

**Environment Report  
National Landscapes (AONB)  
July 2025  
Cllr Roger Dollins  
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We're one of just 6 hubs across the country leading on a national season of art in National Landscapes. Locally, our piece is called 'VIVO' produced by Super Culture and Sound UK - a unique sonic installation transporting the Mendip Hills right into the town centre of Weston-super-Mare.

The installation will run between Monday 14th - Sunday 20th July and we'd love to invite you to the VIP and press launch at 10am on Monday 14th July. This will take place at the installation location, which is a disused shop (Unit 31 opposite Citizens Advice) in The Sovereign Centre, Weston (postcode for shopping centre car park is BS23 1AH).

There will be a short set of speeches and a chance to be the first to listen to the installation, meet the artists and sample food and drink made with local Mendip produce.

The installation uses an incredible 360 sound system made up of 48 speakers, meaning people can experience the sounds, stories, culture and nature of Mendip in a completely new way. The aim is to raise awareness of how near the National Landscape and Mendip NNR is to the town and make it feel more accessible to new audiences.

There are also three accompanying sound trails enhanced with augmented reality to promote our champion species, which will be located in the town, Uphill and King's Wood from mid July until October  
(Thanks to North Somerset Council, Avon Wildlife Trust and National Trust for hosting these).

We currently have a vacancy for a Farm Engagement Officer following Lucy's departure.

Here's a link to the ad [Job](#)

Please could you share amongst any contacts you think would be appropriate?

In anticipation of your help, many thanks

## **6 things you didn't know about the Mendip National Nature Reserve (Mendip NNR)**

It's actually 31 different sites from Brean Down to Wells with gaps in-between, covering 1431 hectares, that's around 2000 football pitches.

400 hectares (560 football pitches) of the land in the NNR has not been previously managed primarily for nature conservation.

The 28 mile western section of the west [Mendip Way](#) coincidentally links most of the NNR sites so you can walk through some of the best wildlife areas on Mendip.

The visitor counter on the Mendip Way in Ebbor Gorge reserve, part of the Mendip NNR, shows that August is the busiest month with 2100 recordings and November the quietest with around 900.

There is only one of the Mendip Hills '[Champion Species](#)' NOT found in the NNR. You can find the adder, dormouse, small pearl bordered fritillary, Cheddar pink, skylark, greater horseshoe bat, black oil beetle in the NNR but not the water vole.

It's important for wildlife because of the mix of great habitats, ancient woodlands, next to flower-rich limestone grasslands, connected by big hedges and drystone walls.

The [Mendip NNR](#) was declared in 2023, its partners have a plan for nature recovery, community engagement, and sustainable management. By fostering partnerships and innovative practices, the NNR aims to create a resilient, biodiverse landscape that benefits both nature and people. The partners are; Natural England, Avon Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation Trust, Longleat Estate, Mendip Hills National Landscape Team, National Trust, South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust.

## Share your thoughts?

Have your say on the draft Mendip Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030.

Have we captured what's important to you? The Plan is an important document because it describes the special qualities of the National Landscape and provides a framework for working across organisations to support its protection, enhancement and enjoyment in line with an agreed vision.

The consultation runs from Tuesday 10th June until Tuesday 22nd July. To see the draft plan please visit [www.mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/](http://www.mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/) or to request a paper copy please email [feedback@mendiphills-nl.org.uk](mailto:feedback@mendiphills-nl.org.uk) or call

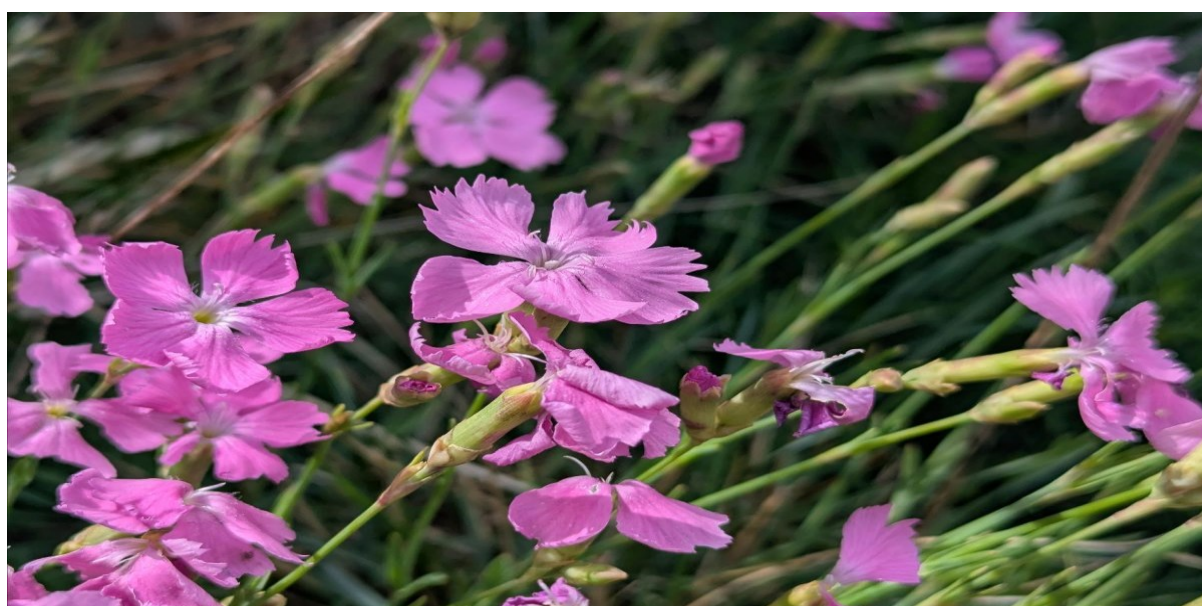
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## Can you find the tiny Cheddar Pink?

June is the month when our Champion Species, the Cheddar pink, is in bloom. This charming little flower is a member of the carnation family and is endemic to, which means 'only found on', the limestone outcrops of the south facing slopes of the Mendip Hills. Even there it is restricted to a very few spots, Cheddar Gorge, above Axbridge and on Brean Down. This species is a real specialist, needing very little in the way of soil or water, it forms a 'cushion' of growth which burst into colour in early

June. It smells slightly of cloves and is the flower of Somerset.

Although this flower has only ever been found in the above-mentioned areas here in the UK, it has still seen a decline and is further threatened by a number of factors. Over collection in the past has meant that the flowers ability to colonise or continue has been reduced, both under and over grazing of areas also impacts this species but perhaps the greatest threat is competition from introduced and invasive species such as cotoneaster, Mexican fleabane and valerian, all of which also love the limestone outcrops that are the Cheddar pinks bastion.



## **Farming in Protected Landscapes Update**

The FiPL team has had a busy few weeks advising on new applications and writing up contracts for successful grant applicants following our latest Local Assessment Panel meeting. Impressively, one of those projects has already managed to complete their work, having made the most of the recent dry weather. Yeo Valley Farms has resurfaced 2km of the Hazel Manor path along the northern escarpment that links Compton Combe and Green Lane, making it multi-user accessible. The path is part of the new 'Yeo Valley Way', an 8km circular route above Compton Martin with gorgeous views of Chew Valley Lake that connects to other paths that have been part funded by FiPL.

With less enthusiasm we share the news that Lucy Stockton, one of our excellent Farming Engagement Officers, is moving on to a new job in the Quantock Hills

National Landscape to lead rural skills sessions for young people and people not in employment or education. We will miss her knowledge and enthusiasm for nature restoration, but we look forward to welcoming a new person to our team. Here's the [job link](#) if you would like to apply.

We have now allocated over £100,000 of our grant for the year. The deadline for the next round of applications is 2nd July. Contact us on [FiPL@mendiphills-nl.org.uk](mailto:FiPL@mendiphills-nl.org.uk) to talk through a potential application.

## Variety for Volunteers

Here's a snapshot of how our volunteers help the Mendip Hills;

Some of our Volunteer Rangers helped with our information stand at the Royal Bath and West Show, telling as many people as they could, both local and from further afield, about the Mendip Hills and our work to look after the area.

The Nature Recovery Volunteers are still busy, transitioning into summer means reducing the habitat management work and increasing work on access. But they do love a bit of bracken crushing that can only happen in early summer.

The Young Rangers had a great day in the sun on Crook Peak and Wavering Down, exploring the diverse habitats and species that can be found there. They built a new adder hibernaculum to add to our network and finished off by writing some great poems about what they'd seen, heard, and smelled on the hill.

All in all, a busy month, with no slowdown in sight for now.

If this sounds like something you are interested in please contact [mendip@mendiphills-nl.org.uk](mailto:mendip@mendiphills-nl.org.uk) for more information about volunteering with us.