

**National Landscapes Report (AONB)**  
**March 20<sup>th</sup> 2025**  
**Cllr Roger Dollins**  
**Page 1 of 2**

## Mendip Hills Fund Awards £9,000 to Local Projects

The Mendip Hills Fund was able to make grants to nine projects this year, with a total of £9,125 awarded to projects that help the environment and community across the Mendip Hills.

Grants were awarded for restoring heritage fingerposts in Butcombe, helping vulnerable people volunteer and create new areas for wildlife, protecting a heritage trail exhibit in Axbridge, assisting people from diverse backgrounds enjoy the Mendip Hills, improving school grounds for wildlife and a contribution to energy efficient heating in the Cheddar Visitor Information Centre.

Jim Hardcastle, Manager of the Mendip Hills National Landscape, said: 'The panel of local people who make the decisions are thrilled to see the number of children and local people who will benefit from the grants. Visitors and local businesses are delighted to contribute to the Fund when they see how helpful a local grant scheme like this can be. It's been a difficult year raising money for the Mendip Hills Fund which is why we've only been able to distribute £9,125 this year despite having applications worth over £25,000. '

Kirsty Campbell, Programmes Manager at Somerset Community Foundation, said: "It's fantastic that the Mendip Hills Fund is able to support such great projects and organisations, helping both communities and the environment - which so often benefit each other."

Funds are raised thanks to gifts from businesses, events and visitors who wish to give something back to this very special area, helping to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Mendip Hills, and benefit local communities.

### **1) Joint report with National Parks England highlights multiple benefits of Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme**

*\*note the case study from the Mendip Hills in the report!*

A new report jointly published today by the National Landscapes Association and National Parks England highlights some of the achievements since FiPL was introduced in 2022:

- 840 projects delivered to reduce flood risk

- 204,000 trees planted
- 3400+ educational visits funded
- Over 7000 farmers and land managers engaged
- Almost 200 farm clusters, supporting farmers to work together supported
- 422 ponds created or restored
- 150 monuments at risk supported

The programme, worth £40M annually, directs funds to farmers and landowners within National Landscapes and National Parks. The innovative model is unique in blending national, regional and local priorities and devolving decision making to local experts, while funding farmers to deliver against national targets. It fills gaps not met by other farming funding programmes, especially for smaller landholders.

Contributions to nature recovery and climate resilience, sustainable businesses, social wellbeing and community building, heritage conservation and better access for people to enjoy our nation's landscapes feature in programme delivery, all coming together to make much more resilient rural places.

Farmers are instrumental in the UK's efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, restore nature, clean up our waters and feed the nation. The FiPL programme has been lauded by the farming and land management community with 85% of surveyed FiPL participants saying they would recommend the programme to others.

## **2) Current example of 'seek to further' the purposes legislation in action**

[Campaigners hail 'important victory' in protection of England's national parks | Conservation | The Guardian](#)

[Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes - GOV.UK](#)

I will be attending a meeting on Thursday Morning which will vote in new Chairman etc for the partnership group.