

Land Management/Advisory Projects Update

Wetland restoration: Research into the colonisation of the new saline lagoon by aquatic fauna has been carried out. Works on the ground include restoration of five existing ponds with four further new wetland woodland schemes being developed. A Ditch Management Plan has been written and monthly winter Wetland Bird Surveys are being carried out by volunteers after a training event.

Heathland restoration: Conifer stands have been felled in Wareham and Affuddle Forests with further felling planned. A strategic operational plan identifying work on individual clearfell coupes is being worked up together with the Environmental Statement.

Plans to establish heathland grazing has progressed well with land agents initially meeting to discuss land agency issues. Cattle grid and by-pass designs, appropriate road safety assessments, services investigations, speed surveys and costs for the s83 and 278 agreements, along with consultation material and information to be used in the public consultation are all underway.

Land Mangers Advisory Forum: The Forum has been established and advisers have worked with a number of land managers to review existing HLS agreements and work up new ones. Information has been sent out to landowners highlighting the additional grant available for woodland planting in the NIA with around 12ha of woodland creation applied for. A further 60ha woodland on the boundary of the NIA has been submitted for grant, with agents happy to work with the Wild Purbeck NIA.

Lapwing sanctuary - nesting lapwings will be safer this spring with the installation of 2,000m predator exclusion fencing around a 200ha SSSI by the RSPB. The fence will create a sanctuary for nesting lapwings to protect their eggs and chicks from ground foxes and other predators, with the hope that 15 pairs of breeding lapwings will be established on the site within 5 years. Redshank will also benefit from this work.

Community at the Centre

Wild Purbeck Community Gateway: After assessing existing parish interest an action plan has been developed to deliver Community Gateway objectives. Events over the first year have included wildlife gardening days; drop in sessions for local communities and a "Bioblitz" wildlife recording day. A number of talks have also been held and new volunteer groups established in readiness for upcoming work and the "Wild About Wareham" event planned for June. Match funding has been secured for three years through the Heritage Lottery Fund to train "Wildlife Champions" through AQA.

Past Arts: This project builds on Purbeck's artistic heritage, using past artworks in a touring exhibition to engage audiences in a dialogue about how landscapes change, and how they may change in the future. Additional funding from Heritage Lottery Fund has

been secured and a Project Co-ordinator has been appointed to research and plan the wide-ranging exhibitions, events and self guided walks.

Schools programme: Work with schools includes the development of teacher training days focusing on the new earth sciences area of the curriculum, geology, wildlife, Jurassic coast and a site visit. Partners are also helping with the enhancement of the natural environment at Wareham Children's Centre.

Building resilience through strategic planning & research

Climate Change adaptation: The "National biodiversity climate change vulnerability model" workshop held in December was well attended by the Wild Purbeck partners. The RSPB have also produced a report to help encompass the impact of climate change across the NIA work objectives and disseminating it to other organisations and the public. The "Mapping landscape permeability within the Dorset AONB to prioritise areas for targeted habitat creation and protection" Report has been produced and a presentation on this work was given to the Wild Purbeck NIA Partnership members. This identifies potential places where habitat creation or restoration could connect existing sites of high conservation value.

Cyril Diver Archive: Cyril Diver (Director General of The Nature Conservancy in the early 1950s) made a groundbreaking systematic survey of Studland Dunes in the 1930s, creating a huge archive of ecological records of Studland. Great progress has been made to preserve his records and make them available for use today by attracting additional support from National Trust Neptune funds and appointing a co-ordinator to safeguard the collection and galvanise a team of volunteers to resurvey the area as it is now.

Working groups are in the process of being set up for the four main taxonomic groups that will be resurveyed (vertebrates, invertebrates, higher plants and lower plants). Cyril Diver will be a focal point for the National Federation of Biological Recording Conference taking place next year in Poole.

Visitor surveys: to inform the Visitor Management Strategy, surveys are planned for the spring / summer, to be undertaken by volunteers trained to ensure consistency of data collection. Surveys will use GPS equipment to provide information on where visitors are going, and this will be backed up by questions on how visitors currently enjoy sites and what other features they would like to see.

Wildfire Working Group: has been set up with Dorset Fire Service, land managers and the Forestry Commission, with input and development from other partners including the Fire & Rescue Service. The first activity of Fire Mapping has been completed.

Developing a Green Economy, income streams & skills

Assessments are currently underway to establish the quantity and usability of scrub produced as a product of heathland management. This information will clarify the next step in this element of the project.

A Community Supported Woodland has now been identified at Langton Westwood and has received much support from the local community. A meeting in November was well attended with over 40 local people turning out. This will be followed up with a spring talk by the Forestry Commission.

Negotiations continue for a significant wider environmental enhancement scheme as landscape mitigation for prolonged oilfield activity within the NIA.

A training needs analysis is being undertaken by Kingston Maurward College and FWAG SW. This will inform the training programme that is to be developed during the second year of the NIA.

Harnessing synergies – efficiency through the partnership approach

Partners have been working together with regular steering group meetings and working groups for each element. During the year, the addition of the Country Land and Business Association and National Farmers Union to the Partnership has been welcomed. Joint working on projects such as Wareham Children's Centre and Purbeck School has increased value for money with work being carried out in kind and delivery of "conservation experience" days.