



# Dorset National Landscape

Dorset National Landscape Partnership  
Hosted by Dorset Council  
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## Dorset National Landscape Partnership Board Meeting, Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### At Cricket Club, Dorchester

### Draft minutes

#### Board attendance:

Organisation	Representative	Status	2024-11
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Mark Burton	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Nick Ireland	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Cllr Ben Wilson	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Jane Somper	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Giles Nicholson	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Jeremy Pope	Voting member	Present
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Claire Dixon	Voting member	Present
Dorset Race Equalities Council	Jonathan Burke	Voting member	Present
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Imogen Davenport	Voting member	Present
Environment Agency	Vacant	Voting member	
Forestry Commission	Roly Boughton	Voting member	Apologies
Historic England		Voting member	Apologies
Independent chair	Dr Phil Sterling	Voting member	Present
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	Apologies
Local Access Forum	Janet Davis	Supporting Officer	Present
National Farmers' Union	Tim Gelfs	Voting member	Present
National Farmers' Union	Gemma Harvey	Supporting Officer	Present
Natura England	Ian Alexander	Supporting Officer	Present
Natural England	David Charman	Voting Member	Present
The National Trust	Hannah Jefferson	Voting member	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), Rachel Janes (FiPL Officer).

**Guests:** Amy Smith, Dorset Council and Mark Warn, Forestry England

#### Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

David Charman attended as representative of Natural England.

This is Jeremy Pope's last meeting; he will be handing over to Claire Dixon.

## Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in May 2024 were agreed as a true record.

**Tom Munro gave an introduction to the team, their work and the role of the Partnership Board.**

**Presentation** [here](#)

Comments:

CllrCTurner: What is the security of DC funding received by the team in these difficult financial times? TM: It's set as a contribution to the partnership and part of an ongoing process. It's a tough budget but believe the financial contribution we receive will be maintained; confirmation of funding expected in January.

GNicholson: DC recognise the value in income and investment (leverage) bought in by the team – it's a very good multiplier for the investment.

TM: DC contribution £56,300 and turnover £2.3m by the team (delivery of nature recovery and landscape enhancement)

Psterling: Majority of funds turned over within Dorset and helping local rural economy.

### 1. Delivering the Management Plan

TM presented the Dorset National Landscape team delivery report which featured additional presentations from the team.

#### a. Julie Hammon: Nature Buddies

Link to presentation [here](#)

Julie gave an overview of the [Nature Buddies Network](#), a new project which follows on from the work of Stepping into Nature. This project is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and will run until June 2026. The aim of the project is to set up a network of specially trained Nature Buddy volunteers who are dedicated to breaking down barriers hindering individuals from taking part in nature-based activities, working with them on a 1 to 1 basis, over a set period of time to help them build confidence and skills to get out into nature.

Nature Buddies volunteers will be embedded within existing befriending/volunteer organisations or set up within health, nature and heritage organisations and activity providers across Dorset / BCP and will be fully supported by the project team to do this. At this initial stage the team are looking for [host organisations](#) to work with. Julie asked the board to get in touch with herself or Kate Townsend if they are interested in finding our more or becoming a host via email or completing this [form](#).

Julie also asked if members could circulate the information on Nature Buddies to any contacts they think could be interested in becoming part of the Network, in particular at this stage as a host. An information sharing webinar scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

#### b. Sue Dampney: Nature Calling

Link to presentation [here](#)

Dorset National Landscape has been selected by the National Landscapes Association to be one of 6 hubs of enhanced funding and activity in the Nature Calling national arts project. We are working with artists to connect with underserved communities in Yeovil on the northern boundary of the National Landscape.

The project in Dorset centres around 2 artist commissions. The first is with poet and writer Louisa Adjoa Parker who has been meeting people (in particular those whose voices are seldom heard) to produce a poem to be launched in January 2025. The larger artist commission has been awarded to Becca Gill who is bringing together a team of experienced artists to work with diverse communities from the Yeovil area to create the work in Spring / Summer 2025. Taking their inspiration from the Cerne Abbas Giant and the historic landscape, they will create a giant-scale temporary art installation based on the game Consequences.

The installation will be unveiled to audiences in 3 locations across the National Landscape in late August and September, aiming to reach an audience of 5000 across all the activities. The finale in Dorset will contribute to a Nature Calling season of performances and installations from other Hubs and smaller commissions from the National Landscape family.

**Comments:**

GHarvey: Concerned the right to roam will be promoted if Nick Hayes is involved. SD Assured this would not be the case.

PSterling: Congratulated the team of the work undertaken, in particular the major achievements of the FiPL team. There have been some staff changes - Caroline Richards to Project Support Officer, Kate Townsend to Stepping into Nature Project Coordinator. Steph Aburrow has taken a new role with East Devon National Landscape. He thanked her for all the excellent work she did for Stepping into Nature.

**Comments:**

JPope: History of Red Fingerposts – in key places so seen for executions. PSterling: Also for driving stock, by colour as could not read. TM: Transportation ships - stops on route for prisoners.

JDavis: Access for All Funding: pleased Piddle Valley has been resurfaced. How was the decision made to fund this project? TM it's short-term funding so no long-term governance, we have worked on projects with partners we know we can deliver. SKing They have to meet a strict criteria for Access for All requirements and DC's ranger team are key delivery partners aware of the local issues.

TGelfs: What is the timing and purpose of the deer survey? TM better deer management, covering 80,000ha in West Dorset. Cllr B Wilson: Is this with landowner permission. TM: Yes it is. TGelfs: Disease amongst deer is a major concern.

IAlexander: The team represent phenomenal value for money. DC are buying a huge resource for such little investment.

**RESOLUTION:**

**The Board acknowledges significant progress towards delivering the Management Plan.**

**2. Proposal to Bid for Funds: Landscape Recovery Project**

TM presented the paper.

**Comments:**

CllrBWilson: Do we understand why we were unsuccessful first time round and what needs changing? TM: yes, our presentation of the climate impact of deforestation mitigated against peat restoration outputs was not clear enough, although we were disappointed with the assessment made of this. IAlexander: we are doing significant works on carbon sequestration so will present it differently next time around.

CllrBWilson: Is new submission going to be significantly different? TM: At the moment we don't think so but depends on the criteria.

GHarvey: Is this in partnership with National Trust. TM: Yes, the Purbeck Heaths Partnership includes conservation organisations, some private estates, tenants and owner occupiers. GHarvey: Have the National Trust engaged with tenants and have any issues been addressed? IAlexander: NT doing a lot to assist tenants to adapt to post Brexit agriculture if they want to. TM: Lots of land in this area is marginal land so well suited for nature management as a major source of guaranteed farm income.

**RESOLUTION:**

**The Board supports the development of a bid for the third round Landscape Recovery pilot by the Purbeck Heaths partnership.**

**3. Proposal to bid for funds: Landscape Connections**

TM presented the paper.

**Comments:**

WBond: Supportive of the sensible length of time to develop and implement this. TM: Will additionally help increase capacity on our Management Plan consultation process.

CllrCTurner: 12-15 months is not a long time? TM this is for the audience development phase which if successful will lead to funding for an 8–10-year programme of works.

IDavenport: I would like to add in DWT support in the development of this initiative and could potentially help with capacity in development phase and staff time for match.

**RESOLUTION:**

## The Board supports the submission of a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a development phase project which would lead to a longer-term Landscape Connections programme.

### 4. Mark Warn: Forestry England's Wilder Forest Areas.

Link to presentation [here](#)

Mark gave an overview of the work being done by Forestry England on Wild Core areas both nationally and locally. The Forest Wilding Programme is being funded by DEFRA for 5 years and is based on FE national policies: Growing the Future 2021-2026 and Biodiversity Plan 2021-2026. It concentrates on 3 principal strands – Wild Core areas, species reintroductions and SSSI condition in Thetford Forest. Nationally the country is split into 4 districts / Wild Core areas making up 8000ha in total. All areas are SSSI designated and have a mix of forest and open habitats and potential for expansion with partnerships. We are South District / Wild Purbeck Core Area, covering 2232ha and link into existing local initiatives include. Wareham Arc Landscape Recovery Scheme. In each Wild Core Area the aim is to rebuild biodiversity through restoring natural processes. Forestry management will be adapted to Low Impact Silvicultural System but will still provide high quality timber. This will be achieved by restoring open heathland and wetlands, removing non-native tree species (rhododendron), increased diversification of tree species and the introduction of conservation/wild grazing. Encouraging the reintroduction of missing key species; beavers, white tailed sea eagles, pine martens and wildcats is underway. Likewise translocations of some of the smaller ecosystem engineers such as the wood ant, soil and fungi are happening. This is an ambitious project and hopes to set the blueprint for future forestry management.

#### Comments:

WBond: Looking at your proposals and thinking how a decade ago you were thinking about selling off the estate; this is quite a transformation. MW: an exciting time and commitment made by Senior Team that this is the direction we are following.

GDikinson: What is veteranisation of trees? MW Creating ecological opportunities by providing holes/cracks fissures in the trees for birds, bats, fungi etc

JDavis: Are there implications for public access? MW: Visitor engagement key particularly with regards to herd grazing.

CllrCTurner: Have you considered the introduction of wild hogs? MW: it's being considered nationally but Wild Boar are classified under the Dangerous Animal Act so although they are a missing species of ecological engineers, domestic pigs are the only option for bare ground grazing at the moment (such as in the Purbeck Heaths NNR).

CllrBWilson: Are your plans to restore hydrology linked into any broader plans across the area? MW: Not within own estate but we are liaising with EA and partners through the Wareham Arc project around the Sherford River.

CllrCTurner: What are the chances for producing disease resistant ash trees in this country? MW: Not established in UK yet but we are not clearing all diseased ash in the hope of some resistance developing overtime. P Sterling: Greater variety of species the further west you go therefore stronger likelihood of becoming resistant over time.

### 5. Amy Smith: Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Link to presentation [here](#)

LNRS plans are underway across England. DC are coordinating the Dorset County strategy, working closely with BCP Council, Natural England and a wide range of stakeholders. It includes a map and description of the current state of nature in Dorset, looks at the opportunities/activities to aid nature recovery and maps high opportunity areas. Based on input from these organisations 12 draft priorities have been compiled alongside maps and supporting docs. These will be considered for approval by DC before going out to public consultation, finalised and published in Autumn 2025.

#### Comments:

TGelfs: Are the impacts of food production being looked at? Concerned that land needed to produce food is going out of production in favour of nature restoration. Has a study been done on this and the potential jobs / skills that will be lost? AS: depending on the on-farm conditions and opportunities, different farmers can do it in different ways alongside productive agriculture.

HJefferson: I think the Nature Recovery Network is where we can make a difference, protect land for farming, and work together to be nature friendly.

IAlexander: Some areas now have animals grazing on them which previously didn't, bringing agricultural back into the landscape.

TGelfs: It's whether it's producing enough food.

IAlexander: And rural livelihoods.

TGelfs: We could become short of food as we rely on imports.

## 6. 2025-2030 National Landscape Management Plan

Tom explained how the recent Annual Forums held in Wareham, Dorchester and Bridport had provided useful feedback as an initial consultation for the upcoming Management Plan Review, a summary of which is provided in the meeting papers. Specialist topic groups will be set up in the Springtime, which board members are warmly invited to join and participate in. They will be convened for planning, farming, woodland & forestry, nature, historic environment, physical access, learning and engagement. They'll broadly be asking members what has changed and what should our priorities be. Please let Tom know if you are interested in taking part so you can get involved in the relevant area. In June the draft plan will be produced and come to board for consideration, it'll then go out for public consultation in the summer. We will also invite board members to share this with their organisations and relevant contacts and supply feedback. In November the draft plan will be brought to the board meeting for approval, at that point subject to any further changes and it will be ready for implementation and adoption by organisations. (see papers)

### Comments

CLrCTurner: Against solar panels in preference of wind turbines. Electric buses are also not viable at this stage due to topography.

GDikinson: Better to have solar panels / vegetation on roofs.

TMunro: These are comments from the Annual Forums, more debate to have, no answers as yet.

CDixon: Interested in being part of the groups.

## 7. Proposed budget for 2025/26

TM presented the paper.

**Comments:** None

## RESOLUTION:

**The Board approves the proposed budget and funding priorities for next financial year.**

## 8. Partners updates

IAlexander: Transition happening across the sector from nature conservation to nature recovery, organisations are working together at a larger scale so a much more powerful way of acting. Government set 30/30 target which we currently fall far below, but ambitious work is happening across many organisations to increase it, including with private sector owners. We need to be ambitious to meet the target.

DCharman: DEFRA has announced the Sustainable Farming Incentive is now fully open online. Expecting Higher Tier announcement soon. Capital Grants 2024 closed except Woodland Tree health grants & Protections and Infrastructure, Management Plans.

WBond: Farmers and Land Managers involved in lots of partnership projects such as Wareham Arc, Wild Purbeck etc which open up new opportunities thus positive. Poole Harbour Nitrates - the nitrate leaching tool widely used in the catchment and impact is significant and will see a reduction in algal blooms over time. Confidence in sector low following budget announcement e.g. grants closed / BPS.

JPope: Lucy of JCT is leaving the Trust at the end of the year.

JBurke: Pleased with the impact of the FLAVOURS project and delighted it will continue. Seen an increase in diverse communities in the landscape.

GHarvey: Farmer confidence seriously low following the budget (no increase in budget) and new reforms around inheritance tax, NFU are challenging the figures quoted as changes will adversely affect many farming families. President of NFU has met with PM. Defra have closed capital grant applications which was a key area to raise revenue by undertaking works for the environment.

**CDixon:** The museum can tell the story of the county, next year exhibition 'Jane Austen by the Sea' and a piece on Wild Swimming. Interested to collaborate with more with the team. 'The Proceedings' is our academic review and would welcome submissions on Natural History.

**CllrJSomper:** Impressed by output of the team. Given lots to read, not sure how to disseminate it to communities as difficult to pinpoint key points and language can be quite technical. Is there a way to present it in a less daunting way that won't put people off? Also keen to support farmers with words and actions.

**CllrBWilson:** In July a Nature State of Emergency was passed by the Council, which included a full commitment to Dorset National Landscape and Nature Recovery and it embeds Nature Recovery at heart of all planning decisions. Purbeck Local Plan has been passed and has protections for the National Landscape. Moving forward with Dorset Wide Plan (2027) and communicated to government that land across Dorset is highly designated and protected making it unsuitable for their proposed planning targets. We need to be aware that these mandatory housing targets will come into effect next year.

**CllrCTurner:** In Beaminster reviewing and enhancing the Local Resilience Plan and updated training for flood wardens.

**GDixon:** Worried about cabling for offshore wind turbine proposals. Substation at Chickerell.

**GNicholson:** Council has declared a Nature Emergency. Timeline for Council being carbon neutral now 2035 and whole of Dorset 2040. This is tied to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and linked to Biodiversity net gain, by which planning applications must take account of. Team working on a potential Landbank to trade biodiversity credits to developers, possibly sell credits, generate income and meet targets. ROWIP is expected early next year. Ash die back is having a significant impact on finances and staff resources. Challenging times for DC generally and changes will be made to balance the accounts.

**HJefferson:** Undertaking feasibility study Jurassic Coast Nature Recovery Network gap area identified and looking at DWT landscape recovery bid round 3. Access restoration works undertaken to reinstate steps at Ringstead, but Trust can't afford to keep doing these works. At Langdon Woods works in progress to boost resilience to climate change – track restoration and active woodland management. Starting a guided nature walks which may fit in with Nature Buddies and primary schools. New NT strategy coming in January.

**TGelfs:** State of markets – beef, lamb, eggs and milk all doing well at the moment as they are in short supply at the moment. We need to be wary of our food security. Confidence in agri-marketplace at an all-time low and government not giving enough guidance in particular around the supply chain. Worry for tenant farmers being pushed out by diversification projects which is not good for food production.

**IDavenport:** Continue to emphasise special habitats of Dorset, but at scale e.g. Peat Partnership, 16 sites almost complete and small amount of funding to continue next year but unsure beyond that. Working with partners, including Wessex Water on the Upper Frome Chalk restoration project. The Beaver Management Group with catchment partnership looking in a practical way how to help if there are any issues. So far positive engagement.

## 9. Any other business

None

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of next meetings

	Spring	Winter (tbc)
<b>AONB Steering Group</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2025
<b>AONB Partnership Board</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2025

If you wish to have items added to the agenda for the Board, please ensure suggestions are sent to [Tom Munro](#), [Caroline Richards](#) 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.