

Mendip Hills National Landscape Team Response Summary

It's important that the diverse use of the area is reflected in the Management Plan.

Areas of Highest Priority

Each question asked respondents to prioritise the objectives in the existing plan. These are the highest ranking priorities with the response in Bold Italics.

- Enhancing biodiversity monitoring in Mendip Hills to support habitat conservation and adaptation to climate change. ***Addressed via Climate Vulnerability Assessment and subsequent actions.***
- Support a broad approach to conserving ecological and geological networks within and around the Mendip Hills. ***Noted. Best practice from Mendip 'super' National Nature Reserve management group needs to be disseminated across the Partnership.***
- Promote farming and land management practices that support climate adaptation, mitigation, and conservation of the Mendip Hills' Unique qualities. ***Amended objective LMI Support and promote farming to have a positive impact on the Mendip Hills NL, contributing to climate adaptation and mitigation and to the furthering of the special qualities of the National Landscape, while remaining the principle land use.***
- Ensure public access and recreational activities in Mendip Hills are inclusive, healthy, and aligned with its conservation goals. ***Addressed via existing P1 and new objectives R3 Develop and deliver a safe, accessible, connected strategic network of green infrastructure routes and space that works for people and nature, and promote more sustainable methods of travel to the NL for enjoyment and recreation and P4 Improve equality, diversity and inclusivity in the management and governance of the Mendip Hills National Landscape.***
- Promote a safe, accessible green infrastructure network that benefits people, nature and wildlife in the Mendip Hills. ***Addressed via new R3 Develop and deliver a safe, accessible, connected strategic network of green infrastructure routes and space that works for people and nature, and promote more sustainable methods of travel to the NL for enjoyment and recreation***

Statement of Community Involvement

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1. Executive summary

This report has been produced by Distinctive Communications on behalf of Mendip Hills National Landscape (the team).

The team required feedback from the public regarding the management of the Mendip Hills National Landscape to inform the Management Plan covering the period between 2025 and 2030. This allows residents, business owners, stakeholders and visitors to have an input on the priorities to help shape the future of the area.

The team appointed Distinctive to support this process. During a six-week consultation, we asked respondents for feedback on which themes were of greatest concern.

There were 113 responses to the survey. This feedback will help prioritise different areas as the team updates the report. Respondents also shared other thoughts, concerns and opportunities for the team to consider.

This document outlines the engagement that took place, the feedback provided by the community and stakeholders, and recommendations on next steps.

We are grateful to everyone who took the time to engage in this conversation.

2. Background information

The Management Plan identifies what the team believes is necessary to conserve and enhance this special landscape. The Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership leads on the production and review of the Management Plan for the local authorities who adopt it.

As required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, local authorities have a statutory responsibility to produce and review the Management Plan every five years.

About the proposal

The proposed Management Plan aims to build on the current plan, setting out the priorities and approach for managing the National Landscape area, rather than detailing the specific projects and initiatives intended to achieve these goals. The plan covers key themes of nature restoration, climate change, people, and place, and outlines the strategy required in response to the needs of the area.

This approach is reflected in the consultation method, where stakeholders and interested parties were asked to vocalise their priorities within these themes, helping the team inform the final Management Plan.

3. Consultation approach

In line with [best practice guidance](#), our engagement ran for a six-week period from Wednesday 18 September to Wednesday 30 October 2024.

It was widely promoted, using online methods, local and regional media, leafletting hundreds of residents and businesses, directly emailing 109 stakeholders, and writing to 38 farmers and landowners.

All information was designed to be clear and comprehensive to explain the Management Plan's concept and goals.

We also set up a dedicated consultation email address and telephone line to open additional channels for feedback and ensure the consultation was accessible for all.

The headlines from the consultation approach:

- **Email detailing the consultation sent to 109 stakeholders** – including Somerset councillors, parish councillors, community group representatives and two Members of Parliament.
- **A press release generated eight items of media coverage**, including in *Somerset County Gazette*, *Chew Valley Gazette*, *Wells Journal* and *Central Somerset Gazette*. These media outlets cover a large proportion of the Mendip Hills area.
- **One hundred and fifty flyers distributed** to residents and local businesses, by hand and at events.
- **Thirty eight emails to landowners and farmers**, an important stakeholder group given the nature of the consultation.
- **Organic posts shared on social media:**
 - Five Facebook posts with combined reach of 15,228, 79 reactions, 21 shares, and 15 comments.
 - Two Instagram posts with a combined reach of 779, 51 likes and one comment.
- **Adverts on Facebook and Instagram** with a combined reach of 12,712 and 779 link clicks.
- **Attended the Mendip Ploughing Match**, distributing flyers and engaging with the local community.
- **Visited the Wells Natural History Society**, sharing consultation information and distributing flyers.

This led to 113 respondents completing the survey. In addition, one person got in touch via the consultation telephone line.

The following sections explain this approach in more detail.

Stakeholder outreach: We researched, compiled and prioritised a comprehensive stakeholder list of 109 individuals and organisations that would be impacted by or potentially have an interest in the consultation. These included county, district and parish councils, landowners, and special interest groups.

All stakeholders were contacted by email (**Appendix A**) on 18th September 2024, with details of the Management Plan consultation, informing them how we were engaging, and encouraging them to complete linked survey. The consultation email and telephone number were also provided.

Media engagement: A press release (**Appendix B**) was issued on the 18th September 2024 detailing the consultation and encouraging people to complete the survey. A follow up release (**Appendix C**) was issued on 14th October 2024 as a reminder that the consultation closed in two weeks.

The press releases were issued to local and regional media, securing print and online coverage, including in *Chew Valley Gazette*, *Central Somerset Gazette*, *Wells Journal*, *Somerset County Gazette*, *Wells News Hub* and *Glastonbury Nub News*.

We anticipate that there may have been additional print coverage in titles that we were unable to capture via our online search.

Online engagements: Details of the consultation were shared on the existing [MHNL Management Plan webpage](#), which was updated on the 18th September 2024.

The webpage (**Appendix D**) contained details of the consultation, a link to the survey, and the consultation email and telephone number.

Respondents were also encouraged to view the [current Management Plan 2019-2024](#), [the Nature Recovery Plan](#) and the [State of the AONB \(National Landscape\) report](#) on the same webpage prior to completing the survey, to inform their feedback

Survey: A survey was created on Google Forms (**Appendix E**) asking qualitative and quantitative questions about the Management Plan priorities under the key themes. There was also space for anecdotal feedback and open comments. Some questions were marked as mandatory, others were optional.

We asked for postcodes to provide context to their views.

Completing the questionnaire was the main 'call to action' in all consultation collateral.

In total, 113 people completed the survey. Of these, 47 people left their email address to receive further updates on the project, meaning that almost half (42%) wish to remain update on the process.

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Flyers: One hundred and fifty flyers (**Appendix F**) were designed and distributed directly to residents and businesses by hand, as well as at events. These gave a brief overview of MHNL, a link to the website, and a call to complete the survey.

Social media: Organic social media posts (**Appendix G**) were shared throughout the consultation period on the well-established MHNL Facebook and Instagram channels (6.2K Facebook followers, 2.9K Instagram followers).

Dates of posting:

- 18/09/24
- 20/09/24
- 03/10/24
- 07/10/24
- 10/10/24

These posts had a reach of 15,228 on Facebook and 779 on Instagram. All social media posts directed people to the Management Plan webpage.

In addition, budget was put towards advertising on Facebook and Instagram (Meta), with graphics for carousel adverts created.

The Meta advert ran from 14th to 21st October 2024. The adverts (**Appendix H**) had a reach of 12,712 and 779 link clicks directing people to the Management Plan webpage. The advert targeted men and women in all age groups in Cheddar (+17km), Shipham (+17km), Wells and Weston-super-Mare.

Emails and phone calls: The consultation email address and telephone number were active throughout the consultation period and after the consultation window closed. We received one phone call, which was logged, recorded, and responded to accordingly.

4. Schedule of activity

Activity	Date	Purpose
Management Plan web page updated	18/09/24	Hub of information on the consultation and link to survey.
Consultation launch press release	18/09/24	Publicise consultation and reach local people.
Email to stakeholders	18/09/24	Share consultation information and approach, encourage feedback via survey.
Organic social media posts	From 18/09/24 to 10/10/24	Sharing details with the MHNL's existing following who may be interested in the Management Plan.
Community engagement	25/09/24 and 04/10/24	Attended the Mendip Ploughing Match and Wells Natural History Society, distributing flyers.
Social media ads	From 14/10/24 to 21/10/24	Targeted to reach those areas close to MHNL.
Follow-up press release	14/10/24	Further outreach with consultation information, encouraging feedback.
Email to Mendip Farm Cluster Group (38 members)	01/10/24	Email introducing the consultation and encouraging engagement with the survey.
Flyers	18/10/24 – 31/10/24	Direct contact to businesses and residents likely to be interested in the Plan.
Letters to landowners and farmers	01/10/24	Provide details of consultation to those it may directly affect, encouraging feedback.

5. Who responded

Location: We had responses from 29 different postcode areas. The chart below shows the postcodes of where there were two or more respondents.

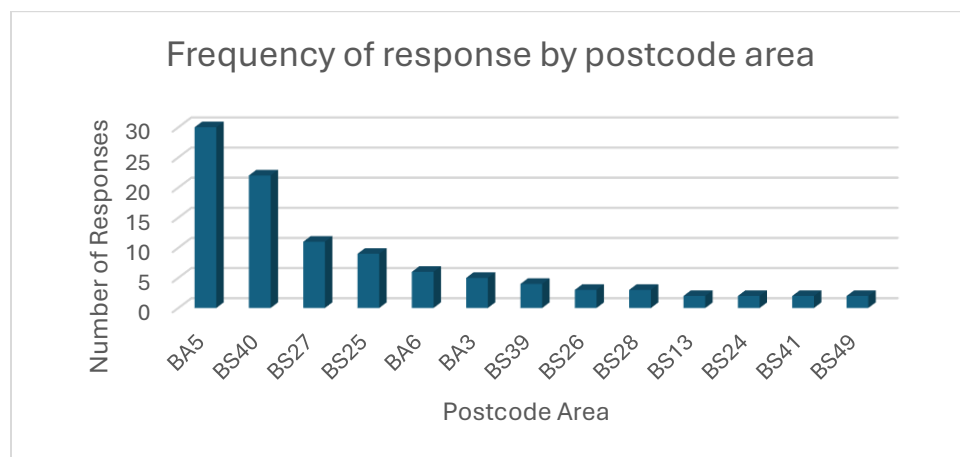


Figure 1. Bar chart presenting the postcode area on the X axis and the number of responses on the Y axis.

Those with the highest proportion of responses:

- BA5 (Wells, Wookey, Croscombe, Coxley, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Priddy)
- BS40 (Wrighton, Chew Magna, Blagdon, Winford, Chew Stoke)
- BS27 (Cheddar, Draycott, Rodney Stoke)

This demonstrates that we successfully reached people within Mendip and the areas immediately surrounding – those most likely to be impacted by the delivery of the Management Plan.

Demographic information: We also asked respondents their relationship to the area. Note, respondents could choose more than one option for this question.

- A local resident (within the Mendip Hills National Landscape area): 66 (58.4%)
- A Bath and North East Somerset resident (local authority): 18 (15.9%)
- A North Somerset Resident (local authority): 16 (14.5%)
- A Somerset Council resident (local authority): 30 (26.5%)
- A visitor to Mendip Hills National Landscape: 35 (31%)
- A local business owner or representative: seven (6.2%)
- A landowner/farmer: 16 (14.2%)

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This shows we reached people with different relationships to the area. Given the large proportion of visitors to the area, it's vital that the Plan focuses on the needs of visitors, as well as local residents and businesses.

Use of area: Respondents were asked how they use the area. Note, respondents could choose more than one option for this question.

- Dog Walking: 38 (33.6%)
- Walking/Hiking/Rambling/Wheeling: 90 (79.6%)
- Cycling: 30 (26.5%)
- Climbing: 10 (8.8%)
- Caving: 12 (10.6%)
- Wildlife Watching: 66 (58.4%)
- Other recreational activity: 39 (34.5%)

Whilst it is evident that walking and wildlife watching are the prominent uses of amongst respondents, a large proportion who gave their views said they use the area for a range of other recreational activities. It's important that the diverse use of the area is reflected in the Management Plan.

Frequency of visit: The survey asked the frequency each respondent visits the MHNL.

How frequently do you visit Mendip Hills?

113 responses

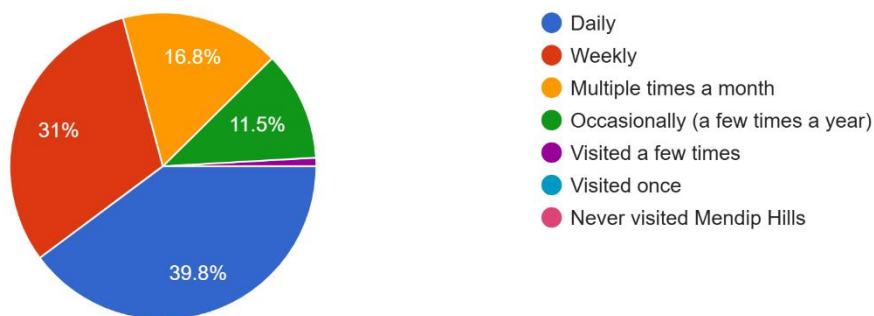


Figure 2. Pie chart presenting how frequently respondents visit the MHNL.

It is notable that only 12.4% state that they visit the area any less than multiple times a month. This illustrates how central the area is to the lives of the people that interact with it, with 70.8% of respondents saying they visit the area every week.

6. Feedback on priorities

This section details the feedback received on priorities during the consultation. A total of 113 responses were received via the survey.

The survey was split into four priority areas:

- Nature restoration
- Climate change
- People
- Place

Within each key area, participants were asked to rank objectives of the Management Plan regarding the central theme in order of priority.

For each key theme, objectives have been sorted into groups of 'higher', 'moderate' and 'lower' priority based on the directionality of clustering in the bar charts below. In cases in which it is possible to derive areas of the highest and lowest priority, these are also stated.

Priority Area 1: Nature Restoration

Respondents were asked to rank five objectives in order of priority.

Priority area 1: Nature Restoration. Please rank the following objectives in the order you feel they are most important (1 being highest priority, 5 being lowest priority). Please don't select more than one response per column.

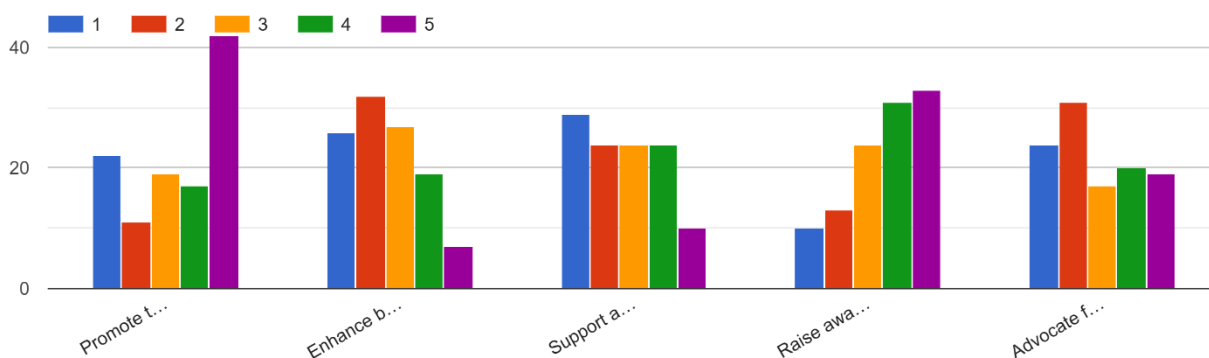


Figure 3. Bar chart presenting how respondents prioritised objectives under the theme of Nature Restoration.

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Area of highest priority

- Enhancing biodiversity monitoring in Mendip Hills to support habitat conservation and adaptation to climate change.
- Support a broad approach to conserving ecological and geological networks within and around the Mendip Hills.

Areas of higher priority

- Advocate for sustainable soil management through regenerative farming to reduce erosion and water pollution, enhancing climate resilience.

Areas of lower priority

- Promoting the Mendip Hills as a source of natural capital, offering economic, health, and climate resilience benefits.
- Raising awareness of Mendip Hills geology, particularly caves, to ensure conservation of geology, habitats and water resources.

Additional themes

- Maintaining the area with regard to local tradition e.g. dry stone walls.
- Re-seeding and reintroduction of endangered species.
- Measures to reduce hunting.

Priority Area 2: climate change

Respondents were asked to rank seven objectives in terms of priority.

Priority area 2: Climate Change. Please rank the following objectives in the order you feel they are most important (1 being highest priority, 7 being lowest priority). Please don't select more than one response per column.

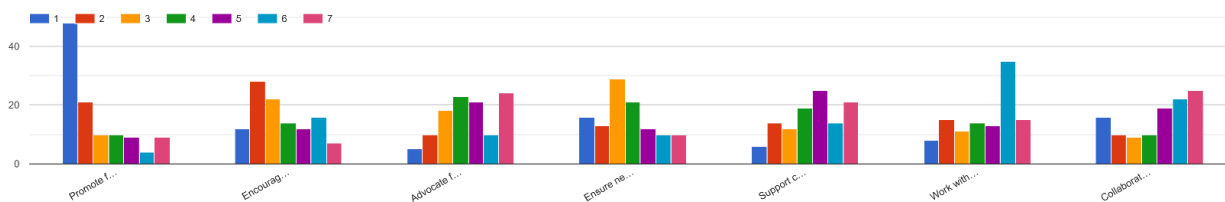


Figure 4. Bar chart presenting how respondents prioritised key objectives under the theme of climate change.

Area of highest priority

- Promote farming and land management practices that support climate adaptation, mitigation, and conservation of the Mendip Hills' Unique qualities.

Areas of moderately higher priority

- Encourage a sustainable woodland economy in Mendip Hills, focusing on climate-resilient species and community driven woodland creation.

Areas of moderate priority

- Collaborate with authorities and communities to ensure strategies and plans reflect the priorities of the Mendip Hills' management.
- Work with local highways authorities to ensure transport infrastructure respects the Mendip Hills special landscape qualities.
- Ensure new developments in the Mendip Hills are compatible with its unique qualities, meet housing needs, and support climate resilience.

Areas of lower priority

- Support carbon reduction in Mendip Hills by promoting energy conservation, sustainable development, and appropriate renewable energy technologies.
- Advocate for quarry restoration and use that minimises landscape impact and supports climate adaptation and the Mendip Hills' designation.

Additional Themes

- Reducing non-EV car use and promoting cycling and walking access.
- Water/flood management.

Priority Area 3: People

Respondents were asked to rank five objectives in terms of priority.

Priority area 3: People. Please rank the following objectives in the order you feel they are most important (1 being highest priority, 5 being lowest priority). Please don't select more than one response per column.

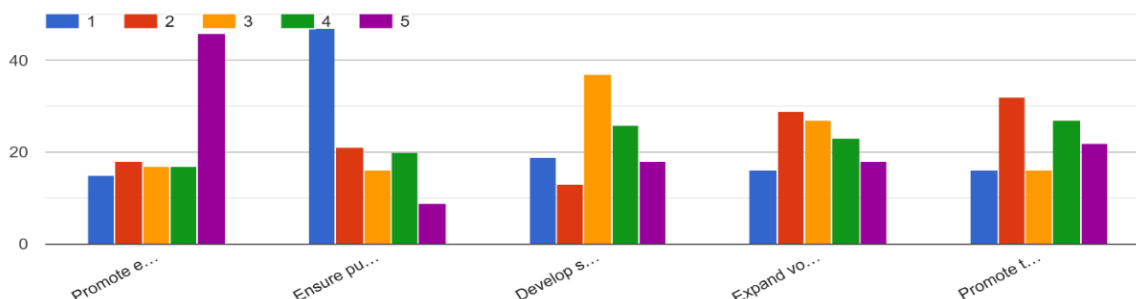


Figure 5. Bar chart presenting how respondents prioritised key objectives under the theme of People.

Areas of higher priority

- Ensure public access and recreational activities in Mendip Hills are inclusive, healthy, and aligned with its conservation goals.

Areas of moderate priority

- Expand volunteering opportunities in Mendip Hills, engaging diverse participants to benefit the environment, community, and well-being.
- Develop sustainable travel options for diverse user groups, enhancing access to and enjoyment of the Mendip Hills.

Areas of lower priority

- Promote the Mendip Hills as an educational resource for all ages, encouraging research and learning.

Area of lowest priority

- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within rural communities and tourism in the Mendip Hills, while enhancing its special qualities.

Additional themes

- Importance of horse riding in the area.
- Engagement with Landowners.
- Improve paths.
- Education and engagement into the importance of nature and countryside management.

Priority Area 4: Place

Respondents were asked to rate four objectives in terms of priority.

Priority areas 4: Place. Please rank the following objectives in the order you feel they are most important (1 being highest priority, 4 being lowest...e don't select more than one response per column.

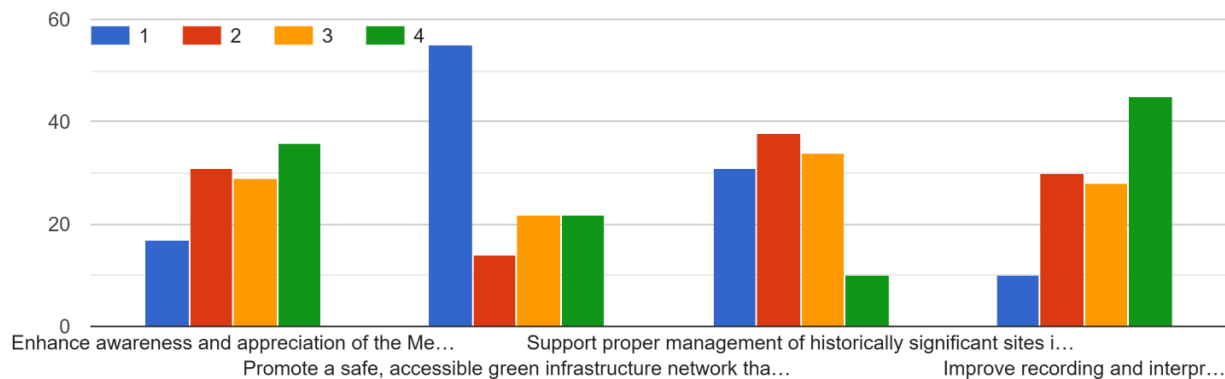


Figure 6. Bar chart presenting how respondents prioritised key objectives under the theme of Place.

Area of highest priority

- Promote a safe, accessible green infrastructure network that benefits people, nature and wildlife in the Mendip Hills.

Area of higher priority

- Support proper management of historically significant sites in the Mendip Hills to prevent the loss of heritage assets.

Areas of lower priority

- Enhance awareness and appreciation of the Mendip Hills' designation and unique qualities.

Area of lowest priority

- Improve recording and interpretation of the Mendip Hills' historic environment to enrich the experience for locals and visitors.

Other Management Plan considerations

Respondents were asked three open questions about Mendip Hills National Landscape. The key themes from each question were derived from a qualitative analysis of the responses:

What do you feel is special about MHNL? *Key themes:*

- Natural beauty and scenic views.
- Diverse and varied landscape, including limestone plateaus, gorges, moorlands, and rocky outcrops.
- Biodiversity of wildlife, unique flora and fauna, and rich habitats, including the limestone grasslands and woodlands.
- Ancient history, industrial heritage and archaeological significance.
- Accessibility and recreational opportunities in the area, particularly for outdoor activities.
- Sense of peace and tranquillity, an opportunity to escape from urban environments.
- Preservation and minimal development, maintaining the unspoilt nature of the area.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges MHNL may face over the next five years?

- Climate change impacts due to unpredictable weather patterns, habitat loss and risks like wildfires and flooding.
- Increased visitation leading to issues such as litter, path erosion and disturbance to wildlife and habitats.
- Limitations due to funding.
- Biodiversity loss due to habitat fragmentation, climate change and agricultural practices.
- Development pressures from local housing and transportation expansions.
- Farming practices creating unbalanced ecological systems.

Is there anything else you would like us to consider for the Management Plan?

- Maintain natural paths and landscapes, avoiding artificial materials on paths to preserve natural feel and limit speeding by cyclists.
- Focus on managing areas affected by habitat deterioration.
- Address light pollution and enforce traffic calming measures.
- Educate on litter management and general visitor impact.
- Enhance bridleway network and equestrian access.
- Collaboration with landowners and local partnerships to achieve landscape goals.

Emails and phone calls: We received one call to the consultation phone line during the consultation, in which the following thoughts were discussed:

- Steps being taken in the upcoming Management Plan to address illegal hunting in the area. The caller said the existing plan doesn't adequately cover this.
- Would like the duties of the police and other services to be referenced in the Plan, indicating a willingness to work with partner agencies to address the hunting.

7. Summary and recommendations

The consultation conducted by Distinctive Communications on behalf of the Mendip Hills National Landscape has provided a wealth of information and feedback which will be important in shaping the Management Plan.

Alongside the insights into the how the team should prioritise objectives, the open feedback sections provided ideas beyond the scope of the identified priorities.

The feedback received is central to the following recommendations:

- **Supporting diversity of use:** Demographic information from the survey demonstrates a wide variety of uses for the National Landscape area, including walking, wildlife watching, cycling and horse riding. The Management Plan should seek to address objectives from these different perspectives, including the lesser-represented groups.
- **Aligning priorities with feedback:** Whilst qualitative feedback suggests that people generally felt all objectives were important, some clear areas of prioritisation were reflected in the responses. The Management Plan should seek to prioritise allocating resources to the objectives that the community have stated are the most important to them, as detailed in section 6 of this report, under each of the key themes.
- **Addressing questions beyond the scope of the National Landscape team:** Although some queries raised are beyond the scope and control of the team, it's important that those who raised these concerns are heard. These questions and comments should be shared with appropriate authorities and organisations.
- **Continued communication:** With 42% of respondents leaving an email address, it is important that engagement continues where they have expressed a willingness to remain involved.

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Stakeholder outreach email

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Stakeholder email

Good afternoon,

Shaping our countryside's future

The Mendip Hills National Landscape team is producing the Management Plan which will set the priorities for 2025 to 2030. We are asking for your help to shape these.

We have a statutory duty to produce a Management Plan every five years. The Plan covers nature restoration, climate change, people and place. It sets out the Partnership's approach for managing the Mendip Hills under each of these themes, not the projects and initiatives designed to deliver them – that comes next.

We cannot achieve these objectives on our own. Management of the Mendip Hills requires us to work closely with partners, stakeholders, farmers, landowners and other key groups. Your feedback is hugely valuable in helping us understand areas of concern and opportunity.

How can we shape the future of this special landscape?

We are launching a consultation to invite everyone to share their views. To read more and complete the survey online, please follow: <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>.

We would like to encourage you share details of the consultation with your communities / members too.



If you require a paper copy of the survey, please get in touch and we will arrange for one to be posted to you. Call 0330 107 0535 or email MendipPlan@distinctivecomms.co.uk.

The deadline for feedback is Wednesday 30 October 2024. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Mendip Hills National Landscape

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Appendix B – Consultation launch media release



**Mendip Hills
National
Landscape**

Media release for immediate use

23 September 2024

Share your views to shape the future of Mendip Hills

Mendip Hills National Landscape has launched a consultation to gather feedback on priorities for the management of the countryside over the next five years.

Shaping the 2025 to 2030 Management Plan, the team wants to hear from residents, businesses and visitors to the area about what they think the plan should focus on. The consultation asks what people love about the area, and what steps the Partnership can be taken to improve it. The Partnership is the overarching body that brings all the relevant authorities together that conserve and enhance the national landscape.

The plan covers the themes of nature recovery, climate change, people, and place. It sets out the Partnership's approach for managing Mendip Hills with these themes in mind. These will then inform thinking about the projects and initiatives designed to deliver them.

Jim Hardcastle, manager of Mendip Hills National Landscape, said: "The Mendip Hills is a distinctive and nationally important landscape, with diverse habitats supporting abundant wildlife. We know it's a place that so many enjoy and care about.

"Such a special place requires careful and considered management. As we prepare the next Management Plan, we want to know if we're prioritising what matters most to you – the people who live, work in, and explore the area. We invite you to share your thoughts with us to help shape the future of our countryside.

"From the last review, we could see that people were concerned about the loss of nature, so we turned this concern into a Nature Recovery Plan for the area and a Nature Recovery Ranger who now leads practical work across the landscape. Visitor pressure was another key piece of feedback, which led us to employ a Sustainable Recreation Officer and install visitor counters across the area to help land managers understand how their sites are being used."

The Management Plan is a statutory document required by Natural England under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It recognises the intrinsic links between conservation, enhancing natural beauty, and promoting access.

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



For more information and to complete the survey, visit <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>. The consultation is open until Wednesday, October 30, 2024.

Should any further support or information be required, the project team can be contacted on MendipPlan@distinctivecomms.co.uk or call 0330 107 0535.

ENDS

For more information, please contact Arianne Smart at Distinctive Communications on arianne.smart@distinctivecomms.co.uk or 07435 763384.

Attached map of the Mendip Hills National Landscape area and photographs may be used in connection with this press release.

About Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership

One of 46 National Landscapes in England and Wales, The Mendip Hills National Landscape is beautiful, but people make it outstanding. Our mission is to protect and regenerate this designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. And to make sure everyone can enjoy it.

As a small team, we work in partnership with many others. Bringing together landowners, the local community and other organisations to create and deliver the Management Plan. Through this plan, our team and partners make sure that Mendip Hills National Landscape is a beautiful, thriving place that all people feel they can be part of.

Designated in 1972, the Mendip Hills National Landscape covers 198sq km from Bleadon in the west to Chewton Mendip in the east.

To find out more, visit <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/>.

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



Appendix C – Follow-up media release



Mendip Hills National Landscape

Media release for immediate use

14 October 2024

Share your views to shape the future of Mendip Hills

There are two weeks remaining to share your views on the future of the Mendip Hills.

A consultation launched by the Mendip Hills National Landscape team is gathering feedback on priorities for the management of the countryside over the next five years.

Shaping the 2025 to 2030 Management Plan, the team wants to hear from residents, businesses and visitors to the area about what they think the plan should focus on.

The consultation asks what people love about the area, and what steps the Partnership can be taken to improve it. The Partnership is the overarching body that brings all the relevant authorities together that conserve and enhance the national landscape.

Jim Hardcastle, manager of Mendip Hills National Landscape, said: "Recent extreme weather and flash flooding has made evident the impacts of climate change. Coupled with the evolving needs of countryside users and growing pressures on nature, it is vital that we prioritise what matters most for Mendip Hills. We know this is a place that so many enjoy and care about."

The plan covers the themes of climate change, nature recovery, people, and place. It sets out the Partnership's approach for managing Mendip Hills with these themes in mind. These will then inform thinking about the projects and initiatives designed to deliver them.

Jim added: "Climate change is accelerating and we can see the effects on Mendip now. Last year, an adder was seen in late December as it was so mild. Plants are flowering at different times and insects are emerging out-of-sync with them. And I'm sure most communities around Mendip will have experienced the torrents of water after downpours."

The Management Plan is a statutory document required by Natural England under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It recognises the intrinsic links between conservation, enhancing natural beauty, and promoting access.

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



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Mendip Hills National Landscape

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Appendix D – Management Plan web page

**Mendip Hills
National
Landscape**

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Mendip Hills National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

MENDIP HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE > MANAGEMENT PLAN

MANAGEMENT PLAN



Shaping our countryside's future

We need your views to help shape the management of Mendip Hills for the next five years. Are we prioritising what matters most to you?

The Mendip Hills are a distinctive, nationally-important landscape, marked by steep slopes, gorges, ancient monuments, lakes, and diverse habitats, including wildflower-rich grasslands and wooded areas, supporting abundant wildlife.

Such a special place requires careful and considered management. The purpose of Mendip Hills National Landscape designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

As we prepare the Management Plan for 2025 to 2030 – which covers nature restoration, climate change, people and place – we want to hear from you. What do you love about the area? How can we develop an area resilient to climate change? What steps can be taken to improve access and enjoyment?

We want to know, how can we shape the future of our Mendip Hills?

The Management Plan sets out the priorities and approach for managing the Mendip Hills, not the projects and initiatives designed to deliver them – that comes next.

Before you complete the survey it may help you to look at the:

- [State of the AONB \(National Landscape\) report](#)
- [The Nature Recovery Plan](#)
- [The current Management Plan 2019-24](#)

Then share your thoughts via the survey [CLICK HERE](#)

Or [DOWNLOAD](#) the survey [HERE](#) and send it back using the address: FREEPOST DISTINCTIVE

Should you require any further support or information, or the plan in a different format please email MendipPlan@distinctivecomms.co.uk or call 0330 107 0535 or write to Mendip Hills National Landscape Team, Charterhouse Centre, Blagdon BS40 7XR. Hard copies can be returned using Freepost DISTINCTIVE

Click here to start the survey

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



FAQs

Q: What happens next?

A: The survey runs from Wednesday 18 September to Wednesday 30 October 2024. The team will consider all feedback in shaping the 2025-2030 Management Plan.

Once the consultation period has closed, we will analyse the feedback, produce a report, and write the Draft Management Plan. We aim to present the plan, shaped by your feedback, to Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership in November.

Once approved by the Partnership, the Draft Management Plan has a further statutory period of consultation before it is presented to the local authorities and Natural England for adoption. It will run from April 2025.

Q: Why are you developing a Management Plan?

A: The primary legislation relating to National Landscapes is set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). This legislation uses the original term for National Landscapes, 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB).

The Act includes provisions on the designation of AONBs, sets out requirements for the publication of an AONB Management Plan and provides that the single purpose of AONBs is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty.

We have a statutory duty to produce a Management Plan for the area every five years. The current management plan is for the period 2019-2024.

Q: Where can I find more information about the requirements of the Management Plan?

A: If you would like to learn more about the Management Plan process and requirements, you can read technical guidance from Natural England here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs-designation-and-management>.

Q: Who is on the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee?

A:

- Somerset Council
- North Somerset Council
- Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Mendip Hills National Landscape Team
- National Trust
- National Farmers Union
- Natural England
- Somerset Wildlife Trust
- Avon Wildlife Trust
- Bath and North East Somerset Parishes Representative
- North Somerset Parishes Representative
- Somerset Parishes Representative
- Mendip Society
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- The Trails Trust

Q: What is a National Landscape or an AONB?

A: In November 2023, all 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in England and Wales adopted a new name, National Landscapes. National Landscapes still retain the AONB designation and all the protections under the Countryside Rights of Way Act and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Q: I would like to complete a paper survey, where can I get one?

A: If you would like to complete a paper copy of the survey, please call 0330 107 0535 or email MendipPlan@distinctivemms.co.uk and we will post one out to you.

Hard copies of the survey can be returned to: Freepost DISTINCTIVE.

Q: I would like to give feedback outside of the survey, who can I contact?

A: If you have any additional feedback, or should you require any further support or information, please email MendipPlan@distinctivemms.co.uk or call 0330 107 0535.

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Appendix E – Google Form survey

Section 1 of 3

Shaping the Countryside's Future

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Mendip Hills National Landscape - Management Plan Consultation

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts on the Management Plan for Mendip Hills National Landscape, 2025-2030.

Before you complete the survey, it may help you to look at the State of the AONB (National Landscape) report; the Nature Recovery Plan; and the current Management Plan 2019-2024, which can be found here: <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>

Please then return to this survey afterwards.

Map of Mendip Hills Area

The map shows the Mendip Hills National Landscape area, including towns like Glastonbury, Bath, and Wells. It highlights various landscape features and routes. A scale bar indicates 0 to 20km. The map is sourced from Ordnance Survey maps covering the area Landranger 182, Explorer 141.

National Landscape

- Woodland
- Open Access
- AWT Area Wildlife Trust
- DWT Somerset Wildlife Trust
- National Trust

Strawberry Line (National Cycle Route 36)

West Country Way (National Cycle Route 3)

Wild Walk Start- Limestone Link
- Mendip Way
- Morand's Way

Ordnance Survey maps covering this area Landranger 182, Explorer 141

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



Privacy

Your personal information is captured, held, and processed by Distinctive Communications for the purposes of collecting feedback on Mendip Hills National Landscape's Management Plan. Distinctive Communications is consulting on behalf of Mendip Hills National Landscape team, meaning that we are joint data controllers for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Your name and postcode are used to identify you as a single respondent. All your personal information is held in a secure database on a server located in the United Kingdom. It will be held for as long as is necessary to produce the Management Plan.

After section 1 Continue to next section

Section 2 of 3

About you

Description (optional)

Your name:

Short answer text

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please share which group here:

Short answer text

Your postcode (this is used to understand the geographical location of respondents and their proximity to Mendip Hills National Landscape): *

Short answer text

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Are you a... (tick all that apply): *

- ☐ A local resident (within the Mendip Hills National Landscape area)
- ☐ A Bath and North East Somerset resident (local authority)
- ☐ A North Somerset resident (local authority)
- ☐ A Somerset Council resident (local authority)
- ☐ A local business owner or representative
- ☐ A visitor to Mendip Hills National Landscape
- ☐ A landowner/farmer

How do you use the area? *

- ☐ Dog Walking
- ☐ Walking/ Hiking/ Rambling/ Wheeling
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Climbing
- ☐ Caving
- ☐ Wildlife Watching
- ☐ Other recreational activity

How frequently do you visit Mendip Hills? *

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Multiple times a month
- ☐ Occasionally (a few times a year)
- ☐ Visited a few times
- ☐ Visited once
- ☐ Never visited Mendip Hills

Mendip Hills National Landscape

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Section 3 of 3

Mendip Hills Management Plan

< >

Description (optional)

Have you seen the Mendip Hills National Landscape name and logo prior to engaging with this * consultation process?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

What do you feel is special about Mendip Hills National Landscape?

Long answer text

What do you feel are the biggest challenges Mendip Hills National Landscape may face over the next five years?

Long answer text

Priority area 1: Nature Restoration. *

Please rank the following objectives in the order you feel they are most important (1 being highest priority, 5 being lowest priority).

Please don't select more than one response per column.

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the M...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enhance biodiv...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support a broa...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Raise awarene...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advocate for s...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



Is there anything under the theme of 'nature restoration' that we might have missed?

Long answer text

Priority area 2: Climate Change.



Please rank the following objectives in the order you feel they are most important (1 being highest priority, 7 being lowest priority).

Please don't select more than one response per column.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Promote f...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encourage...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advocate f...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ensure ne...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support c...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work with ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaborat...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Is there anything under the theme of 'climate change' that we might have missed?

Long answer text

Distinctive

29

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



Is there anything else you would like us to consider for our Mendip Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030?

Long answer text

If you would like to be added to the Mendip Hills National Landscape mailing list, please leave your name and email address below:

Description (optional)

Name:

Short answer text

Email Address:

Short answer text

Mendip Hills National Landscape

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Appendix F – Flyer



Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



The Mendip Hills are a distinctive landscape, marked by steep slopes, gorges, ancient monuments, lakes, and diverse habitats, including wildflower-rich grasslands and wooded areas, supporting abundant wildlife. Such a special place requires careful and considered management.

As we prepare the Management Plan for 2025 to 2030 we want to hear from you.

What do you love about the area?

How can we develop an area resilient to climate change?

What steps can be taken to improve access and enjoyment?

We want to know, how can we shape the future of our Mendip Hills?

Visit mendiphills-nl.org.uk to find out more and complete the survey.

Deadline for feedback is **Wednesday 30 October 2024.**

Should you require any further information, support, or this document in a different format please email MendipPlan@distinctivecomms.co.uk or call 0330 107 0535.



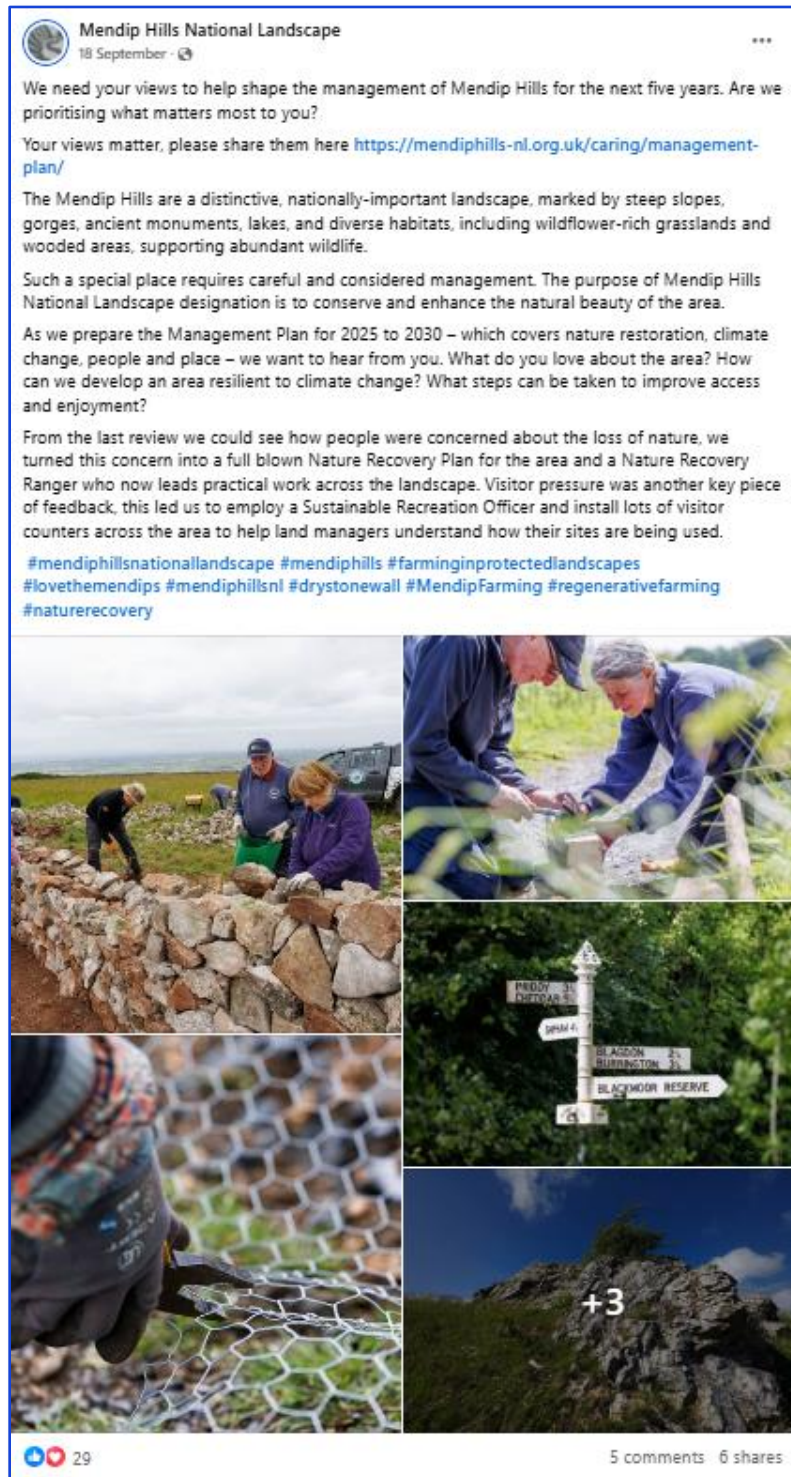
Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



Appendix G – Organic social media posts

Facebook:



Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



**Mendip Hills National Landscape**
20 September · 🌐

Before you have a go at the all-important survey where we're asking you to say what the priorities are for the Mendip Hills, take a look at the State of the AONB (National Landscape) report. It's got all you need to know about the area, from light pollution maps to number of people employed in farming.

Some headline stats:
There are 447km of public rights of way
There are 408km of drystone walls
The number of visitors to Deer Leap went up, but the numbers to Dolebury went down between 2019-22
Landholding average size has gone with the number of holdings going up
You can read much more here <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/.../State-of-the-AONB-2022...>
And then fill in the survey here <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>
[#mendiphills](#) [#lovethemendips](#) [#mendiphillsnl](#) [#drystonewall](#) [#MendipFarming](#) [#Mendip](#)

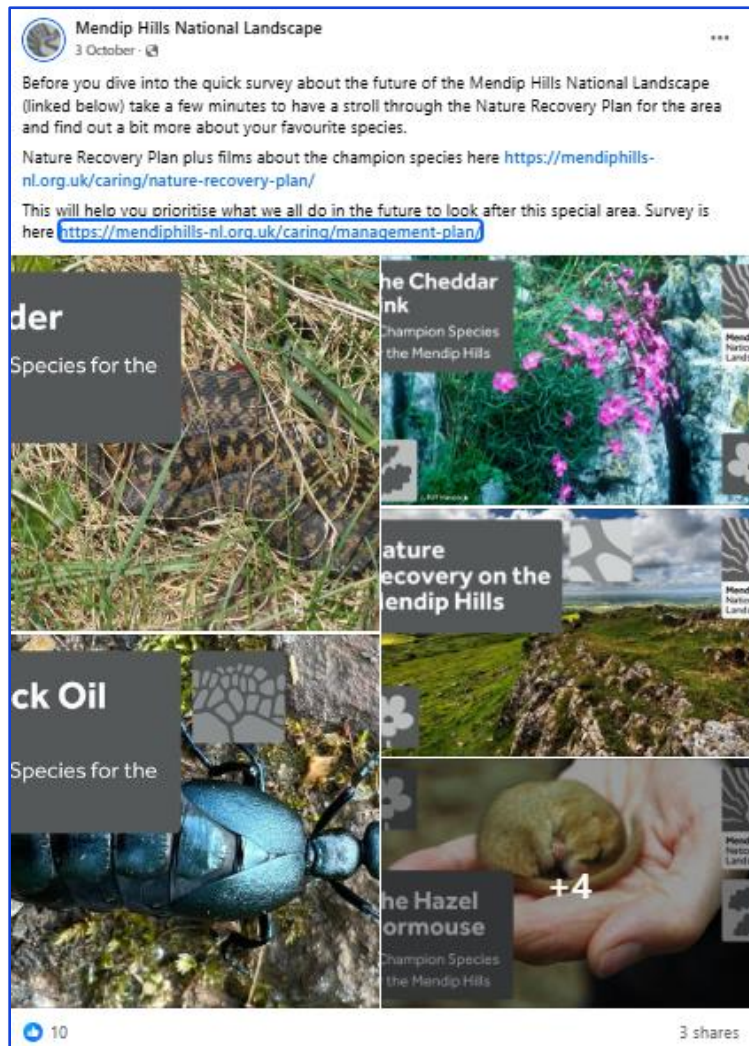


 13

1 comment · 2 shares

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



**Mendip Hills National Landscape**
7 October at 15:22 · 🌐

How would you rank the priorities for the Mendip Hills over the next 5 years?
Restoring nature? Addressing climate change? Improving access? Creating a better sense of place?

Please take 5 minutes to share your views via the survey <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>

Your views will shape the work of all the organisations involved in looking after the nationally important Mendip Hills.



Mendip Hills National Landscape
Charitable organisation

Call now

 15

9 comments

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



**Mendip Hills National Landscape**
10 October at 15:32 · 🌐

There are just two weeks remaining to share your views on the future of the Mendip Hills.

The consultation is gathering feedback on priorities for the management of the countryside over the next five years.

Shaping the 2025 to 2030 Management Plan, the team wants to hear from residents, businesses and visitors to the area about what they think the plan should focus on.

The consultation asks what people love about the area, and what steps the Partnership can be taken to improve it. The Partnership is the overarching body that brings all the relevant authorities together that conserve and enhance the national landscape.

Jim Hardcastle, manager of Mendip Hills National Landscape, said: "Recent extreme weather and flash flooding has made evident the impacts of climate change. Coupled with the evolving needs of countryside users and growing pressures on nature, it is vital that we prioritise what matters most for Mendip Hills. We know this is a place that so many enjoy and care about."

The plan covers the themes of climate change, nature recovery, people, and place. It sets out the Partnership's approach for managing Mendip Hills with these themes in mind. These will then inform thinking about the projects and initiatives designed to deliver them.

Jim added: "Climate change is accelerating and we can see the effects on Mendip now. Last year an adder was seen in late December as it was so mild. Plants are flowering at different times and insects are emerging out-of-sync with them. And I'm sure most communities around Mendip will have experienced the torrents of water after downpours. This survey gives people a chance to share what the priorities should be for this special area."

The Management Plan is a statutory document required by Natural England under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It recognises the intrinsic links between conservation, enhancing natural beauty, and promoting access.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey here, you can download it and send it back via a Freepost address. <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>



Instagram:

Mendip Hills National Landscape

Shaping the countryside's future



mendiphillsnl • Follow

mendiphillsnl We need your views to help shape the management of Mendip Hills for the next five years. Are we prioritising what matters most to you?

Your views matter, please share them here
<https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>

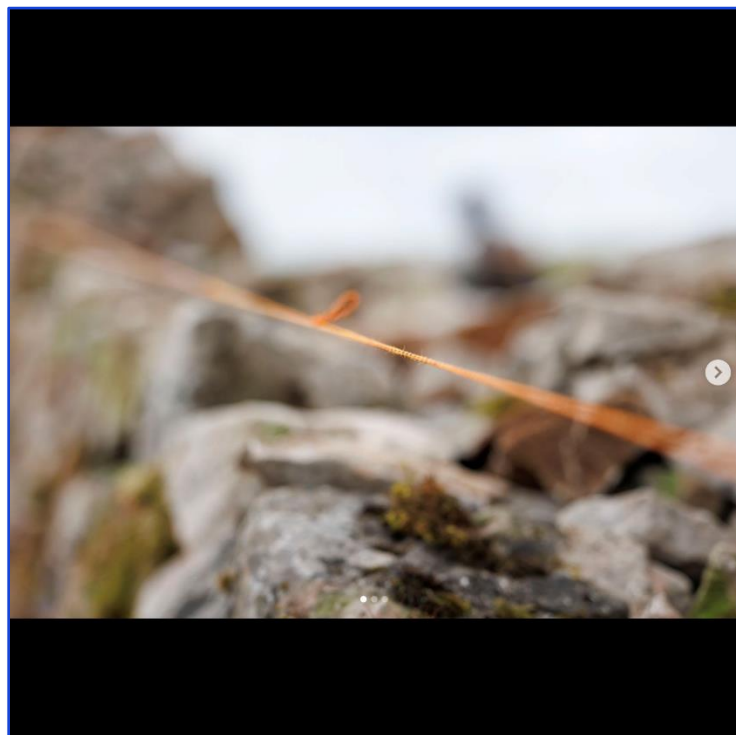
The Mendip Hills are a distinctive, nationally-important landscape, marked by steep slopes, gorges, ancient monuments, lakes, and diverse habitats, including wildflower-rich grasslands and wooded areas, supporting abundant wildlife.

Such a special place requires careful and considered management. The purpose of Mendip Hills National Landscape designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

As we prepare the Management Plan for 2025 to 2030 – which covers nature restoration, climate change, people and place – we want to hear from you. What do you love about the area? How can we develop an area resilient to climate change? What steps can be taken to improve access and enjoyment?

25 likes
18 September

Add a comment...



mendiphillsnl • Follow

mendiphillsnl Before you have a go at the all-important survey where we're asking you to say what the priorities are for the Mendip Hills, take a look at the State of the AONB (National Landscape) report. It's got all you need to know about the area, from light pollution maps to number of people employed in farming.

Some headline stats;
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There are 408km of drystone walls
The number of visitors to Deer Leap went up, but the numbers to Dolebury went down between 2019-22
Landholding average size has gone with the number of holdings going up

You can read much more here <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/State-of-the-AONB-2022-Report-Final-6June23.pdf>

And then fill in the survey here <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>

#mendiphillsnationallandscape #mendiphills
#lovethemendips #mendiphillsnl #drystonewall
#MendipFarming #Mendip

26 likes
20 September

Add a comment...

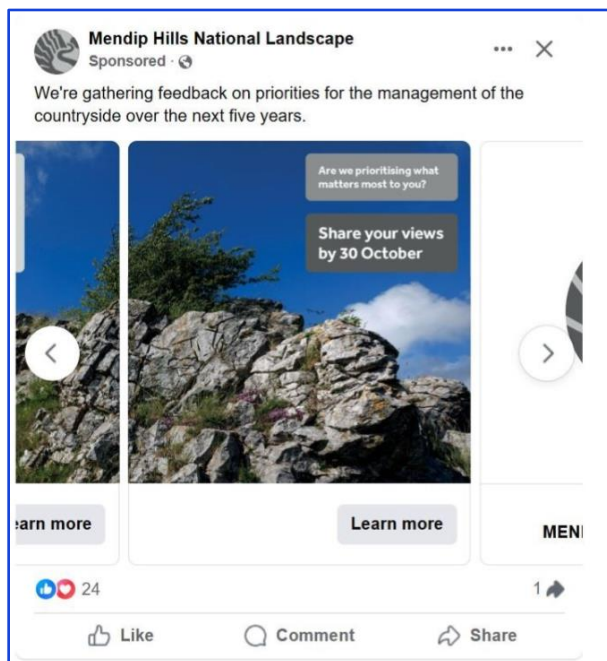
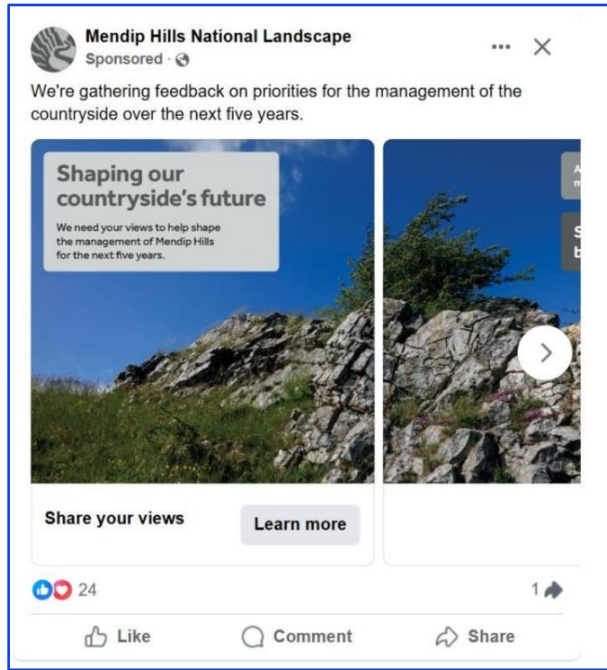
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Appendix H – Meta advert

Facebook:



Mendip Hills National Landscape

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Instagram:

