



**Mendip Hills**  
National  
Landscape

# Applicant guidance

## Linking projects to the Mendip Hills Management Plan



# Farming in Protected Landscapes

Working in partnership with farmers  
and land managers to look after our  
landscapes together



This document is intended to help grant applicants develop project proposals that clearly support the purposes of the Mendip Hills AONB designation to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.



The priorities for the Mendip Hills National Landscape that are relevant to the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme are outlined below.

Each theme includes examples of potential projects – these lists are by no means exhaustive or prescriptive, they are merely there to illustrate potential options that would work well in the Mendip Hills National Landscape.

The full management plan and the 5 Year Strategic Delivery Plan, plus associated documents, are available on our website.

Please contact us for free advice and guidance before submitting an application. The Farming Engagement Officers are here to support applicants in developing proposals.

Email: [mendip@mendiphillsaonb.org.uk](mailto:mendip@mendiphillsaonb.org.uk)



## Theme 1 - Landscape Quality

The vision for Landscape Quality is a wide understanding and appreciation of the Mendip Hills as a protected area of distinct character, created over time by the interaction of people and nature. Its ecological, biological, cultural, and scenic value conserved and enhanced.



### Relevant Management Plan objectives:

L1: Promote appropriate management to ensure that the distinctive Mendip Hills National landscape is conserved and enhanced.

L2: Provide opportunities to acquire and develop skills required to care for and promote the landscape and its special qualities.

L3: Increase awareness and appreciation of the purposes of designation and the special qualities of the National Landscape.

L4: Increase awareness of the benefits of supporting local products and services that help conserve and enhance the landscape.

### Examples of potential local projects:

- Restoration and enhancement work to benefit the special qualities of the National Landscape, such as restoring and rebuilding drystone walls
- Development and delivery of grazing regimes to enhance nature recovery
- Events or practices that promote rural skills, landscape management techniques and that showcase traditional rural skills such as sheep shearing
- Training programmes for traditional local crafts/practises such as drystone walling training
- Promotion of area appropriate rural crafts
- Facilitation of educational visits to farms/landholdings to showcase the special qualities of the National Landscape – providing facilities and local expert speakers (e.g farmers, archaeologists, ecologists)
- Collaborative establishment of a local food festival, farm shop or local produce markets



## Theme 2 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The vision for Biodiversity and Geodiversity is for resilient and coherent ecological networks in place providing bigger, better, and joined up habitats, with no loss of characteristic species. The areas diverse geology is understood and managed for its importance, both to the biodiversity, and ecosystem services that benefit business, people and wildlife.

### Relevant Management Plan objectives:

BG1: Ensure that there is no net loss of characteristic habitats and species.

BG2: Promote a landscape scale approach to the conservation and enhancement of ecological networks within and adjoining the National Landscape.

BG5: Recognise and celebrate geological sites and features of the Mendip Hills National Landscape to ensure the successful conservation both of the geology and wildlife habitat they provide.

BG6: Increase awareness of the Mendip Hills geology, particularly cave systems in relation to the important role they play in water management and water supply.



### Examples of potential local projects:

- Work that enhances connectivity between important habitats, such as hedgerow planting or drystone walling
- Establishing species-rich grassland or wildflower meadows
- Re-establishing appropriate dew ponds
- Where appropriate, install wildlife refugia such as bat roosts/boxes, insect boxes, bird nest boxes, reptile hibernacula, butterfly banks
- Rewilding or regenerative agriculture projects linking valuable habitats within the National Landscape with those outside the designation boundary
- Establishing or enhancing a mosaic of species-rich habitats within the landscape
- Removal of invasive species from cliff faces or important geological features
- Educational visits to farms that increase awareness and showcase the work required to protect the special biodiversity and geodiversity features of the National Landscape

## Theme 3. Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage

The vision for Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage is an enhanced understanding of the National Landscape's historic environment and cultural heritage, with appropriate management in place to ensure all sites, structures, and landscapes are conserved and enhanced, and local communities, and visitors enjoy a rich experience of sense of place.

### Relevant Management Plan objectives:

H1: Improve the recording, interpretation and understanding of all aspects of the National Landscape's historic environment to ensure local communities and visitors enjoy a rich experience of the sense of place.

H2: Increase awareness and communicate the significance of the high-quality historic environment of the Mendip Hills National Landscape.

H3: Promote appropriate management of sites, structures and landscapes designated for their international, national, regional or local importance in the historic environment to ensure no further loss of heritage assets.



### Examples of potential local projects

- Clearance of blocked or overgrown swallets, linked in with educational visits to increase awareness and showcase the work required to protect this special feature of the National Landscape
- Support the surveying and excavation (if appropriate) of archaeological features
- Support and work with archaeologists/historians to deliver educational site visits for all ages and demographics
- Stabilisation or rebuilding (where appropriate and permitted by Historic England's guidance) of archaeological features such as those to do with historic lead mining in the area
- Consultation on and alterations to grazing regimes in historic areas to reduce the impact of livestock on heritage features



## Theme 4. Recreation, Access & Tourism

The vision for Recreation, Access and Tourism is a provision for enjoyment by a diverse population, from both within and beyond the National Landscape boundary, through a wide range of active, and quiet pursuits that the area can sustain. The area will be accessible, regardless of individual mobility, wealth or background.



### Relevant Management Plan objectives:

R1: Maintain, improve and promote public access and quiet recreational activities with measures to ensure access for all in accordance with the purposes of National Landscape designation.

R2: Support the development of tourism that benefits the local economy, conserves and enhances the landscape and improves understanding of the Mendip Hills.

R4: Support healthy lifestyles by encouraging more people to use the Mendip Hills for sustainable outdoor activities.

### Examples of potential local projects

- Public access provision (either rights of way, permissive paths or other access) to provide for safety, access to countryside, heritage and landscape, community connections and circuits, see Appendix D of the management plan
- Provision/replacement of structures and furniture, e.g. access to gates to make them suitable for a wider range of audiences (walkers/cyclists/horse riders/access for people with limited mobility/access for people with impaired vision)
- Biodiversity measures along access to corridors to add interest and encourage wildlife
- Farmers/land managers could look to provide access to countryside instructors for events on their land
- Projects on land to improve cyclist safety (getting users off/away from busy roads)
- Facilitate access for caving groups led by instructors

## Theme 5. Natural Resources

The vision for Natural Resources is an integrated land use management that has restored and continues to enhance the areas natural capital including soils, food, and water supply.

### Relevant Management Plan objectives:

N1: Recognise and promote the benefits and relevance of the NL as a valuable source of ecosystem services, economic and health benefits

N2: Promote conservation of water resources and enhance their quality taking measures to reduce low flows and flooding by appropriate management and use.

N3: Promote sustainable management of soils in accordance with best practice to minimise erosion and water pollution and maximise resilience to drought.



### Examples of potential local projects:

- Nature based solutions to tackle climate change and natural flood management
- Addition of pollinator friendly features within the landscape such as refugia, natural field margins, or beetle banks
- Consultation and alteration of pest management regimes to increase populations of natural predators
- Projects to prevent soil erosion, such as reducing stocking density or creating buffer strips/banks to catch surface runoff
- “Leaky dam” construction in watercourses prone to flash-flooding
- Promote the sharing of information on best practices and local issues, for example through hosting information talks or running farm tours where sustainable soil management measure are already implemented



## Theme 6. Land Management

The vision for Land Management is that as the main land use, agriculture continues to contribute to enhancing landscape character, including ecological networks, and the provision of benefits such as clean water. The area of woodland managed for fuel as well as wildlife, and recreation has increased.

### Relevant Management Plan objectives:

LM1: Support and promote viable farming to ensure it remains as the principle land use and contributes to maintaining the special qualities of the National Landscape

LM2: Support and promote rural land management that conserves and enhances natural resources, including biodiversity special to the Mendip Hills, landscape character, the historic environment, and aids public awareness and enjoyment of the Mendip Hills.



### Examples of potential local projects:

- Diversifying farm income and sustainability of farm business through provision of a farm shop or vending machine
- Running public events to improve public awareness of farming and the landscapes of the Mendip Hills
- Adopting nature friendly farming practices as under themes 2 and 5
- Conservation and restoration of limestone grassland
- Creating scrub along woodland rides and edges

## Theme 8. Participation

The vision for Participation is that significant numbers of the local community can access training and learning to benefit their involvement in the conservation and enhancement of the Mendip Hills National Landscape, either through direct employment in the rural economy, or as custodians of the landscape, influencing decision makers, or volunteering.

### Relevant Management Plan objectives:

P1: Increase the opportunities for volunteering and the range of people participating, to benefit the environment, people's health and wellbeing and local communities in and around the National Landscape.

P2: Encourage the involvement of local people and the wider community in the management of the National Landscape.

P3: Promote the Mendip Hills as an educational resource for all ages and encourage sharing of research and learning tools.



### Examples of potential local projects

- Work that enhances connectivity between important habitats, such as hedgerow planting or drystone walling
- Establishing species-rich grassland or wildflower meadows.
- Re-establishing appropriate dew ponds; where appropriate, install wildlife refugia such as, bat roosts/boxes, insect boxes, bird nest boxes, reptile hibernacula, beetle banks
- Rewilding or regenerative agriculture projects linking valuable habitats within the National Landscape with those outside the designation boundary
- Establishing or enhancing a mosaic of species-rich habitats within the landscape
- Removal of ivy and cotoneaster from cliff faces or important geological features
- Educational visits to farms that increase awareness and showcase the work required to protect the special biodiversity and geodiversity features of the National Landscape



Additional useful information can be found in the Nature Recovery Plan on our website:

- Mendip Hills' champion species
- 12 special qualities of the Mendip Hills
- Management priorities for your local area and more recommendations for projects

