>

Website: www.dorsetaonb.org.uk; **Twitter:** [@DorsetAONB](https://twitter.com/DorsetAONB); **Facebook:** [DorsetAONB](https://www.facebook.com/DorsetAONB); **Instagram:** [@dorsetaonb](https://www.instagram.com/dorsetaonb)

2.4. PLACE

This section encompasses the team's role in place-making – input to the planning system and conserving, enhancing and promoting the area's culture and heritage.



a. PLANNING PROTOCOL WORK

The Team received over 330 consultations in 2023-24, which represents a notable uplift from previous years. The consultations include both planning applications and consultations from organisations such as the Forestry Commission and statutory undertakers, particularly electricity and water companies. A large majority of the consultations received are from Dorset Council's development management service and the Team have communicated with the planning department to encourage the use of thresholds that seek to ensure that the consultations received are those application most in need of specialist input from the AONB Team.

Highlights:

- Major solar proposals within and close to the AONB have provided some of the larger projects to which we have responded, although there are some signs of a downturn in these applications, thought to be linked to grid connection issues. The most notable solar farm application the Team were involved in during the year was the Public Inquiry into a proposed large solar farm within the

AONB, at Cruxton Farm, near Maiden Newton. The appeal was recovered by the Secretary of State for a final decision and despite the planning inspector recommending approval, the Secretary of State considered that there were not exceptional circumstances to warrant granting permission, noting harm to the nearby Macmillan Way and views from the surrounding area.

- Farm diversification applications have been a notable source of consultations, with diversification to tourism being the most significant trend.
- The Team continues to receive a notable number of applications for felling and replanting of woodlands affected by Ash Dieback, as well as for the creation of entirely new woodlands. We are working to seek positive management of woodlands that have often been undermanaged, whilst achieving a diverse and resilient mix of restocking and new planting, with a preference for native broadleaf species.

b. DORSET FOOD & DRINK

FLAVOURS continues to add a new dimension to the culinary narrative of Dorset Food & Drink, as we explore and celebrate diverse flavours and help broaden experiences of nature and countryside connections of local diverse communities. While both projects share a common thread of promoting Dorset's culinary and cultural identity, effective time management becomes crucial to ensure the success of each initiative.

The future of Dorset Food & Drink CIC hinges on its ability to address the current challenges and adapt to the evolving landscape. Finding a balance between day-to-day operations, strategic planning, and navigating the competitive field are essential for sustained viability.

Fostering innovation, good communications and strategic partnerships should help us remain a thriving force in Dorset's food and drink community. But the ask is a lot for one person currently in the role of Coordinator – whose time and capacity is multilayered.

Dorset Food & Drink are at a moment in time to reshape and refine our offer to better fit the current financial climate and look at potential collaborations to fill the space in the bigger picture of the Dorset's food and hospitality sector. This approach also aligns with our current corporate sponsors NFU Mutual Wessex.

Competition and Choices:

There are now more people and organisations in the 'local food space'.

Love Local, Trust Local aims to become the next membership organisation, and the Jurassic Coast Trust is also recruiting food and drink members, potentially impacting investment choices for local businesses. This also impacts on membership value as well as challenges and competition for corporate sponsor support.

With so many more 'new' events in Dorset- the calendar rapidly fills, and competition so snag the producers and artisans is ferocious!

What does the brand represent in 2024:

Future iterations of Dorset Food & Drink must recognise the achievements of what went before, and nurture Dorset Food & Drink in the subtext of how and what we do going forward.

Reevaluating Our Identity:

In 2024, we must assess what Dorset Food & Drink represents to:

- DF&D members
- The wider public
- Potential corporate partners
- Other Dorset Council & BCP projects to understand wider business opportunities, and collaborations for procurement and trade expos for businesses who are ready to take the next big steps.

Highlights:

- Successful collaboration with the newly formed Artisan Markets in Dorset: Sherborne, Shaftesbury, and Dorchester. Where regular trading opportunities for DF&D members are offered.
- Ongoing collaboration with Dorset Farmers Markets.
- Working with Dorchester Town Council to input into their local food, drink, and hospitality vision for the town.
- A proposed 'West Dorset Day' at the Houses of Parliament via an invitation from MP Chris Loder. Date TBC.
- Showcasing and working with few of the local food businesses we met via our FLAVOURS work and collaborations.

c. ART IN THE LANDSCAPE

The National Landscape team have continued to support the National Landscapes Association with their Art in the Landscape initiative and heard in November 2023 that the funding bid to Arts Council England for a national-scale creative project 'Nature Calling' has been successful. Dorset national is one of six hubs of activity aimed at engaging and inspiring people who are not regular visitors to the countryside, with development work phase in 2024 and creative activity in 2025. The funding will also support a new Arts Development Officer for the National Landscape family, to support professional development and further fundraising and Sue Dampney was involved in the recruitment process for this important role. The [artist commissions are now live](#) and in May 2024 an Artist Information Day was held to give more information about these. An Advisory Group meeting is planned for 20th May, inviting arts, countryside and community contacts from the Yeovil area.

Through the FLAVOURS project, we were able to support Activate Performing Arts to run the Inside Out Festival activities at Wild Woodbury, Bere Regis. A full report on attendance will be available soon. The Dorset AONB team pitched the Talking Tent throughout the festival, with a focus on what makes autumn so special.

Highlights:

- Dorchester rapper Isaiah Dreads led outreach work with schools and youth groups focussed on the nature of Wild Woodbury site.
- Over 2021 visits were recorded at the various artist performances at Wild Woodbury, despite very bad weather conditions.
- A celebration video of the Inside Out Festival across all the venues [can be found here](#)

*"Gathered conkers shine
Family connect, celebrate
Home created nourished love"
Autumn, created by a visitor to the Talking Tent*

d. DORSET FINGERPOST PROJECT

Fingerposts are an iconic, traditional feature of the Dorset countryside. Many have fallen into disrepair and Dorset Council no longer has a remit to restore them. Working with expert Roger Bond (Normtec) and his band of volunteers we are able to support & subsidise their restoration.

Highlights:

- 34 completed Fingerposts from 18 different parishes include. Neville, Stoney Cross – Bourton, Evershot Holt, Cucklington and 3 new fingerposts at Silverlake
- 28 completed by Normtec & 6 completed entirely by local volunteers
- 19 on the current 'To Do' list for 2024/25, with 6 in hand or funding approved

astic Fingerpost Champions, ably supported by Roger Bond, Normtec, with funding from the CPRE are restoring Dorset's iconic fingerposts for future generations to enjoy."

Find out more about the [Dorset Fingerpost Project](#)

Photo credits:

NATURE: Cattle grazing (c) Mark Singleton; Rivers (c) Nick Gray; Tree seedlings (c) Purbeck's Precious Past PEOPLE: Stepping into Nature © Ben Ingram Curtain Raisers at Culliford Tree Barrow © Mike Pettidemange PLACE: Inside-Out-Dorset Activate Performing Arts Wild Woodbury © Jayne Jackson
All other photos taken by Dorset AONB Team

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ITEM 3: 2023-2024 PROVISIONAL PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTS

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	Dorset National Landscape Manager
SUMMARY	The Dorset AONB team continues to be successful in demonstrating good funding leverage in terms of income generated from a modest local contribution to the core budget. Below is a draft account summary which will be presented to Defra as per our reporting requirements.		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	This is a report on past income and expenditure, so has no implications on future funding		
RECOMMENDATION	The Dorset AONB Board commends the funding leverage demonstrated by these accounts		

3.1. CORE FINANCE

It should be noted that a significant contributor to reducing core staff costs is the allocation of time and cost towards FIPL for time committed by core staff. This amounted to just under £25,000.

This year, Defra's contribution to costs was at 71% and Dorset Council contributed 20% towards core expenditure.

Expenditure item	Actual	Budget
Staff & on costs	£ 253,796	£ 289,156
Staff travel	£ 5,569	£ 4,400
Staff training	£ 2,283	£ 3,000
Office & accommodation costs	£ 6,135	£ 6,000
Communications	£ 7,910	£ 5,000
Partnership running costs	£ 6,002	£ 4,000
TOTAL	£ 281,696	£ 311,556

Income	£	
Defra single pot	£	201,391
Earned income	£	1,783
Other income	£	3,000
Dorset Council	£	55,862
Reserve	£	19,660
TOTAL	£	281,696

3.2. PROJECT FINANCE

Project	Defra single pot	Other income	CASH VALUE	Volunteer contributions	Partner spend	CASH + ADDED VALUE
Wild Purbeck	£ -	£ 302,068	£ 302,068	£ 8,450	£ 259,004	£ 569,522
South Dorset Ridgeway legacy	£ -	£ 1,200	£ 1,200			£ 1,200
Community Woodlands	£ -	£ 23,188	£ 23,188			£ 23,188
Landscape Enhancement Initiative - Ridgeway	£ -	£ 1,363	£ 1,363			£ 1,363
Landscape Enhancement Initiative - Linking	£ -	£ 61,494	£ 61,494	£ 3,904	£ 13,872	£ 79,270
Landscape Enhancement Initiative - Marshwood	£ -	£ 12,017	£ 12,017			£ 12,017
Dorset Fingerpost project	£ 6,225	£ -	£ 6,225	£ 3,200	£ 40,800	£ 50,225
Dorset Food & Drink	£ 12,634	£ 26,000	£ 38,634	£ 2,400		£ 41,034
Sustainable Development Fund	£ 14,355	£ -	£ 14,355	£ 31,080	£ 69,270	£ 114,705
Stepping into Nature	£ 35,130	£ 74,244	£ 109,374		£ 11,200	£ 120,574
Visitor Management (Jurassic Coast)	£ 9,000	£ 23,687	£ 32,687		£ 4,049	£ 36,736
Dorset Rivers projects	£ 1,000	£ 19,546	£ 20,546			£ 20,546
Purbeck Heaths NNR	£ -	£ 18,093	£ 18,093			£ 18,093
Farming in Protected Landscapes (external grants & team)	£ -	£ 918,881	£ 918,881	£ 11,600	£ 282,862	£ 1,213,343
Greenspace improvements (Litter Free Dorset projects)	£ -	£ 71,072	£ 71,072			£ 71,072
FLAVOURS	£ 2,000	£ 101,535	£ 103,535	£ 151,521		£ 255,056
Youth participation	£ 217	£ 5,566	£ 5,784			£ 5,784
EDL-General	£ 444	£ -	£ 444			£ 444
Triple Axe	£ 1,000	£ -	£ 1,000			£ 1,000
South Purbeck pNNR & nature recovery network	£ 308	£ -	£ 308			£ 308
Food trails (capital)	£ -	£ 14,640	£ 14,640			£ 14,640
Access for All (capital)	£ -	£ 51,800	£ 51,800		£ 3,128	£ 54,928
TOTAL	£ 82,314	£ 1,726,395	£ 1,808,709	£ 212,155	£ 684,185	£ 2,705,048

3.3. INCOME SOURCES (core & projects)

Total cash income	
Defra core grant	£ 283,705
Defra FIPL	£ 918,881
Defra Access for All	£ 51,800
Dorset National Landscape Core reserve	£ 17,196
Wytch Farm S106	£ 320,161
National Lottery Heritage Fund	£ 84,731
Forestry Commission (DC reserve)	£ 23,188
National Grid	£ 74,874
Dorset Food & Drink CIC	£ 26,000
Lottery Community Fund	£ 41,229
Dorset Council	£ 65,862
Catchment Partnership	£ 19,546
COMF (Covid response)	£ 71,072
Rural England Prosperity Fund	£ 14,640
Natural England	£ 10,000
Miscellaneous income	£ 67,520
TOTAL	£ 2,090,405

3.4. SUMMARY

- a. Total direct spend by the AONB Partnership is £2,090,404 (core and projects)
- b. Total 'added value' makes the effective total £2,705,048, the additional £896,340 is derived from £212,155 in volunteer time and £684,185 in partner spend on joint partnership and granted projects.

3.5. LEVERAGE RATIOS

- a. Direct spend delivered for each pound contributed by core partners (Defra & Dorset Council)
 - £1 core funding levered £5.97
 - £1 Defra core contribution levered £7.36
 - £ Dorset Council core contribution levered £31.34
- b. Total value, including volunteer and partner spend delivered for each pound contributed by core partners (Defra & Dorset Council)
 - £1 core funding levered £8.54
 - £1 Defra core contribution levered £10.53
 - £ Dorset Council core contribution levered £45.35

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ITEM 4: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT UPDATE

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	Dorset National Landscape Culture, Community & Learning Officer
SUMMARY	The EDI statement was approved by the Board in May 2023. In that paper, we committed to a regular review of progress which is provided here.		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	The commitment to greater equity, diversity and inclusion in delivery is factored into the Partnership team's projects and core work. External funds will be sought – as ever – to support that delivery.		
RECOMMENDATION	The Dorset National Landscape Board approves the progress made and supports the continued trajectory.		

4.1. Background

The statement of intent adopted in May 2023 set out 5 strategic objectives to inspire, empower and engage everyone to connect with the landscapes around them. These are set out below with our progress against each.

4.2. FORMALISE A FRAMEWORK FOR EDI ACTION AND REVIEW

Ensuring that Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is central to strategic work of the Dorset National Landscape Partnership, that impact of our action is evaluated, and achievements reported and shared.

a. What we said we'd do:

- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): With the support of the Dorset Council Equality Reference Group, we will review, reflect and report on progress at the end of the Management Plan period (2024) and develop a new EqIA, for the new Management Plan (2025-30). A new EDI Steering Group will be created to oversee this piece of work, to include National Landscape staff and partners.
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan: To ensure that the EDI actions from the EqIA are not lost, they will be captured and published in an EDI Action Plan, to be reviewed twice a year by the EDI Steering Group and reported on annually at the Dorset National Landscape Partnership Board. This will ensure that EDI achievements across the Partnership, not just the work of the National Landscape Team, are celebrated and shared and that gaps and opportunities are assessed and addressed.

b. What we've done:

- Equality Impact Assessment is not yet underway as the timescale for the Management Plan has been extended to 2025. We would like to discuss and formalise this important element of the Management Plan process at the May Partnership Board meeting.
- The EDI Steering Group will be set up to oversee the EqIA process and Action Plan and we would like to involve members of the Partnership Board on this, as well as National Landscape Team members.
- The EDI Action Plan has not yet been developed, though this has been published on the Dorset National Landscape website.

4.3. INVITE DIVERSE VOICES INTO DECISION MAKING

Recognising the value of diverse voices in our decision making and ensuring relevance and integrity in consultation processes.

a. What we said we'd do:

- Steering the development and consultation of the next Management Plan: The Dorset AONB Partnership Board will invite and support a wider range of people to be involved in steering the development and consultation of the next Management Plan, creating a transparent process for engagement from the outset.
- Stakeholder involvement in project development and delivery: For all major projects where additional funding is being sought, we will invite appropriate stakeholders to join at the outset, building in additional resources to support involvement if required.

- Strategic review of AONB governance: The Dorset AONB will support the National Association for AONBs in actions to establish a system to review AONB governance and/or help diversify the environmental sector.
- b. What we've done:
- The more expansive steering group for the Management Plan has not been set up due the extension given for the Management Plan process, however we do still consider this as an important element of the development of the Plan.
 - We have made good progress with stakeholder engagement in project development and delivery. The Stepping into Nature has established a wide steering group to help develop the Nature Buddies initiative, with valuable contributions made by a wide range of stakeholders at a number of development meetings over the past year. The Flavours project is now supported by Anjali Mavi, BPC Indian Community, on the Steering Group as well as a staff member and trustee of Dorset Race Equality Council. The new Nature Calling project has set up its first steering group, bringing together community members in Yeovil, on 20th May 2024.

4.4. CO-CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH LANDSCAPES AND NATURE

Investing in relationships with wider communities, creating new opportunities together to ensure relevance and bring in fresh ideas to our work.

- a. What we said we'd do:
- Ethnic minority communities: Breaking Bread will be treated as a pilot to inform a more sustainable programme of action to promote equality of access, and the relationships we hope to build will help us co-create that programme of action.
 - Young people: The survey has provided a catalyst for organisations to create a longer-term vision for young people in the countryside is also be developed with environmental and youth partners across Dorset.
 - Rural isolation and low income: If the Sticks and Stones project bid is not successful, we will pick up and build contacts made in Weymouth, on the southern edge of the AONB.
 - Accessible paths: Liaise with stakeholders to identify priorities for phase 2 path improvements funded by Defra.
 - Targeting community grants: The Dorset AONB Sustainable Development Fund is a small pot of funding available to people who want to conserve, enhance or celebrate the landscape heritage in their local area. We will review beneficiaries of the Fund over the past 7 years and amend the criteria / target specific communities with future Funds to widen reach.
- b. What we've done:
- Breaking Bread (now called Flavours) is making good progress and is now in Phase 3 of delivery. The Steering Group will meet in June to consider the next step for this project, beyond the current National Lottery Heritage Fund programme.
 - Young People: The National Trust have been very proactive in developing a long term plan for young people in the countryside in Purbeck, drawing in much commitment from a wide range of stakeholders. During the Management Plan process, it would be useful to review the success of this work and consider developing in other parts of the Dorset national Landscape.
 - Rural isolation and low income: Sticks and Stones is now called Nature Calling and was successful in attracting a sizeable grant from Arts Council England. The upcoming steering group will help identify communities in the Yeovil area who have limited access to nature.
 - Accessible paths: Plans are underway for Phase 2 path improvements which include new Trumper facilities.
 - Targeting community grants: The Dorset National Landscape Fund (formerly Sustainable Development Fund) has been actively promoted to Dorset Race Equality members and Dorset Youth Association members. A review of beneficiaries will be done after the 2024 award process has been made later in May.

Ensuring that communication of opportunities for exploring, understanding and getting involved are inclusive.

- **New brand guidelines:** The proposed National Landscapes rebrand has carefully considered accessibility in design, use of imagery and language. Adopting the rebrand and using the guidelines aims to improve accessibility of the Dorset AONB communications.
- **AONB website:** We will commission an audit and public survey of the Dorset AONB website to understand how accessible the content and format is and what improvements can be made to improve it.
- **Targeted communication:** Through the targeted projects outlined in (3) we will increase our understanding of the best communication channels to reach specific audiences and integrate these into mainstream communications.

- New brand guidelines: The new brand has been adopted and will be used when developing new communication materials. Further training is expected from the National Landscapes Association.
- Dorset National Landscape website: Significant time was put into rebranding the website and doing urgent updates so and audit has not yet been achieved. We will consider how this could fit in with the Management Plan process and the development of Stepping into Nature, Flavours and Nature Calling.
- Targeted communications: We are increasing our understanding of best communications on a project basis and informally but this knowledge needs to be formalised and shared.

Listening, learning, reflecting, challenging and sharing will help us on our journey to becoming a more inclusive organisation.

- **Training & support:** Identify gaps in EDI confidence and understanding within AONB team. Meet training needs through formal training, sharing good practice and guided discussion at team meetings. Extend training and support to project partners where needed to ensure inclusive ways of working.
- **Knowing our audience:** Ensure that up to date data is used to inform project development by providing staff training to collate community census profiles and interpret data.
- **Sharing and inspiring good practice:** Work with Natural England advisors; other AONBs and NAAONB to build supportive 'communities of practice' to share EDI experiences, develop confidence and inspire action.

- Training & support: All Dorset National Landscapes staff have signed up to EDI training over the next month, provided through the National Landscapes Association. This will be reviewed together at a Team Meeting and will provide a catalyst for formalising the EDI Steering Group.
- Knowing our audience: Profiles and data will be extensively reviewed as part of the Management Plan process.
- Sharing good practice: The Wessex EDI group, led by Natural England, was very useful but has not met recently due to staff absence. The National Landscapes Association are developing communities of practice and EDI will be the theme of the next one to be established.

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ITEM 5: UPDATE TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

ITEM FOR	Decision	REPORT BY	Dorset National Landscape Manager
SUMMARY	The Dorset National Landscape Partnership Terms of Reference require change following the rebrand from AONB. It is also an opportunity to make other minor changes to improve clarity and describe Dorset Council and DAPTC's nominations in more detail.		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	None		
RECOMMENDATION	The AONB Board approves the edits to the Terms of Reference		

- 5.1. A copy of the Terms of Reference showing tracked changes is available on request.
- 5.2. **Proposed edits following the rebrand:**
 - a. All references to 'AONB' and 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' have been changed to 'Dorset National Landscape'. One insertion changes the sentence 'The Dorset National Landscape Partnership was established on 7th January 2003' to 'The Dorset National Landscape Partnership was established as the Dorset AONB Partnership on 7th January 2003.'
 - b. References to the 'National Association for AONBs' have changed to 'National Landscapes Association'.
- 5.3. **Proposed edits re Dorset Council and DAPTC:**

After consultation with Dorset Council's Democratic Services team, we propose introducing two new clauses to clarify the selection of representatives from Dorset Council and DAPTC. This is because these organisations put forward more than one nominated representative. The clauses will be inserted following the list of member organisations, as:

 - a. A new item 4.4 stating 'Dorset Council would normally be represented by the relevant Portfolio Holder and two other elected members representing areas from within (or adjacent to) the Dorset National Landscape, with regard to the political balance of the Council.'
 - b. A new item 4.5 stating 'Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils would normally be represented by councillors representing parishes within the Dorset National Landscape, with regard to geographical spread.'

[illegible]

ITEM 6: INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN

ITEM FOR	Decision	REPORT BY	Dorset National Landscape Manager
SUMMARY	<p>Having decided on a delayed Management Plan production to ensure we follow best guidance, there is a need to fulfil the obligations of the review timetable as advised by Lord Benyon as the relevant minister in July 2022.</p> <p>The 'plan' here has been endorsed by the Steering Group and is compliant with the recommendations made by Lord Benyon.</p>		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	None for the interim management plan.		
RECOMMENDATION	The Partnership Board approves the interim plan, and recommends its adoption by relevant partners.		

- 6.1. Lord Benyon wrote to chairs and managers of what were then the AONB Partnerships, in his capacity as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in July 2022 offering an extension to those that wished to wait for the introduction of outcomes-based targets (due January 2023, [published January 2024](#)) and new management plan guidance (due Spring 2023, yet to be published).

6.2. Lord Benyon went on to advise that some action was necessary to comply with the five year review cycles as described by the CROW Act. To maintain compliance, the advice stated, *"Defra judges that Partnerships could simply produce a light-touch review in which they commit to produce a new Management Plan after the new guidance is published. Defra has considered what a light-touch review might look like and advises the following: Partnerships would agree and publish one page of text setting out their intentions for the next Management Plan. This could include a brief vision statement, a summary of how the Management Plan will be structured, and a summary of the Partnerships' objectives over the next five-year review period (carrying forward actions and/or adding new ones for the year affected by the delay). Producing a light-touch review of this nature would allow Partnerships to carry over their existing Plan by demonstrating they have considered the next Plan, in compliance with the law. Partnerships would not need to consult extensively to produce this light-touch review, as we expect it would be pitched as a continuation/extension of the current Plan."*

6.3. **Background**

- c. The CROW Act requires local authorities to produce a Management Plan for an AONB every 5 years, in co-operation with any other local authorities which share that AONB. Good practice also ensures that this is informed by meaningful dialogue with stakeholders.
- d. The process has, to date, been carried out according to guidance published by the Countryside Agency in 2001. The Landscapes (Glover) Review recommended refreshing this guidance to reflect the review's ambition for protected landscapes. The review also made recommendations on performance monitoring for AONBs and National Parks.
- e. Consequently, Defra, Natural England, NAAONB and National Parks England are working together on two items which will have significant bearing on future Management Plans. These are:
 - Outcome-based targets: a targets and monitoring framework is being established for all Protected Landscapes; this is due to be published in January 2023.
 - Management Plan guidance: a comprehensive re-write of guidance for the production of Protected Landscape Management Plans was due to be published in Spring 2023 and is still, at the time of writing, in draft.
- f. Lord Benyon wrote to AONB lead officers in August 2022 enabling a delay to the review process, but recommending adoption of a simple plan to cover the interim period. In May 2023 the Dorset AONB Partnership approved delaying the full review of the management plan in order to ensure that the new plan follows new guidance.

6.4. **The interim plan**

MANAGEMENT PLAN for the DORSET NATIONAL LANDSCAPE, an area of outstanding natural beauty

The Dorset National Landscape Partnership will complete a review of the 2019-2024 AONB Management Plan and publish its successor plan by 31st December 2025. This interim document responds to the advice made by Lord Benyon in July 2022 enabling the normal timetable for a full review of the plan to be paused to allow for Defra to introduce two key items which follow recommendations from the Landscapes Review, and for their assimilation into the review process:

- Management plan guidance: to encourage greater consistency and strength of plans across the country. It is proposed that the plan's structure will follow national guidance.
- Protected landscapes outcomes and monitoring framework: to link the protected landscapes to key targets within the Environmental Improvement Plan, and provide data to assist with monitoring ([published 31 January '24](#)).

Intentions for the next plan

The Dorset National Landscape Partnership intends to produce a plan for the landscape that is legally and democratically sound, based on good consultation and compliant with central guidance.

It will articulate the local vision for the delivery of the statutory purpose of designation. In so doing it provides advice and guidance to relevant authorities subject to the Countryside & Rights of Way Act's s84 'duty to seek to further the purpose' which includes local planning authorities, government agencies, other statutory bodies and statutory undertakers. It will be prepared for adoption as a material consideration in strategic planning and development management.

It will provide a framework for delivering on the purpose of designation by the organisations represented on the Partnership Board, wider delivery partners and the local community. It will be prepared for use to prioritise action and resources to best effect for the designation and provides an evidence base to secure additional resources for that purpose.

It will also describe a framework for the delivery of relevant environmental targets under the Environment Act 2021.

Vision

The plan will articulate a vision of how the outstanding natural beauty of the Dorset National Landscape underpins and contributes to:

- A low-carbon future.
- A sense of place and belonging.
- A wide love and understanding of place, precipitating more pro-environmental behaviour.
- People's wellbeing and health.
- A sustainable, more circular economy which itself contributes to the area's conservation and enhancement.

Key objectives

- Support the delivery of an apportionment of the Environment Act's environmental targets by a wide range of partners, including:
 - Furthering the Isle of Purbeck Landscape Recovery ambitions.
 - Delivering the funded Natural Flood Management programme for the Brit catchment, and supporting the community-led catchment management approach in the West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams Catchment.
 - Supporting the active Landscape Recovery pilots in the National Landscape (Wareham Arc, Upper Axe and Brit Catchment).
 - Supporting the declaration of a new National Nature Reserve for the Purbeck Coast.
 - Supporting the nature recovery network which buffers, radiates from, and connects areas of high nature value.
- Supporting initiative that increase understanding of, and participation in the conservation of, the landscape's natural, built and cultural heritage.
- Support underserved communities to access the special qualities of the National Landscape, including:
 - Developing activity which builds on the successes of Stepping into Nature and FLAVOURS.
 - Delivering the Dorset element of the national programme, Nature Calling.
- Encourage and facilitate access in ways that avoids harm to the National Landscape, including:
 - Visitor management for the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site.
- Supporting a transition to a more sustainable, circular economy including:
 - Promoting a vision for regenerative and/or restorative farming and land management practices and supporting land-based businesses in their transition towards that vision.

- Supporting Dorset Food & Drink, Litter Free Dorset and other relevant initiatives.
- Supporting planning authorities in their statutory requirement to seek to further the purpose of designation through good strategic planning and development management decisions.

Policy framework

A revised policy framework will be developed responding to

- an updated assessment of needs, pressures and opportunities
- consultation with experts, partners and the wider community

In the interim, the **2019-2024 policy framework** will be carried forward in entirety.

[illegible]

ITEM 7: Management Plan Review

ITEM FOR	Decision	REPORT BY	Dorset National Landscape Manager
SUMMARY	<p>This paper gives more detail to timeline outlined in the Board papers of November 2023 (Item 3) as a schedule of touchpoints for the Board, wider working partnership and other key stakeholders.</p> <p>It also shifts the timeline.</p>		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>The greatest resource required to be applied to the Management Plan review is largely core staff time, with an estimated cost of around £40,000 during the last review, which is split across two financial years.</p> <p>There is the potential to let a contract to undertake preparatory work this financial year (with £6,000 budgeted).</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	The Board approves review process described.		

7.1. Timeline for stakeholders

- a. Summer 2024: initial public consultation will be an opportunity of summer events, being light-tough and potentially issue-specific. The Talking Tent has been identified as a good vehicle for holding conversations which would enrich the plan review process.
- b. Late summer / early autumn 2024: team works with close partners and experts in relevant fields to understand:
 - o What is working well in the 2014-2019 plan?
 - o What's not working so well?
 - o What has changed in terms of context (opportunities, threats)?
 - o What needs to change to respond to the new context?
- c. October/November Annual Forums 2024 will work with the audience to learn more about local priorities and issues.
- d. Team will draft the new plan, bringing a draft to a Partnership Board meeting in late May 2025 to launch consultation in June 2025.
- e. Summer 2025: formal public consultation period, with associated promotion.
- f. Late September 2025 Partnership Board meeting to discuss an amended draft and recommend its adoption following any necessary further amendments.
- g. November 2025-December 2025: final plan as recommended by the Board for adoption by relevant partners.

ITEM 8: Levelling up & Regeneration Act Amendments CROW Act 2000

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	Dorset National Landscape Planning Officer
SUMMARY	<p>Introduced at the last Board Meeting, the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act (2023) made amendments to the Countryside & Rights of Way Act (2000) to increase the level of legal protection for National Landscapes. Similar amendments were made to the Environment Act for equivalence with National Parks in terms of the level of legal protection.</p> <p>Defra's draft guidance has been published and will be introduced in a verbal update.</p>		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>Potential financial implications on the National Landscape Team and the Planning Authorities which decide development in the area. It also has implications for all Statutory Undertakers and Public organisations which could potentially add cost.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>The Statutory Undertakers and Public Bodies that are part of the Partnership Board are asked to examine the implications for their operations and seek to implement changes to enable compliance. NB this excludes private and charitable organisations.</p>		

[illegible]

Partner updates

Each AONB Board Member is invited to use no more than 90 second to describe the main issues and opportunities relevant to AONB Management from their organisation's perspectives.

[illegible]

APPENDIX 1: detailed AONB team activity log

This content is in addition to the Team Activity report in item 4

a. **PURBECK HEATHS NNR / WILD GRAZING UNIT**

Additional detail:

AONB Team Manager chairs the Purbeck Heaths NNR Steering Group and the Wilder Grazing Unit Working Group. These groups bring together the landowning bodies to oversee and implement delivery of the NNR Management Plan and the specific objectives of the wilder grazing unit. A key principle across the heaths is to reinstate natural processes at this landscape scale, alongside enhancing people's engagement and opportunities to connect with nature.

2023 grazing season has delivered excellent environmental outcomes with the graziers working hard to deliver the landowners' ecological aspirations. Key points of interest include the re-emergence of the small, rare annual yellow centaury in number not previously recorded, attributed to ground disturbance by cattle.

b. WEST DORSET RIVERS & COASTAL STREAMS

Additional detail:

- Four volunteer sessions with 39 attending
- 39 citizen scientists trained in Riverfly, CSI and Water Guardian methods
- Engaged with 327 people at 11 events, including communities in Bridport, Charmouth, Swanage, Lyme Regis and Mountjoy School, Beaminster.

- Engaged with farmers through advice from Peter Stone, geomorphologist, and follow-up from previous Nethergill work.
- Repeated 12km of Himalayan balsam clearance on the River Asker
- Enhanced 350 metres on the Char
- Dorset National Landscape delivery has been incorporated into the following infographic for Dorset Wild Rivers

Dorset Wild Rivers 2023 - 2024

A partnership project which works catchment scale across Dorset to deliver biodiversity enhancements which support multi-functional freshwater environments.

FOR YOU. FOR LIFE.
Wessex Water
 YTL GROUP

Where have we worked?

We work across the Poole Harbour, Stour and West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams Catchments

River Char
 River Asker
 Wider Brit Catchment
 River Allen
 Devils Brook
 Corfe River
 Wareham Arc
 Stour Headwaters
 Frome Headwaters
 Dorset Peat Partnership Project
 Tadnoll and Winfrith Heath
 Enclosed Beaver Project Study
 Wild Woodbury

What have we achieved?

52ha Habitat improved	15.3ha Habitat feature improved
3.5ha Habitat created	4.4ha Invasive non native species control
2.36km Watercourse improved	49ha Land subject to erosion control
618ha Habitat connectivity	100 Water Guardians registered surveying 154km river
100 Trees planted	60 Trained Riverfly Monitors over 50 sites
939m Habitat feature created	2 Successful Landscape Recovery bids supported
	2 Successful Natural Flood Management bids

How have we worked with farmers, landowners and communities?

- Advisory visits
- Farmer training
- Catchment plans
- Feasibility reports
- Soil management plans
- Nutrient management plans
- CS applications
- Wetland design
- Innovation trials
- Sediment monitoring
- Brash bundling

1813
people engaged
webinars, workshops,
farm visits, volunteer tasks,
Riverfly training

How are we funded?

Core funding from Wessex Water Foundation Partners Programme enables Dorset Wild Rivers to secure additional match funding.

During 2023-2024 an additional **£393,880** has been secured.

For every £1 spent funded by Wessex Water another £19.70 has been spent from additional funding.



c. WYTCH FARM LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS ENHANCEMENT FUND

Detailed outputs and outcomes: Funded projects include

- FWAG - Currenden Farm hedge planting Phase2 Hedge planting 260 (m) & Fencing 520 (m)
- DC Purbeck Park (Norden) to Studland cycleway Access Improvement (m) TBC
- FWAG - Kingswood Hedge Project Hedge Restoration (74 m), Hedgerow Trees x 8 & Hedgerow Fencing (249 m)
- Purbecks Invasive Plants-audit & control Phase2 Small plants (38 locations)R&hoddi management (total restoration 17 Ha)
- NT_Beryl Bikes to Studland Staff time, Access_Bikes x 10 & Access_Bike Bays x 4
- Lulworth Lake Rhododendron Management (2 Ha)
- FWAG_Rempstone Hedge Phase3 Hedge Restoration (288 m), Hedgerow planting (472 m), & Hedgerow Fencing (1520 m)
- DC_Sharford Bridge Access Improved - Causeway installed (10m)

d. LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

Detailed outputs and outcomes:

Magical Marshwood Vale

Delivered over the course of four years:

- Restored 16.4 hectares of lowland meadow and 7.2ha of scrub clearance, giving a total of 23.6ha of meadow restoration.

- 2,155 metres of hedge laying.
- 129 hedgerow trees have been planted
- 72 Orchard trees have been planted.
- 8 ponds have been restored.
- 150m of river restoration is complete.
- Established a wild daffodil nursery at Washingpool Farm to supplement future meadow restoration with locally grown plants.
- 45 volunteer sessions with 635 attending totalling 3,235 hours.

Reconnecting the Ridgeway

Total project outputs delivered over three years:

- 1,850m of hedgerow laid
- 1,600m new hedgerow planted
- 6 standard hedgerow trees planted
- 3 trees conserved by pollarding and 1 fenced for protection from stock
- 4.2ha species-rich grassland managed for scrub
- 2.2ha grassland enhanced through flower-rich seeding and 8.4ha with diverse herbal ley and wild bird seed mix
- 2 new ponds created
- 200m dry stone wall restored
- 1 stile and dog-hatch installed to improve access on Eggardon Hill

Linking

To be delivered over the coming two and a half years:

- Plant, protect and manage 60 hedgerow oak trees
- Lay 1,270 metres of hedgerow
- Restore 140m of drystone wall
- Restore 7 ha of semi-natural grassland
- Undertake 4.7 ha of scrub clearance to ensure no loss of important grassland habitat
- Enhance management of 10 ponds and wetlands for wildlife, particularly great crested newts
- Create 0.75ha of wildlife corridors to increase habitat connectivity

CLIMATE

e. **FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES**

Detailed outputs and outcomes in 2023/24:

65 more farmers have benefitted from the programme since April 2023 making the cumulative total for FiPL programme 186. Six farm groups or clusters have been supported.

Outputs relating to the four themes include:

Nature

- 3.8km of hedgerow has been restored to date
- Four projects focussing on surveys and creating habitat for Duke of Burgundy and Marsh Fritillary butterflies have been funded.
- 11.40 ha of wildflower rich grassland created in 2023 season.

Climate

- FIPL will have planted over 11km of new hedgerow by the end of the programme.
- An investment in a second compost turner has been made, and associated demonstration and training events.
- Second season of innovative hemp growing trial delivered including research into oil processing

- 150m of the river Axe restored so that it connects with the floodplain, preventing flooding downstream, capturing carbon and increasing biodiversity.

People

- 17 projects have been supported which include elements to widen participation in the Protected Landscape including outreach to disadvantaged school children via the Kingfisher Awards Scheme, working with Dorset Race Equality Council & Dorset Food and Drink, plus the residential stays offered at Madgalen Farm for groups including disadvantaged children, young carers, refugees, and children who have been trafficked into the UK. Links have been made with social prescribers at two projects. Practical conservation volunteering features in four projects.
- 55 individual educational farm visits have been delivered this year (bringing programme total to 116)

Place

- A geophysical survey of the Waddon Hill Roman Fort and a re-examination of Webster's finds has been funded. The landowner here is working closely with Bournemouth University, Bridport and Dorset County Museums.
- Emergency works at Winterborne Clenston Grade 1 listed barn have been carried out as the roof made of 15th Century timbers was at risk of imminent collapse.

f. COMMUNITY TREE PROJECT

Detailed outputs and outcomes:

- Engaged with 65 parishes via an online survey to find out their needs related to tree planting.
- Key areas of support were identified as:
 - Introduction to the challenges of tree planting and management
 - Training in site selection and woodland design
 - Support for tree planting and aftercare
 - Support for Tree Wardens
 - Grants towards tree planting, aftercare, and tree nurseries
- £2,000 secured from Public Health Dorset to help deliver an education programme, piloted at four West Dorset primary Schools.
- Engaged educational consultant Rowan Beecham, to develop and deliver this programme of works.

g. LOW CARBON DORSET

Activity and Outputs – programme lifetime

- 801 applications for support from Dorset's business, community and public sectors
- 211 grants totalling £6,132,112
- £17.3m total investment in low-carbon projects in Dorset
- 9,169 tonnes annual reduction of CO₂e (with a potential further 1,000 tonnes to confirm)
- 12.78MW of renewable energy capacity installed
- 67 homes with improved energy efficiency
- 7 new low carbon products developed
- 1,188,378 kwh/yr energy use reduction in public sector buildings

Legacy resources

These include a range of Case Studies (some of which are being updated with client feedback from the evaluation). The Guide to Reducing Emissions is also available, again with updated sections planned, to share more learning from the project, such as decarbonising in listed settings. The Low Carbon Dorset website will be maintained until relevant content can be transferred to the Dorset Council website. An exhibition of professional photographs, telling the story and outcomes of the EU funded Low Carbon Dorset programme, through the people and places supported, is also in progress. This exhibition will help

to highlight the work done to date but can also be used at events publicising how Dorset Council will be supporting organisations to decarbonise going forward.

Future plans

Funding from Dorset Council's allocation of Shared Prosperity Fund money is being used to secure a small team to continue delivering low carbon technical advice for SMEs and Community groups in the Dorset Council area. This will comprise:

- 2 x Technical officers
- 1 x Project Officer
- 1 x Project Support Officer

The team and its activities will be managed by the Dorset Council Sustainability team.

Plans are also underway to create a small grant pot for capital projects, again for SME and Community organisations in the Dorset Council area, which the team will administer. Details are yet to be published but the grant pot could be used to support eligible measures in the decarbonisation plans delivered by the technical officers. Dorset Council will continue to use the Low Carbon Dorset name for this two year project which started in April 2023. Low Carbon Dorset has an excellent reputation for its independent technical advice and support and brand recognition is strong.

PEOPLE

h. **STEPPING INTO NATURE**

Detailed outputs and outcomes:

[For the full Stepping into Nature 2022-23 report please view our slide deck.](#)

i. **VISITOR MANAGEMENT**

Detailed outputs and outcomes:

Interpretation and signage

- New (replacement) beach safety sign installed Lyme Regis Front Beach. Lyme Regis Town Council funded us to do this piece of work. Much needed improvement at this extremely busy beach
- Work can commence on replacement of Lyme Regis safety information (5 panels on East Cliff) following approval of PSPO guidelines. We will incorporate all the necessary information on one sign, rather than having several separate signs, thus reducing clutter
- New (replacement) interpretation panel installed Budleigh Salterton near Fossil Roots. The Curry Fund and Devon County Council provided funding to replace an old sign at this location with new engaging information about this unusual geological site
- Work commenced on Charmouth signage improvements- 4 interpretation panels and 2 safety panels. Draft designs have been agreed with Charmouth Parish Council who are funding these long overdue improvements to visitor information

Access for All project (Defra funded)

- Funds were allocated to new multi-user route from Chideock to Quarry Hill – work began but due to an unknown location of a gas main running through the proposed site, has had to be put on hold. It is hoped once the gas main's location is known, work can recommence.
- The money has not been lost, however! It has been diverted to Access for All improvements to multi-user routes at Hilfield Nature Reserve in West Dorset. This has improved accessibility around this site which is particularly popular with local people. With further improvements in 2024/25, together with appropriate promotion, it's hoped the popularity of this site will increase, potentially helping to ease visitor numbers at other very busy locations
- Five exciting new Access for All capital projects selected for 2024/25. Following applications from various organisations, and detailed site visits, the projects selected are:

- Lulworth Estate all-terrain tramper route between Lulworth Cove and White Nothe
- Brownsea Island improved access to the Tern Hide
- Kingcombe National Nature Reserve access ramp and track improvements
- Further improvements to Hilfield Nature Reserve
- Multi-user path improvements in the Piddle Valley

j. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Detailed outputs and outcomes:

13 applications with a total request of £20,000 were considered by the SDF Panel in May 2023. The panel were keen particularly keep to support projects which encourage young people's involvement in the AONB. In the end £14,400 of grant funding has been allocated to support the following 9 projects:

- **Planet Purbeck Festival** (Sept 2023): Costs towards the hire of The Mowlem Centre in Swanage as a festival hub, enabling them to reach a wider audience and connect with the community, in particular young people around the climate & ecological emergency. Further information [here](#)
- **Asker Meadows Nature Reserve Project:** Pupils from Mountjoy School with complex needs volunteering at Asker Meadow Nature Reserve. Facilitated poetry and visual art sessions enabled them to share their feelings about being in nature. The grant contributed towards the artists' costs. Further information [here](#)
- **Bridport Youth Dance:** Young dancers' site-specific outdoor performance 'Choreography Geography 2' at Abbotsbury Hillfort, building on the success of last year's production. Creation of a new film based on the performance that will take dance and art into local primary schools, care homes and local Parkinson's support groups. View the film of the performance [here](#)
- **Purbeck Youth & Community Foundation:** Costs towards Club Planet Purbeck Environmental Youth Group. Funded a Project Manager to work with the group, co-ordinate and promote 4 visits/activities connected to nature and environmental issues around the AONB. More information [here](#)
- **Artsreach – Stone, Sea & Song:** Commission of a song capturing the history and traditions of stone quarrying across the Jurassic Coast, sung by The Longest Johns alongside local choirs, filmed and QR code available to download. Project page and film [here](#)
- **Caught in the Net:** An intergenerational celebration of Chesil Beach and its history of traditional mackerel fishing through song, movement and dance performance. Case study [here](#)
- **Bridport Green Route:** Funding towards the production of 2 new circular heritage trails around Bridport with accompanying downloadable podcasts. Encouraging people to explore the town on foot whilst connecting to its heritage & history. Download the routes & podcasts [here](#)
- **Bridport Food Security:** Deliver a food security plan building on the town's excellent food culture and previous activity. The funding contributed to a commission to Landworkers' Alliance as part of a wider project. Available to download [here](#)
- **Purbeck Wildlife Student Environment Research Team:** Vegetation habitat surveys across the Purbeck Heaths NNR to monitor the effect of wild grazing on the heaths. The grant paid for the transport costs of the students from Bournemouth University to the site by mini-bus.

k. PROMOTING THE AONB

The team undertook a series of Annual Forum talks in Bridport, Blandford and Furzebrook to an audience of parish & town councillors, Dorset Council members and members of community groups and partner organisations. Audience numbers were fair (c 65 people in total) but engagement was good; attendees provided feedback to a series of questions related to future activity:

- Working landscape: Community Trees, citizen science, targeting of FIPL
- Accessing, enjoying & understanding: Access for All investment, Nature Buddies hosts/volunteers, Talking Tent events, youth/multicultural groups

- Planning for landscape quality: contributing to a debate about how to achieve the balance between enabling renewable energy and landscape/visual impact, farm diversification and the extent to which it can support sustainable farm business, and an offer of assistance to Neighbourhood Planning groups.