

Environmental Report May 2025
Cllr Roger Dollins

‘5 years to go - How can Somerset deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in the journey to 30% of land and sea actively managed for nature by 2030’

We are very excited to announce that we have **two of our local MP's** attending and speaking;

'Nature is critical infrastructure for the economy and the population' – Sarah Dyke MP

'How we can use the new planning environment for nature restoration' – Gideon Amos MP
Gideon's position on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill Committee and Sarah's role on the EFRA Select Committee make them both so vital for nature's recovery and what they have to say on the 30th will be very relevant.
You can book your free place here;

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/somerset-local-nature-partnership-annual-forum-tickets-1291160448659?aff=oddtcreator>

Grants for farmers in the Mendip Hills renewed for another year

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) is a flexible grants programme that supports farmers and land managers to develop projects that enhance the Mendip Hills National Landscape and leave a positive legacy for the future. For the last four years FiPL programmes across the UK have been delivering impressive outcomes under our main themes – nature, climate, people and place, and we're delighted to announce that Defra has renewed our funding for the fifth year, giving us a total allocation of £358,300 to spend on nature-friendly farming.

The FiPL team provides tailored advice and support to applicants applying for a grant. Previous applicants have carried out hedge laying, tree planting, pond creation or meadow restoration, all of which are great for biodiversity and make a positive impact on climate change. FiPL has also funded educational events, improved access to the countryside and supported Land Alive, the first food and farming conference in the South West.

Since 2021 over £1,000,000 has been spent on projects, resulting in tangible benefits for nature on the ground such as 11.5 km of new or restored hedgerows, 37 new or restored ponds and 6,475 trees planted. A decision panel made up of local farming, wildlife and access specialists meet regularly to ensure that projects produce the right outcomes and provide value for money.

Lucy Stockton, Farming Engagement Officer says; ‘We know that wildlife habitats need to be connected to each other in order for biodiversity to thrive, and we can already see some amazing connections happening across the Mendip Hills. This year we are keen to join up the gaps, especially on the grasslands of the southern slopes and along the new National Nature Reserve’.

We can help develop ideas for your land and welcome enquiries from anyone interested in the programme. Contact lucy@mendiphillsaonb.org.uk or jemima@mendiphillsaonb.org.uk to discuss your project and apply.

Link below for the planned development of Burrington Combe.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zrxWUIdfSuVmtjbE1qDLxhaRP7St0LZN/view?usp=drive_web