



Dorset National Landscape

Dorset National Landscape Partnership
Hosted by Dorset Council
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Dorset National Landscape Partnership Board Meeting, Thursday 16th May 2024

At Cricket Club, Dorchester

Draft minute

Board attendance:

Organisation	Representative	Status	2024-05
Independent chair	Dr Phil Sterling	Voting member	Present
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Piers Brown	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Cllr Roland Tarr	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Jeremy Pope	Voting member	Apologies
Environment Agency	Keith Calder	Voting member	Apologies
Forestry Commission	Roly Boughton	Voting member	Apologies
Historic England	Ross Simmonds	Voting member	Apologies
Historic England	Sasha Chapman	Voting member	Present (virtual)
National Farmers' Union	Tim Gelfs	Voting member	Apologies
Natural England	Emma Tomlin	Voting member	Apologies
Natural England	Tania Carvisiglia	Voting member	
The National Trust	Hannah Jefferson	Voting member	Present
Dorset Race Equalities Council	Vacant	Voting member	
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	Present
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Imogen Davenport	Attending member	Present
Dorset Council	Giles Nicholson	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Country Land and Business Association	Mark Burton	Supporting Officer	Apologies
National Farmers' Union	Gemma Harvey	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Neil Wedge	Supporting Officer	
LAF	Janet Davis	Supporting Officer	Present

Dorset National Landscape Team: Tom Munro (Manager), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink), Sue Dampney (Culture, Communications & Learning Officer) Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), Jill Hearing (Project Officer), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer), Richard Brown (Planning Officer).

Guests: Dr Sam Rose (West Dorset Wilding), Roger Bond (Normtec)

Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Keith Calder will be retiring in June and no longer sitting on the Board, but the EA will appoint a new representative in due course. Nick Squirrell attended on behalf of Emma Tomlin as Representative of Natural England.

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in Nov. 2023 were agreed as a true record.

Cllr Roland Tarr reported that following the recent local elections this would be his last meeting. His replacement will be Cllr Ben Wilson. The Chair thanked him for his valuable contributions to the Board.

Post-election update: Dorset Council has appointed the following members to the Board: Cllr Nick Ireland (Council Leader, lead member for the Environment & Crossways ward), Cllr Ben Wilson (South East Purbeck ward) and Cllr Jane Somper (Beacon ward).

1. Dr Sam Rose: Brit Catchment Recovery Project

Link to presentation [here](#)

[West Dorset Wilding](#) is a landowner initiated and led charity focussing on the Brit Catchment area working to expand natural process led restoration, regenerative agriculture and reconnection with nature for wellbeing. The major landholdings involved are the Mapperton Estate, Crutchley Estate and Symondsburry Estate. To date successful projects include: a beaver wild release consultation, dam capacity mapping and feasibility studies, annual breeding bird surveys and tree, hedgerow and woodland baseline mapping for carbon.

These studies fed into the group's successful Local Recovery Partnership bid. [The Brit Catchment Recovery Project](#) is one of 34 projects awarded Defra funding in this round. Following a summer of intensive initial consultation with farmers & landowners in the catchment, 53 farmers have signed up to the initial 2-year project development stage (PDS) currently in progress. This is in preparation for the implementation stage, starting in April 2026 lasting for 20/30 plus yrs. It's an ambitious project, covering 11,500 ha with broad aims to improve biodiversity, increase carbon capture, improve water quality, maintain food production, improve flood management and to bring socio-eco. benefits to the area. A large set of supporting actions has been developed to achieve these aims including beaver & vole release, deer management, 'Flying pig' club, ponds, wetland creation. A new staff team has been set up to support the work. Sam can be contacted [via email](#) with any queries.

Comments:

- a. CllrRTarr: I think a long-term plan is feasible based on previous access projects I've set up. Although we're moving into to a new period of government, at Dorset Council the budget is fixed for 12 months which can't be altered so don't be disappointed if grant structure can't change. SRose: Access is a sensitive issue, but positive areas in the catchment such as a cycle way through Mapperton. We'll work with landowners on this in the plan.
- b. GNicholson: There's some quick wins you could do. SRose: I'll link in with you.
- c. CllrRTarr: I'd like to see tourists arriving by sustainable travel means.
- d. NSquirrell: Want to encourage landowners to be accessible and welcome tourists, and harness benefit by selling local products from the farm to them etc. SRose: we have to provide some match to government funding with green finance. Wellness and access to the countryside should be included in the figures.

2. Delivering the Management Plan

TM presented the Dorset National Landscape team delivery report. He also asked the board to consider three additional recommendations in addition to those in the circulated board papers in support of new projects:

- Brit Catchment Natural Flood Management,
- Nature Buddies
- For a new bid to the 3rd round of funding for Landscape Recovery when it opens.

a. Ian Rees: Natural Flood Management Programme

Link to presentation [here](#)

Ian explained that pre-Landscape Recovery Bid we were working with West Dorset Wilding (WDW) and Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) on flood defence issues with the Environment Agency, employing a consultant geomorphologist to do some data capture, ground truthing, and analysis.

This project aims to reduce flood risk in the Brit Catchment, particular around the Bridport area at the bottom of the catchment, caused by high intensity rainfall from storms and high surface flow from land use. The geomorphologist identified some specific fields deemed to be at high risk and looked at historical channel changes. This information coupled with other data identified 33 locations, working with 17 landowners, where issues could be addressed. Solutions include leaky dams to slow the water and trap sediment and more area-based schemes with changes to land use, for example sediment ponds and flood plain reconnection at key locations.

On the back of this work, the group put in an Expression of Interest to the Environment Agency's Natural Flood Management Programme which was successful. Great news for the team, who now have until September to finalise details and install monitoring measures to prove the effectiveness of the measures. Installation will be from September to March 2027. It is a partnership approach with WDW, DWT and Citizen Scientists. They also intend to use the project as a demonstration to other farmers. The value of scheme: delivery of measures is £280,000 for 3 years, £215,000 for monitoring and evaluation and £127,000 for staff time, design work, etc. Total investment £673,000.

Ian asked for Partnership Board support for the development and delivery of this project in order to formalise the process with Dorset Council.

Comments:

- a. HJefferson: Any complexity over double funding for the 2 projects? IRees: We are in contact with NE / Defra. TMunro: Different elements will show as different funding streams. IRees: that will be behind the scenes, we will present it as one project so as not to confuse those involved.
- b. LRake: Don't presume government departments talk to each other! Many stackable benefits from this project.
- c. NSquirrel: Countryside Stewardship rates have increased, important that landowners are aware of the range of options available to them. IRees: This is a capital project but for long term maintenance this will come in. Plan to set up a steering group which could include NE.
- d. GHarvey: important to have funding in place for landowners to implement the change after the work of this project has been undertaken. IRees: Long term maintenance is an important consideration; this is where Landscape Recovery come in too.
- e. CllrCTurner: Shouldn't water companies be financing such projects? TMunro: There are national conversations being had that need to be followed up with some local opportunities.

b. Roger Bond: Fingerpost Project

Link to presentation [here](#).

This project started 10 years ago to assist with the restoration of traditional fingerposts which had fallen into disrepair across the county. In this time over 350 restorations have taken place. Roger and his small band of volunteers are able to advise and assist local parish councils on restoration works. Funding coming from local funds / donations, assisted by contributions towards some materials from the Dorset National Landscape team and fingerposts grants from Dorset CPRE. Works are carried out using traditional, durable materials. Long term maintenance is down to the local parish. These iconic posts are viewed with much local pride and fondness. Link to the [Dorset Fingerpost Project](#).

Comments:

- a. Cllr CTurner: Who keeps the signs cleaned and where do you get your letters? RBond: we advise those involved to clean them and there are some 'unknown' helpers too! Letters are from Coles Casting.
- b. NSquirrel: Are the signs mapped? RBond: Yes, there is a database with grid references. NS: Could they be added to Dorset Explorer?

- c. GNicholson: It would be easy to get it added to Dorset Explorer. Contact the GIS team.
- d. Cllr RTarr: the refurbished sign near Culliford Tree looks great and locals are proud of it. Could additional information be added to a post eg. National Cycle Routes? RBond: Potentially, if the Parish Council request it.
- e. JDavis: What is the significance of a red post? RBond: I think it marks a staging post for prisoners.

In addition, Tom reported the good news that this week The Stepping into Nature team bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been successful. They have been awarded funding for an additional 2 years to continue their project works, which includes new work on Nature Buddies. He asked for the Partnership Board's support for the project so it can be ratified by Dorset Council.

RESOLUTION:

The Board acknowledges significant progress towards delivering the Management Plan. The Board also supports the team to develop and deliver:

- **Brit Catchment Natural Flood Management,**
- **Nature Buddies**
- **a new bid to the 3rd round of funding for Landscape Recovery (when it opens).**

3. Partnership accounts 2023-24

TM presented the paper.

Comments:

- a. PSterling: These accounts demonstrate excellent value for money.

The Board commended the funding leverage demonstrated by these accounts.

4. Sue Dampney: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion statement update

Sue reported that formalising a new EDI framework is in progress, aligning with the Management Plan review and will include creating a strong EDI steering group. Involving diverse voices in decision making progresses across the National Landscape family as well as through our local project work, in particular Flavours, Nature Buddies and Nature Calling projects. The team have been actively targeting underrepresented groups through these projects, as well as projects we support through the Access for All fund, the Sustainable Development Fund and FIPL Young Explorers. We're also supporting and learning from Purbeck National Trust's work with young people. Comms work is rolling out with a National welcome campaign in the pipeline along with plans internally to make our website more accessible. The team have benefitted from some nationally supported EDI training recently.

5. Terms of Reference update

TM presented the paper. He explained that following the rebrand it is necessary to update the Terms of Reference by amending all references to AONB to Dorset National Landscape. Along with a couple other minor edits to clarify the selection of representatives from Dorset Council and DAPTC.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approves the edits to the Terms of Reference.

6. Interim Management Plan

TM presented the paper. Due to the delayed Management Plan review he explained that Lord Benyan had advised National Landscapes to draw-up an Interim Management Plan. The plan was presented to the board for approval, to become adopted primarily by Dorset Council, to ensure the policies in the existing Management Plan (2019-2024) remain valid.

Comments:

- a) IDavenport: Suggested the phrase 'nature recovery' be included in the vision under Mission?
- b) NSquirrel: Suggested to add in a bullet point 'to fund the right mitigation measures'

RESOLUTION:

The Board approves the Interim Management Plan, subject to the suggested additions and recommends its adoption by relevant partners.

7. Management Plan Review

TM presented the paper. A May 2025 Partnership board meeting will take place as usual, but an extraordinary meeting of the Board will be called late September 2025 to review the draft Management Plan. Meantime Tom will work with the Steering Group (DC, NE, Dr Phil Sterling) to establish a review group for the Management Plan process.

Comments:

- a) HJefferson: the Team are welcome to hold some Talking Tent consultation events at National Trust sites.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approves the proposed intention to review the Management Plan, the timeline for review and the broad outline of the process.

8. Legislation update: LUR Act amendments to the CROW Act (Richard Brown)

Richard explained that as of 26th December 2023, any relevant authority (as per CROW Act) discharging a function which affects a Protected Landscape must 'seek to further the purposes of the designated area'. In Dorset National Landscape the focus being on 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty'. This is more focused and pro-active than former duty to 'have regard' to the purpose. The official guidance has not yet been published by Defra, but a draft had been circulated which outlined ideas and potential approaches, for example seeking mitigation and enhancement measures. The draft guidance noted that this should be an active duty and that reasonable steps must be taken to explore how decisions and actions can both avoid harm to the National Landscape and go beyond this to achieve gains. Once Defra has finalised the new guidance it will be circulated to the Board and to those parties it affects the most e.g. local planning authority, Town and Parish Councils.

Comments:

- a. CllrRTarr: Byway approval at Winterborne Abbas disrupting quiet enjoyment of Countryside, would that count under this?
- b. GNicholson: A Byway is a legal process, based on evidence, hence historical considerations important. RB: In making any order the Council must take into consideration this new order, but we don't know specifically about using it in such a context as yet. GN: Byways do give a lot of people who don't have access to the countryside that access.
- c. HJefferson: Would this give the Team more access to Biodiversity Net Gain development money?
- d. CllrCTurner: In Beaminster call to change a footpath into a BOAT. We need more clarity on what the situation is to be assured that designation adhered to. GN: Clear info on Dorset Explorer but a request can be submitted to get it changed. CllrRTarr: This is wrong and should be changed.
- e. TMunro: Going forward there will be greater evidence in documenting the decision-making process.
- f. NSquirrel: NE has rushed out some guidance to answer queries and are also referring them to the AONB Management Plan. This puts weight behind the National Landscape teams and advisors making case law and gives a stronger voice from the National Landscape teams themselves.

Partners' 90 second updates

NSquirrel: Wytch farm project is an area of review one of 12 national projects cited as best practice.

HJefferson: Welcomed NT Director General for a visit, showing her Dorset NT sites and exchange information. A new 10 yr. strategy coming in January. Cow & calf safety in particular on hillforts as bare land tenancies. The impact of erosion by storms is very noticeable and taking up more Trust time.

CllrCTurner: New council in Beaminster, hoping to progress better landscape use and better planning. Will be taking up issue of new housing with DC as concerned by the potential impact of commuters and lack of local facilities.

GDikinson: 2 Battery Energy Storage System applications have been submitted near Chickerell. One was thrown out but the other still ongoing. They are very dangerous in themselves (fire risk) and may encourage more solar panel applications too.

LRake: Funding for LEP ceased last month. Main focus is now careers and development. Wessex Internet have won a major government contract for the installation of superfast broadband focused in south and west Dorset which may impact on duties to improve / enhance the National Landscape. Home working may also increase as a result.

GNicholson: Following recent elections DC now have a Lib Dem majority. Cllr John Andrews will replace Cllr Ray Bryan for the Environment portfolio. New leader is Cllr Nick Ireland. More of an emphasis on west Dorset, bought forward Net 0 target for DC to 2035, and Dorset as a whole 2045 so believe environment and climate focus, positive for NL team and the value for money you bring. Be aware that DC has a budget pressure. ROWIP will be published later this year. Cut & collect on verges continues this year and aiming to massively increase both wildlife value and have a positive effect on climate change.

CllrRTarr: New councillors for partnership board are Cllr Nick Ireland, Council Leader and Cllr Ben Wilson from South East Purbeck.

IDavenport: Alongside NE we have purchased land at [Lyscombe](#) and will be managing the site. Launch last week. Successful in bid to Defra Species Survival Fund which will fund work at Lyscombe and 17 other sites to increase species biomass. Currently recruiting for 2 new roles – 1 at Wild Woodbury and another at Lyscombe. Peat project going well and is in second year, funded by Defra. Supporting DC with Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

JDavis: Advisory remit to DC/BCP. Working on Sustainable Transport Plan, commenting on felling applications. Levelling Up and Regeneration Act duty means we are restricted, but could we impose traffic regulations as a solution? Looking forward to ROWIP publication.

WBond: Transition funding from EU to UK is really hitting home now and is an incentive for farmers to re-think how managing farms. Some new schemes from government but all slightly disjointed and little cohesion on the income side. Flooding has had an impact on farmers, and if this happens again could be a breaking point for some who need to generate income as opposed to capital projects.

GHarvey: Recent farmer survey shows national confidence at lowest level and extreme weather and payments are a concern. In arable section it's been a difficult drilling season, less crops in ground and more land given over to sustainable farming incentive (ELMS). Likely to see an increase in sign-ups to this scheme over the coming year. Expecting more option announcements in June, alongside Countryside Stewardship. Poole Harbour nutrient management scheme (75% of farmers) – but issues with the data collection tool. EA have removed some mitigation measures and as a result there's been an increase in leaching figures this year. Farmers dissatisfied and EA have come under ministerial scrutiny. Agreement to improve the tool put in place to increase confidence amongst farmers and hopefully we will see those involved remaining in the scheme. Disseminating livestock worrying messages and will share details.

LCulkin: 6-yr periodic report submitted to UNESCO. Shocking how site has destabilised. In light of this 2 new projects underway. The first is a protected site strategy; mapping changes and predicting future change. The results of which will form a new plan around supplementary planning guidance eg. Ammonite pavement in Lyme. The second is an EA mitigation project around sea defences. Sidmouth is a case study – sea defences being put in and will report on how we learn from that. Have employed a new geologist. On the back of these new projects we have proposed a delay to the upcoming Management Plan review. Plans for a visitor centre and museum progressing well. Weymouth location and decision will be made soon on this.

SChapman: (written report) Provided statutory advice and grant funding for several FiPL schemes in the National Landscape; Holditch Tower, Winterbourne Clenston Barn, Culliford Tree Barrow. A Countryside Stewardship Scheme at Came Down is underway which includes the removal of trees, geophysical survey and meshing of the barrows to protect them from the badgers that are very much in occupation of one of the group. The cleared areas will then be managed as glade within the wider woodland to protect the archaeology and improve habitat and ecological diversity. There are also lots of previously unrecorded WWII structures in the woods that are being recorded as part of the project to help prevent accidental damage. We are supporting Dorset Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset with regards to Heritage Crime reporting. At Arne Moors we have provided advice to the Environment Agency regarding impact to the historic environment. As a statutory consultee we have been providing input into the new Shoreline Management Plans. We are a consultee with regards to Countryside Stewardship applications

where there are heritage assets and will be providing advice on the ELMS schemes, Sustainable Farming Incentive as well as Landscape Recovery. All alongside our Development Advice with regards to the planning system in Dorset.

9. Any other business

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of next meetings

	Winter	Spring (tbc)
AONB Steering Group	17 th October 2024	24 th April 2025
AONB Partnership Board	28 th November 2024	22 nd May 2025

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