



Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan

Farmer and Land Manager version



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Brown hare



1. Introduction

1. Introduction

The Cotswolds is widely recognised as nationally and internationally important for an exceptionally wide range of species and habitats. It is also strategically located to support species in adapting to climate change by moving to a new climate space.

We know what we have to do to allow our wildlife to flourish. We need to create a robust and resilient nature recovery network – a landscape rich in joined up and well managed habitats. The features of such a network were described in the report ‘Making Space for Nature’ in 2010 (appendix 5.1).

This version of the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan is for practical people who want to do the right thing for wildlife in the right place. It focusses on the what, where and how, with recommended practical measures, links to ecological network maps and appendices covering funding and practical guidance. The full version of the plan represents a ‘deep dive’ into the species and habitats of the Cotswolds and contains the evidence base providing the justification for the recommended measures. It can be downloaded from the plan’s [webpage](#).

This version is for practical people who want to do the right thing for wildlife in the right place.

A robust nature recovery network is not only good for wildlife, it provides a range of ‘ecosystem services’ such as clean water, food and a beautiful place to get away from it all and enjoy some peace surrounded by nature. These ecosystem services are critically important to the wellbeing and economy of people living in and around the Cotswolds. Furthermore, a robust nature recovery network can help solve some of the issues faced by wider society, particularly concerning climate change, and health and wellbeing. Sustainable forms of farming and land management are playing an essential role in delivering these ecosystem services and can be supported to do more.

This plan is about nature recovery but it is not about turning back the clock. We do need to look back and learn from traditional land practices but then we need to look forward and apply these lessons in a modern and changing context. Above all we need to create the conditions for wildlife to increase in abundance and spread across the landscape, and we need to do it in ways that are embedded in the economy and support businesses



SOMM

Kites Hill hay making

and livelihoods in a lasting way. This will create new landscapes full of wildlife that reflect the distinctive character of the Cotswolds but are also dynamic and changing.

The current extent of wildlife-rich habitats within the Cotswolds is 48,000 Ha which is 23% of the area of the National Landscape. The extent of these habitats needed to form a robust nature recovery network that will enable wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change, according to the scientific literature, is 82,000 Ha, 40% of the area.

These area targets will only achieve the desired outcomes for nature recovery if they are delivered in the appropriate locations to best increase habitat connectivity. Maps have been produced by local partners to guide this work and a mapping exercise to provide consistency across the Cotswolds has also been undertaken.

Nature recovery in the Cotswolds will only happen if farmers and land managers choose to deliver the measures recommended within this plan over the appropriate land. We need to change the management of over 34,000 Ha of land in order to create a robust nature recovery network. The figure rises to over 103,000 Ha if arable fields containing environmental measures are included. This needs a farmer and land manager led approach to nature recovery to deliver the necessary scale of change and they need to be properly supported. Getting this right over the next few years is the key challenge for delivering nature recovery across the Cotswolds and beyond.



Ian Boyd

Hereford cattle enjoying the benefits of grazing a restored wildflower grassland

This needs a farmer and land manager led approach to nature recovery and they need to be properly supported.

2. An illustrated vision for nature's recovery



Visiting bluebells in the spring sunshine. Photographer: Simon Smith

Generalised view of the Cotswolds scarp and outliers, without and with nature recovery features

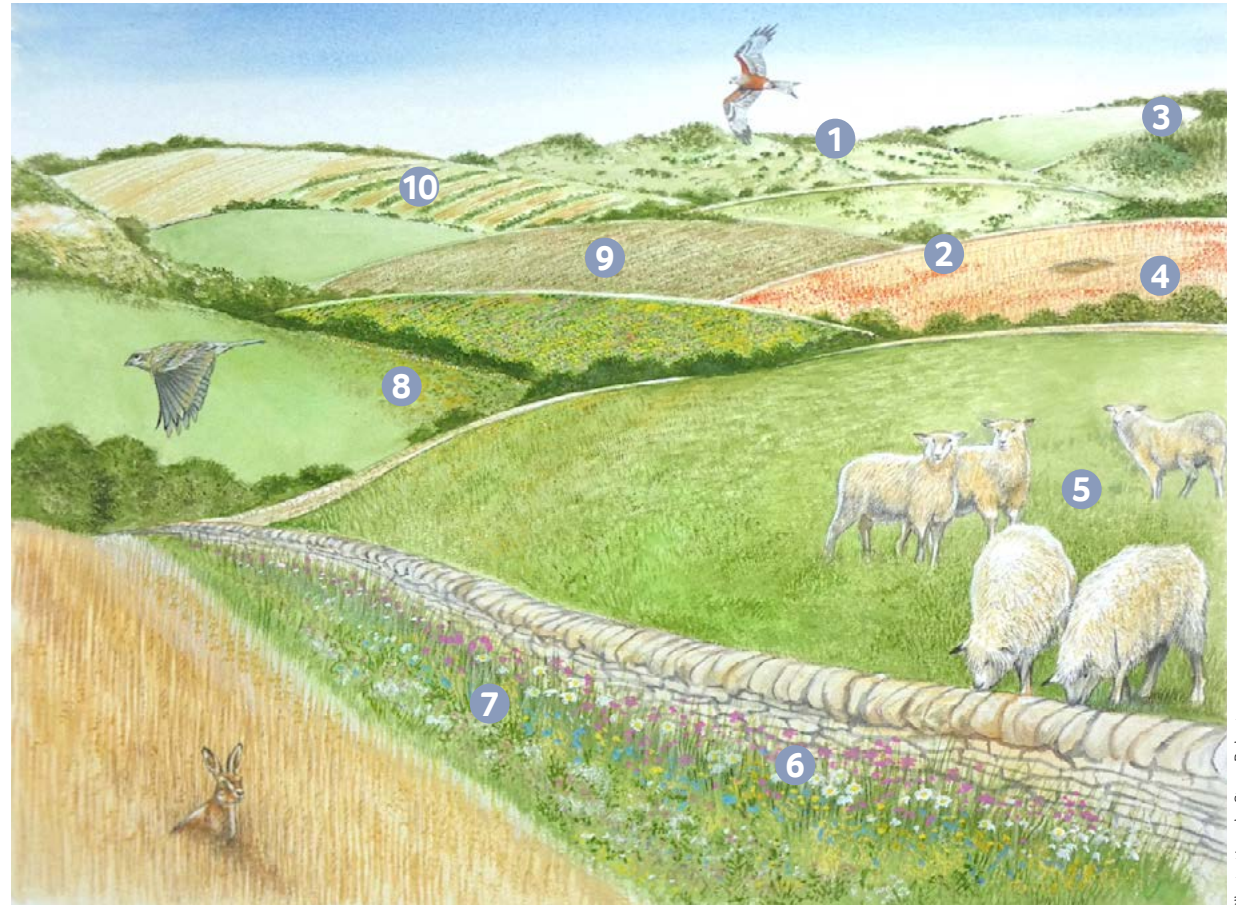


Illustrations by Steve Roberts

Some of the features shown

- 1 Habitat corridor linking the scarp and outlier.
- 2 Continuity of calcareous wildflower grassland along steeper scarp slopes.
- 3 Reduction of scrub where it threatens to overwhelm existing calcareous grassland.
- 4 Access management reducing the lateral spread of rights of way.
- 5 Targeted grazing using local breed and new 'virtual fencing' technology to accommodate species with different sward height requirements.
- 6 Conversion of 'semi-improved' grassland to wildflower grassland on the scarp slopes and at its bottom. Extending and linking the current wildflower grasslands.
- 7 Additional scrub introduced through habitat creation.
- 8 Increase in overall 'scruffiness' and scrub grassland edge area.
- 9 In field trees, orchard and agro-forestry in the vale.
- 10 Tall and thick hedgerows in the vale area.

Generalised view of the high wold without and with nature recovery features



Illustrations by Steve Roberts

Some of the features shown

- ① Creation of a large area of extensively grazed mosaic habitat.
- ② Measures in arable fields for arable flowers such as poppies
- ③ Woodland extent increased through natural regeneration extending an existing wood to link with another.
- ④ Measures in arable fields for farmland birds such as skylark plots.
- ⑤ Local breed – the Cotswold sheep or 'lion'.
- ⑥ Restoration of dry stone walls.
- ⑦ Managed wildflower grassland margins around arable fields.
- ⑧ Hedgerows growing taller and thicker
- ⑨ Overwinter stubble and cover crops providing year round cover and conserving soils.
- ⑩ Agro-forestry.

Generalised view of the river valleys, without and with nature recovery features



Illustrations by Steve Roberts

Some of the features shown

- 1 Conversion of ‘semi-improved’ grassland to wildflower grassland on the slopes of the valley sides. Extending and linking the current wildflower grasslands.
- 2 Arable measures such as contour ploughing to conserve soils.
- 3 Hedgerows managed to become taller and thicker.
- 4 In field trees and agro-forestry.
- 5 Conversion of arable to wildflower pasture and hay meadows on slopes adjacent to river, particularly in areas prone to flooding. Wildflower grassland restoration incorporated into natural flood management measures.
- 6 Marginal growth along the river side.
- 7 River reconnected with its floodplain allowing the development of wetland habitats including wet woodland.

3. Recommended practical measures

Sowing wildflower grassland seed. Photographer: Anna Field

3. Recommended practical measures

This section is a quick guide to the measures that, if applied at scale across the Cotswolds, would allow wildlife to flourish, gain abundance, spread and adapt to climate change. They can be used to prioritise actions detailed in the new Sustainable Farming, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes operating under Environmental Land Management. Sources of more detailed guidance on practical measures, some linked to these schemes and other sources of funding are listed in the appendices. The Cotswolds National Landscape’s landscape strategy and guidelines are also listed. These contain measures which should be followed tailored to particular landscape character types. Guidance on dealing with ash dieback has recently been issued and is also included.

3.1. Overarching

- Consider how your measures contribute to the wider nature recovery network. How does wildlife enter and leave the area and how do your measures support the Lawton principles of; more, bigger, better and joined (see appendix 5.1 for details).
- Irrespective of the habitats being managed or restored, aim to include marginal habitats. Woodland edge, scrub in grasslands and water’s edge can all be particularly valuable.
- Consider combining new wildflower grassland and trees to create new extensively grazed dynamic habitat mosaics where natural processes are allowed to take place. Management can aim to provide a variety of conditions that fit into the landscape. Such areas of mosaic habitat are ideal for locations that can contribute to both woodland and grassland habitat connectivity.



Harvesting wildflower grassland seed

3.2. Woodland and trees including hedgerows

- Periodically thin ‘high forest’ type woodlands (tall trees with little shrub layer) to maintain structural diversity and a varied age structure where appropriate.
- Create and maintain rides and glades within woods, where appropriate. Strategically locate rides and glades to encourage greater continuity and connectivity of grassland and grassland edge habitats.
- Where appropriate use new open woodland areas caused by ash dieback to create new wood pastures or glades.
- Maintain existing coppice rotations and reintroduce coppicing to suitable areas of previous historic coppice. Retain at least one hawthorn in each coppice compartment as a spring nectar source for the adult stages of woodland invertebrates.
- Remove conifers from plantations on ancient woodland sites to restore to ancient woodlands.
- Avoid placing game bird pens in woodland areas with a high botanical value.
- Deadwood, especially standing deadwood should be retained. Where safe to do so, leave dead and dying ash trees in situ. Where ash trees have to be removed, retain standing deadwood stumps. Implement measures to introduce veteran tree characteristics to a range of tree ages and species.
- Maintain hedgerows in a thick and tall condition. Lay or coppice them (with protection from livestock) on a long rotation to regenerate them when they show signs of becoming gappy.
- Avoid trimming hedgerows if possible by allowing them to grow before coppicing or laying on rotation. Trimming can considerably prolong the period between the need to lay or coppice. If necessary trim to a high ‘A’ profile or just trim one side a year. Avoid trimming during the nesting season and before the berries have been eaten.

Maintain existing coppice rotations and reintroduce coppicing to suitable areas of previous historic coppice.



Pearl-bordered fritillary

- Promote and retain hedgerow and field trees. Consider including native fruit species as hedgerow trees to provide nectar for insects in the spring and food for birds in the summer and autumn.
- Allow some hawthorn in hedges and on slopes to grow on, to become trees and flower, providing a spring nectar source.
- Broaden the age diversity of trees inside and outside of woods.
- Consider creating new wood pastures, extensively grazed mosaic habitats which include trees, scrub and small woody areas rich in edge habitats.
- Favour natural regeneration over the planting of trees in the creation of new woodlands, especially near existing ancient woodland. Consider natural regeneration as the preferred method for the creation of new woodland habitats or mosaic habitats that include trees and small woody areas. Direct seeding is an option for sites remote from existing seed sources.
- Design new woodlands to maximise beneficial dense shrubby edge habitats. They should be small (within the context of the landscape), structurally diverse with rides and glades and have shrub species planted around the edges of their perimeters and inner open areas. Use a variety of species to create a diverse habitat. Species planted should be native and of local or a more southerly English provenance. Consider planting new box woodland.
- Collaborate across land ownership boundaries to control deer and squirrels at a scale that will enable natural regrowth, regeneration and woodland management. Ensure natural regeneration and planting are protected during establishment. Avoid plastic tree tubes.

Design new woodlands to maximise beneficial dense shrubby edge habitats.



Sun shining through the smoke from charcoal making

- Locate new woodlands and trees where they extend existing woods and improve ecological connectivity without damaging existing priority habitats or their potential ecological connectivity. Consider their impact on sensitive species such as corn bunting. The nature recovery network mapping undertaken by the Cotswolds National Landscape, local nature partnerships, and/or local authorities can provide detailed guidance (section 4).
- Locate new woodlands where they fit in with the landscape. The Cotswolds Landscape Strategy and Guidelines can help with this (appendix 5.3).
- Implement the northward assisted migration of woodland core species through the translocation of deadwood and flora and the inoculation of sites with woodland soil.

Ensure that grazing and or cutting with the removal of the cuttings prevents nutrient levels from building.

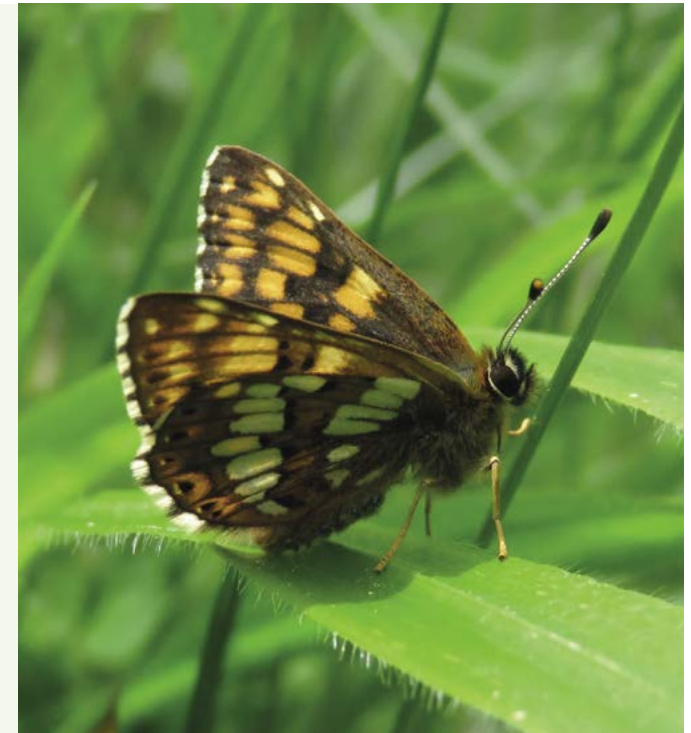
3.3. Grassland and scrub including dry stone walls

- Manage wildflower grasslands according to the broad requirements of the habitat whilst allowing for the specialist needs of any priority species. Ensure that grazing and or cutting with the removal of the cuttings prevents nutrient levels from building. Winter grazing or light grazing all year round will suit many sites.
- Consider utilising traditional and rare breeds, particularly the Cotswolds sheep known locally as the lion which require conservation effort in their own right. Many rare breeds such as Gloucester Cattle are hardy and well suited to conservation grazing. Further guidance can be sourced in appendix 5.3.
- Collar-based virtual fencing is a rapidly developing technology which provides greater control over grazing animals enabling grazing to be focused where and when it is needed to achieve the best conservation outcomes.
- Prevent scrub from overrunning wildflower grasslands.



The Cotswold sheep, frequently referred to as the 'Cotswold Lion'

- Manage scrub to create a varied age and physical structure including glades and scalloped edges. Encourage juniper where it is present and introduced it to new sites where appropriate.
- Create new wildflower grasslands where they best improve ecological connectivity. Arable can be reverted to wildflower grassland through seeding and ‘semi-improved’ permanent pasture can be diversified by harrowing and over seeding. Wildflower limestone grasslands can be restored on the slopes, and high wold and wildflower-rich wet grasslands in the valley bottoms.
- Create new large areas of extensively grazed grassland where natural processes are allowed to create a complex mosaic of habitats.
- Value dynamic scrub and complex grassland/woody mosaic habitats and resist the perception of them as being unmanaged, neglected, messy or overgrown.
- Use seed sources of local provenance for the creation of new wildflower grasslands. Consider growing and planting plugs for species such as devil’s bit scabious that do not respond well to introduction as seed.
- Within the creation of new grassland sites, consider the creation of a more varied physical ground structure similar to the lumps and bumps of historic delves. Seek opportunities to include areas of bare ground and thin skeletal soils along with rocky bare and disturbed ground and a variety of aspects and gradients. The restoration of quarries provides opportunities to do this although it can also be done on any new habitat. Check with your local Historic Environment Record (HER) or Local Authority Archaeology Service before undertaking ground works.
- Maintain and restore dry stone walls.
- Look for opportunities for wildflower grassland and scrub restoration and management on road verges and avoid using topsoil for new verges. Further guidance can be sourced in Appendix 5.3.



Simon Smith

Duke of Burgundy, a species requiring varied conditions and partial shade

Value dynamic scrub and complex grassland/woody mosaic habitats and resist the perception of them as being unmanaged, neglected, messy or overgrown.

- Incorporate the creation and management of wildflower meadows into river restoration and natural flood management projects.
- Consider assisted migration for appropriate species, for example pasqueflower and juniper.

3.4. Rivers and Wetland

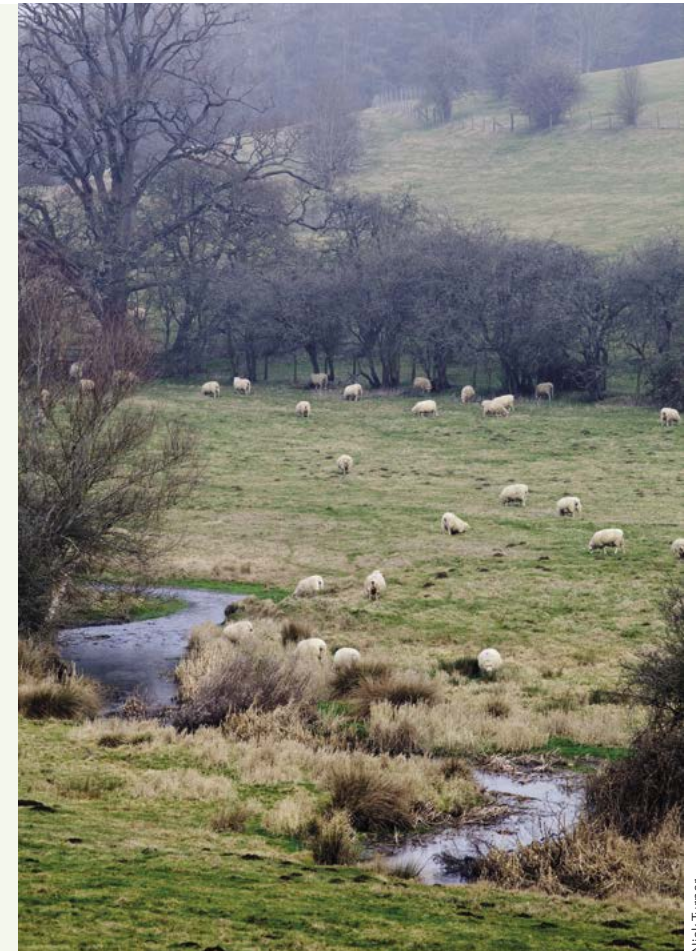
- Restore river and wetland habitats to a structurally diverse condition through:
 - Reintroducing meanders and other physical features such as pools.
 - Narrowing low flow channels to clean silt from the river bed and create marginal habitats.
 - Raising the channel bed and reconnecting the river with the floodplain to form mosaics of wetlands, riparian woodlands and wet meadow wildflower grasslands.
 - Giving the river room to change naturally by allowing it to spread out over its floodplain through many ever changing channels. This approach is sometimes called stage zero.
 - Consider achieving the above through the introduction of beavers where appropriate.
 - Avoid dredging wherever possible.
- Remove in stream barriers to migratory species through weir removal or where flow allows, bypass channels. Modifications such as the introduction of notches in small weirs can have the same result. Where these measures are not appropriate introduce fish passes.
- Minimise soil erosion and run off by implementing soil conservation measures such as cover crops, contour ploughing, margins and buffer strips across slopes. Avoid arable cropping on steep slopes feeding into watercourses and intensive grazing along river banks.
- Identify existing and create new wildflower grasslands and ensure their retention and favourable management particularly on the valley sides and the scarp slope to aid water interception and retention.

Give the river room to change naturally by allowing it to spread out over its floodplain.



Reconnecting a river to its floodplain

- Minimise pesticide and artificial fertiliser use and put in place measures to reduce pollution from agriculture including the relocation of gates and associated gapping up, watercourse fencing, cross drains, sediment ponds and traps, livestock and machinery tracks and associated livestock fencing, pesticide handling and biobed options, roofing of manure, slurry and silage storage, and livestock gathering areas and help reduce runoff from yards, tracks and gateways.
- Site new wetland habitats to intercept runoff from roads.
- Ensure that water leaving wastewater treatment works is low in pollutants and that storm events do not result in the discharge of untreated sewerage.
- Create reedbeds to filter potentially polluted water from settlements before it is discharged to rivers.
- Manage agricultural and domestic water use to minimise low flows in rivers. Ensure that abstraction from the aquifer is capped at a level that has no negative impact on river and wetland habitats through low flows.
- Establish new trees and woodland where it will help ‘slow the flow’ and support water catchment management. Include the promotion of riparian woodland corridors as appropriate.
- Implement and promote individual measures and behaviours in the home and workplace that protect water volume and quality in rivers:
 - Only paper, pee and poo go down the loo.
 - Water saving measures.
 - Only rain down the drain (no paints, waste or oils etc.).



Nick Turner

Minimise pesticide and artificial fertiliser use and put in place measures to reduce pollution from agriculture

3.5. Cropland

- Create and manage arable field margins as wildflower grasslands. Variable mowing regimes can be employed to ensure cover for small mammals and refugia over winter for invertebrates. Arisings will need to be removed after mowing to avoid the build-up of fertility and the loss of wildflowers to vigorous grasses.
- Consider managing strips within field margins differently with annual cutting of the strip nearest the crop, and less frequent cutting nearer the field boundary. Variety could also be introduced by managing blocks of strips or whole margins at different intervals.
- Different strips within a field margin can be sown with different species mixes to reflect their different management.
- Consider incorporating nectar strips and or herb-rich arable leys into arable rotations.
- Leave areas unsprayed to support arable wildflowers, particularly in areas where important species are present. Manage arable fields with important populations of arable flowers present for those species.
- Implement measures to help farmland birds to survive across the hungry gap (mid-February to mid-April): overwinter stubble, seed-rich winter cover crops using wild bird seed mixtures, unsprayed and unharvested arable headlands, and supplementary feeding (as a measure until sufficient habitat has been provided).



Wildflower field margin

Create and manage arable field margins as wildflower grasslands.

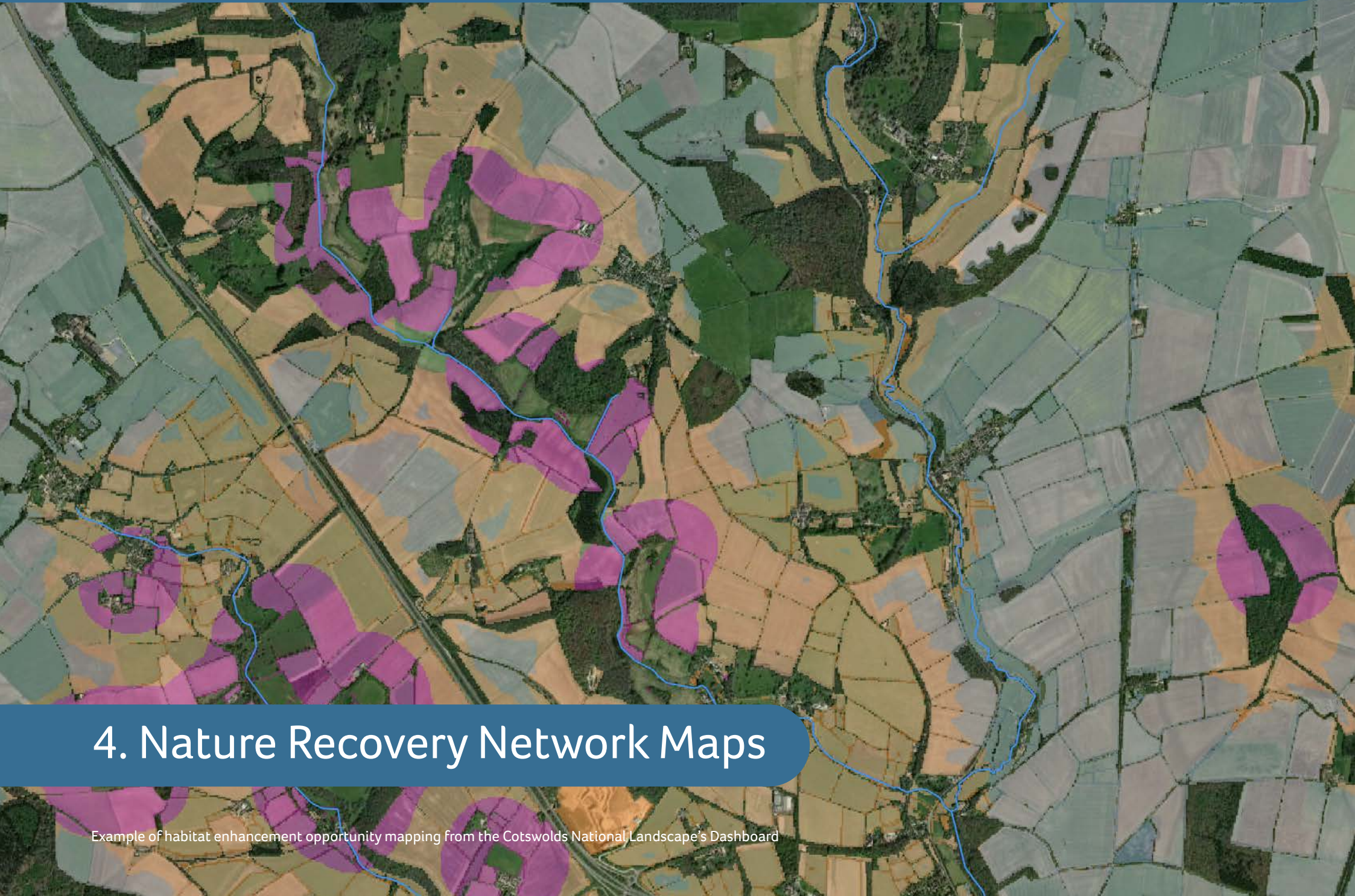
- Implement measures to improve farmland bird nesting success.
 - Provide graded margins up to a thick hedgerow to create nesting sites for linnets and yellowhammers who seek long grass at hedgerow bases.
 - Provide wide margins to draw corn buntings and yellow wagtails to nest in them avoiding incidents of nest damaging that can occur within the crop.
 - Double drill a patch of the crop and avoid harvesting it to draw corn buntings into it to nest safely.
 - Create skylark plots, unsown squares in the field. Skylarks land on bare earth and walk to the nest. This avoids siting nests near tramlines which are used by mammalian predators – e.g. foxes.
 - Create lapwing plots, they need large stony areas to nest in. These must be sited near to pasture which lapwings use for foraging and ideally on or near to traditional lapwing nesting areas.
- Implement measures such as integrated pest management and minimise the use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides.
- Adopt techniques that align with the five principles of regenerative agriculture: keep the soil covered, minimize soil disturbance, maximize crop diversity, maintain living root in the ground year-round, and integrate livestock.
- Consider converting arable land on steep scarp or valley slopes and the high wold to extensively grazed wildflower grassland or mosaic habitats. Select locations that optimise strengthening the nature recovery network, improvements in groundwater quality, and that address nitrate and phosphate issues and aquifer recharge.



Grey partridge

Rich Tyler

Implement measures to improve farmland bird nesting success.



4. Nature Recovery Network Maps

Example of habitat enhancement opportunity mapping from the Cotswolds National Landscape's Dashboard

4. Nature Recovery Network Maps

The practical measures within this plan provide guidance on the best things to do to aid nature recovery in different locations, largely according to local conditions, what is already there, and the habitats nearby. Maps can help further, and nature recovery network maps are being produced to encourage the adoption of measures where they will do the most good. This work is closely linked to the coming Local Nature Recovery Strategies and is being undertaken by a combination of Local Nature Partnerships and county or unitary local authorities. There are six areas undertaking this mapping that coincide with the Cotswolds National Landscape. These areas are at different stages of production and their maps are presented differently. To provide a consistent picture, habitats across the whole of the Cotswolds have been mapped and analysed using a consistent methodology to create a nature recovery map for the Cotswolds.

Cotswolds

Habitats have been remapped using satellite imagery analysis aligned with existing national habitat data and a nature recovery map has been produced based on habitat connectivity. The nature recovery map has been produced using the priorities within this plan. For example where a location is of high importance for grassland habitat connectivity it has been prioritised over woodland connectivity; and where a location is of medium importance for both the creation of mosaic habitat is recommended. Opportunity maps for grassland, wetland, woodland and mosaic habitats have been produced and can be viewed via the Cotswolds natural capital [dashboard](#).

The methodology and priorities used for the Cotswolds map are similar to the local maps below but there may still be differences at the field level. In time, the mapping of the coming Local Nature Recovery Strategies will provide greater consistency.

Gloucestershire

The Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership natural capital mapping page which shows the nature recovery network opportunity areas, habitat connectivity and resilience and a series of Ecosystem Service maps <https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/>

Oxfordshire

A draft nature recovery network map has been published on the [Wild Oxfordshire website](#).

West of England – includes Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

The West of England Nature Partnership has published a [nature recovery map](#) on their website. Additionally the Forest of Avon Trust has produced [The Forest of Avon Plan: A Tree and Woodland Strategy for the West of England](#) which is endorsed by the West of England Nature Partnership.

Warwickshire

The [Warwickshire Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership](#) will be developing a nature recovery map for the coming Local Nature recovery Strategy.

Wiltshire

The [Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre](#) has started working on a map for the coming Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Worcestershire

A [habitat inventory mapping tool](#) which includes habitat network expansion zones has been published on the Worcestershire County Council website. Members of the [Worcestershire Local Nature Partnership](#) are in the early stages of preparing further mapping for the coming Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Much of this work is draft until more nationally consistent mapping is agreed for the coming Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Historical data can help point towards land which may be particularly well suited to the restoration of habitats.

Historical data can help point towards land which may be particularly well suited to the restoration of habitats. Old commons or historic ‘waste’ were frequently used for rough grazing and or woodland as they were unsuitable for more intensive

management due to low fertility or difficult conditions. Modern natural capital and habitat mapping combined with historical maps can indicate areas that would respond particularly well to habitat restoration.



Restored wildflower grassland

5. Appendices

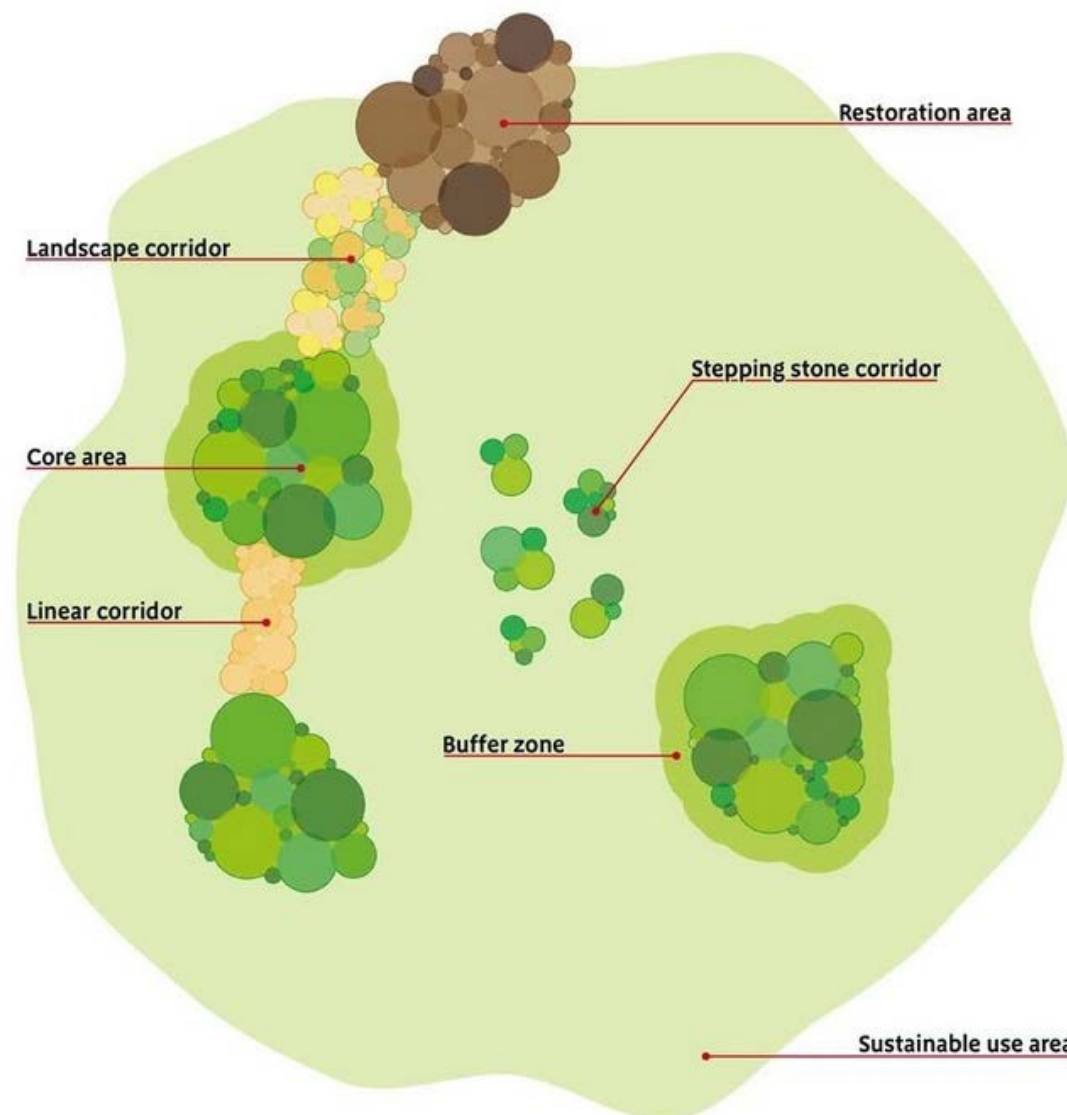
5. Appendices

5.1. Features of a Nature Recovery Network

In order to adapt to climate change wildlife needs to be able to move to a new niche (ecological home) and/or to move, usually northwards to a new climate space. Two things are required for this to happen, large 'core' areas of varied habitat-rich in different gradients and aspects offering new niches and a robust nature recovery network that allows wildlife to move across the landscape. Such a network was described by Sir John Lawton in the report Making Space for Nature¹.

The 'Lawton Report' goes on to describe what we need to do to create a network that will allow wildlife to recover and adapt to climate change.

*What needs to be done... can be summarised in four words: **more, bigger, better and joined**. There are five key approaches which encompass these, and also take account of the land around the ecological network. We need to:*



¹. *Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network*. Lawton, 2010.

The components of an ecological network as described in Making Space for Nature

- I. *Improve the quality of current wildlife sites by better habitat management.*
- II. *Increase the size of current sites.*
- III. *Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’.*
- IV. *Create new sites.*
- V. *Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.*

5.2. Funding schemes

Agri-environment schemes

Countryside Stewardship

Countryside Stewardship (CS) is the current scheme that provides financial incentives for farmers, woodland owners, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment. More information can be found [here](#).

Environmental Stewardship

This is the previous agri-environment scheme which has been encouraging and supporting environmental measures since 2005. It still has some live schemes.

Environmental Land Management

This is made up of three schemes that are intended to support the rural economy whilst delivering environmental outcomes.

- Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI).
- Local Nature recovery (LNR).
- Landscape Recovery.

They are based on the premises of public payments for public goods that contribute to:

- Clean and plentiful water.
- Clean air.
- Thriving plants and wildlife.
- Protection from environmental hazards.
- Reduction of and adaptation to climate change.
- Beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment.

The **Sustainable Farming Incentive** will reward farmers for managing their land in an environmentally sustainable way and help them create greener landscapes and improve biodiversity. The full scheme will launch in 2022, initially for farmers in England who currently receive payments under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). SFI will support directly and indirectly and number of measures in this plan.

Local Nature Recovery is the scheme that will encompass most of the practical measures in this plan. LNR will pay for actions that support local nature recovery and deliver local environmental priorities. The scheme will also encourage collaboration between farmers and land managers.

The **Landscape Recovery Scheme** will support the delivery of landscape and ecosystem recovery through long-term land use change projects, including projects to restore wilder landscapes where that is appropriate. The measures in this plan which it is most likely to support are large areas of dynamic habitat mosaic managed through extensive grazing.

The three schemes are currently under development through a programme of tests, trials and pilots. They will all be in place to start in 2024. Further details are available [here](#).

Forestry Commission Grant Schemes

There are a variety of government funding schemes for woodland creation and management managed by the Forestry Commission, some are part of the Countryside Stewardship programme. The primary scheme for new woodland planting is the England Woodland Creation Offer. Details of all the national schemes are summarised [here](#) and an overview of tree planting and woodland creation schemes can be found [here](#).

There are also regional Forestry Commission schemes such as the [regional woodland restoration innovation fund](#). These tend to open and close on an annual basis. An ever changing plethora of local authorities and charities are also seeking to support tree planting locally.

Farming in Protected Landscapes

This is a grant funding programme restricted to protected landscapes and being delivered locally by the Cotswolds National Landscape until 2024. Eligible projects must aim to achieve something that fits into at least one of the following themes: nature, climate, people, and place.

This may include projects that:

- Support nature recovery – e.g. habitat restoration and conservation skills training.
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change - e.g. natural flood management and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage – e.g. replacing stiles with gates and hosting community events.
- Support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses – e.g. land management planning and local food supply.

Further details are on the Cotswolds National Landscape website [here](#).

Biodiversity Net Gain

Mechanisms are starting to emerge where landowners can put forward land for the delivery of off-site wildlife benefits as part of planning agreements resulting from development.

[National metrics](#) for calculating payments have been developed by Natural England. The best places to start to find out about local mechanisms are your local Planning Authority or Local Nature Partnership.

5.3. Practical guidance

The Landscape Strategies and Guidelines

Detailed strategies and guidelines for each of the 19 landscape character types found in the Cotswolds. Published by the Cotswolds National Landscape [here](#) to guide any proposals that may affect the landscape. They should be followed to maintain landscape character.

The United Kingdom Forestry Standard

The UK Forestry Standard is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. It outlines the context for forestry, sets out the approach of the UK governments to sustainable forest management, defines standards and requirements, and provides a basis for regulation and monitoring. It covers woodlands as well as large forests and includes guidelines for biodiversity. It can be downloaded [here](#).

Design techniques for forest management planning: practice guide

Guidance for the creation of new forests and woodlands – by planting or encouraging natural regeneration – and the management of existing forests and woodlands. Although it is mainly focused on larger forest areas, you'll also find information on how to follow aspects of forest planning for small woods. It can be downloaded [here](#).

Ash Dieback

The Cotswolds and Vale Ash Dieback Forum has issued two helpful leaflets 'Ash Dieback information for farmers and land managers' and 'Replacing ash trees, principles and practice'. Both can be downloaded [here](#).

Rare breeds for conservation grazing

The Grazing Animals Project hosted by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust provides a lot of resources [here](#) to help with the selection and management of rare breeds for conservation grazing.

Species and habitat action plans

Detailed action plans were published for priority species and habitats between 1995 and 1999. They can all be downloaded from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website [here](#).

Species summary sheets from the Back from the Brink Project

Completing in 2021 – [Back from the Brink](#) was a national programme with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It aimed to save 20 species from extinction and ensure the recovery of a further 92. The Cotswolds element, led by Butterfly Conservation, was called Limestone’s Living Legacies and it focused on these key species for the Cotswolds.

- Basil thyme
- Cotswold pennycress
- Duke of Burgundy
- Fly orchid
- Greater horseshoe bat
- Grey long-eared bat
- Juniper
- Large blue
- Marsh fritillary
- Pasqueflower
- Purple milk vetch
- Red-shanked carder bee
- Rockrose pot-beetle
- Ruderal bumblebee
- Rugged oil beetle

Summary sheets for these species can be downloaded from the [Back from the Brink species summaries webpage](#). Alternatively they can all be downloaded as one document [here](#). This document also contains a compilation of recommendations for future work.

Wildflower grassland management, creation and restoration

The Save Our Magnificent Meadows web page has brought together lots of information in one place [here](#).

Glorious Cotswold Grasslands is a local project with the aim of creating the largest network of wildflower-rich Jurassic limestone grassland in the country. Details including a downloadable advice pack can be found [here](#).

The project can be contacted through an enquiry form [here](#).

River, wetland and water management

[Catchment Partnerships](#) can help address water quality and habitat issues and also allow landowners to access funds like the Water Environment Investment Fund (WEIF). They also provide opportunities for landowners together to work on a larger, catchment scale.

Road verges

The Cotswolds National Landscape has published a position statement on the management of roadside verges, it can be downloaded [here](#).

Plantlife have produced a set of resources to encourage and support the management of road verges for wildlife including management guidelines and the Good Verge Guide. These and more can be downloaded [here](#).

Community action for wildlife

Many guides to community action for wildlife have been published. One of the best is also a local one. The ‘Community and Parish Guide to Biodiversity’ published by BBOWT (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust), Oxfordshire County Council and TVERC (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) can be downloaded [here](#).

South Gloucestershire Council have written a guide for town and parish councils on developing a local nature action plan. It can be downloaded [here](#).



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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

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The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan was adopted as guidance by the Cotswolds National Landscape in October 2021.

It was produced by a Working Group of the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Forum and the Cotswolds National Landscape.