

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee

Draft Minutes of the meeting held online, 20th July 2024 (postponed from 18th June 2024)

Present:

Partnership Committee

Andy Wear (Chair)	Farmer
Jim Hardcastle	National Landscape Manager
David Julian	CPRE
Lauren Holt	National Trust
Cllr Mike Adams	North Somerset Parish Councils Representative
Simon Clarke	Somerset Wildlife Trust
Barbra Lakin	Somerset Council Officer
Cllr Theo Butt Phillip	Somerset County Councillor
James Divall	Somerset Council Officer
Cllr Roger Dollins	Somerset Parish Councils Representative
Cllr Paul Crossley	Bath & North East Somerset Councillor
Tina Bath	Mendip Society
Jo Lewis	Natural England
Esther Coffin-Smith	North Somerset Council Officer

Other attendees

Joanna Cheung	Support and Communications Officer
Judith Chubb-Whittle	Landscape Planning Officer
Tim Haselden	Project Development Officer
Kelly Davies	Sustainable Recreation Officer
John Simpson	Volunteer
Prof. Richard Bolden	UWE

Apologies

Cllr Edric Hobbs (Vice Chair)	Somerset Council
Julie Cooper	Somerset Council Officer
Cllr Nick Cottle	Somerset Council Councillor
Cllr Annemieke Waite	North Somerset Council
Chris Farr	Country Land and Business Association
James Bateman	Country Land and Business Association
DI Sheppard	Bath & North East Somerset Council Officer
Rachel Thompson MBE	The Trails Trust
Steve Dury	Somerset Council Officer
Fern Elias-Stagg	Avon Wildlife Trust

Summary of Actions

No	Item	Notes	Action
1	Introduction and Apologies	Apologies as stated above	
2	Declaration of interest	No declarations.	
3	Notes of Previous Meeting	No other matters arising. Accepted as a true and accurate record. JC to arrange AW to sign	JC
4	Paper A - Partners' Updates	See appended Notes TB – Continue to promote reserves - Open day was in May - Scything event TBC in September - Tanya's Wood used by Blagdon School - Working with Ubley Youth Club - Continue to respond to planning applications - Small grant scheme is ongoing - Kate Avery has joined MS - Mike Harvey is now newsletter editor - Judith Tranter stood down as secretary - AGM was well attended JD – Introduces himself as Head of Service for the Environment and Climate Team - Large refresh going on in terms of climate and ecological emergency ambitions - Happy to take away any questions and respond later if needed PC – no major planning applications in MHNL are ECS – Focussing on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), including habitat banking - West of England Nature Recovery Strategy - West of England Nature Partnership Conference in October - Green Infrastructure actions - 2 Defra funded posts re tree planting - Also Defra funded Ranger to work with volunteer groups and green social prescribing - Work on England Coast Path	

		LH – Heritage Pasturelands project - 20 ha of woodland creation and some wetland creation - Black Rock path is now completed and open, it is experimental surface, please take a look - Continuing to work in partnership with Longleat to maintain the Gorge Loop - Funding in place for the next section at Hell's Steps - Car park work is on hold as NT are trying to find new funding - NNR recruiting a community engagement role - NNR creating a forum to work more collaboratively JH – Explains Mendip NNR for new partners and external attendees LH – Dolebury Warren is returning to NT in October - Hope to start works on the hillfort, and defence through the ages - Interviewing for a new apprentice role JL – NE won an award on behalf of Mendip NNR - Focus on connecting people with nature activity - Linking with Weston Super Mare MA – reports of vandalism SC – In an update to paper A the FiPL bid was successful so phase two of the dormouse work will go ahead - Rachel Fickweiler working on Mendip Super NNR Paper A noted and accepted	
5	Paper B – Visitor Statistics Update	Presentation only Presented by Kelly Davies KD summarises findings of Big Visitor Count, the variety of sites used, the effect of Covid/lockdowns, weather and types of user. KD reviews visitor counter data and locations and discusses the different types of sites across Mendip.	

		JD – Several locations have declining visits. Do you know a reason for that? KD – Different reason for each site e.g. Burrington Ham is a very remote site that only gets used by the overflow car park, so when the main site is very busy. East Harptree can be skewed by D of E groups. Some of the drops are difficult to explain. TH – One of the reasons this is so important is the long term collections of data. Trends will become clear over time.	
6	Nature Calling and Nature Connections	See appended Notes Paper C - Presented by Tim Haselden TH presents details of Nature Calling and Nature Connections project, both with strong links to communities in and around Weston-Super-Mare. Mendip Nature Connections builds on the work done with SWT over the last few years. Hopefully this will become a long term project, partnered with the West of England Nature Partnership and the NHS. RD – Do you include Steep Holm and Flat Holm? TH – We can include anywhere in North Somerset but it is community focussed. RD – Niece has just joined Steep Holm Trust so there may be an opportunity to connect. TH – Always happy to link up on these projects if possible. MA – Can we share the poster? TH – yes	
7	Paper D - Climate Risk Assessments for the Mendip Hills National Landscape	See appended Notes Presented by Judith Chubb-Whittle Judith presents the results of the workshop in March and the survey sent to the Partnership in December All Protected Landscapes are taking part in a Climate Risk Assessment, which will set out short, medium and long term actions.	

		We are linking this to our special qualities. So far we have focussed on Dry Stone Walls but we will be doing all of the special qualities. Partnership will be asked for feedback. SC – SWT have done lots of work on climate adaptation and climate vulnerability and happy to share on this. JH – the focus on Special Qualities make for quite an interesting aspect to this work	
8	Paper E - Terms of Reference 2021 - 2024	See appended notes Presented by Jim Hardcastle JH – Explains purpose of Terms of Reference and they need to be updated - Chair and VC elections should happen in November - Statement of Intent is also being renewed - The Glover Review recommend a move to smaller boards - We need to ensure the board is informed on issues relating to diversities ie through community groups RD – consultants can be quite costly and the current set up works quite well. How quickly do we need to finalise this? JH – Ideally, this financial year RD – What funding do we have JH – we have additional funding from Defra RD – need to work more with Parishes TB – Consultants often create a document that will lose local connections JD – it about the balance. We also need to include engagement strategies/community scrutiny function. Need to include the communities within the process. We should make use of consultants as part of the process.	

		JL – Recommend bringing in someone independent to give ideas and structure to the outcome - Two tier structure to ensure engagement with communities JH – Yes, a community forum will be a vital part of structure - Need to include passionate local people for their advice - the aim of a community board would be to make the partnership accountable JCW – Parish councils are vital, as we have seen as part of recent training session conducted with TH RD – The partnership needs to work for Jim and the team primarily. We have experts here already. JH – We need an expert organisation to question whether we have the right people informing us. E.g. re climate, do we have climate experts on the partnership. JD – understand the purpose ie strategic board, operational board - sub groups are for practical operation objectives - remember transparency and openness - observer roles - think about dynamics JH – Protect Landscapes will have targets - we need to remember to further the purpose - transparency will be very important there RD – Climate change advice could be brought in ad hoc we don't need a specialist on the board JD – SC has Climate Specialists we can make use of and can support JH – I think there is a role for an independent consultant to prepare something for the partnership to review MA – Outside consultants often make suggestions that don't last. Can we find someone we know and someone who knows the area JH – We have John Simpson and Richard Bolden	
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		JS – There has been lots at work looking at what makes a partnership effective - Accountability, openness, target setting etc JH – I will create a brief for an external consultant and I will share that with the Partnership JH – Elections. We will always need a Chair and Vice Chair - Propose that we carry on with elections JD – Yes. They need to understand that they are taking on a role that may change JH – Another possibility is to delay elections until March JL – agree JH – seven hands so that is enough to agree to carry on with our current Chair and Vice Chair until March AW – Many thanks	
9	Paper F - Mendip Hills National Landscape Team; current position and direction.	JH – Somerset Council have not confirmed our District funding but we are working on the assumption that it will be JD – yes it will be. There is still work to be done on finances and budgeting but it will be found. JH – thanks James - Priority for the team this year is reviewing the Management Plan - Reviews the content of the activity plan RD – thank you, you have a fantastic team, it's nice to see the faces JH – Judith is leaving and we are recruiting for a new Landscape Planning Officer JH – Presents a slide showing the increase in project funding and FiPL funding compared to core funding RD – Is there funding from the lottery available	

		JH – we have used the lottery funding before and there is an interesting lottery funding coming up that we are very excited about. LH – NT has the same picture and experiences the same pressures	
10	AOB	TB – Disappointed that planning has not been formalised - Several concerning planning applications on Mendip - We don't seem to have a voice JCW – We respond to any application that will have a significant impact on the landscape - We follow up to make sure they are recorded with the local authority TB – Mendip Basecamp is a particular concern JCW – We can respond to planning applications and we have also liaised with council officers - We are not enforcement, that is for the council TB – can we include planning in the Management Plan JH – Understanding and awareness is patchy, Management Plan is a key document to overcome this TB – Concerned the management plan can become less of a priority to planners JH – This point underlines how important the Management Plan is so please do take the time to review it carefully BL – Somerset is rewriting its Local Plan which will be out in 2028. We need to ensure our Plan feeds into this - What training is available to raise profile at Somerset Council JCW – We have invited SC to do the training and it is a big opportunity JH – At the National Conference, the possibility of a Protected Landscape Impact Assessment be carried out as part of decisions regarding the protected landscape was discussed, Defra seemed keen.	

		PC – I am on the Planning Committee at BANES BL – LNRS will be an important document, make sure our sites are on the map TH – We have attended several workshops for LNRS	
11	Date of next meeting	Thursday 12th September 7pm – 9pm 2024, evening meeting JC to send invite to Partnership	JC

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	10am – 12pm 20 th June 2024	
Title:	Agenda	
Presented by:	NA	
To be noted		

1. Introductions and Apologies
2. Declaration of Interest
3. Notes of Previous Meeting. To be approved
4. Partners' updates. Paper A.
5. Visitor statistics update. Paper B.
6. Nature Calling and Nature Connections. Paper C.
7. Climate Risk Assessments for the Mendip Hills National Landscape. Paper D.
8. Terms of Reference 2021 - 2024. Paper E.
9. Mendip Hills National Landscape Team; current position and direction. Paper F.
10. AOB
11. Date of Next Meeting: to be discussed.

Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	20 th June 2024	Paper: A
Title:	Partner Updates	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle	
To be noted.		

1. Somerset Council

2. BANES

Many thanks for the Planning & Nature Recovery workshop, led by Judith and Tim from the National Landscape Team.

3. NSC

4. Natural England

- We continue to work with the Mendip NNR partnership to develop the management framework for the new NNR.
- We had a successful National Nature Reserve Week with events across some of the new Mendip NNR sites particularly Cheddar Gorge
- We recently ran a Nature and Health event with the National Landscape team at Mendip Activity Centre, aimed at connecting healthcare providers with green social prescribing providers. We had a great array of nature-based health providers with information stalls and taster sessions including nature-based arts and crafts, nature connection activities, nature photography and mindfulness as well as a chance to ride on some adaptive bikes.
- We have hosted nature connection sessions on Rodney Stoke for an assisted housing group from Weston Super Mare.
- Our other work land management and protected sites work continues as normal.

5. National Trust

6. SWT

- Mendip Hills Farm Cluster work: much of the last few months has been focussed on organising and sharing skills and training amongst cluster group members. The group continues to expand with a new member joining recently.
- Phase 1 of the Mendip Dormouse project is complete, with SWT applying for funding from MHNL FIPL (and others) for Phase 2, which if successful will enable habitat restoration and management works to increase suitability and connectivity for hazel dormouse on several sites owned by different partners, private landowners and SWT as well as further training and surveying support. We would like to thank MHNL FIPL for supporting the first phase and reference that we're keeping our fingers crossed for Phase 2!
- We would also like to thank MHNL for their support via FIPL of the relaunch of the PCNR Network. The Private & Community Nature Reserves (PCNR) Network is a user-led group hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust which provides peer-to-peer support for people who own

or manage land primarily for nature — including landowners, smallholders, and community groups. **It will be celebrating an official relaunch on Saturday 6th July**, uniting like-minded individuals to help achieve more for nature's recovery in Somerset. [Relaunch of community network supports landowners across Somerset to manage their land for nature | Somerset Wildlife Trust](#)

- Guy Braga, our Wilder Communities Officer Has been working with communities particularly in E Mendip but also supporting/contributing to Wells Environment Week in October including an event at the town hall on Saturday the 12th of October

7. AWT

8. Parish Council Representatives

9. Mendip Society

10. CPRE

Events & Competitions

We are hosting a talk on "West Country Myths & Legends" by Tony Painter at Wells Museum on Tuesday 18th June.

Our annual photo competition is open for entries. The theme is "Somerset: my special place in all seasons. Two prizes of £100 each available in two age categories and you can submit up to 3 photos. Closing date is 31st August 2024.

Litter project

SUEZ are supporting our project by providing us with 60 litterpicking kits for new volunteers. The new kits are made by Waterhaul and include a foldable grabber, reusable sack and a bag hoop all made from recycled ocean plastic and waste fishing gear. We have now supplied kits for over 300 volunteers across Somerset. Our volunteers range from teenagers completing their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering to people in their tenth decade.

Planning

We continue to be very busy with planning cases across the county. We recently took legal action against Exmoor National Park which had granted planning permission for a bungalow adjacent to the National Coastal Path at Bossington, despite it not complying with the National Park's own policies. Planning permission has now been quashed and the park has refunded half of our legal costs.

Nearer to the Mendip Hills:

- we are supporting Coleford Parish Council in their objection against 75 dwellings on Anchor Road, Coleford. This site is not allocated for housing in the Local Plan.
- We spoke at a recent Frome Town Council meeting against plans for Selwood Garden Village – a massive plan for 1700 houses on the edge of Frome.
- We spoke at planning committee against a solar park at Rode – this has now been deferred.
- We have written to the Planning Inspector about the appeal for an extension of the Fortescue Fields development in Norton St Philip.

- We objected to a plan for 40 houses in Evercreech. The old Greencore site remains redundant and should be prioritised for development before any further greenfield land is lost – especially as Evercreech is already significantly in excess of its housing requirement.

11. The Trails Trust

The Trails Trust (TTT) currently represents multi-user access whether on foot, by horse, by bicycle or disabled conveyance to the Mendip Hills AONB partnership.

ELM 159 Tests

Landscape Recovery Test ELM 159A

TTT is pleased to report that the second test (159A) 'Incentivising green infrastructure public access and biodiversity creation in land management' is running in the Landscape Recovery Test and Trial programme and continues to run smoothly.

The Mendip test team, which includes a member of the Mendip Hill unit team, is working with ten participants chosen from the 50 test 1 participants.

The test started in July 2022, are currently on the 8/9 milestone.

The following mechanisms have been researched, tested and a report on each sent to Defra on each of these themes

Advice & Guidance: mechanisms: pictorial image mechanism, topical advice, an example containing a highway exit mechanism, an advice and guidance framework to inform a future green infrastructure access and biodiversity creation / improvement tool kit.

Payments blended finance investment and payments to landowners for creating / improving green infrastructure for public access and biodiversity.

Land management Plan: long term agreements mechanism and land management plan creation to deliver creation and improvement of access and biodiversity on the land holding.

We are currently reporting on the creation and effectiveness of land management plans for the ten holdings (covering just over 10,000 acres). Data from the ten plans will inform a best practice plan and a landscape scale plan. The plans research options

- To overcome impacts and barriers to public access on holding
- For public transport to the holdings (options for 'bus trails')
- Impacts on public access from highway exit interface
- Familiarity with public access & biodiversity green infrastructure on the holding.
- Existing public access routes & space accessibility, condition and engagement
- Biodiversity enhancement in public access space
- Other facilities that could be added to an LMP
- Options for the holding LMP green infrastructure access & biodiversity layer
- Funding options for LMP

Other access work

The test leaves very little time for other projects however it provides valuable information and data that could help the Mendip Hills NL partnership take a strategic approach to delivering better connected, accessible and safe public access to all users on Mendip, whilst safeguarding biodiversity and promoting nature recovery.

Several trails in the proposed strategic network have been created or enhanced thanks to landowners and managers taking part in the test.

We are currently working with Waldegrave Farms to improve public and permissive access to North Hill (Nine Barrows) which will allow all users, including those on mobility scooters / ATV to access the site which is the second highest point on the Mendips and of significant heritage, spiritual and biodiversity value.

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	20 th June 2024	Paper D
Title:	Climate Risk Assessments for the Mendip Hills National Landscape.	
Presented by:	Judith Chubb-Whittle	

1. Background

National Landscapes can play a vital role in adapting to climate change and building resilient landscapes for future generations. Climate adaptation reporting provides an opportunity to identify relevant climate risks, incorporate them into management processes, and encourage early engagement with stakeholders to address climate challenges.

For the first time all protected landscapes are asked now, prior to it being a requirement for all plans from 2028, to produce a climate change risk assessment that identifies climate risks and priorities.

Warmer wetter winters; increased severity of storms; and hotter, drier summers are symptoms of a changing climate. These impacts are already being felt and will increasingly affect the special qualities of our landscapes.

2. Principles for creating a climate adaptation plan

To produce a climate adaptation plan, National Landscapes should utilise the risk assessment process following these principles:

1. Identifies the special qualities of the landscape;
2. Assesses the vulnerability of these special qualities to the impacts of Climate Change;
3. Consider sectoral impacts for principle land uses such as farming and forestry, as well as the natural, built and historic environment;
4. Assess the impacts based upon current climate change projections;
5. Score these risks and opportunities based on their likelihood, impact and risk over the short, medium and long term;
6. Identify possible high-level mitigation actions
7. Identify existing policy responses and identify any gaps;

8. Identify relevant local stakeholders that can support or lead the action;
9. Assess the acceptability of these options, their interdependencies, and potential barriers to delivery;
10. Set out planned actions for the short, medium and long term.

3. Format

Special Quality	Headline Projection	Impact, Direct and Indirect	Risks & Opp.s	Short term – up to 2050			Medium Term – 2050-2080			Long Term – 2080+			High Level Mitigation	Policy response	Local stakeholders
				Likelihood 1 to 5	Impact -5 to 5	Risk	Likelihood 1 to 5	Impact -5 to 5	Risk	Likelihood 1 to 5	Impact -5 to 5	Risk			

Risk/Opportunity Matrix

Likelihood of a risk or opportunity occurring is rated 1 to 5

Likelihood	1	Rare
	2	Unlikely
	3	Possible
	4	Likely
	5	Almost Certain

The impact of a risk or opportunity is rated from -5 to +5

Risk	-5	Catastrophic
	-4	Major
	-3	Moderate
	-2	Minor
	-1	Slight
No Change	0	No Change
Opportunity	+1	Slight
	+2	Minor
	+3	Moderate
	+4	Major

	+5	Fantastic
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Risk/Opportunity Matrix: The combination of likelihood and impact leads to a scoring of risks and opportunities

Risk	-5	Catastrophic	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25
	-4	Major	-4	-8	-12	-16	-20
	-3	Moderate	-3	-6	-9	-12	-15
	-2	Minor	-2	-4	-6	-8	-10
	-1	Slight	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
No Change	0	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
Opportunity	+1	Slight	1	2	3	4	5
	+2	Minor	2	4	6	8	10
	+3	Moderate	3	6	9	12	15
	+4	Major	4	8	12	16	20
	+5	Fantastic	5	10	15	20	25
			Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain
			1	2	3	4	5
			Likelihood				

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	20 th June 2024	Paper E
Title:	Terms of Reference	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle	

1. Governance Review

Summary

The Terms of Reference need to be reviewed alongside a Statement of Intent agreed by the local authorities, but a review of the Partnership structure needs to happen first.

How would the Partnership like to be involved with the review?

Option 1. Independent Review - clearly defined (in terms of focus, timelines and resources) and which could be used to identify recommendations for policy/practice BUT the limited engagement from the partners could lead to lack to a resistance or indifference in implementation.

Option 2. Action Research – working alongside the consultants to collectively identify the issues and solutions, this approach should lead to increased ownership and a smoother transition. This would be a more costly, time-consuming and involved process for all parties.

Option 3. A blend of Option 1 and 2, or something else?

Background and Context

At the March 2023 meeting the Partnership approved a review of the governance structure of the Mendip Hills National Landscape in line with proposal 26 on the Protected Landscape Review 2019;

‘Proposal 26: Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society.’

We have delayed the review as further guidance on the management plans and their review process was expected. Natural England have released draft guidance now which includes ‘principles for the effective delivery of management plans’ by which protected landscape partnerships can most effectively deliver the plan. We can assume that this will be the guidance and therefore the following should guide the review.

Principles for the Effective Delivery of Management Plans

- Management Plan focused

Delivery is focused on the stated outcomes and strategy in the Management Plan and all processes, procedures and activity facilitate the joint delivery of the Plan.

- Accountability

Partnerships, committees and boards are fully transparent and accountable with wide communication.

- Forward-facing, positive and co-operative

Partnership working is positive, co-operative and outward-looking, seeking all opportunities to collaborate together to deliver Plan outcomes

- Inclusive and diverse

Protected Landscapes management bodies reflect and account for diversity in our society – welcoming young voices, people from cities and beyond, bringing together stakeholders of all kinds to ensure Boards are well informed about a wide range of interests and specialist expertise. Every effort should be made to achieve diversity of social background, gender, age, ethnicity and (dis)ability.

- Strategic and focused on implementation

Protected Landscapes should be agile, focused on driving the ambitious delivery of Management Plans, and not overly burdened by procedures and processes.

- Innovative and enterprising

Protected Landscapes deliver Plans innovatively, being creative with core funding, leveraging other sources of income at scale, including through charitable routes.

- Inspirational and ambitious

Protected Landscape representatives should be inspirational leaders in their fields, able to advocate and champion action to deliver ambition.

- Self-critical and adaptive

Protected Landscapes strive for improvement, learning from each other and partners and working with designated landscapes elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Europe.

- Knowledgeable and experienced

Professional staff and have the right expertise to deliver the ambition and strategy established in the Plan. Partnership, committee and board representatives are selected for their passion, skills, and experience reflective of the Management Plan outcomes.

- Structured to deliver

All forums, from board level to working groups are structured in such a way as to enable a strong focus on delivering the outcomes of the Management Plan.

- Influencing the conditions to support delivery

Protected Landscape representatives to use their collective influence to shape the agendas of local, regional, and national organisations to optimise delivery, for example advocating for the appropriate targeting of fundamental delivery mechanisms.

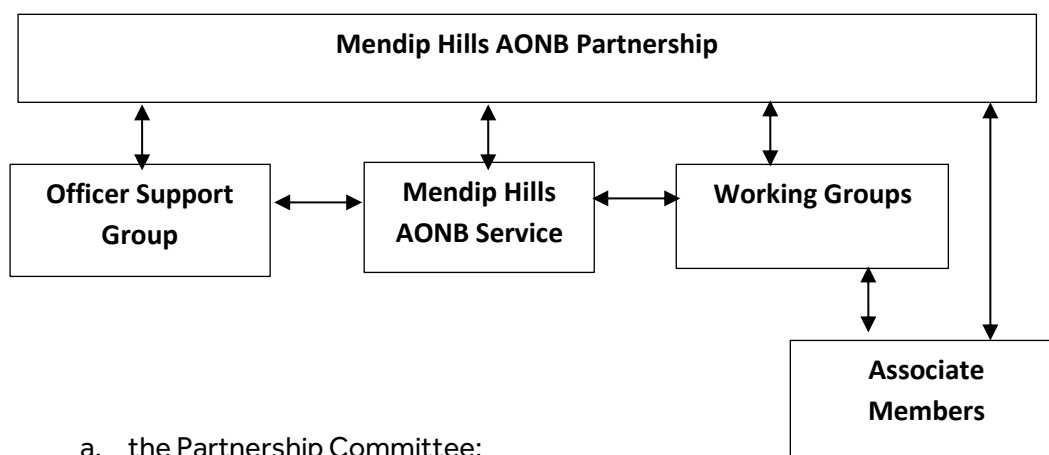
2. Existing Terms of Reference

Mendip Hills AONB Partnership

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2021-2024

1. Application and Context

- 1.1. These Terms of Reference apply to the governance structure of the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership:



- a. the Partnership Committee;
- b. the Officer Support Group;
- c. AONB Service
- d. Working groups
- e. Associate Members;

- 1.2. The term the 'constituent local authorities' applies to the five principal local authorities whose areas wholly or partly comprise the Mendip Hills AONB (i.e. Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, North Somerset Council and Bath and North East Somerset Council). These local authorities (with the exception of North Somerset Council), plus Defra, are also the 'funding partners'.
- 1.3. The Committee is set up as a Joint Advisory Committee under Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to advise the constituent local authorities. The Partnership does not have executive powers over the funding partners rather it acts in an advisory and consultative capacity to the funding partners.

2. Review of Terms of Reference

- 2.1. These Terms of Reference operate alongside the identical time periods of the Statement of Intent, signed by the local authority funding partners, and are subject to review by the Partnership Committee at the same time the Statement of Intent is reviewed.
- 2.2. Subject to the agreement of all funding partners and a majority of the Partnership Committee, these Terms of Reference may be reviewed at any time.

3. The AONB Partnership Committee

General

- 3.1. The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee is the body responsible for coordinating, on behalf of the constituent local authorities, the management of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 3.2. The principal purpose of the Partnership Committee is to enable the relevant local authorities, 'acting jointly', to fulfil their duties under Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CROW Act) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Mendip Hills AONB through the production of a Management Plan. In addition, the Partnership Committee encompasses a wider membership in order to engage an appropriate range of relevant national, regional and local interests in the management of the area.
- 3.3. The Partnership Committee's principal focus is on the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty as designated. However, recognising that such designated landscapes cannot be managed in isolation, the Partnership Committee also seeks to ensure that management of the AONB reflects, and is reflected in the management of the surrounding area.

Roles and responsibilities

- 3.4. The Partnership Committee:
 - prepares, produces and promotes the AONB Management Plan, leads on its implementation, monitors and reviews its progress
 - seeks to ensure that the policy and practice of authorities and organisations with management responsibilities in the Mendip Hills are consistent with and complement AONB Management Plan objectives
 - develops and fosters partnership working with all appropriate bodies and organisations to assist in the effective management of the Mendip Hills AONB
 - seeks additional funds, including external finance, to assist in delivering projects and initiatives identified within the AONB Management Plan and for effective AONB management continually promotes the work of the AONB and engages the wider community in the delivery of the AONB Management Plan.

Membership and Meetings

- 3.5. There are 16 voting members of the Partnership Committee comprising:
 - a) five elected members appointed by the constituent principal local authorities (one from each):
 - Somerset County Council;
 - Mendip District Council;
 - Sedgemoor District Council;

- North Somerset Council;
 - Bath and North East Somerset Council;
- b) three members elected by the constituent Parish Councils¹ (see Appendix 1);
- c) one representative of Natural England;
- d) one representative of land owning and farming interests:
- National Farmers Union or Country Land and Business Association;
- e) three representatives of non-governmental organisations:
- National Trust;
 - Mendip Society ,
 - Campaign to Protect Rural England
- f) two representatives of wildlife interests :
- Avon Wildlife Trust
 - Somerset Wildlife Trust
- g) one representative of local business/tourism interests¹
- 3.6. Each member of the Partnership committee has one vote, with the Chair having a second or casting vote if required.
- 3.7. The AONB Manager attends the Partnership Committee but does not have a vote.
- 3.8. The Partnership Committee elects a Chair and Vice Chair, one of whom will be one of the Statement of Intent local authority partners, to each serve a term of 2 years.
- 3.9. The Partnership Committee may, at any time, co-opt onto the Committee an individual or a representative of an organisation that it feels will bring particular knowledge, expertise or experience to its deliberations. Co-option will normally be for a limited, although not necessarily predetermined, period of time. Co-opted members do not have a vote.
- 3.10. The Partnership Committee normally meets twice per year at a venue within or close to the AONB. Dates for these meetings should preferably be identified several months ahead.. Additional Partnership Committee meetings may be held, at the discretion of the Chair, as and when required.
- 3.11. A quorum for a Partnership Committee meeting comprises a minimum of five voting members, of which a minimum of three will be representatives of funding partners.
- 3.12. Whilst each member of the Partnership Committee represents an organisation or stakeholder group, such interests should be considered in context with the Committee's collective goal of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. The principal role of individual Partnership Committee members is to bring their knowledge, skills,

¹ in these Terms of Reference the term Parish Councils is used as a generic term for Parish Councils, Town Councils and City Councils.

experience and expertise to this process and to assist the Partnership in the delivery of the Management Plan.

- 3.13. Local authority members of the Partnership Committee are subject to the following conditions:
- (a) All local authorities represented on the Partnership Committee should have regard to the desirability of appointing one member of the authority who represents a ward or electoral division situated wholly or partly within the Mendip Hills AONB.
 - (b) Each local authority elected member attending a Partnership Committee meeting may be accompanied by no more than one officer. The officer of the authority may still attend if the member is absent
 - (c) If a local authority elected member wishes to be accompanied to a Partnership Committee meeting by more than one officer, or if more than one officer wishes to attend such a meeting when the elected member is absent, this should, on each occasion, be with the prior agreement of the Chair.
 - (d) Local authority officers accompanying local authority elected members to Partnership Committee meetings do not have the right to vote
- 3.14. All members of the Partnership Committee are to sign the 'Membership Accord' which sets out the role of individual members and the way in which they are expected to contribute to the work of the Partnership Committee. A copy of the 'Membership Accord' is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.15. The three parish council representatives elected to the Partnership are to reflect the interests of the parishes in Somerset, North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset respectively and to ensure that the Partnership takes account of the needs of their communities (Appendix 1 contains more information).
- 3.16. If the named representative is unable to attend they can send a substitute. If they fail to attend on a regular basis membership of that organisation will be subject to review.
- 3.17. The Chairman, in consultation with the AONB Manager, will decide whether items are appropriate for inclusion on the agenda for a Partnership Committee meeting or may be considered in other ways. Items for the Partnership Committee should be appropriate to the AONB and its delivery of the Management Plan.
- 3.18. Partnership Committee papers will be uploaded to the AONB web site and the Partnership Committee members notified of this at least one week prior to Partnership Committee meetings.
- 3.19. With prior notice to the Chairman members of the public may raise a matter of relevance at the AONB Partnership Committee meeting if the Chairman agrees that it is appropriate to do so. Matters that are deemed not appropriate will be considered by the Chairman with the AONB Service Manager or other relevant partner and responded to accordingly.

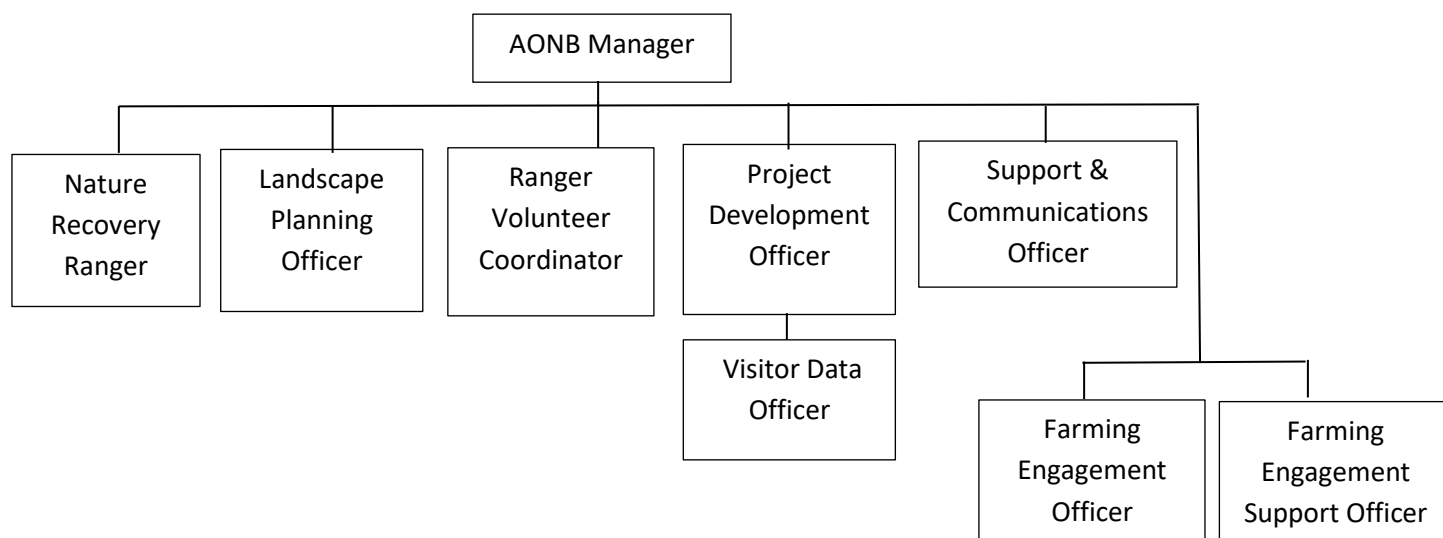
4. Financial Matters

- 4.1. The local funding arrangement for the AONB Partnership is set out in a Statement of Intent (SOI) between the four funding local authority partners², to give the Partnership a secure financial future for the period of the SOI
 - 4.2. The annual budget is agreed by the funding partners in accordance with their Statement of Intent. Decisions regarding the annual strategic priorities for this budget are the responsibility of the Partnership Committee. Day to day management of the budget is the responsibility of the AONB Manager who follows the host authority's financial standing orders. The OSG provides budgetary guidance/advice to the AONB Manager as required.
- 5. Officer Support Group**
- 5.1. The principal roles and responsibilities of the Officer Support Group (OSG) are:
 - a) to provide support to the AONB Service through the AONB Manager and the Partnership Committee;
 - b) to agree with the AONB Manager the form and content of the agendas for the Partnership Committee meetings and the process through which the decisions of the Partnership Committee will be implemented.
 - 5.2. The membership of the OSG comprises:
 - c) one officer from each of the five constituent local authorities;
 - d) the Chair of the Partnership Committee (or Vice Chair in their absence);
 - e) the AONB Manager.
 - f) An officer of Natural England may attend by invitation
 - 5.3. The OSG elects a Chair from amongst officers of the five constituent local authorities for each meeting.
 - 5.4. The OSG meets before each Partnership meeting and as required.

² i.e. the four local authorities are Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council & Bath and North East Somerset Council

6. AONB Service

- 6.1. The work of the Partnership is coordinated by the AONB Service. The Service delivers the AONB core functions as defined by Defra (see Business Plan)



7. Working Groups

- 7.1. The Partnership establishes Working Groups, as and when required, to provide specialist advice and guidance on issues relating to:
- policy development
 - the review or delivery of the AONB Management Plan;
 - project development and implementation;
 - any other matter where the Partnership decides that it would be expedient.
- 7.2. The Partnerships approach to the establishment of all Working Groups is to:
- facilitate the development of an inclusive and participative approach to the management of the Mendip Hills AONB;
 - provide a mechanism through which the Partnership Committee, Officer Support Group and AONB Service can actively engage with a wide range of organisations, individuals and interest groups concerned with, or interested in the management of the Mendip Hills AONB;
 - enable the Partnership Committee, Officer Support Group and AONB Service to access specialist knowledge and expertise that will assist in the production/review and implementation of the AONB Management Plan.
- 7.3. Working Groups are normally established on a 'Task and Finish' basis with specific and time-limited role with clear purpose(s) and goals. Current working groups are listed on the AONB website.

8. Associate Members of the Partnership

- 8.1. Associate membership of the Partnership is open to any organisation or individual contributing to the delivery of the AONB Management Plan who wishes to be recognised as an Associate Member.
- 8.2. All Parish Councils that lie wholly or partially within the AONB automatically become an Associate member of the Partnership. Parish Councils are required to provide the AONB Service with a current e-mail address if they wish to be included on a circulation list to receive notifications from the Partnership regarding Committee meetings and other matters.
- 8.3. All Associate members :
 - (a) will be notified of Partnership Committee papers uploaded to the AONB website and are welcome to attend the meetings in a non voting capacity.
 - (b) have the right to submit a request to the Chair of the Partnership Committee to be allowed to address a meeting of the Committee where there is an issue that is of particular interest or concern to them: any such request should be decided by the Chair.

Appendix 1

Parish Council Representatives and the Election Process

The Partnership Committee has three Parish Councils members, one elected from each of the following principal local authority areas by those parish councils that lie wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Mendip Hills AONB:

- (a) Somerset County (11 parishes)*
- (b) North Somerset (9 parishes)*
- (c) Bath and North East Somerset (8 parishes)*

The eligible parishes within each of these three principal local authority areas are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Parish and Town Councils whose boundaries that lie wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Mendip Hills AONB		
Somerset County	North Somerset	Bath and North East Somerset
Axbridge	Banwell	Chew Stoke
Cheddar	Blagdon	Compton Martin
Chewton Mendip	Bleadon	East Harptree
Compton Bishop	Burrington	Hinton Blewett
Litton	Butcombe	Nempnett Thrubwell
Priddy	Churchill	Stowey Sutton
Rodney Stoke	Hutton	Ubley
St Cuthbert Out	Loxton and Christon	West Harptree
Shipham	Winscombe and Sandford	
Wells City		
Westbury sub Mendip		

The elections are administered by the Somerset Association of Local Councils.

Each candidate is required to currently hold a position as a parish councillor on one of the parish councils within their principal local authority area. Candidates should preferably not be an elected member of a principal local authority: it is hoped that this will ensure that those elected to the Partnership Committee are better able to focus on issues at the parish council level and give the necessary time and commitment to the work of the Partnership Committee.

Each of the three parish councillors elected to the Partnership Committee will hold the post for a five year term (i.e. through the 2011 parish council elections and on until the parish council elections in May 2015). Elections for the next four year term on the Partnership Committee (i.e. 2015 – 2019) will be held after the parish council elections in May 2015.

Role of Parish Council Members on the Partnership Committee.

The role of parish council members of the Committee is to ensure that the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership takes full account of the needs of their local communities and to improve the links between the Partnership and local residents.

Parish members are appointed to reflect local concerns and to represent the wider AONB view, not just that of their own parish.

Appendix 2 Mendip Hills AONB Partnership

Membership Accord

As a member of the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee, I undertake:

- to promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Mendip Hills AONB;*
- to respond on request to the review and preparation of the Management Plan and the Delivery Plan, signing up to key actions where appropriate.*
- to champion and communicate the Partnership's vision for the Mendip Hills AONB and its communities, as set out on the AONB Management Plan and Communication Action Plan;*
- to contribute knowledge, expertise and experience to the work of the Committee;*
- to promote, support and play a full and active part in the work of the Partnership Committee in fulfilling its 'Roles and Responsibilities' as set out in the Partnership Committee's 'Terms of Reference';*
- where appropriate, to consult with the organisation(s) or interest group(s) that I represent on relevant matters being considered or addressed by the Committee;*
- to assist the Partnership Committee in achieving an independent and apolitical profile in the performance of its functions;*
- to ensure that no activity or decision of the Partnership may cause any member to be in breach of its constitution*
- to attend Partnership Committee meetings whenever possible and to step down from the Committee if I am no longer able to attend meetings on a regular basis.*
- to follow the Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership*

Name.....
.....

Position

Signed..... Date.....

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	20 th June 2024	Paper F
Title:	Mendip Hills National Landscape Team; current position and direction	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle	

1. Background

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Partnership of the current status and direction of the Team in order that informed discussions and decisions can be made in the future.

Mendip Hills National Landscape Team

The current team structure is;

- **Manager** – Jim Hardcastle
- **Project Development Officer** – Tim Haselden
- **Landscape Planning Officer** – Judith Chubb-Whittle (Part Time)
- **Ranger Volunteer Coordinator** – Andy Chamberlain
- **Nature Recovery Ranger** – Nathan Orr
- **Support & Communications Officer** – Joanna Cheung (Part Time)
- **Farming Engagement Officer** – Lucy Stockton
- **Farming Engagement Officer** – Jemima Western (Part Time/Somerset Wildlife Trust)
- **Farming Engagement Support Officer** – Penny White (Part Time)
- **Visitor Data Project Officer** – Dr Kelly Davies (Part Time)
- **Nature Connections Project Officer** – Mhairi Cornish (Part Time)

2. Mendip Hills National Landscape Team Finances

Core Income

Defra	184,662
Somerset Council	34,700
Mendip DC	8,017
Sedgemoor DC	8,001
North Somerset	3,500
B&NES	5,000
The Trails Trust	545
TOTAL INCOME	244,425
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	245,417

Projects

Farming in Protected Landscapes	441,685
Defra Uplift Funding, Revenue	43,228
Defra Uplift Funding, Capital	43,228
Access for All	69,390
Mendip Nature Connections	59,000
Countryside Stewardship	6,025
Generation Green	3,300
Mendip Activity Centre	6,827 (Nature Recovery Ranger)
Moments on Mendip	500
My Mendip Memories	2,000 (applying for extra 10,000)
Ash Viewing	9,500
Nature Calling	25,000
TOTAL PROJECTS	709,683

3. Direction

Priorities for 2024-25

- Review and prepare the management plan for adoption by the . Create a governance structure of the National Landscape that meets current requirements.
- Complete the current stage of the Farming in Protected Landscape programme and prepare for the next stage.

Defra have committed to extending the Support Officer role by 6 months, until November 2025 and the Engagement Officer role for two years, until March 2027. As yet no details have been confirmed regarding the project budgets available or the exact nature of the engagement role.

- Focus work on Weston-super-Mare.

The Nature Calling project will use artists to raise awareness of the National Landscape with communities in Weston. The Nature Connections project will use farms in North Somerset as sites for the courses aimed at individuals around Weston. The Generation Green project will target schools in Weston for day and residential activities on the Mendip Hills. This years Annual Forum will be in Weston. Other core work will be focused on this area.

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	20 th June 2024	Paper F Cont
Title:	National Landscape Team Activity Plan Update for 2024-25	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle	



Mendip Hills
National
Landscape

Mendip Hills National Landscape Team

Activity Plan 2024-25

National Landscape Association Metrics

1. Hectares of habitat conserved or enhanced for biodiversity
2. Hectares of land conserved for geodiversity
3. Hectares of land where the heritage asset condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced
4. Hectares of landscape enhanced via the removal of overhead cables
5. Number of SMs where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced
6. Number of other designated sites where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced
7. Number of non-designated heritage assets where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced
8. Number of volunteers
9. Attendance at events convened/organised by NL team
10. Number of young people (<18yo) engaged with via school visits, activities etc
11. Number of farmers/land managers engaged with
12. Number of people engaged with via NL promotional publications (newsletter database)
13. Number of people engaged with via social media (engagement rate)
14. Number of partnerships where the NL team is the project/team/steering group lead
15. Number of partnerships where the NL team is a supporting partner

- | NATURE | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|---|-------------------------|
| Work Area | Action | Lead | MGT Plan Obj. | Delivery Plan ref. | NLA KPI | Progress report | RAG (Red, Amber, Green) |
| Nature Recovery Plan (NRP) | Update with alignment to the new Defra outcomes framework and new Management Plan. Develop long-term monitoring of the champion species. | TH, NO | L1, L2, BG1, BG2, BG3, P1, P2 | 6.2 | 16, 24, 25 | Volunteer monitoring coordinators in place for adder, black oil beetle and skylark. Volunteer training programme in place for the champion species. | AMBER |
| Mendip National Nature Reserve | Produce a partnership management plan for the Mendip NNR. | JH, TH | L1, BG1-6, R2, P1, P3 | 2.2.3 | 14, 16 | In production. Coordinating regular NNR Delivery Group meetings on behalf of the partnership. | AMBER |
| CLIMATE | | | | | | | |

Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Tree planting	Support Westbury Tree Nursery and plant 4000 trees in line with the Nature Recovery Plan.	TH/NO	BG1-2	2.2.1	1, 8, 9, 10, 27	No action until autumn/winter 2024/25. Agreed to support group again this year with running costs. Met with Forest of Avon Trust re. working together and funding opportunities.	AMBER
Big Chalk	Attend the Big Chalk Board and Limestone Landscape Link meetings to support work focussed on connectivity across England.	TH/JH	L1, BG1-6, R2, P1, P3	2.2.3	1, 15	Ongoing. Also part of a small Big Chalk steering group helping to create a new logo and national brand for the initiative.	GREEN

PEOPLE

Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Nature Recovery Plan Community Engagement Plan	Promote the awareness of the champion species via a series of projects.	JH / TH	P1, P2	1.1	9, 12, 13	Key awareness project is the Champion Species films; the 9 films have been viewed/reached 46,912 times. The Mendip Nature Connections and Nature Calling project are also key ways in which the engagement plan will be delivered.	GREEN
Mendip Nature Connections	Deliver the 1-year project that supports people with mental health issues via a coordinated programme on farms and other sites. Secure long-term funding.	TH / TBC	P1, P2, L3, R4, N1	8.2.2	9, 11, 15, 25	Mhairi Cornish started as the Nature and Wellbeing Specialist Officer in May. Currently finalising venue locations and course dates. Funding this year secured from FiPL and Healthier with Nature pilot (in partnership with the NHS).	AMBER
Top of the Gorge	Support the delivery of the adventure festival through	JH	R2-4	8.3.1	9	The event takes place on 8-9 June 2024.	AMBER

	pre-event meetings, on site staffing and volunteer rangers.						
	Deliver the Gorge Championship community day involving local schools.	AC, JC	R2-4	8.3.1	9, 10	Cancelled due to requirement of schools needing to send 2 teachers with any group on a trip. For the small number of children involved this has proved prohibitive for schools.	RED
Generation Green 2	Deliver for young people; 60 day/night experience 60 residential experiences 30 farm experiences	JH	L2, L3, R2, R3	N/A		Delivery commitment agreed with National Landscape Association. Initial planning meetings held with Mendip Activity Centre.	AMBER
Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership	Restructure the Partnership to make it a body that has greater influence on the future of the National Landscape.	JH	L3	N/A	14	Developing a commission with University of West of England.	RED
Access for All	Spend the allocated amount on a series of projects that make access easier for people across the Mendip Hills NL.	KD	H3, R2, R4, D2	4.2.1	3, 6, 7	Prioritising the £69,390 allocation.	AMBER
Visitor data collection and analysis	Deliver and analyse visitor counter data and The Big Visitor Count and develop and pilot a visitor survey.	KD	R1, R2, R3	4.2.3 4.1.2	8, 27	Big Visitor Count carried out on Saturday 4 th May – a total of 3,282 visits (not visitors) were recorded over 4 hours across 16 sites – this is a 27% increase on the number recorded in 2019. Data counters are being downloaded currently.	AMBER

PLACE

Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
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Cheddar Gorge Experimental Traffic Regulation Order Consultation	Act on the findings of the consultation.	JH	L3, BG5, H3, R1, R2, R4, D2, D3	NA	2, 3, 5, 6	Communication agency retained to help plan and prepare for next stage. Formal application to be prepared and submitted to the highway authority.	AMBER
Deer Leap Access Audit and Master Plan	Act on the report's conclusions to enhance access and deliver part/full version of 'Ash Barrow' project.	TH	H3, R2, R4, D2	3.1, 3.2, 6.3.1	3, 5, 14, 25	Draft access master plan has been prepared by landscape architects Mei Loci – an updated draft is being worked on and a local consultation will take place soon (which may be delayed due to limitations enforced for the pre-election period). Funding has been secured (from Henry Moore Foundation, Creative Mendip and our team, Somerset Art Works) to deliver the first part of the project called 'Ash Viewing' – part of Somerset Art Weeks in Sep.	AMBER
Landscape Planning Guidance	Produce updated Landscape Character Assessment guidance.	JCW	D1, D4	7.1	16	TBC	RED
Training	Deliver training programme for local councillors on the NL special qualities, nature recovery and planning system.	JCW	D4, P2, L3	1.1	9	Training for B&NES Planning staff delivered on 24/4/24. Further Parish Council training to be scheduled for autumn/winter.	AMBER
National Landscape	Produce items that promote awareness of the National Landscape brand.	JH	L3	4.3.1	13	Staff have branded kit. Uniforms for volunteers to be organised next.	AMBER
Management Plan	Review the management plan for adoption by local authorities in March 2025.	JCW	ALL	N/A	14	On track with plan approved by Partnership at previous meeting.	GREEN
Nature Calling	Deliver year 1 of the 'Nature Calling' programme for the National Art in the Landscape Mendip & Weston Hub (develop	TH	L3, P1-2	3.2.2 8.3.1	9, 14, 25	Partnership developed with Super Culture and local Advisory Group set up including SWAN youth workers, Weston Town Council, NS Council, Avon WT/WENP, Alliance Homes). Commission deadline 24 th May with 39 applications for our hub following successful information day for artists. Artist shortlisting underway and interviews to be held 24 th June. Writing element of	AMBER

Commented [TH1]: This Ash Barrow element could equally go under 'Climate'

	partnership working and secure match).					to be delivered this year. Project to focus on young people in South Ward and connection to Mendip and Mendip NNR nearby.	
My Mendip Memories	Secure remaining funding and deliver the 'My Mendip Memories' photography and film project.	TH	H1, L3, P1-2	3.2.2	14, 25	EOI due to be submitted to NLHF for remaining funding after positive informal feedback from them (Mendip Hills Fund grant secured) in partnership with Windrose Rural Media Trust.	AMBER

Commented [TH2]: Changed this from Moments on Mendip to the memories project (as MoM will have been completed) - is this best here or under People?

Core Delivery

1. Conserve & Enhance							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj.	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Blackmoor Reserve and Deer Leap	Coordinate management plans and instigate works that conserve and enhance these sites, based around existing countryside stewardship schemes for Blackmoor and Deer Leap.	TH / NO	L1, L2, R1, LM2, P1, P2, P3	6.3.1	1,2	Blackmoor Adder sites protected by roping areas off. Essential removal of ash trees suffering from dieback. Understorey planting to replace canopy lost due to ash dieback. Bracken crushing planned. Drystone walls patched. Grassland cut in certain areas to create different grass heights. Deer Leap Skylark sites protected by roping areas off. Hibernaculum extended. Car park and visitor area attended more by volunteer rangers and staff. Access master plan in development (see above).	GREEN
The Mendip Way	Update online resources for the Mendip Way and support its development, and Walkers are Welcome groups.	TH / KD	R1, R2, R3, R4, P1, P2	4.1 4.2	1, 4, 14	New Mendip Way guide online The Mendip Way - Mendip Hills National Landscape (mendiphills-nl.org.uk)	GREEN

Farming in Protected Landscapes	Support the allocation of project funds and the Local Assessment Panel for this programme.	JH	N1, N2, N3, L1, LM1, LM2, BG3, BG6	NA	1, 2, 3, 4, 7	Ongoing. Approximately 40% of the £360,000 awarded to projects so far. New Farm Engagement Support Officer appointed, commences 17/6.	AMBER
2.							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Mendip Rocks!	Work with SESC & Mendip Society to organise a programme of events aimed at family groups and people with geological interests during Sept and Oct.	JH/TH	BG5, BG6, P3	8.3.1	3, 4	Planning underway for events in October. Looking to link this with Nature Calling and Ash Viewing project where possible.	AMBER
MHANL Website	Maintain visitor traffic to 50,000 Users & 65,000 sessions on NL website.	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	April – June 8100 users, 10444 sessions	AMBER
Social media	Achieve 4000 followers on X (Twitter)	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	June 3831	AMBER
	Achieve 6000 likes on Facebook	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	June 6040	GREEN

	Achieve 18,000 views on YouTube	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	June 4052	AMBER
	Achieve 3000 followers on Instagram	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	June 2905	AMBER
Enewsletters	Distribute a minimum of 24 enewsletters (12 to the public list, 12 to the Partnership list)	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	0	RED
	Achieve 1800 on the enewsletter database.	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	1743	
Talks & other opportunities	Deliver 10 talks (walks), including online events & attend relevant events.	JH, TH JCW	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3, 4	Nature Recovery and Big Chalk presentations to Mendip Farm Cluster 24/5 Water Vole training for volunteers 22/5 Mendip Society Sladers Leigh 19/5 Rare Plants training, Mendip Activity Centre 10/5 Priddy Parish Council Nature Recovery 24/4 National Nature Reserve talk at Natural England seminar 14/4 Mendip Nature Connections presentation to NHS and Public Health leads 21/5 and 11/6	GREEN
Annual Forum	Organise and deliver an annual forum for the public to raise awareness of the special qualities of the NL.	JH, JC	L3, H2, N1, P1, P2, P3	8.3	3	12/10 agenda and location tbc.	AMBER
3.							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)

Planning liaison	Establish a planning liaison group that meets on a regular basis.	JCW	D1, D4	1.1	6	Ongoing.	GREEN
	Two newsletters to planning managers (DM & policy) & planning officers. July & January	JCW	D1, D4, L3	1.1	6	Requires planning.	AMBER
Regional	Liaise with other NL planners and partner organisations.	JCW	D1, D4	N/A	4, 5, 6	Ongoing. Attended southern National Landscape Planners Group on 1/5.	GREEN
4.							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Cheddar Vision Group	Chair the Vision Group to deliver the action plan.	JH	R1, R2, D2	4.1, 4.2, 4.3	4	Ongoing. The group had a walking site visit to identify issues in the public areas on 18/4.	GREEN
Volunteer Rangers	Submit funding bids and seek sponsorship to support the volunteer rangers.	TH	P1, P2	8.1	7	None required. Present levels of funding met via core budget.	AMBER
	Maintain the Mendip Shed as a base for the volunteer rangers and other groups to use with a functioning workshop.	JH	P1, P2	8.1	3	Ongoing.	GREEN
	Plan and deliver the rota of site visits, meetings and social gatherings	AC	P1, P2, R4	8.1	1, 2, 3	Water Vole training 22/5 Rare Plants training 15/5 Ice Age to Cold War walk, delivered by Vol Ranger 29/5 Meetings every 6 weeks	GREEN

	Train 10 volunteers via Dry Stone Walling Association (DSWA).	AC	P1, P3	2.2.1	3	Planned for later this year.	RED
	Restore 300m drystone wall via weekly practical tasks.	AC	P1, P3	2.2.1, 3.1	1, 2	Approx 40 metres completed so far. Worked with Somerset Wildlife Trust and County Recorder (rare plants) to adjust walling technique in order to minimise the impacts on wildlife during rebuilding.	AMBER
Practical Task Volunteers	Maintain a weekly programme of tasks focussed on delivering the Nature Recovery Plan.	AC, NO	P1, P2, L2	2.2, 4.2	1, 2, 3	Weekly tasks, including; Dormouse and bird box construction and installation. Invasive species management. Cross drains and natural flood management. Coppicing.	GREEN
Young Rangers	Programme and deliver their activities aimed at creating environmental decision makers of the future.	ALL	P1, P2, L2	8.1	3	Young Rangers win Environmental Youth Award at 2024 Bath & West Show for their film, Earth in Focus. Constructed bird boxes. Hike and navigation skills. Recruitment started for next cohort of young rangers. Visited by Quantock Hills NL young rangers.	AMBER
Mendip Hills Fund	Achieve donations of >£20000	JH	P2, P3	8.4	7	Ongoing.	GREEN
	Administer the panel to meet in November and March	JH	P2, P3	8.4	3, 4	Ongoing.	GREEN
5.							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NLA KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Partnership	Administer 2 x meetings per year minimum.	JH	ALL	N/A	4	Adjusted to 4 meetings per year.	AMBER
Officer Support Group	Administer 2 x meetings per year minimum	JH	ALL	N/A	4	To be organised for later in year.	AMBER

Regional representation	Actively participate in regional and Somerset wide environmental partnerships that will benefit the Mendip Hills and protected landscapes	ALL	ALL	N/A	4	Somerset National Landscape staff day on 9/5 Attendance and support of: Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy Somerset Local Community Network x 2 Chew Valley Reconnected Partnership Churchill Area Woodland Group	GREEN
National representation	Attend NLA meetings, contribute to responses, forums and communications	ALL	ALL	N/A	4	Ongoing. Chair, Manager and Landscape Planning Officer attending National Landscape Conference 3-5 July.	GREEN

Management Plan Review – Objectives/Policies

Landscape Quality Objectives:

L1 Promote appropriate management to ensure that the distinctive Mendip Hills AONB landscape is maintained 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 AONB

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

Biodiversity and Geodiversity Objectives:

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

BG2 Promote a landscape scale approach to the conservation and expansion of coherent and resilient ecological networks within and adjoining the AONB.

BG3 Increase monitoring and awareness of the biodiversity resource of the Mendip Hills AONB so that it is sufficiently understood to continue to guide the successful conservation of the characteristic habitats and species.

BG4 Promote a holistic approach to implementing AONB Management Plan objectives, National Character Area Statements of Opportunity and a locally designated Nature Improvement Area's objectives

BG5 Recognise and celebrate geological sites and features of the Mendip Hills AONB 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 importance they play in water management and water supply.

Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage objectives;

H1 Improve the recording, interpretation and understanding of all aspects of the AONBs 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 AONB

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.

Recreation, Access and Tourism 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 AONB designation.

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

R3 Develop and promote more sustainable methods of travel to and around the AONB for enjoyment and recreation.

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

Natural Resources objectives:

N1 Recognise and promote the benefits and relevance of the AONB 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.

Land Management objectives:

LMI Support sustainable farming to ensure it remains as the principle land use and contributes to maintaining the special qualities of the AONB.

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

LM3 Promote a sustainable woodland economy that enhances the Mendip Hills AONB woodlands and wider landscape with targeted woodland management and creation in appropriate locations supporting wood fuel and local community opportunities.

LM4 Influence the use, restoration and after use of all quarries to minimise the impact on the landscape and to be compatible with the purposes of designation.

Development and Transport Objectives:

D1 Working with the local planning authorities, ensure that development in the AONB and its setting is of a nature, scale, location and design that meets community need without compromising the special qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB.

D2 Working with the local highways authorities, ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are fully respected in the planning, design, provision and management of all types of transport and associated infrastructure.

D3 Encourage reduction in Carbon emissions within the AONB through reducing energy consumption, applying energy conservation measures, encouraging more sustainable patterns of development, and utilising renewable energy generation technologies that are of an appropriate type and scale for their siting.

D4 Ensure issues of importance for the management of the AONB landscape are fully reflected in strategies and plans produced by other agencies and local communities.

Participation objectives:

P1 Increase the opportunities for volunteering and the range of people participating, to benefit the environment, people's health and well being and local communities in and around the AONB.

P2 Encourage the involvement of local people and the wider community in the management of the AONB

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

