

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held online, 7pm, 12th September 2024

Present:

Partnership Committee

Andy Wear (Chair)	NFU
Jim Hardcastle	National Landscape Manager
David Julian	CPRE
Lauren Holt	National Trust
Cllr Mike Adams	North Somerset Parish Councils Representative
Barbra Lakin	Somerset Council Officer
Cllr Theo Butt Phillip	Somerset County Councillor
Cllr Roger Dollins	Somerset Parish Councils Representative
Jo Lewis	Natural England
Esther Coffin-Smith	North Somerset Council Officer
Fern Elias-Stagg	Avon Wildlife Trust
Rachel Thompson MBE	The Trails Trust

Other attendees

Joanna Cheung	Support and Communications Officer
Tim Haselden	Project Development Officer

Apologies

Cllr Edric Hobbs (Vice Chair)	Somerset Council
Cllr Nick Cottle	Somerset Council Councillor
Cllr Annemieke Waite	North Somerset Council
Duncan Margetts	Country Land and Business Association
James Bateman	Country Land and Business Association
DI Sheppard	Bath & North East Somerset Council Officer
Steve Dury	Somerset Council Officer
Tina Bath	Mendip Society
Simon Clarke	Somerset Wildlife Trust
James Divall	Somerset Council Officer
Cllr Paul Crossley	Bath & North East Somerset Councillor

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	Partners' Updates	RD – None MA – Vandalism reported last time has been improved, resolved - Footpaths often blocked with weeds BL – LNRS coming together ready for consultation later in Autumn - Identifying protected sites owned by SC JH – Do you need help from us re those in NL? The main ones are Deer Leap, Blackmoor, Split Rock Quarry and the Perch BL – yes, thank you - Call for sites re biodiversity and phosphates ongoing - Working alongside community groups eg Sustainable Wells to ensure we are aware of their work and it can continue LH – We have a new apprentice, so we are a team of four now - Josh is focussing on NNR - Workshop at the Cheddar Pavilion next week - There will be more path work in Cheddar starting in October - Thank you for feedback on latest work finished on the Gorge Loop - Dolbury Warren is coming back to NT this Autumn DJ – Feeding into draft NPPF - Somerset's housing allocation has gone from 2,669 pa to 3,891pa - We are requesting they prioritise affordable homes, and change the definition of affordable homes so that it reflects local incomes - Aim to give the definition of brownfield some teeth - Protect and enhance greenbelt, to try and prevent development in open countryside - Protect landscapes as we transition to renewables - Support nature recovery - Setting up appts with new MPs	

		- Responded to Glencott Road planning app JH – we also objected to Glencott Road JL – NNR, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment underway - Waldegrove Estate Priddy Pools, aiming to get it to favourable condition - Ebbor Gorge & Rodney Stoke ash dieback work over winter - D&I officer is back and will focus on Mendip & WSM JH – can we work with them on phase 2 of MNC? JL – Potentially, we can look at some support there. RT – Delivered final Test and Trials report to Defra, no feedback yet which is disappointing. - Summarised main findings of the report - Mentions a reluctance from Highway Authorities to engage with the project and to engage with landowners JH – thank you, yes it was a significant piece of work TBP – Keen to follow up with RT re Highways feedback - Changes to executive as follows: - Ros Wyke has left and been replaced by Mike Rigby - Cllr Dixie Darch stood down, replaced with Cllr Graham Oakes - Financial Emergency at forefront of council work FES – Funding for Hellenge Hill - Orchard at Hutton Hill has gone in - Increase in resourcing for monitoring work - New refugia at Hutton, we have already seen improvements in the population of slow worms and grass snakes - We had Nathan Orr’s oil beetle training and now our volunteers have been spotting hundreds of them - Purn Hill annual rock rose count, numbers were up this year, hybrid has dropped a little bit - Fungi surveys planned over the autumn ECS – financial position also difficult - Struggling to find replacement for some staff - Planning department are employing landscape consultants - We have Lottery Heritage funding for citizen science project for bats, contacting landowners to get bat detectors up	
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		- UK Shared prosperity funding for upgrading RoW (Bleadon & Winscombe) - WoE first region to launch local nature recovery strategy on 7/11/2024 - Updating our supplementary planning documentation for bats, they are now travelling further from the roost, possible because of a lack of foraging sites near the roots - Setting up habitat banking vehicle for BNG JH – interesting re SPD, Tim & Nathan will be in touch AW – It has been observed across the country that funding for nature is being stopped which is a problem - Criminal behaviour is another concern, we have seen incidents of theft, dumping rubbish and one incident involved an intruder attacking a local elderly farmer LH – lots of sweeps in Sandford and a grazier had his ATV stolen AW - We have a meeting set up with local police - Hosted MH volunteers and CPRE young people	
5	Paper A – MHNL Activity Plan	See appended notes Presented by Jim Hardcastle Judith Chubb-Whittle recently retired, her replacement starts mid November. We have a consultant to fill in on any big consultations that come up We have left X (formerly twitter) RD – What is My Mendip Memories? TH – It’s a separate project with Windrose Rural Media Trust, aimed at capturing people’s memories, cultural heritage and traditional skills also funded by Mendip Hills Fund. TH – Nature Calling launched on 10/9/24, you will have seen our press release. We are one of the six hubs, and our focus is Weston-Super-Mare. Aiming to connect people of Weston-Super-Mare to the nature on their doorstep. Artists have been appointed this week. FES – You can use our west Mendip sites for events LH – Brean and Sand Point (with a new bird hide coming next year) also available for Nature Calling	

6	Paper B – Landscape Connections Think Big	See appended notes Presented by Jim Hardcastle The National Heritage Lottery Fund have announced a 10 year fund of up to £10 million called Landscape Connections specifically aimed at protected landscapes. What ideas does the Partnership have for such a project? LH – TTT access project. The ground work has been done. It's slightly different and it's ready and can expand. JH – Evidence base is there already RT – Thank you Lauren. Best practice land management plan based on commonalities. The biggest was green infrastructure trials. It is able to marry up access and biodiversity, which are separate at the moment. JL – Corridors for people and biodiversity, is a big strength of the idea. RT – As a horse rider it is clear to me that green lanes have a lot of biodiversity that we can build on AW – brilliant project, hope to see this flow on from it. - Regen farming approach is enlightening - Iconic name in Cheddar Cheese, can we capitalise on that LH – farm shop or cooperative - Ways to raise awareness and engagement JH – What do Parish Councils want to see in communities MA – It's great when things turn up RD – We have a bat corridor in Draycott - It sounds like an excellent initiative - A platform for farmers would be very welcome JH – The four principles are Nature, Heritage, Engagement and Organisational Sustainability - We used to have Mendip Made which we could re launch DJ – The loss of elm and ash in the area has been significant, mitigation for that would be welcome - Velvet Bottom footpath become very dangerous at one point, could we look at upgrading footpath networks	
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		- A bus service akin to the “mountain goat” in Lake District, could be run from car parks in Cheddar/Wells. It could also run tours. JH – great ideas - We are continuing to look for ideas so please keep your thoughts going - Hoping to look at our option re heritage ie a heritage specialist role, can protecting them be combined with protecting nature RD – What is happening with the hotel in Cheddar that was knocked down JH – That will be public realm RD – Bring in special interest groups but there is nowhere for them to stay with the loss of the hotel LH – A Mendip seed bank, possible partnering with Kew or similar, to preserve them, eg Cheddar Pink JH – we have been looking at expanding the tree nurseries we are supporting, linking up with more around the Mendip Hills. Another option is plant nurseries. A seed bank would tie in with that. BL – Setting up a shared resource hub/skills hub for farmers, bringing in skills eg graziers, scything, volunteers, shared across Somerset. JH – we are looking at connecting with other landscapes, we also have the option of the Cotswolds with the Limestone Link RT – re heritage, are you going to get in touch with Jodie Lewis? She is of the opinion that the Mendip Hills is the most important in the country for heritage. JH – Yes we are RD – What is the timescale? Can I ask at the parish council? JH – Yes. We are hoping to submit an Expression of Interest this year and bid in 2025.	
7	Paper C – Deer Leap Consultation	See appended Notes Presented by Tim Haselden RT – There is also a bridleway alongside the road which is very overgrown. Is making the bridleway more accessible an option? TH – I will look at that	

		- We would like to see a formal response from parish councils - Please let me know your thoughts or complete the consultation online TH – Lotte Scott has an exhibition at Deer Leap as part of Somerset Art Weeks MA – Deer Leap is lovely, I have completed the consultation already. I would like to see an overspill car park. TH – thank you for completing it AW – People really appreciate that place and I hear lots of positive feedback from visitors	
8	Paper D – Management Plan Consultation	See appended notes Presented by Jim Hardcastle JH - It will be sent out this week RD – would like to see photographs RT – the biggest barrier in our landscape is road crossings and traffic. Could we include a question about this kind of infrastructure? They need to look wider than the road itself. Dangerous traffic can be very off putting for visitors to the area. RD – Need to engage with businesses, especially quarries. JH – this consultation will form the basis for a more formal consultation with Natural England in November.	
9	AOB		
10	Date of next meeting	Thursday 21st November 10am-12pm Compton Marting Village Hall, in person meeting. Invite has already been sent out.	

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	7pm 12 th September 2024	
Title:	Agenda	
Presented by:	NA	
To be noted		

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MTYzY2Q5ZmUtNzEyMi00MDI3LTk3NjktMjM1M2E5NGM0Mjlm%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22b524f606-f77a-4aa2-8da2-fe70343b0cce%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22a64ac739-c504-461a-adf6-9332cac9bb7d%22%7d

1. Introductions and Apologies
2. Declaration of Interest
3. Notes of Previous Meeting. To be approved
4. Partners' verbal updates.
5. Mendip Hills NL 2024-25 Activity Plan. Paper A.
6. Landscape Connections. Think big. Paper B.
7. Deer Leap Consultation. Paper C.
8. Management Plan Consultation. Paper D.
9. AOB
10. Date of Next Meeting: to be discussed.

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	12 th September 2024	Paper A
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 AONB 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 AONB promotional publications (newsletter database)
13. Number of people engaged with via social media (engagement rate)
14. Number of partnerships where the AONB team is the project/team/steering group lead
15. Number of partnerships where the AONB team is a supporting partner

16. Number of strategies, plans, policy or guidance documents appraised or developed by the AONB team
17. Number of Major 'development schemes' appraised – LPA planning applications
18. Number of non-Major 'development schemes' appraised – LPA planning applications
19. Number of other 'development schemes' appraised – Highways, Environment Agency, BT etc
20. Number of National Infrastructure Projects appraised
21. Number of other 'land management schemes' appraised – woodland management, catchment sensitive farming countryside stewardship
22. Amount of Defra funding spent (core)
23. Amount of local authority funding spent (core)
24. Amount of non-local authority funding spent (core)
25. Value of other 'external' grants or contributions spent on projects (non core)
26. Value of external projects substantially influenced/generated by the AONB team
27. Value of volunteer days

Project Delivery

NATURE							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj.	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB 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	Still waiting for apportionment of targets. Long term monitoring now in place for Champion Species; adder, dormice, skylark, small pearly-bordered fritillary	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	Work has commenced to compile the features and key species list, plus a climate vulnerability assessment of these.	AMBER
CLIMATE							

Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB 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	£600 committed to tree nursery to cover insurance costs. £4650 allocated to purchase trees for planting this winter.	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	Attendance in place plus 2 members of staff attending Big Chalk Conference. Aims of the projects will be used in Landscape Connections bid.	GREEN

PEOPLE

Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB 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	Many existing projects now incorporate Champion Species e.g. Nature Calling, Mendip Nature Connections. New education programme for schools being developed based around Champion Species.	AMBER
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 / MC	P1, P2, L3, R4, N1	8.2.2	9, 11, 15, 25	Mendip Nature Connections now in place. Part-time officer delivering 5 week courses for participants with low level mental health issues.	GREEN
Top of the Gorge	Support the delivery of the adventure festival through	JH	R2-4	8.3.1	9	Delivered. This year's event had increased numbers in running and riding elements. MHNL increasing financial support for the	GREEN

	pre-event meetings, on site staffing and volunteer rangers.					event coordinator to allow them more time to develop sponsorship packages.	
	Deliver the Gorge Championship community day involving local schools.	AC, JC	R2-4	8.3.1	9, 10	Cancelled as the number of teachers per pupil's ratio is too costly.	RED
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	Working with UWE to find funding to start this piece of work.	AMBER
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	£69390 allocated. So far £10k allocated to National trust to improve the Cheddar Gorge Loop, Forestry England provided funds to install signage and parking bays for disabled people, visitor interpretation panels commissioned.	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 2024 completed. Ongoing support and monitoring of visitor counters.	GREEN

PLACE

Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
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	SUPPORTED BY DEFRA UPLIFT FUNDING. Work in progress.	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	Consultation commencing on access plan.	AMBER
State of Heritage report	Produce a State of Heritage Report to support management plan review.	JH	D1, D4	7.1	16	SUPPORTED BY DEFRA UPLIFT FUNDING South West Heritage Trust commissioned, deadline November	AMBER
Burrington Combe public toilets	Support to keep toilets open.	JH	R1, R2	NA	25	SUPPORTED BY DEFRA UPLIFT FUNDING £2000 to the parish council.	GREEN
Training	Deliver a training programme for local councillors on the NL special qualities, nature recovery and planning system.	TBC	D4, P2, L3	1.1	9	On hold pending new Landscape Planning Officer.	RED
Westbury Beacon	Support the protection of the historic structure at this Butterfly Conservation Trust site with the South West Heritage Trust.	TH	H1, H3	NA	25	SUPPORTED BY DEFRA UPLIFT FUNDING Financial contribution to upgrade the cladding on the Cold War radar testing facility.	AMBER
National Landscape	Produce items that promote awareness of the National Landscape brand.	JH	L3	4.3.1	13	SUPPORTED BY DEFRA UPLIFT FUNDING Design consultants appointed to deliver new visitor information.	AMBER
Management Plan	Review the management plan for adoption by local authorities in March 2025.	JH	ALL	N/A	14	SUPPORTED BY DEFRA UPLIFT FUNDING Initial stakeholder consultation done. Public consultation commencing 16/9/24.	AMBER
Nature Calling	Deliver year 1 of the 'Nature Calling' programme for the national Art in the	TH	L3, P1-2	3.2.2 8.3.1	9, 14, 25	Artist appointments made. Public launch September 2024.	GREEN

	Landscape Weston Hub (develop partnership working and secure match).						
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	Lottery application to be submitted.	AMBER

Core Delivery

1. Conserve & Enhance

Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj.	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB 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	Skylark and adder areas roped off again this year to provide better protection. No concerns raised by the public. Plan prepared to improve access for visitors at Deer Leap. Consultation about to start. Various habitat management and surveying taken place at both sites.	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	The Mendip Way page The Mendip Way - Mendip Hills National Landscape (mendiphills-nl.org.uk) is the 3 rd most viewed page on the MHNL website, 5116 views between 1/4/24 and 31/8/24.	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	Approx. 80% of project funds committed this year.	GREEN
2.							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB 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	13 events planned between 1/10/24 and 26/10/24.	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	19,000 users. 48,600 sessions.	AMBER
Social media	Achieve 4000 followers on X (Twitter)	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	We took the decision to close the X/Twitter account on 16/8/24 as we felt we were gaining very little from this platform and it didn't fit with our aims. At that point we had 3782.	NA
	Achieve 6000 likes on Facebook	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	6.1k followers 1/9/24	GREEN
	Achieve 18,000 views on YouTube	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	6300 views achieved 1/9/24	AMBER
	Achieve 3000 followers on Instagram	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	2953 followers 1/9/24	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 newsletter database.	JC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3	1951 on database 1/9/24	GREEN
Talks & other opportunities	Deliver 10 talks (walks), including online events & attend relevant events.	JH, TH, NO	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	1.1	3, 4	29/7-2/8 Trigger holiday club x 4 sessions. 15 attended 9/7/24 Walk for roman Baths staff x15 13/6/24 Healthier with Nature mtg x30 21/5/24 Wellbeing through Creativity x20 19/5/24 Mendip Society Slader's Leigh x20 9/5/24 Mendip Activity Centre eco walk x 15	AMBER
Annual Forum	Organise and deliver an annual forum for the public to raise awareness of the special qualities of the AONB.	JH, JC	L3, H2, N1, P1, P2, P3	8.3	3	Planned for Sunday 17/11/24	AMBER
3.							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Planning liaison	Establish a planning liaison group that meets on a regular basis.	TBC	D1, D4	1.1	6	Ongoing	AMBER
	Two newsletters to planning managers (DM & policy) & planning officers. July & January	TBC	D1, D4, L3	1.1	6	Ongoing	AMBER
Regional	Liaise with other NL planners and partner organisations.	TBC	D1, D4	N/A	4, 5, 6	Ongoing	AMBER
4.							
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj	Delivery Plan ref.	NAAONB 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	Next meeting in September	AMBER
Volunteer Rangers	Submit funding bids and seek sponsorship to support the volunteer rangers.	TH	P1, P2	8.1	7	SUPPORTED BY DEFRA UPLIFT FUNDING Defibrillator purchased and held in ranger vehicle. Various trail cams, species identification books, eDNA testing kits purchased to support nature recovery work.	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	Ongoing	GREEN
	Train 10 volunteers via Dry Stone Walling Association (DSWA).	AC	P1, P3	2.2.1	3	Two training sessions booked 12/9/24 3/10/24	GREEN
	Restore 300m drystone wall via weekly practical tasks.	AC	P1, P3	2.2.1, 3.1	1, 2	122m (5.5m/week) 1/9/24	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	Full programme booked. Weekly walling tasks. During summer fortnightly nature recovery tasks, weekly autumn-spring.	GREEN
Young Rangers	Programme and deliver their activities aimed at creating environmental decision makers of the future.	ALL	P1, P2, L2	8.1	3	New cohort starting 14/9/24.	GREEN

Mendip Hills Fund	Achieve donations of >£20000	JH	P2, P3	8.4	7	£10,000 achieved so far.	AMBER
	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.	NAAONB KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Partnership	Administer 4 x meetings per year minimum.	JH	ALL	N/A	4	2 x online June and September, 2 face-to-face March and November.	GREEN
Officer Support Group	Administer 2 x meetings per year minimum	JH	ALL	N/A	4	As required.	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 Local Nature Partnership Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy Chew Valley Reconnected Limestone Landscape Link Mendip Woodland Group	GREEN
National representation	Attend NLA meetings, contribute to responses, forums and communications	ALL	ALL	N/A	4	Ongoing	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.

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	12 th September 2024	Paper B
Title:	Landscape Connections	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle	
To be discussed.		

Pre-meeting thoughts to be shared at the meeting

If money was no object my top 2 suggestions under the following headings would be;

Top 2 suggestions for helping nature recover across the Mendip Hills:

- 1.
- 2.

Top 2 suggestions for saving our heritage across the Mendip Hills:

- 1.
- 2.

Top 2 suggestions for engaging people in the nature and heritage of the Mendip Hills;

- 1.
- 2.

Top 2 ways of making the above suggestions sustainable

- 1.
- 2.

Context

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has a new strategic initiative, called Landscape Connections, that will support long-term projects to boost nature recovery and connect more people to our most treasured landscapes.

They want to drive systemic and lasting change across the UK's protected landscapes. Over the next 10 years they will invest in around 20 projects to work with local communities, organisations, landowners and farmers to put entire landscapes and habitats into recovery. Each project funded will be for 10 years receiving around £10 million.

The four main principles of the fund are;

- *Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.*
- *Conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future.*
- *Supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage.*
- *Strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.*

This is a special opportunity to bring small project ideas together and formulate one big application.

Building blocks already in place, or nearly

- A Nature Recovery Plan with champion species and targets for different habitats. We also have a community engagement plan linked to delivering this.
- A State of Heritage report that will highlight heritage 'at risk' and where we need to focus our efforts.
- A strategic access plan that shows how communities can be linked by access that also benefits wildlife.
- The Mendip Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 that will include targets the Partnership must achieve for restoring and creating habitats and tree planting.

Think Big

This is our chance to bring a range of other ideas together. What other projects or funding could be wrapped into this?

Next Steps

The Mendip Hills NL team will be gathering ideas and evidence over the next few months and be discussing these with the Lottery Development Officers. We will probably submit a Project Enquiry form first, then apply for a Development Phase which gives up to 2 years to refine the ideas and get everything ready for the delivery stage.

To read more on the Landscape Connections programme visit [Strategic initiatives | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	12 th September 2024	Paper D
Title:	Management Plan Consultation	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle	
To be discussed.		

Context

Public consultation on the Mendip Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2029 will start in mid-September. The following survey has been produced that will be promoted in a variety of ways for people to complete. We will focus on local residents to achieve a broad representation and evidence base to steer the creation of the objectives and the priorities for the work of the Partnership.

We will specifically target farmers and land managers, parish clerks for wider distribution alongside our usual contact list of partners.

Management Plan consultation draft survey

The following is the draft text that will be included in the survey. Have we missed anything? What else could we ask?

Shaping the landscape's future

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts on the future of the Mendip Hills

Before you complete this survey you may want to look at the;

Management Plan 2019-24

Nature Recovery Plan

State of the AONB (renamed National Landscape)

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.

Section 1: About you

Your name:

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

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

What is your relationship with Mendip Hills? [categories to be determined]

Section 2: Mendip Hills Management Plan

Have you seen the title Mendip Hills National Landscape before, other than on this survey?

Have you seen the Mendip Hills National Landscape logo before, other than on this survey?

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

Comment box.

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

Comment box.

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).

- Promote the Mendip Hills as a source of natural capital, offering economic, health, and climate resilience benefits.
- Enhance 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.
- Raise awareness of Mendip Hills geology, particularly caves, to ensure conservation of geology, habitats, and water resources.
- Advocate for sustainable soil management through regenerative farming to reduce erosion and water pollution, enhancing climate resilience.

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

Comment box.

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).

- Promote farming and land management practices that support climate adaptation, mitigation, and conservation of the Mendip Hills' unique qualities.
- Encourage a sustainable woodland economy in Mendip Hills, focusing on climate-resilient species and community-driven woodland creation.
- Advocate for quarry restoration and use that minimises landscape impact and supports climate adaptation and the Mendip Hills' designation.
- Ensure new developments in the Mendip Hills are compatible with its unique qualities, meet housing needs, and support climate resilience.
- Support carbon reduction in Mendip Hills by promoting energy conservation, sustainable development, and appropriate renewable energy technologies.
- Work with local highways authorities to ensure transport infrastructure respects the Mendip Hills' special landscape qualities.
- Collaborate with authorities and communities to ensure strategies and plans reflect the priorities of the Mendip Hills' management.

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

Comment box.

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).

- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within rural communities and tourism in the Mendip Hills, while enhancing its special qualities.
- Ensure public access and recreational activities in Mendip Hills are inclusive, healthy, and aligned with its conservation goals.
- Develop sustainable travel options for diverse user groups, enhancing access to and enjoyment of the Mendip Hills.
- Expand volunteering opportunities in Mendip Hills, engaging diverse participants to benefit the environment, community, and well-being.
- Promote the Mendip Hills as an educational resource for all ages, encouraging research and learning.

Is there anything under the theme of people that we might have missed?

Comment box.

Priority area 4: place. Please rank the following objectives in the order you feel they are most important (1 being highest priority, 4 being lowest priority).

- Enhance awareness and appreciation of the Mendip Hills' designation and unique qualities.
- Promote a safe, accessible green infrastructure network that benefits people, nature, and wildlife in the Mendip Hills.
- Support proper management of historically significant sites in the Mendip Hills to prevent the loss of heritage assets.
- Improve recording and interpretation of the Mendip Hills' historic environment to enrich the experience for locals and visitors.

Is there anything under the theme of place that we might have missed?

Comment box.

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

Short comment box

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