BCP Council

Biodiversity report 2022-2025

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Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole: Nature Towns

BCP Biodiversity report

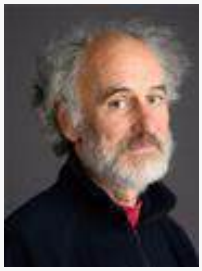
Foreword

This report is BCP Council's first summary of action for biodiversity. The BCP Corporate Strategy promotes the importance of connecting people and nature and across our area we have access to diverse green spaces and abundant wildlife. The Climate and Ecological Emergency declared by BCP in 2019 demands action to protect our natural environment.

This report highlights how much nature we have on our doorsteps, in our green spaces and around us in the harbours, heaths, woods and fields.

It provides a baseline as we seek to capitalise on our accreditation as Nature Towns, build on the Dorset Nature Recovery Strategy with delivery, action and new ways for our communities and individuals to help make a difference for nature.

We all need to champion the importance of nature and take every opportunity to support nature recovery.



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Contents






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1. Introduction

The Environment Act 2021 strengthens the biodiversity duty originally set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requiring public authorities to:

- Consider what actions they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on that consideration.
- Act to deliver those policies and achieve the objectives.

This report is the first to document actions, future plans and strategic platforms that are in place.

It provides a summary of delivery for nature recovery, key species to monitor to understand the health of biodiversity in BCP, new means of engagement with residents and action and plan.

Key elements to satisfy in the report for the Statutory Duty to Biodiversity are:

- a summary of actions taken to comply with the biodiversity duty,
- how the Council intends to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period

A separate BNG report provides:

- actions carried out to meet biodiversity net gain obligations
- and how the biodiversity net gain obligations will be met in the next reporting period

Scope

As a first report, the scope is primarily on the delivery and monitoring of wildlife undertaken by BCP Council teams, and in partnership with stakeholders and partner organisations.

Future reports ambition to be bigger/wider from more sources with new ways for residents, organisations and partners to come together to work to deliver wildlife monitoring and nature recovery.

The reporting period covers the last 3 years 2022 to November 2025. The next report is required within 5 years of the date of issue.

2. BCP a nature rich area

Whilst being a dense urban conurbation home to over 400,000 people, the BCP area is an incredibly rich and diverse place for nature.

The amount of nature and some of the species and habitats present are nationally and internationally significant.

The largest harbour in the world, Sydney, is almost entirely surrounded by the city; Poole Harbour – Europe's largest natural harbour – is extensively natural with exceptional habitat for over-wintering birds and providing opportunities for people to engage with nature on their doorsteps, such as the eye-catching White-tailed Eagle and Osprey.

The area's only Country Park at Upton, wraps around the Holes Bay linking people with nature through active travel routes through woodlands, wetland and meadow.

Bookended to the East with Christchurch harbour and adjacent cliffs and green space, BCP has a unique Coastal Nature Park offering. The cliffs and chines in between the two harbours providing spaces to connect with nature, with lizards on the walls, dune habitats and goats managing the steep cliff faces.

There is a purple wash across BCP that comes from the remaining areas of lowland Heath. Our heathlands are now heavily protected and need careful management to protect them from disturbance and the threat of wildfire.

Along the northern boundary, the Stour valley is an important corridor for people and wildlife. Otter, beavers and kingfishers can be the high-profile wildlife spotting opportunities, alongside increasing species diversity at Stour Valley water meadows SANG, and in the future on land to be set aside for habitat improvements through Biodiversity Net Gain units.

Home to all six native reptiles, with scarce and elusive bugs and birds, they provide natural and wild spaces that are also home to over 60 cattle, ponies, sheep and goats that help support the conservation and maintenance of these precious spaces.

With the Hampshire Avon, the Dorset River catchments flow into our two harbours and bring extensive partnership working to secure water quality improvements.

Alongside spaces designated for conservation, our local green spaces play a huge role where wildlife can thrive. Community parks, verges and corridors are vital spaces for the more familiar and urban animals – hedgehogs, foxes, sparrows and magpies – but they need our help and support just as much as the species living on specialist habitats.

Our gardens, allotments, cemeteries, green and blue spaces are becoming more important as acting as stepping stones for nature and to connect with larger nature reserves.

All of our green spaces are precious, and every effort is required to maximise them for the benefit of nature and people.

3. Designations and land management

For a relatively small council area BCP has many designated nature sites and extensive green space.

BCP Area: 16,132 Ha

Green Space: c. 2,500 Ha = 14%

25 Local Nature Reserves ~ local wildlife sites of special interest that make an important contribution to England's biodiversity. 505 Ha

Natural England have designated 19 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 769 Ha ~ wildlife and geological sites of national importance.

Most of these SSSIs also have international designations of Special Areas of Conservation (2), Special Protection Areas (4) and Ramsar (3) designations.

While many of the nationally and internationally designated sites are primarily heathland, they also cover both Poole and Christchurch harbours, River Avon and areas of reedbed, salt marsh and woodlands.

8 Ancient Woodlands

67 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) 160Ha

1 Regionally Important Geological Site

NERC 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) listed S41 species of "principal importance" for the conservation of biodiversity in England. These are species that are of conservation concern and are listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan or other priority species framework.

18 Section 41 habitats

191 Section 41 species

NERC 2006 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to ensure everyone working for a public body must think about how to take care of plants, animals, and where they live and what can be done to carry out improvements for them

Agri-Environmental schemes

The BCP Countryside team manage extensive areas of BCP under agri-environmental schemes, known as Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS). These schemes provide financial incentives to farmers, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment.

Total CS Area: 865 Ha

Total HLS Area: 116 Ha

4. Current nature restoration work across BCP teams and partners

A summary of actions taken to comply with the biodiversity duty:

The BCP Countryside team provide a broad range of functions that include statutory protection and conservation management of habitats.

Typically, 700 hours per month in volunteering is facilitated; education work with schools and uniformed groups; work experience and opportunities for people with additional needs, University students and other specialist groups.

Conservation grazing includes over 60 head of cattle, along with ponies, sheep and goats that help to manage heaths, cliffs, meadows and mire to agri-environmental stewardship scheme compliance.

There are volunteers, or **'Lookerers'**, who check animal stocks and help the care of our livestock by seeking out our grazing animals every day, let us know where they are on the nature reserves and if all is well, or if an animal needs any attention.

Green space development team

deliver a capital programme of improvements across all our green spaces that will ensure nature is a feature and maximised as part of their delivery through planting, habitat creation and landscaping schemes.

Green space maintenance team

are, where practicable, promoting opportunities for biodiversity. This includes green and blue spaces such as parks, gardens, roadside verges, streams and ponds.

Working in partnership to deliver habitats regulations mitigation.

The **Dorset Heaths Partnership** provide monitoring, promotion, the Dorset Dogs initiative, close liaison with the fire service and other agencies across SE Dorset heaths.

- The arson courtroom drama presented to over 3,000 students
- Dog Control, through site specific advice and education for dog walkers, to reduce wildlife disturbance
- Supporting the fighting of over 130 heathland wildfires in SE Dorset in 2025
- Creation of a professional dog walker charter to reduce disturbance through increased education
- BBQ and wildfire messaging campaigns

Working alongside BCP heathland mitigation rangers on site to educate and, where required, enforce behaviour.

Delivery of capital projects to mitigate the impact of housing development on protected sites, through Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) and Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs). These improvements enable housing development through creation or improvement of green spaces, including biodiversity measures.

The **Birds and Recreation Initiative** in Poole Harbour mitigates the impact of public disturbance on birds and delivers projects and promotion to educate people about the harbour's fantastic habitats and species.

Strength in partnerships

The Parks Foundation are an independent charity that support BCP green spaces. They activate spaces with volunteering, run park cafés that provide a warm and friendly space for park users and offer nature-based activities alongside food growing zones.

These **Green Heart Parks** have nature and access to green spaces at their core. Creating maintenance maps with our park maintenance team helps to manage spaces with a wildlife focus: planting trees, creating ponds and running walks and talks, on everything from fungi to moonlit moths to make nature accessible on people's doorsteps.

There are **Friends and residents' groups** across BCP (Appendix 3) that play a vital role for nature in caring for their local spaces. From planting and maintaining shrub beds and trees in car parks or roadside planters, to fund raising and extensive support for our grounds maintenance teams.

Special help for nature comes from many groups, not all could be mentioned here, who raise funds for maintenance and improvement of reserves, some examples are:


Friends of Stanpit Marsh who help raise funds, host walks and support volunteering across the site, and other green spaces.


Birds of Poole Harbour is a charity that aims to raise the profile of bird conservation, preservation and observation in and around the Poole Harbour area through harbour-wide partnership working, high standards of people engagement work and continuous monitoring of the harbour and its bird populations


Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG) is an independent organisation and registered charity, which is dedicated to recording, promoting and conserving the birds and other wildlife of the Christchurch Harbour area.


Transition Towns at Turners Nursery is a Community Orchard with regular monthly volunteer workdays, Started by Transition Town Poole in 2015 with food growing and caring for nature in local spaces, the group brings together people wanting to learn more about living lighter on the planet.

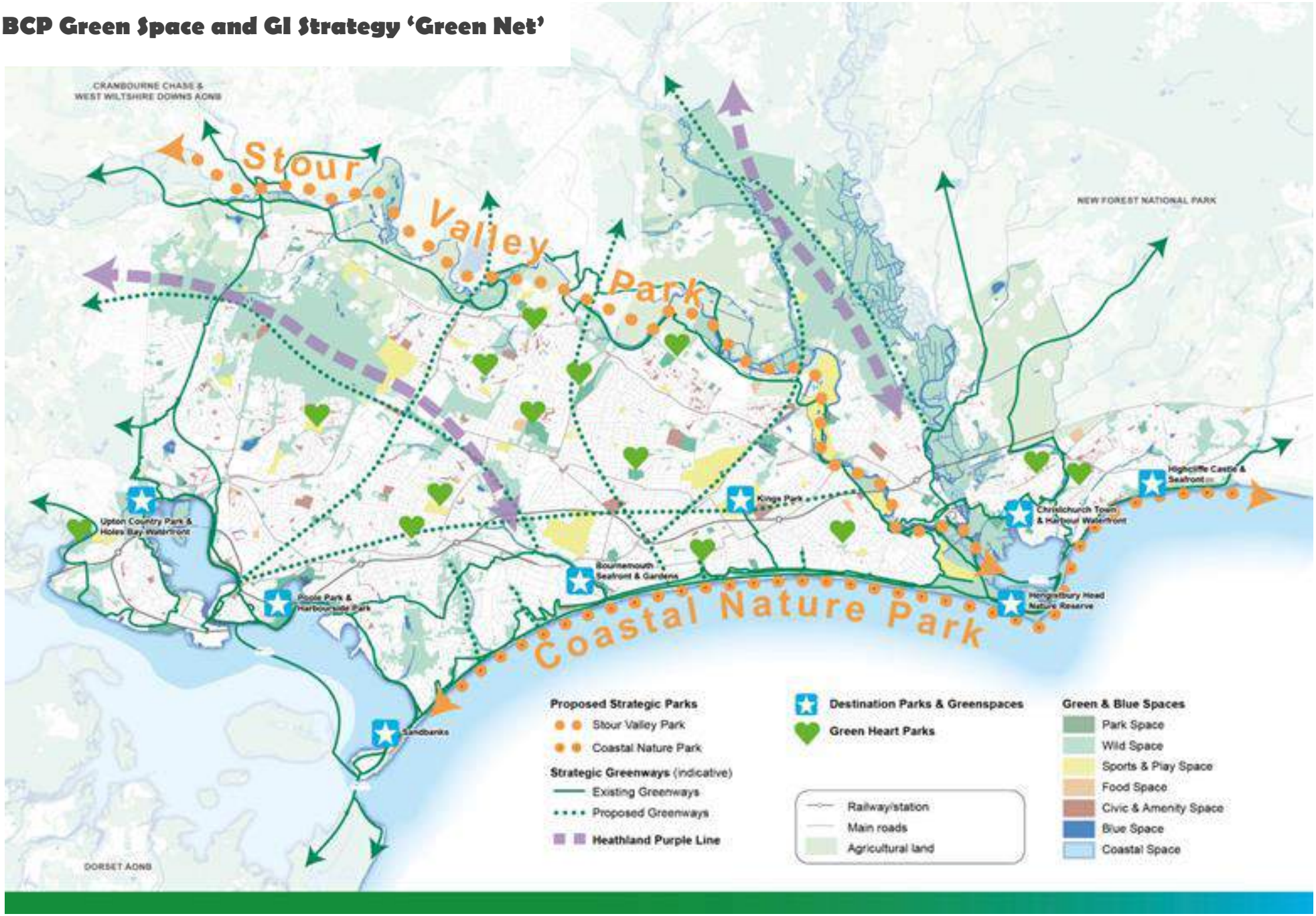

The Merley Wildlife group is a small group of residents passionate about local wildlife with an aim to get the community involved in managing wildlife habitats around them, help enhance and protect wildlife habitats.


Upton Country Park have regular conservation volunteering, host BioBlitz events surveying habitats and the team work in partnership with the Wareham Arc project and host RSPB events.


Community food growing opportunities such as allotments, garden growing projects, grow zones are supported by charities such as Grounded Communities, Transition Towns and The Parks Foundations, alongside Friends and other groups. These initiatives go hand in hand with supporting nature, for pollinators and wider biodiversity.

We encourage and work with groups across BCP that are passionate about their local natural spaces.

BCP Green Space and GI Strategy 'Green Net'



Action taken:

In the reporting years 2023-24 and 2024-25 the following action has been recorded by BCP Council teams (Appendix 2).

Future reports, and the creation of the Nature recovery delivery group will seek to collate and publish more accurate figures.

2023/24 – 2024/25:

6,576 Trees Planted

670m of Hedge planted

Meadow management. Enhanced mowing regimes in place to ensure long grass and wildflowers are left where possible.

Meadow maps published:

3.31 Ha Flower Meadow

199 Ha Grass Meadow

14 Green Heart Parks managed in partnership with The Parks Foundation

7 Site Maintenance maps written to support nature recovery interventions, parks maintenance and opportunities to volunteer.

Green spaces capital delivery **>£0.5m** on landscape and biodiversity projects

2025 Dorset-Wide Nature recovery Strategy published including species priority list.

8 Natterjack toad ponds maintained

2 House Martin towers

1 Swallow nesting shelter

2 Hobby baskets installed

1 Bat hibernaculum at Mudeford Woods

230 Swift boxes/bricks installed and/or provided by CHOG, Birds of Poole Harbour & Dorset Swift Network

28 Ha SANG's/HIPS created

Increase in all biodiversity markers at Throop water meadows SANG (see Appendix XX)

39.8% Reduction in use of Glyphosate usage for highways weed treatment 2023 – 2025

Natural Flood Management at Canford Heath through the Dorset Peat Project.

THE PARKS FOUNDATION

BCP Council

Working together

5. GI strategy overview

Nature Towns

The Nature Towns and Cities (NTC) Accreditation scheme has been developed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust and Natural England. It is a national initiative designed to recognise towns and cities where the local authority is committed to working with communities and other partners to create greener, healthier, resilient and thriving places.

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole: Nature Towns

BCP are the first Nature Towns to be accredited with Foundation status in the UK.

Being accredited as Nature Towns recognises that we are putting nature and green infrastructure at the heart of our place and communities.

The accreditation recognises that BCP is ambitious to deliver for nature and our natural environment. The main strategies and platforms to enable this are:

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Includes a delivery framework, identifies challenges, sets a vision, goals and principles. Supported by a large and robust evidence base for identifying opportunities to strengthen our green Infrastructure. Supported by an Urban greening design guide.

Urban Forest Strategy This also identifies priorities and uses a Tree Equity Score to evaluate and establish where our tree canopy needs to be strengthened. There is a working group for the strategy developing the first phase of delivery to establish a community tree planting programme and start to address the findings in the strategy. BCP's canopy cover is at 19% which is relatively high for equivalent council areas but is declining meaning increased tree planting and successful establishment is required across BCP.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

(LNRS) adopted and published December 2025, the LNRS has identified a vision and strong priorities for nature recovery, working to the Lawton principles of 30% of land for nature recovery by 2030.

Priorities have been written specifically for the urban area, highlighting the role that BCP green space can support nature recovery alongside our residents where 24% of BCP land is in residential gardens.

A Dorset Council-led 'rural forum', and a BCP-led 'urban nature forum' will feed in to a new nature delivery group in 2026.

Urban greening

Co-design across council programmes to secure SuDS, tree planting and parklets on capital schemes as part of urban greening is being piloted across three wards.

These wards could be affected most by climate change, through flooding and increased summer temperatures. Making these spaces greener will improve them for people and provide more space for nature.

Draft **Natural environment policies** for the forthcoming Local plan include the use of Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework to mandate that development satisfies BNG that also delivers on urban greening.

See Background Documents and Appendices for further information.

Nature Pledge

The Nature Pledge is a list of principles that help nature thrive in our gardens and green spaces. Whether you have a window box, a small area at your workplace or a large private garden, you can use these principles to improve the habitat for wildlife and insects.

In 2019, BCP Council declared a **climate and ecological emergency** and in September 2022 adopted the Green Infrastructure strategy.

This Nature Pledge supports the Green Infrastructure Strategy and promotes the need for nature-friendly land management, with a view to generating a community of like-minded people and organisations.

The purpose of the pledge is to share simple principles, promote the need for nature friendly land management, encourage commitment to the pledge and generate a community of like-minded organisations.

Our strategic greenspaces team carried out formal engagement with the public in autumn 2022. This Nature Pledge has been created in line with the responses received.

The pledge

Help our nature thrive. Whether you have a window box, small balcony, a large private garden or a small greenspace at your place of work; join us in pledging to do things better for nature, to help bring wildlife to your home, school or workplace.

- plant **native/wildlife-friendly** tree and plant species
- collect **rainwater** for watering
- stop or **reduce chemical use** to control weeds
- only use **peat-free compost** - or make your own if you can
- allow areas to **grow naturally** without interference and leave space for wildlife
- use **natural ground cover** and not artificial/plastic products
- install **bird and bat boxes**
- **reduce mowing** to allow more nature in your garden
- manage **trees for wildlife** value, leaving deadwood and ivy where possible
- install **ponds** or encourage **wetland areas** if safe to do so
- consider **nature-friendly material** choices
- create more **food growing** spaces
- **volunteer** some time to improve nature locally

Working together

THE PARKS FOUNDATION

BCP Council

6. State of Nature

Headline data

70,000+ known species in the UK[1]

5,174 Species recorded in BCP since 2010 = 13% of UK total (for those species groups)

75% of these species were recorded within the last reporting cycle (2020-2024),

197 are listed as species of principle importance in England under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

30 are listed as priority species in the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

BCP is home to:

All 6 native species of reptile

6 of the 7 UK amphibians

14 of the 18 UK species of bat

31 of the 68 other UK mammals

45% of UK bird species

40 of the 59 UK butterflies

45% of UK bird species

49% of UK moths

10% of UK true bugs

31% of UK bees, wasps and ants

20% of UK spiders

50% of vascular plants




Species monitoring

Appendix 7 shows a table of recorded species with the BCP area. This table shows the number of species recorded across different groups of plants, animals and fungi, between 2010 and 2025.

The Living Record online database is used by BCP staff, partners and individual naturalists and recorders.

There will be other records and not all data is uploaded to Living Record, so this should be understood as being a limited data set.

There has also not been time within this report writing to seek and collate additional data sources. It is hoped that future reports will be much fuller with greater partner data.

Future reports will comment on trends, use the list of 14 key species (see below) as headline indicators of the state of nature, as well as trends from wider monitoring, such as the Nature Recovery Strategy.

Credit: Birds of Poole Harbour

Credit: Birds of Poole Harbour

BCP Council Countryside team undertake or facilitate a wide range of species monitoring to inform habitat management and conservation resources.

Often working with volunteers or partner organisations, data is collected on a range of key species:

- Reptiles
- Various key bird species
- Butterflies
- Moths
- Dragonflies and damselflies
- Bats
- Otter
- Various key plant species
- Amphibians

The data represented in this first biodiversity report is not exhaustive and more a snapshot of information readily available at the time of writing.

Future reports can gather and present a much greater range of data and information from a wider group of partners.

Key organisations supporting nature recovery and recording biodiversity are:

- Dorset Heaths Partnership (DHP)
- Birds of Poole Harbour (BoPH)
- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC)
- Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG)
- Stour Valley Supporters
- The Parks Foundation
- Upton Country Park and Holes Bay Nature Park
- British Dragonfly Society (BDS)
- Bournemouth University (BU)
- RSPB
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Dorset Flora Group (DFG)
- Butterfly Conservation (BC)
- Dorset Bird Club
- Lytchett Bay Nature Partnership
- Dorset Bat Group (DBG)
- Dorset Moth Group

7. Future action and monitoring

This report presents a first picture of the work undertaken by BCP Council towards nature recovery. Just as importantly though, it sets out a road map for the future to do more for nature, using the platforms, strategies and partnerships that have been put in place.

The accreditation as Nature Towns provides a wrapper to this work, promoting and driving the importance of connecting people with nature.

Nature priorities:

A Green Infrastructure Action Plan

Ensuring there is investment in Green Infrastructure at all scales, from street-corners to whole landscapes, through partnership-led programmes, community engagement and a range of delivery mechanisms.

Nature recovery delivery group and urban nature forum

Facilitating local delivery through new forums and groups that focus on local action, learning, working in partnership and collaboration.

Citizen science strand to ensure the widest possible scope for data collection.

Nature dashboard and corporate policies

Using species monitoring data and the delivery of nature restoration work to create a public-facing dashboard.

BCP Council decision-making governance

Reviewing the Council corporate decision-making processes to better reflect the ecological emergency.

Develop a more robust and detailed reporting and species monitoring programme

Developed through the Nature forums, ensuring future monitoring is more representative of partners. Include mapping of survey areas and species heat maps to inform delivery and other actions that come from the delivery group and forums.

Work towards Higher level Nature Towns and Cities accreditation

Through the Green Infrastructure strategy, action plan and delivery methods develop to the higher-level status of Nature Towns, including development of work with investment partners.

8. BCP's Top 14 species

Key species have been chosen for future monitoring as a guide to the general state of nature in BCP.

These could be argued and debated as to their inclusion over other species; however, they have been chosen as they can be monitored from existing data sources, are readily surveyed and provide a range of species across different taxa.

A table (Appendix 6) provides a species profile with a summary of their habitats and other criteria for data monitoring.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy identified 54 priority species and species assemblages in a short list, itself reduced from over 1,000 originally felt to be significant in Dorset.

Not all of those are present or relevant within the BCP area. The LNRS list identifies priority species as those requiring bespoke or targeted activity for nature restoration.

Those used in this BCP-focussed report will be used in future reports and are felt to reflect 'our' nature, and whilst they need conserving and supporting, their inclusion here is more as a barometer of the state of nature in BCP.

Future work through the nature forums may revise this list for future reports, as will the future availability of survey data and collection opportunities.

Sand Lizard

The sand lizard is one of the UK's rarest and most threatened reptiles, found in only a handful of locations across the country. Dorset is one of its last remaining strongholds, thanks to the county's rich patchwork of lowland heath—a rare habitat that provides the warm, sandy conditions essential for the lizard's survival.

These shy but charismatic creatures are most noticeable in spring and early summer, when the males develop brilliant green flanks to attract mates—a vivid display against the backdrop of purple heather and golden gorse.

The presence of the sand lizard in Dorset is not only a symbol of the county's unique natural heritage but also a testament to what focused conservation action can achieve in reversing species decline.

Trend: Sand lizard populations suffered severe declines throughout the 20th century due to widespread habitat loss, fragmentation, and changes in land use. As a result, the species became locally extinct in many areas, including some parts of southern England.

What can we do to help it? Targeted conservation efforts have helped stabilise and even increase local sand lizard numbers in recent years. Programmes have focused on habitat restoration, careful management of heathlands, and the successful reintroduction of sand lizards to areas where they had previously disappeared.

Fun fact Unlike most reptiles in the UK, sand lizards lay their eggs in warm, sandy burrows rather than giving birth to live young. They are the only native UK lizard to do so, and they rely on open patches of bare sand, which makes habitat management especially important.

European Nightjar

A summer visitor from the scrub grasslands of the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a UK population estimate of 4,600 males. The cryptic colours make this bird more likely to be heard than seen. Across much of its range, the Nightjar's breeding distribution is closely associated with rare lowland heath and consequently is mostly scattered across the southern half of Britain.

Trend: Historically, Nightjars were widely distributed throughout Britain & Ireland. A catastrophic decline was recorded between the 1968-72 and 1988-91 breeding atlases; there was a range retraction of more than 50% due mostly to loss of suitable habitat. More recently, there has been a welcome 18% range expansion in Britain from the 1988–91 to 2008–11 atlas. Nightjar is amber listed under UK birds of conservation concern.

What can we do to help it? Management, protection, restoration and creation (or re-creation) of key heathland breeding habitats remain critical for the long-term conservation of Nightjar. It is also necessary to minimise human and pet disturbance, especially during the breeding season.

Recent studies have shown Nightjars also forage in surrounding areas, like grasslands and farmland, not just their nesting sites. A wider, landscape-scale approach to habitat management, in particular retaining existing foraging areas close to the heaths, is critical.

Fun fact The Nightjar has many alternative names through folklore, one being the Goat Sucker, as it was often seen round the udders of livestock. In fact, it was just feeding on the insects that associate with these animals.

Stag Beetle

The Stag beetle is a nationally scarce species of principle importance, mainly found in south-east England, with the BCP area being the south-west limit of its main range. For Dorset the majority of records are in the BCP area.

Stag Beetles spend 3 to 4 years (but can be up to 7 years depending on temperature) as a larva (grub) in underground rotting wood, with adults emerging in late spring to mate.

Trend: declining across Europe and in the UK is mainly found in the south-east, with Dorset being the strongest western extent.

The main problems facing Stag beetles are habitat loss and a lack of rotting wood in which to lay their eggs and for their larvae to feed on. The tendency to keep parks and gardens “tidy”, including removing old tree stumps and roots.

The larvae are long-lived, and the adults do not move very far from where they emerge. Although males can fly for up to 500m, most females travel no more than 20m

What can we do to help: Avoid removal of old tree stumps, roots, dead or decaying wood habitats which takes away larval food sources.

Fun fact: Stag beetles are harmless and do not damage living wood or timber, as the larvae only feed on decaying wood.

Hedgehog

The European hedgehog is a much-loved mammal across the United Kingdom, including Dorset. Recognisable by its spines and nocturnal habits, the hedgehog plays an important role in the local ecosystem, where they act as natures' indicator.
They help control garden pests naturally, reducing reliance on harmful chemicals.

Hedgehogs are nocturnal insectivores, feeding primarily on beetles, caterpillars, earthworms, and slugs. Adults typically have between 6,000 and 7,000 spines, which also act as shock absorbers if they fall.

Trend: Hedgehog numbers have fallen significantly in recent decades, and Dorset reflects this national trend. Reasons include the reduction of hedgerows and wild spaces, lack of suitable habitat connectivity, road traffic accidents, use of pesticides and slug pellets.

What can we do to help: Conserving hedgehogs in Dorset requires an integrated approach that combines habitat management, reduction of human-induced threats, and active community involvement. Linking urban greenspaces and creating small openings in garden fences and walls; reduction of pesticide use.

Fun Fact
Despite their small size, hedgehogs can travel up to two miles in a single night while searching for food and mates. In urban settings they require access to 12 average gardens to get enough food to survive.

Green woodpecker

The green woodpecker is a large, mostly green woodpecker with a red crown and a laughing "yaffle" call. It is principally a ground-feeding species that favours mature trees for nest holes and nearby open turf or parkland for foraging across southern and central Britain.

Trend: National monitoring shows little long-term change but Bird Breeding Survey indices reported worryingly strong short-term declines in recent years.

Green woodpeckers are regularly recorded within the BCP area, especially where there are mature trees, open grassland/parkland and low-intensity greenspaces. They do not tend to move far, around 1km for adults and 3km for juveniles.

Likely causes of decline include loss of veteran/standing deadwood and suitable nest sites, pesticide use reducing ants as prey, fragmentation of parkland, and urban development.

What we can do to help: Retain and create veteran trees and standing deadwood; avoid routine removal of large branches. Reduce pesticide/insecticide use on parks, verges and golf courses to maintain ant populations.

Manage grassland as semi-natural meadow/ant-friendly patches and leave ant-rich microhabitats (bare patches/anthills). Protect and connect parkland & hedgerow networks.

Fun fact: The common name "yaffle" is onomatopoeic — it imitates the loud, ringing call that often betrays this otherwise skulking bird's presence

Heath Spotted-orchid

In June to August, the striking purple, pink, and white flower spikes of the Heath Spotted-orchid can be seen scattered across opens areas of wetland – an indication of healthy, undisturbed habitats.

Scattered by the wind, their seeds are tiny and dust-like, containing no food reserves – instead relying on fungi within the soil to provide nutrients to the germinating seedling.

The BCP populations of Heath Spotted-orchid are a vital link between the larger populations of Purbeck and the New Forest.

Trend: Populations are declining as habitats are lost through land management changes, nutrient enrichment, drainage, and development, especially across our heathlands and water meadows.

What we can do to help: Grazing is the principal intervention to preserve populations of Heath Spotted-orchid. In addition, re-wetting of habitats can be beneficial, as well as avoiding nutrient enrichment and chemical pollution of soils to promote this species and others.

Fun Fact: It's vibrant, spotted flowers are 'food-deceptive' – attracting pollinators however offering no sweet reward. This strategy relies on the curiosity and foraging behaviour of insects, particularly bumblebees, which visit the flowers expecting nectar and inadvertently assist in pollination.

Natterjack toad

The Natterjack Toad is one of our rarest amphibians, associated with sand dune and heathland sites. Within the BCP area it can only be found at Hengistbury Head, where a colony was reintroduced in the 1980s. This species has complex habitat requirements and careful and ongoing management is necessary to sustain this fragile and isolated population.

Nationally and locally there is a downward trend, which is felt to be linked to changing climate and reduction in suitable habitat.

This is a nocturnal species and can only be seen close to breeding pools at Hengistbury Head, during the spring and summer.

Natterjacks are a key positive indicator of the health of the habitats where they are found and an integral part of the food chain and through ecological interactions.

Trend: Following widespread historical decline they are only surviving thanks to interventions and dedicated habitat management. We have a moral and legal duty to prevent further declines and loss of this species.

Changing climatic conditions cause breeding ponds to dry too quickly with mild winters (and increased nitrates) allowing more vegetative growth leading to lack of open sand and short turf necessary for burrowing and feeding. There is a general need for more intensive habitat management, including grazing and scrub clearance as well as provision of artificial ponds in some circumstances.

Fun fact: The loud call of the male toad in breeding season can travel up to 2km

Silver-Studded Blue butterfly

The Silver-studded Blue is a rare butterfly found mainly on the lowland heathlands of southern England. Dorset is one of their strongholds, home to important populations which can be found across the county.

This species gets its name from the distinctive silvery-blue scales on the hindwing, which are absent in our other blue butterflies. Weak fliers and generally sedentary, they are best seen on calm, sunny days in their large colonies skirting atop the heather.

Small but mighty, the silver-studded blue is an excellent indicator of healthy, well-functioning heathland ecosystems due to its complex habitat requirements.

Trend: Listed as Vulnerable on the GB Red List, the Silver-studded blue has suffered severe recent population declines, with an estimated 80% loss in its range over the past 100 years. Habitat loss is a main driver; this species relies on a mosaic of mixed-age vegetation which deteriorates quickly without active management.

Fun fact: They have a strong mutualistic symbiotic relationship with black ants *Lasius spp.*, on which the Silver-studded blues are dependant. Laying eggs only where ant pheromones are present, the ants take the developing butterfly larvae within their nests where they feed on the sweet honeydew the caterpillar produces. At dusk, the ants escort the larvae to its favourite foodplants, protecting it from predators while it eats.

Golden-Ringed dragonfly

The Golden-ringed Dragonfly is an unmistakeable species, with its striking black body, yellow rings and bright green eyes. It is also one of the largest dragonflies in UK at 75-85mm long and a wingspan of 100mm.

On the wing from May to September. It is widely distributed but absent from central and eastern England. It can live in a stream or river for up to 5 years before emerging as an adult to live for a matter of weeks.

It is generally associated with heathlands, as it breeds in streams, rivers and bog pools with an acidic nature. Whilst it is mainly found on heathlands, it may be found hunting away from its breeding habitat indicating the importance of surrounding habitats, not just heathland.

Trend: Contrary to what is happening with the majority of dragonfly species in this country, that have benefited from a changing climate, the trend is downwards with the Golden-ringed Dragonfly dropping very slightly from 1970 to 2019.

It is a good indicator of water quality in streams as opposed to rivers as streams are more susceptible to climate change and reacts to rainfall, which affects the volume of water in streams and pools and ultimately, rivers. Pollution can have a devastating effect on this species.

Fun fact: Independent wings allow it to fly backwards and it is the punk of the dragonfly world - the female lays its eggs by pogoing up and down into the sediment at the bottom of streams.

Brown long-eared bat

While bats are hard to identify without specialist equipment, they do act as great indicator species of general health of nature.

The brown long-eared bat is medium sized and, as its name suggests has enormous ears.

BCP is in a privileged location to have Brown Long-eared and the very rare Grey Long-eared Bat. It is not always possible to tell the difference between the two, many records are recorded as long-eared bat species.

As with all bats, they are nocturnal, feeding on midges, moths and other flying insects, using echolocation to catch their prey.

Roosting in holes in trees and old buildings, showing the value of traditional building materials and leaving standing dead-wood.

They feed in parks, gardens and woodlands.

Trend: Since 1999 it has been stable, but roost counts over the last 5 years show decline

What we can do to help: leave dead wood on trees, plant hedges and food sources for moths and insects.

Fun fact: The brown long-eared bat certainly lives up to its name as its ears are nearly as long as its body

Eurasian otter

We have a population of Eurasian otters within the BCP Council area. The Eurasian otter is the most widely distributed otter, its range includes parts of Asia and northern Africa and is also spread across Europe. It inhabits unpolluted bodies of fresh water such as lakes, streams, rivers and ponds.

They mainly eat fish, but during the winter and in colder environments will feed on birds, eggs, worms, amphibians, insects and small amounts of vegetation.

Otters are very territorial, living alone most of the time. An individual's territory can vary between about 1 and 25 miles long.

They live in holes in riverbanks called holts; a holt will have a few different entrances to protect against flooding, with at least one entrance being above water level.

Trend: Currently a low population in BCP and they are very vulnerable to pollution and disturbance.

Fun fact: They have many adaptions for swimming – long streamlined bodies with strong tails, webbed feet and they can close their ears and nostrils whilst underwater. They have 2 layers of fur: a thick waterproof outer one and a warm inner one with 50,000 hairs/cm^2.

Waxcaps

Brightly coloured waxcap fungi play an important ecological role as key indicators of healthy grasslands. Their sensitivity to disturbances such as chemical inputs, air pollution, and habitat change makes them valuable biological markers of ecosystem condition.

They can be seen throughout the autumn in meadows, lawns, and cemeteries.

There are around 40 species in the UK, which is home to half the world's population. Their bright colouration, distinctive features, and specific habitat requirements means waxcaps can be easily identifiable

Trend: Britain is home to some of the world's most valuable waxcap grasslands, though many species remain rare or under threat. Over 97% of the UK's species-rich grassland has been lost in less than a century.

What we can do to help: Avoid the use of fungicides, pesticides, and proprietary lawn treatments. Remove all cut grass to ensure nutrients don't build up. Recording sightings through projects such as Plantlife's Waxcap Watch is a great way to contribute to the conservation of this species and others.

Fun Fact: Waxcap fungi develop partnerships with nearby plants, exchanging nutrients and water which enable both to thrive in places they might otherwise struggle to survive. Fungi can supply up to 80% of a plant's nitrogen requirements,100% of its nitrogen requirements, also providing water in times of drought or dormancy.

Swift

This bird is a much-loved sign of summer which overwinters in Africa and comes to the UK for a few months, just to breed.

Mainly nesting in roof eaves, it is also a bird of urban areas, feeding on mosquitoes and other aerial invertebrates.

Trend: This is a species that has suffered major declines over a relatively short period (down 66% between 1995 and 2022). Various factors have led to this, not least the loss of nest locations due to the rise of uPVC soffits and fascia boards as we seal any gaps in our rooves.

What we can do to help: We all need to support this species and encourage everyone to install boxes and bricks. Providing nesting locations is a proven way to boost populations.

We also need to encourage nature friendly practices to boost the insects which Swifts eat. Dorset Swift Network is an umbrella partnership working locally to help raise awareness and reverse declines.

Fun Fact: Swifts only land to breed, so do everything on the wing – from sleeping to drinking and even mating.

Glow-worm

The Glow-worm despite its name is not a worm but a beetle, the flightless females of which emit a yellow-green glow at night, making them unmistakable for any other beetle and captivate any observer.

The male looks like a typical beetle with hard wing cases and can fly. They are often associated with calcareous grasslands, which may include meadows, railway embankments, woodland edges and even road verges. In BCP they also occur on our lowland heaths.

Only the adult female glows brightly, caused by a chemical reaction in the last two segments of her abdomen, creating the bright glow (bioluminescence). The females live a short sedentary life, rarely moving more than 30cm from one night to the next.

They can be seen on warm nights between May and September. The glow is used to attract a mate, once mated she will turn out her light. Diet consists of small slugs and snails.

Trend: The Glow-worm shares threats with many other invertebrates, such as habitat loss and fragmentation (resulting in isolation and unsustainable populations), pesticide use, climate change and light pollution. The species is near-threatened, and the rate of decline suggests it is a species at risk of extinction in the UK.

What can we do to help it?
Survey our local Open spaces to find where they are and how many are present. Protect sites where present. They need a supply of snails and slugs and to keep spaces as dark as possible. Don't ever take them home.

Fun Fact: Mentioned by the novelist Thomas Hardy in 'The Return of the Native', first published in 1878.

Credit: Sam Deakin

9. Background Information and Appendices

Background reading and links:

- BCP Projects Website:
  - Nature Towns page and information
  - The Future Parks programme
  - Green spaces Strategies and plans
  - Let it Grow pages, with maintenance maps for selected parks
  - Download and share the Nature pledge
- The Parks Foundation website:
  - Guides to support the Nature Pledge
  - The Nature Neighbourhoods project
- The Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Dorset-wide Habitat regulations mitigation
- The Economics of Biodiversity The Dasgupta Review: Headline Messages

List of Appendices:

1. GI Strategic Framework, Action plan and delivery model – separate document
2. BCP Nature quantitative progress report 2025
3. Friends' groups in BCP
4. Statement on Highway weed management treatment.
5. Case Studies – separate document
6. BCP's Top 14 species - Summary of species, their habitats and recording platforms/groups.
7. Species recorded within BCP
8. BCP Countryside Team and partner species monitoring 2023-2025
9. Highlighted species trends - Species lost

Appendix 2

BCP Council Nature Quantitative Progress Report - 2025				
	Measure	**unit of measurement**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
Measure 1: designated sites	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	no. of sites	19	19
	Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance)	no. of sites	3	3
	National Nature Reserve (NNR)	no. of sites or hectares	0	0
	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	no. of sites or hectares	2	2
	Special Protection Area (SPA)	no. of sites or hectares	4	4
	Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	no. of sites or hectares	25	25
	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)	no. of sites or hectares	67	67
	Local Geological Sites (Regionally Important Geological Sites)	no. of sites or hectares	1	1
	Land managed by BCP Council in a countryside stewardship agreement to improve condition of site	hectares	865Ha	865Ha
	Value of countryside stewardship agreements held by BCP Council	£	c £300k pa	c £300k pa
	Land purchased to create new habitat	hectares		
Measure 2: Countryside Team	Verges managed to enhance their value for nature	sq m		
	Rights of way improvements to make nature more accessible	km		
	Percentage of Herbicide (glyphosate) decreased when managing weed growth within BCP highway network	%		
	Trees planted	no. of	5593	620
	Hedgerow planted	no. of	50m	620m
	Shrubs planted	no. of		
	Wildflower seeds	sq m		
	Removal of invasive and non-native species	sq m		
	Wetland creation	sq m		

Measure 3: Landscape design and projects	Trees planted	no. of trees	151	212
	Hedgerow planted	no. of		
	Shrubs planted			
	Wildflower seeds	sq m		
	Removal of invasive and non-native species	sq m		
	Total schemes that enhance or create nature	no.of schemes		
	Value of the schemes that enhance or create nature	£		
Measure 4: Other Capital Projects eg BCP Homes	Schools and community buildings with new or enhanced space for nature	no. of buildings / schemes	No current Data. Information to be collated and supplied for further reports.	
	Schemes with a long-term landscape and ecological management plan (XX years)	no. of schemes		
	Trees planted	no. of		
	Hedgrow planted	no. of		
	Shrubs planted	sq m		
	Wildflower seeds	sq m		
	Wetland creation	sq m		
	Wildlife enhancements (e.g. bee bricks, bird boxes, bat boxes, reptile chambers, log piles, dormouse nest boxes)	no. of		
	no. of schemes with Sustainable Drainage features	no. of		
Measure 5: Highways projects	Trees planted	no. of trees		
	Hedgrow planted	no. of		
	Shrubs planted	sq m		
	Wildflower planting	sq m or km		

Measure 6: Arboriculture	New trees planted	no. of trees	
Measure 7: Biodiversity gain through development	Biodiversity units on offer through habitat banks secured by BCP Council	no. of units	
	Biodiversity net gain agreed through planning applications	units and % from master gov ? no. of agreed planning applications where BNG applies? No. of developments delivering on-site BNG	
	wildlife enhancements secured through biodiversity plans (e.g. bee bricks, bird boxes, bat boxes, reptile chambers, log piles, dormouse nest boxes)	no. of	
	Land use/management change to deliver nutrient mitigation which by default will deliver nature recovery (increase in biodiversity) - ha	hectares	
	Nitrogen removed as part of nutrient mitigation as part of planning	kilograms of nitrogen per hectare per year	
	SANGs with nature-friendly management plan	hectares	13Ha
Measure 8: Sustainable Farming	County farms managed using sustainable farming practices	%	
Measure 9: Nature-based solutions	Natural flood management projects	hectares	No current Data. Information to be collated and supplied for further reports.
	Nature Based Solution opportunity project		

Measure 10: Nature Recovery Dorset network	Nature Recovery Dorset network members	no.of	No current Data. Information to be collated and supplied for further reports.
	Approx. hectares space for nature created by all the NRD members	ha	
	Member of public	ha	
	Community Group	ha	
	Charity or social enterprise	ha	
	Farmer	ha	
	Land manager	ha	
	Landowner	ha	
	Organisation	ha	
	Public body	ha	
	School	ha	
	Other	ha	

Appendix 3

Group Name	Location
Friends of Fisherman's Walk	Southbourne
Friends of Knyveton and Spencer Gardens	Knyveton and Spencer Gardens
Friends of Boscombe Chine Gardens	Boscombe
Southbourne, Wick and Tuckton Action Group (SWAT)	Southbourne, Wick and Tuckton
Friends of Seafield Gardens	Seafield gardens
Winton Library Garden	Winton Library
Friends of Skerryvore Garden	Skerryvore Garden
Stour Valley Supporters	Stour Valley
Southbourne in Bloom	Southbourne Green
Mallard Road Park	Mallard Road Park
Friends of Coy Pond	Coy Pond Gardens and Upper Gardens Rockery
Adastral Square Gardening Group	Adastral Square, Canford Heath estate
BH12 Planters	Planters in Albert Road, and surrounding roads, Poole
Broadstone in Bloom	Broadstone High Street
Friends of Broadstone Nature Reserve	Broadstone Nature Reserve (Broadstone Heath)
Friends of Hamworthy Park	Hamworthy Park
Friends of Turners Nursery	Newtown
Friends of Upton Country Park	Upton Country Park
Heathland Lookerers	Canford Heath
Merley Nature Group	Sopwith Crescent Open Space, Fenners Field Rec, Chichester Walk, Oakley Lane, Selkirk Close Park, Magna Road, Down in the Woods Pre school, Harrier Drive
Oakdale Library Gardens Association	Oakdale Library
Pinecliff Gardens volunteers	Pinecliff Sunken Gardens, Pinecliff Road
Sterte Community Garden Association	Sterte Court apartment blocks,Sterte Close
Friends of Sterte Green	Sterte Green
Tatnam Organic Patch	Oakdale
Parkstone Rotary Club	Parkstone
Bluebell Woods	Behind St Michael's Church, Hamworthy
Hamworthy Gardening Volunteers	Hamworthy
Rossmore Library Community Garden	Rossemore
Haskells Rec Community Group	Haskells Rec
Alum Chine Tropical Gardens Volunteer Group	Alum Chine
OLGA - Oakdale Library Garden Association	Oakdale
Alexandra Park GreenFingers	Alexandra Park

Parks in Mind Project	Shelley Park, Knyveton Gardens, Boscombe Overcliff, Fisherman's Walk, Woodland Walk, Kings Park
Winton Recreation Ground GreenFingers Volunteers	Winton Rec
Winton Rec Community Cafe Volunteers	Winton Rec
Muscliffe Park GreenFingers Volunteers	Muscliffe Park
Slades Farm Community Garden	Slades Farm (rear of Cycle track)
Seafield Gardens GreenFingers and Nature Tots	Seafield Gardens
Kinson and West Howe GreenFingers	Moore Avenue, Pelhams Park, Kinson Manor Playing Fields
Redhill Park GreenFingers	Redhill Park
Boscombe Chine Gardens	Boscombe Chine Gardens
Pelhams Park GreenFingers	Pelhams Park
Kings Park Nursery	Kings Park Drive
Friends of Druitt Gardens	Druitt Gardens
Friends of Stanpit Marsh	Stanpit Marsh and surrounding areas
Friends of St Catherine's Hill	St Catherine's Hill
Highcliffe and Walkford in Bloom	Various
Watermans Park GreenFingers and Wildlings	Watermans Park
Mudeford Woods	Mudeford Woods
South West Lakes Trust	Christchurch Harbour

Appendix 4

Statement on Highway weed management treatment.

Highways based weed management treatment involving the use of Glyphosate has significantly reduced due to the reinstatement of effective twice annual spot treatment reducing growth following a backlog in treatment during the pandemic and subsequent management programme.

The Council is committed to securing sustainable opportunities to further reduce its use of glyphosate and is working with its Contractors and Suppliers to trial the effectiveness of reducing the level of active product quantities.

Usage Data:

Year	Product quantities used in litres	Quantities of active ingredient used
2023	2226	801.36kg
2024	1371	493.56kg
2025	1340	482.40kg

Appendix 5

Case studies – see separate document.

i. Stour Valley water meadows SANG
ii. The Parks Foundation: Urban Greening project evaluation and nature interventions.
iii. Green Heart Parks
iv. The Nature Pledge
v. The Peat project

Appendix 6

BCP's Top 14 species - Summary of species, their habitats and recording platforms/groups.

	Heath	Ponds	Rivers /streams	Gardens	Woodland	*Monitoring in place*	*Partner orgs involved*	*Data sources*	*Current monitoring*	*Future monitoring*
Sand Lizard ***Lacerta agilis***	**Y**					**Y**	ARC	ARC	National Reptile Survey	National Reptile Survey[1]
European Nightjar ***Caprimulgus europaeus***	**Y**					**Y**	RSPB	BTO	Heathland Bird Survey	Heathland Birds Survey[2]
Stag Beetle ***Lucanus cervus***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		European Stag Beetle Monitoring Network[3]
Hedgehog ***Erinaceus europaeus***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		
Green Woodpecker ***Picus viridis***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**	**Y**		Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist	Breeding Bird Survey	Breeding Bird Survey[5]
Heath Spotted Orchid ***Dactylorhiza maculata***	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**			**Y**		Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist	Count	Count[6]
Natterjack Toad ***Epidalea calamita***	**Y**	**Y**				**Y**	ARC	Living Record, ARC	String, tadpole & toadlet count	String, tadpole and toadlet count[7]

Silver-studded Blue ***Plebejus argus***	**Y**					**Y**	BC	iRecord	UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme	UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme[8]
Golden Ringed Dragonfly ***Cordulegaster boltonii***	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**			**Y**	BDS	iRecord	British Dragonfly Survey	British Dragonfly Survey[9]
Brown Long-eared Bat ***Plecotus auritus***	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**		DBG	Living Record	Bat box survey Bat activity transects Static bat survey	Bat box survey[10] Bat activity transects[11] Static bat survey[12]
Otter ***Lutra lutra***		**Y**	**Y**			**Y**			Ad-hoc field sign surveys	Field sign surveys[13]
Waxcaps ***Hygrocybe spp.***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		Waxcap Watch[14]
Swift ***Apus apus***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	CHOG, BoPH, Dorset Swift Network	CHOG, RPSB Swift Mapper	Swift box occupation	Swift box occupation[15]
Glow-worm ***Lampyris noctiluca***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		UK Glow Worm Survey[16]

1 – protocol | National Reptile Survey

2 – nightjar_survey_methods_2025.pdf

3 – Protocol-for-the-European-Stag-Beetle-Survey-1.pdf

4 –

5 – Methodology and survey design | BTO

6 –

7 –

8 – UKBMS Factsheet TR1

9 – Survey-guidance.pdf

10 –

11 – Bat Survey Guidelines 2015

12

13 – Microsoft Word - HRSSM_16003 HR_Otter.docx

14 – Take part in Waxcap Watch 2025 - Plantlife

15 –

16 – UK Glow worm survey home page

Appendix 7

Species recorded within BCP

BCP Council predominantly use the Living Record online recording system for inputting data from species monitoring. This data is presented in the table below and all data is passed to the Dorset Environmental Records Centre for county-wide monitoring purposes.

Reptile survey data is managed through the National reptile Survey, coordinated by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC). Data is also collected via apps and field survey field maps.

Care should be taken when drawing inferences from this data due to various complexities.

- This is a record of species richness (and to some extent recorder effort) rather than biodiversity – it doesn't give information on changes in population size and is purely the number of species present in certain time periods.
- UK species totals are based on best available information and change on a regular basis as new species arrive or are amalgamated
- Despite large overlaps, species will not wholly be the same in each time-period – some species will have been lost and some will have been gained.
- There is no indication of recorder effort year by year or available expertise.
- Abundance (and relative abundance) is not shown but is measured for some species groups.
- Although Living Record is extensively used in Dorset, it is not the only record database and therefore it does not give a complete picture of actual species recorded. However, data is all verified by County Recorders before going live and should be seen as robust.
- Recording is often time-intensive, and specialist knowledge often has a monetary cost. Funding is often limited and infrequent, making fair comparison difficult. (e.g. apparent spider decline is very likely due to lack of recording effort)
- Data for 2025 is still incoming/not fully verified and only included in the 'all-time' record column. This is therefore subject to change.

Species recorded within BCP on Living Record Database

Species Group	UK species	S41 Species	LNRS S12 Species	2010-2025	% of UK	2010-2014	2015-2019	2020-2024	% UK	% BCP	Richness Trend	
Amphibians (native)	7	3/4*	1/1	6	86	5	5	**6**	86	100	Up	20%
Bats	18	7/26	9/10	14	78	10	13	**12**	67	86	Down	-8%
Bees, Wasps, Ants	590	3/31	0/6	183	31	23	44	**169**	29	92	Up	284%
Beetles	4072	5/75	1/1	298	7	68	202	**159**	4	53	Down	-21%
Birds	640	31/49	8/15	198	31	145	170	**157**	25	79	Down	-8%
Birds (CHOG records)	640	36/49	9/15	287	45	260	246	**252**	39	88	Up	2%
Bugs (Hemiptera)	1830	0/10	0	176	10	33	104	**129**	7	73	Up	24%
Butterflies	59	10/22	1/4	39	66	33	33	**36**	61	92	Up	9%
Caddisflies	199	0/3	0	54	27	49	4	**24**	12	44	Up	500%
Dragonflies & Damselflies	57	1/2	0/1	35	61	28	30	**33**	58	94	Up	10%
Flies	7000	4/29	0	292	4	70	136	**192**	3	66	Up	41%
Freshwater Fish	64	17/35	1/2	18	28	3	11	**9**	14	50	Down	-18%
Fungi	14889	2/61	0	345	2	51	221	**205**	1	59	Down	-7%
Grasshoppers & Crickets (native)	38	0/3	0/1	28	74	17	20	**25**	66	89	Up	25%
Larger Crustaceans	36	0/6	0/1	5	14	0	4	**2**	6	40	Down	-50%
Lichens	1800	2/97	0	271	15	129	134	**132**	7	49	Down	-1%
Mammals (exc. bats)	68	6/6	2/4	31	46	19	24	**29**	43	94	Up	21%
Marine Fish	330	21	1/1	15	5	0	8	**9**	3	60	Up	11%
Molluscs (non marine)	239	1/20	0	33	14	6	24	**18**	8	55	Down	-25%
Mosses & Liverworts etc	1110	0/77	0/3	188	17	1	60	**177**	16	94	Up	195%
Moths	2610	70/142	2/12	1288	49	907	1036	**1068**	41	83	Up	3%
Reptiles (native)	6	6/6	0	6	100	6	6	**6**	100	100	No change	0%
Sawflies	500	0	0	19	4	2	6	**11**	2	58	Up	83%
Seaweeds	644	0/6	0	26	4	0	19	**8**	1	31	Down	-58%
Spiders & Harvestmen	707	1/30	0/1	144	20	34	129	**44**	6	31	Down	-66%
Vascular Plants	2951	7/151	4/9	1461	50	522	956	**1236**	42	85	Up	29%
Total**	**40464**	**197/943**	**30**	**5173**	**13**	**2161**	**3393**	**3896**	**10**	**75**	Up	15%

*Great Crested Newt records are probable deliberate/accidental introductions

** excludes CHOG records Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG)

Appendix 8

BCP Countryside Team and partner species monitoring 2023-2025

Year	Site	Funder/For	Type		Species/Group	Surveyor
Central team						
2025	Turbary Common	BTO	BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Turbary Common	BTO	WBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Turbary Common	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Turbary Common	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Stour Valley	BTO	WEBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Stour Valley	BTO	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house/volunteers
2025	Stour Valley		Trap		Moth	In-house
2025	Stour Valley	BDS	BDS transect		Odonata	In-house
2025	Millhams	BTO	BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Millhams	BTO	WBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Millhams	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	ARC
2025	Millhams	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	BTO	BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	BTO	WBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house/volunteers
Year	**Site**	**Funder/For**	**Type**		**Species/Group**	**Surveyor**
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	In-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Bee transect		Bees	Silvia Freire
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Walking transect		Bats	in-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	BTO	Breeding bird survey		Birds	in-house

2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	BTO	Winter bird survey		Birds	in-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Presence/absence survey		Dragonflies	in-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Field survey		Otter	Guy Finucane
West team						
Year	**Site**	**Funder/For**	**Type**		**Species/Group**	**Surveyor**
2025	Bourne Valley		BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Bourne Valley	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Bourne Valley	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Bourne Valley		Count		Southern marsh orchid	In-house
2026	Bourne Valley	DBS	BDS point/transect		Odonata	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		HBS transect		Dartford/nightjar/woodlark	RSPB
2025	Canford Heath	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		Trap		Moth	In-house
2025	Canford Heath	BDS	BDS point		Odonata	In-house
2025	Canford Heath	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Canford Heath	SRT	PondNet count		Marsh clubmoss	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		Count		Pale butterwort	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		Count		Dorset Heath	DFG
2026	Canford Heath		Trap		Moth	In-house
2026	Canford Heath	ARC	Emergence		Reptile	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		HBS transect		Dartford/nightjar/woodlark	RSPB
2025	Corfe Hills North	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		PondNet count		Marsh clubmoss	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		Count		Pale butterwort	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		Count		Marsh gentian	In-house

2025	Corfe Hills North	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	ARC volunteer
2025	Corfe Hills Middle	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills South		HBS transect		Dartford/nightjar	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills South	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	ARC volunteer
2025	Hatch Pond	BTO	Ringing		Bird	BTO
2025	Hatch Pond		Field Surveys		Bird	Volunteers and BCP staff
2025	Hatch Pond		Trap		Moth	In-house
2025	Poole Harbour		WeBs		Bird	
East team						
Year	**Site**	**Funder/For**	**Type**		**Species/Group**	**Surveyor**
2025	Stanpit Marsh	FOSM/CHOG	Field survey		Insects	Bryan Pinchen
2025	Stanpit Marsh	FOSM	Light trapping		Moths	Phil Budd
2025	Christchurch Harbour	Southern IFCA	Seine net trapping		Fish	Southern IFCA
2025	Hengistbury Head	Buglife	Pitfall trapping		Scaly Cricket	Caroline Kelly
2025	Hengistbury Head	n/a	Light trapping		Moths	in-house/Mike Jeffes
2025	Hengistbury Head	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	in-house
2025	Hengistbury Head	n/a	Pond transect		Dragonflies	in-house/volunteers
2025	Stanpit Marsh	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	volunteers
2025	Mude Valley	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	in-house
2025	St Catherine's Hill	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	in-house
2025	Christchurch Harbour	BTO	WeBs count		Birds	CHOG
2025	Christchurch Harbour	CHOG	Breeding bird survey		Birds	CHOG
2025	Christchurch Harbour	n/a	Field survey		Insects	Paul Morrison
2025	St Catherine's Hill	ARC	Refugia transect		Reptiles	in-house

2025	Hengistbury Head	ARC	Refugia transect		Reptiles	in-house
2025	Hengistbury Head	n/a	Pond survey		Natterjack Toad	in-house
2025	St Catherine's Hill	DHP	Heathland Bird Survey		Birds	

Selected additional wildlife monitoring data sources:

Holes bay nature park

- **Website**
- **2024 latest survey report**

Appendix 9

Highlighted species trends - species lost

There are many species where their distribution and density are changing across Dorset, many are not clearly known but some are very apparent. Invertebrates are generally seeing an overall decline and species that were once common in Dorset are now rare.

Long-term data shows that more species have decreased significantly in number than have increased. The factors are not always known but many that have become apparent have strong correlations with climate and/or habitat.

Where habitat restoration has occurred, there is encouraging evidence that nature can respond quickly, if given the chance. Birds, Butterflies, Moths and Dragonflies tend to be the most easily and regularly observed and recorded taxa, with many professional and amateur recorders located across the county, providing annual insights into any clear or rapid changes.

Appendix XX highlights a small representation of species that have seen significant changes within BCP, highlighting the need to avoid complacency about what we have, and also to expect new arrivals.

The need for continual monitoring is vital to understand both local and national changes and the health of our environment and take action where it is possible. It is hoped in the future to be able to produce graphs and visuals related to the trends shown below.

Class	Species	Trend	Likely reasons	Comment
Birds	Willow Warbler	Decreasing	Climate Productivity	63% decline in SW England since 1995. This once common breeder is almost now restricted to a passage migrant within BCP. Northen population is increasing, suggesting a shift northward.
	Wood warbler	Extinct	Climate Predation	32 pairs were reported across Dorset in 1998, bred in Delph Woods. Part of a national decline, has been on UK red list since 2009
	Spotted Flycatcher	Decreasing	Low 1st year survival rates Lack of flying insects Predation Traditional habitat management has changed.	Another summer migrant suffering severed declines. 66% decline in SW England since 1995. Improved habitat, reduced use of pesticides may assist recovery.

	Goldeneye	Rapidly decreasing	Climate Birds no longer need to migrate as far south.	Dramatic decline, Poole harbour was a nationally important wintering site, with up to 500 birds in the 60's, 208 were counted in Feb 1991, with just 5 birds in Feb 2025
	Woodlark	Increasing	Habitat Management	One of the many species that has benefited from improved heathland management. It also now breeds away from traditional heathland habitat and the recovery of habitat at Wild Woodbury (DWT) has enabled the species to breed there in the past two years.
	Firecrest	Increasing	Climate	Rapid population growth, from just a few breeders in the west of the county, can now be encountered breeding across Dorset and BCP.
	Egrets and Herons	New arrival	Climate Habitat restoration	Numerous species colonising and expanding rapidly. Little, Great and Cattle Egrets in particular.
	Osprey	Increasing	Reintroduction and protections	First successful pair to breed in southern England for 200 years occurred in Poole Harbour in 2022. 2025 saw a second pair successfully breed.
Invertebrates	Jersey Tiger moth	New arrival	Climate	New species of moth continue to colonise Dorset having arrived since the year 2000 but many are in decline
	Willow Emerald damselfy	New arrival	Climate	Recent colonist; first recorded in significant numbers in East Anglia in 2009. Since then, it has rapidly expanded its range and was first recorded in Dorset at Hengistbury head in 2021 and is now spreading west, having been found at Upton County Park in 2024
	Praying Mantis (A Mantis)	New arrival	Climate / illegal releases	

Case Studies

Case study 2025 - Throop SANG

Prepared by Frankie Gamble, Lead SANG Ranger

October 2025

Contents

Summary

BCP council's heathland mitigation team have converted a low biodiversity 30acre private farm into an improving biodiverse public SANG (Suitable alternative natural greenspace), for local foot traffic which alleviates the many pressures on local SSSI nature reserves. This case study has found a marked increase in various species diversity and density from baseline data and 2023 survey results. Bats, Birds, Butterfly and Bee species in particular have benefitted from a 'green' approach to delivering a SANG with creation of high quality and varied robust habitat. These results highlight how land managers can achieve biodiversity improvements on public, disturbed SANG sites.

Introduction

This case study provides an overview of the biodiversity at Throop Water Meadows SANG (also known as Throop SANG), in 2025, with the objective of evaluating the effectiveness of ongoing site management efforts in supporting wildlife. Comprehensive species surveys were conducted by our conservation team in collaboration with local ecological consultancies, focusing on key taxa including bats, birds, butterflies, and otters. Additional species data was collected through surveys led by local experts and BCP Council Rangers, as well as through incidental observations.
All the data collected from the various surveys will be or have already been uploaded onto living record or onto relevant conservation organisations' databases (e.g. British trust for ornithology, Butterfly conservation). Throop SANG is a 30 acre former private farm that has undergone a transformation through various habitat management techniques as is an important link in the Stour valley way, improving the connectivity along this important stretch of river and surrounding habitats.

Bats

Abbas Ecology carried out a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) in 2019, revised in 2021 at the SANG. In the PEA report, the site was described as having a potentially low value for foraging bats due to the lack of linear features, such as hedgerows.

Bat surveys were carried out in 2022 by Tetra Tech. These included walked transect surveys, automated detector surveys and tree roost assessment surveys.
The walked transect survey in June found four species of bat, which were Soprano pipistrelle, Common pipistrelle, Noctule and Daubenton's bat. The pipistrelles were the dominant species, with only occasional passes of the other species. Most bats were found foraging near trees along the river stour, which provide shelter and invertebrates to eat.

The automated detector surveys were positioned in the east and west of the site in June and showed significantly higher levels of activity in the east, which was near a stream leading to the Stour. Two additional species were recorded, which were Brown Long-eared bat and Serotine.
Other surveys carried out by a local volunteer showed an additional species Nathusius' pipistrelle is present on site.

The value for the foraging and commuting bats present has been assessed as Local or Parish level by Tetra Tech based on the Wray et al. method (see Appendix 1), supporting Abbas Ecology's prediction.

Subsequent to this, the 2025 surveying season performed by the team yielded Common, Soprano and occasionally Nathusius's Pipistrelle, Noctule, Serotine and Daubenton's bat. The dominant species were Soprano and Common pipistrelles, with 31 Soprano pipistrelles identified on one survey in April. A survey in May recorded 7 species in one survey. The 2024/25 planting regime in several areas around the site will play an important role in foraging opportunities for the bats in the future.

Species	**2023**	**2025**
Brown long-eared	0	0
Common pipistrelle	4	18
Daubentons	0	3
Myotis species	2	2
Nathusius pipistrelle	2	3
Noctule	2	7
Serotine	2	2
Soprano pipistrelle	24	31

Table 1: Highest count for each species recorded on surveys in 2023 and 2025

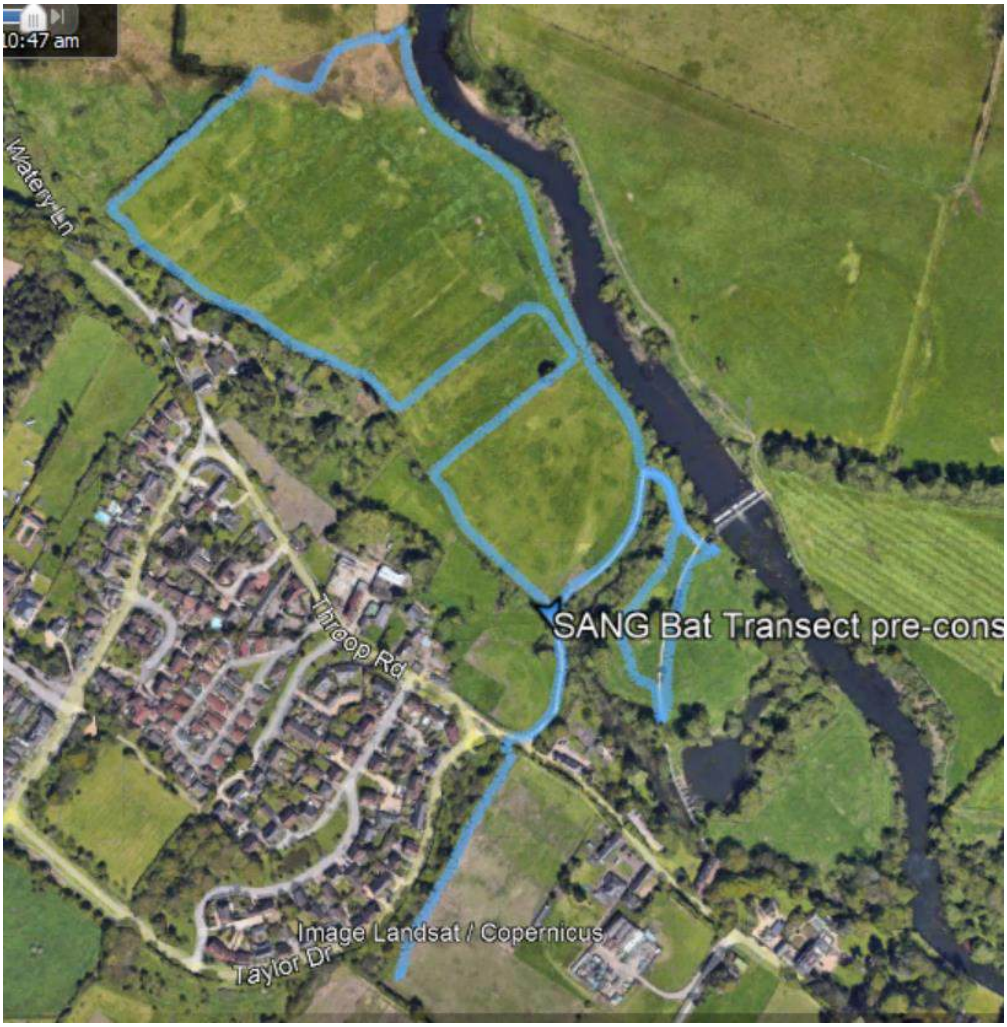


Figure 1: Bat transect route – Throop SANG

The bat transect route (in blue), starts at the SANG car park and moves north, lasting for approximately 2 hours. The team used a Batlogger device and found the busiest areas of bat activity were near the mill stream, the south-eastern end of the SANG and the woodland near Taylor drive.

Birds

All the bird surveys were carried out once a month on both Careys field by volunteer Silvia Freire and on the main Throop SANG route by the ranger team. The data has been uploaded onto BTOs BirdTrack database in line with the other bird survey data from BCP central sites.
The winter bird surveys were conducted from January to March and will be completed monthly in November to December. In the first three months of the year, 35 species were recorded on site.

There has been a good number of ad hoc observations on site which include: Spotted Flycatcher, Norther Wheatear, Nightjar, Great White Egret, Western Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, Water Rail, Eurasian Siskin, Cuckoo, Lapwing and Kingfisher.

Some of the more 'commonplace' green listed species such as Great Tit, Robin, Blackbird, Carrion Crow, Goldfinch and Magpie were widespread and are now a familiar feature on site.

In 2025, The highest number of species spotted on a survey was 36, with an average of 26 species found each survey. In 2024, the highest number of species was 25 with an average of 20 species a survey. In 2023 the highest number of species was 24 species with an average of 19.

The highest total number of individual birds in 2025 recorded on a survey was 172. The highest total number of birds recorded in 2024 was 136 and 74 in 2023. The avian biodiversity and density on site is moving in a positive direction.

Previous actions to improve habitat by planting native trees and hedgerows has been delivered, with more planting planned in 2026.

Species	Baseline	2025
Blackbird	4	7
Blackcap	1	1
Black-headed Gull	13	18
Blue Tit	5	12
Brent Goose	3	0
Bullfinch	2	0
Buzzard	3	2
Canada Goose	2	2
Carrion crow	0	9
Cattle Egret	1	0
Cetti's warbler	0	2
Chaffinch	2	4
Chiffchaff	1	7
Common Gull	1	0
Common Sandpiper	1	0
Collared Dove	0	0
Cormorant	3	6
Dunnock	3	4
Egyptian Goose	4	0
Fieldfare	0	0
Feral pigeon	0	8
Goldcrest	0	2
Goldfinch	0	59
Goosander	2	0
Great tit	5	8
Great spotted woodpecker	2	1
Greenfinch	12	8
Grey heron	1	3
Grey Partridge	2	0
Grey Wagtail	2	1
Greylag Goose	5	0
Herring Gull	2	20
Hobby	0	1

House martin	0	20
House sparrow	3	19
Jackdaw	0	11
Jay	1	3
Kestrel	2	2
Kingfisher	0	0
Little Egret	1	3
Little Grebe	1	0
Long-tailed tit	5	8
Magpie	3	6
Mallard	8	14
Meadow pipit	3	19
Mediterranean Gull	0	1
Mistle Thrush	0	1
Moorhen	7	8
Mute swan	10	4
Nightjar	1	0
Nuthatch	0	1
Peregrine falcon	0	1
Pheasant	5	3
Pied Wagtail	0	5
Raven	0	1
Red kite	0	1
Redwing	1	1
Reed Bunting	1	1
Reed warbler	1	4
Robin	4	10
Rook	0	5
Sedge Warbler	1	0
Snipe	22	0
Song thrush	2	2
Sparrowhawk	1	1
Starling	200	35
Swift	4	11
Tawny Owl	1	0
Teal	3	0
Stonechat	0	4
Swallow	0	15
Treecreeper	0	1
Wheatear	0	0
Whitethroat	1	4
Woodpigeon	17	24
Wren	3	7

Table 2: Baseline versus 2025 highest individual count for species spotted during surveys at Throop SANG

Figure 2: Kestrel are a common sight on Throop SANG now with the improvement of habitat for prey species

Figure 3: Stonechat have been found breeding on site

Invertebrates

Butterfly transects were undertaken weekly between the beginning of April and the end of September 2025 around the SANG by the team. Our data was uploaded to the UK Butterfly monitoring scheme (UKBMS), with all the rest of the data across the central BCP countryside sites. We followed the UKBMS transect methodology.

The transect route was split into seven sections to roughly follow areas of different habitat. Surveys were carried out during calm, warm, sunny days when possible. The route was walked at a continuous pace and butterflies recorded within 5m ahead or to the side of the surveyor. The highest amount of Butterfly activity was found in sections 1, 2, 6 and 7.

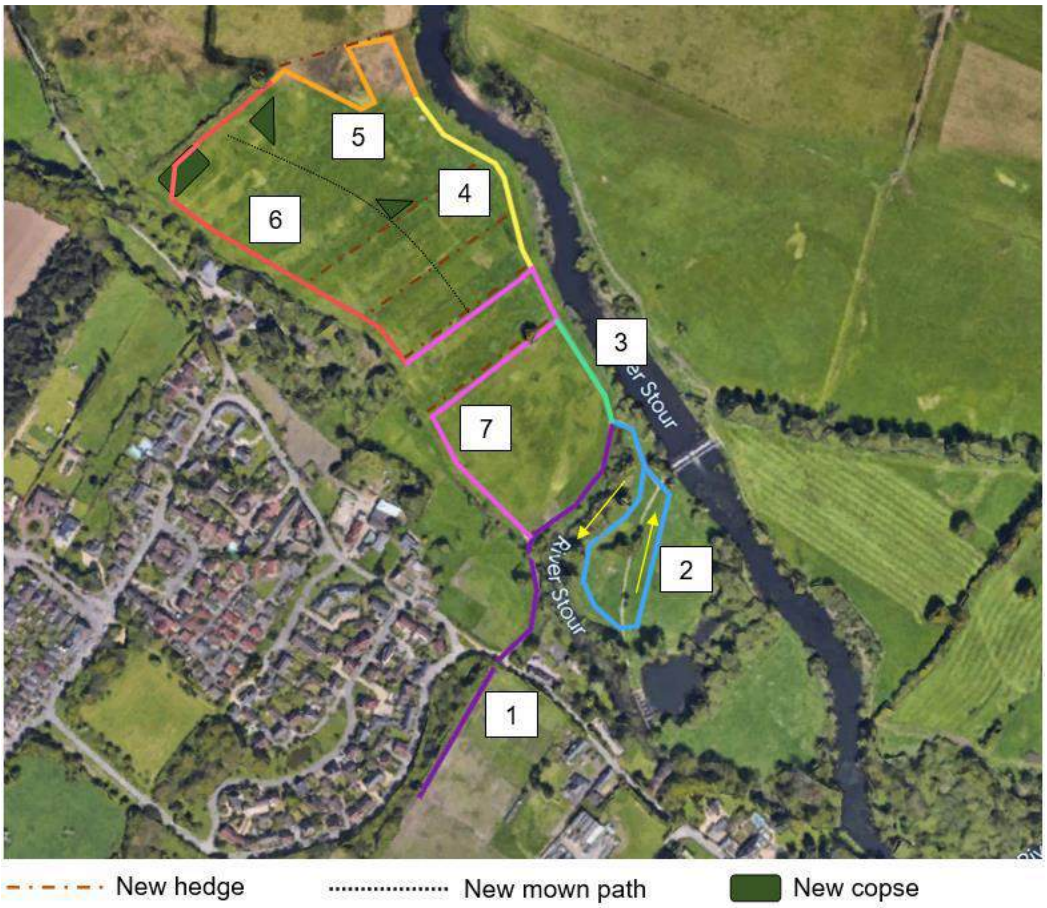


Figure 4: Butterfly transect route on Throop SANG

Species	Baseline	2023	2025
Small Skipper	1	8	39
Small/Essex Skipper	0	2	4
Large Skipper	5	9	0
Brimstone	2	4	1
Clouded yellow	0	0	1
Large White	0	10	45
Small White	0	10	41
Green-veined white	1	0	9
Orange Tip	0	4	1

Small Copper	0	2	1
Brown argus	1	0	1
Common Blue	1	2	9
Holly Blue	3	4	3
Red Admiral	1	17	13
Painted Lady	1	2	1
Peacock	3	18	14
Comma	0	3	10
Speckled Wood	2	5	4
Marbled White	2	2	1
Gatekeeper	1	61	107
Meadow Brown	50	183	89
Small Heath	2	0	0
Small Tortoiseshell	4	0	0

Table 3: Highest count of each species spotted during transects during 2025, 2023 and baseline surveys

In total, 20 species of butterfly were spotted at Throop SANG during the 2025 transect survey period. Additional ad-hoc sightings of Small heath, Small Tortoiseshell, Purple hairstreak, Large skipper and Clouded Yellow were also on site this year. In comparison, 16 species were identified during the Baseline, with 18 species in 2023, indicating the improved habitat management is having a positive effect on butterfly species on Throop SANG.

Recommendations for improving Butterfly species on site:

- Continue floristic diversity by restoring the floodplain meadows.
- Increase species diversity in hedgerow species to provide more food opportunities.

Bee surveys were carried out by Silvia Freire and followed the Bumble Conservation Guidelines for their Bee surveys. The transect route follows the same path as the butterfly transect and is walked once per month in March to October in fair weather with low winds and between 11am and 5pm.

Species	**Baseline**	**2023**	**2025**
Andrena nitida	0	0	1
Andrena sp.	0	0	1
Bombus sp	0	0	1
Brown Banded Carder Bee	0	9	2
Buff-tailed Bumblebee	0	6	8
Common Carder Bee	0	18	24
Common Mining Bee	0	1	0
Early Bumblebee	1	0	9
European Hornet	0	0	1
Garden Bumblebee	0	1	1
Honey Bee	1	40	26
Large Sharp Tailed Bee	0	1	0

Patchwork leaf-cutter bee	0	0	2
Red-tailed Bumblebee	0	2	0
Shrill Carder Bee	0	4	0
Tawny Mining bee	0	0	1
Tree Bumblebee	0	0	2
White-tailed Bumblebee	1	14	11

Table 4: Total Bees spotted on surveys across 2025, 2023 and the baseline study

Recommendations for improving Bee species on site:

- Continue delivering higher quality floodplain meadow habitat.
- Create new habitat piles which include brash and logs.
- Encourage more flowering species on banks.
- Coppice bramble thickets on rotation to provide more flowers.
- Cut small patches of finished thistles to encourage regrowth and reflowering in autumn.

The data available for Odonata in 2025 is currently incomplete bar ad-hoc sightings, with a presence/absence survey planned in 2026. All sightings are entered onto living record.

The transect route encompasses the waterbodies and wet areas of the SANG, including the ditch, the mill stream and along the river.

Figure 5: Route of the Odonata survey in pink

No data for Riverflies has been collected in 2025. Records of riverflies including Blue Winged Olive mayfly and Narrow-Bodied Stoneflies were found at two sites upstream of the Stour at the SANG.

Actions to improve habitat for invertebrate species:

- Plant more native trees and shrubs.
- Encourage wildflowers to re-establish.
- Sensitively manage the river corridor.

Mammals

Formal surveys of Otter and Water Vole have been carried out at the SANG in previous years, though Roe deer, Field Mouse and Weasel have been observed ad hoc. There has been no conclusive evidence of Water Vole yet, but they have been reported (Guy Finucane, 22).

Guy Finucane surveys for Otter and Water Vole for the Dorset Mammal Group and has evidence of activity nearby the boundaries of the SANG, including spraints, a couch and photographs of Otter at Hicks Farm. There was also a holt nearby, so it is likely that Otter utilised the river corridor along the SANG as part of a wider territory (Finucane, 2022).

Surveys were carried out on several dates in June and October 2025 by Guy Finucane. The slower flowing water at Mill stream and pond are conditions favoured by water vole, but much of the riverbank on these stretches has
wide mud margins which is not suitable habitat and there hasn't been any sighting of the species.

The flooding in 2024 had a largely negative impact on Otter numbers both locally and nationally. However, potential signs of Otter activity around Throop SANG with discarded food sources and an ad-hoc sighting showed that there might be a small contingent or solitary individual in the area.

Key species:

- Otter
- Water vole

Actions to improve habitat:

- Sensitive management of river corridor
- Grazing grassland areas
- Protect potential Water Vole habitats by preventing dog access into the mill stream.
- Limit feeding of water birds on the waterways as it leads to a rapid increase in the population of brown rats
- Planting native trees and shrubs.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptile surveys have been carried out by BCP without much success. It is possible that low numbers of reptiles used the site due to lack of suitable vegetation structure. Grass snakes have been seen ad hoc by locals and BCP staff. No amphibian surveys have been carried out.

Key species:

- Grass snake
- Slow worm

Actions to improve habitat:

- Ditch restoration
- Grazing grassland areas
- Creation of a wildlife pond
- Creating brash piles for refugia, basking and hibernation

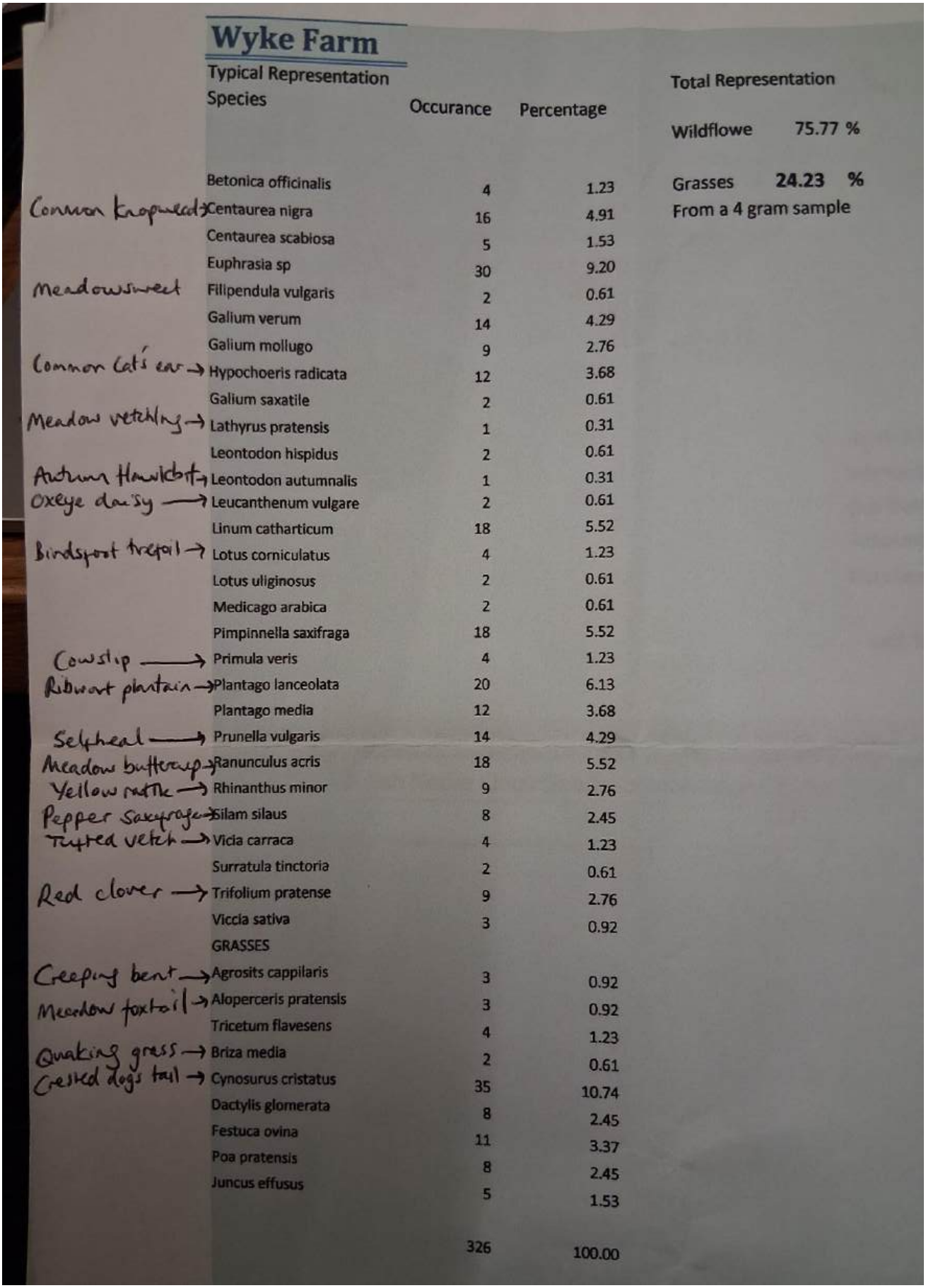
Plants

Abbas Ecology's 2019 PEA, taking place on the private farm after flowering season, noted only the dominant presence of False Oat Grass within the horse paddocks, with some Yarrow, Autumn hawkbit and Red clover in the sward. There were patches of Marsh Cudweed in poached bare soil, Amphibious Bistort on the river margins and Purple Loosestrife in the reed swamp. The open grassland at the SANG was described as having low ecological value, being dominated by coarse grasses and lacking good structure. Another field was dominated by bramble patches and ruderals including Teasel, thistles and Burdock.

No formal plant surveys have been undertaken in 2025, but the intensive floodplain meadow restoration project which consists of 26 x 3m rotavated strips - has already seen a diverse range of native meadow plants already emerge, with more expected next season. After working in partnership with the Countryside regeneration trust, who have undertaken an impressive floodplain meadow restoration project of their own at Bere Marsh farm - Our seed mix was purchased from Heritage seeds, who collected the specialist mix from Wyke farm, a large-scale floodplain meadow restoration project itself that has been going for nearly 25 years. A local farmer harrowed, seeded and rolled the mix into the ground, which was subsequently grazed later in the year to knock back encroaching dominant grass species.

Throop SANG has also seen an impressive planting regime in 2025 that has installed some 2,154 whips and 6 mature trees, through various funding streams. 170m worth of native hedgerow whips have been awarded to the site from the Tree council/DEFRA Trees outside woodland fund which will further help to increase biodiversity on Throop SANG.

Figure 6: Throop SANG floodplain meadow restoration project



Wyke Farm

Typical Representation

Species	Occurance	Percentage
Betonica officinalis	4	1.23
Common knapweed → Centaurea nigra	16	4.91
Centaurea scabiosa	5	1.53
Euphrasia sp	30	9.20
Meadowsweet Filipendula vulgaris	2	0.61
Galium verum	14	4.29
Galium mollugo	9	2.76
Common Cat's ear → Hypochoeris radicata	12	3.68
Galium saxatile	2	0.61
Meadow vetchling → Lathyrus pratensis	1	0.31
Leontodon hispidus	2	0.61
Autumn Hawkbit → Leontodon autumnalis	1	0.31
Oxeye daisy → Leucanthenum vulgare	2	0.61
Linum catharticum	18	5.52
Birdsfoot trefoil → Lotus corniculatus	4	1.23
Lotus uliginosus	2	0.61
Medicago arabica	2	0.61
Pimpinnella saxifraga	18	5.52
Cowslip → Primula veris	4	1.23
Ribwort plantain → Plantago lanceolata	20	6.13
Plantago media	12	3.68
Selfheal → Prunella vulgaris	14	4.29
Meadow buttercup → Ranunculus acris	18	5.52
Yellow rattle → Rhinanthus minor	9	2.76
Pepper Saxifrage → Silam silaus	8	2.45
Tufted vetch → Vicia carraca	4	1.23
Surratula tinctoria	2	0.61
Red clover → Trifolium pratense	9	2.76
Viccia sativa	3	0.92
GRASSES		
Creeping bent → Agrosits cappilaris	3	0.92
Meadow foxtail → Aloperceris pratensis	3	0.92
Tricetum flavesens	4	1.23
Quaking grass → Briza media	2	0.61
Crested dogs tail → Cynosurus cristatus	35	10.74
Dactylis glomerata	8	2.45
Festuca ovina	11	3.37
Poa pratensis	8	2.45
Juncus effusus	5	1.53
	326	100.00

Total Representation

Wildflowe 75.77 %

Grasses **24.23** %

From a 4 gram sample

Figure 7: Seed mix species used in the floodplain meadow restoration project with the percentage of each found in mixture

Actions to improve habitat:

- Grazing grassland areas
- Topping ruderals followed by grazing
- Hay cut, followed by grazing
- Green hay cut from suitable donor site, followed by grazing
- Cutting back dominant grass species around whips

Baseline

Throop SANG currently features a variety of habitats which have been carefully built up and created by the team. However, it looked very different before. Mature woodland, developing planted woodland, bramble scrub, reedbed and swamp, riverbank and wet margins and native hedgerow, were described as good resources for wildlife such as birds, bats and invertebrates. The original open grassland was assessed to be of low ecological value, and the overall biodiversity of the site was found to be modest (Abbas Ecology, 2021).

No further protected species surveys were recommended by Abbas Ecology except for Otter, which is now being surveyed. The implication was that other than Otter and bats, the site had low potential for protected species whilst the site was still a private farm.

The creation of the car park was assessed as having little impact beyond the removal of several trees, which have negligible potential for roosting bats, and the possible damage to old hedgerows which were prevented by protective fences and buffer zones during works. With planted native flowers on the banks of the car parks in conjunction with planted whips and volunteers cutting back encroaching thistle, dock and grass species, the car park area is now yielding excellent invertebrate species which in turn is encouraging various birds into the area.

Future Survey Schedule

A yearly survey schedule (Table 5) has been created to monitor various species over time. Surveys will follow standard survey methodology by trained surveyors to create a comparable data set. Bird, bat and Otter surveys will use the same method as the baseline surveys.

We expect future vegetation surveys to follow the Rapid Condition Assessment method, streamlining the data and focussing on key indicator species to quickly assess changes in habitat quality. There is scope for a good botanist to record all plant species present to prove changes in biodiversity at greater intervals of time.

Butterfly surveys will follow UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme method, picking up day flying moths at the same time. Regular bioblitzes could help fill any gaps in biodiversity data not included in routine surveying.

Task	Description	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Breeding bird survey	Once per month between 6am-11am												
Winter bird survey	Once per month												
Butterfly survey	UKBMS method: Weekly 10:45-15:45 in favourable conditions												
Moth surveys	Daytime moths included in Butterfly surveys aswell as ad hoc records												
Bat survey	Monthly: 2 hours after sunset												
Bee survey	Monthly												
Odonata survey	Presence/absence survey annually as well as ad hoc records												
Amphibian survey	Visible inspection and ad hoc records												
Mammal survey (Badger, water vole & Otter)	Four times a year												

Table 5: Proposed yearly survey schedule

Conclusion

The team are very happy with the direction that Throop SANG is moving into in terms of visitor enjoyment of the site, as well as the increase in biodiversity for a wide variety of native species. The site is now seen by many as a robust nature reserve in its own right, which only encourages more visitors in and away from SSSIs and other precious nature reserves. One of the main reasons that the public visits SSSI nature reserves is the abundance of flora and fauna and Throop SANG is looking to mimic that wild feeling for our users who could easily choose to visit a barren, open monotypic grassland in the form of parks, if they just wanted their dogs to run around. Ultimately, we believe this management style is the benchmark for how SANGs should be delivered, encouraging additional people and dogs to the countryside whilst delivering biodiversity gains for multiple species.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Scoring system for valuing commuting and foraging bats

Geographic frame of reference	Number of bats
International	> 50
National	41-50
Regional	31-40
County	21-30
District, local or parish	11-20
Not important	1-10

(Wrey et al., 2010)

Appendix 2: Otter and Water Vole survey 2025

Hicks Farm – Site of Alternative Natural Greenspace

Otter and Water Vole Survey – 2025

Surveys were carried out on several dates in June and October 2025 by Guy Finucane.

Water Vole (Arvicola amphibious)

As previously reported, slower flowing water, as found on the mill stream and mill pond, is preferred by water voles but much of the riverbank on these stretches has wide mud margins which is not suitable habitat. Private gardens meet the riverbank along Areas 2 and 11 (see plan WV1). This is a more suitable habitat but no evidence of water vole habitation was observed. No detailed survey has been conducted for this 2025 report but I visit the river almost on a daily basis and no evidence of water vole activity was observed.

A number of holes in the riverbank were observed on the northern section of Area 14 but I have since established that these are occupied by brown rats (Rattus norvegicus).

Plan WV1

As water voles are our most endangered mammal, it would be prudent to protect potential habitats, for water voles and other wildlife, by preventing dog access into the mill stream. Feeding of water birds in this location should be discouraged as it leads to a rapid increase in the population of brown rats (Rattus norvegicus).

Otter (Lutra Lutra)

2024 was bad year for our local otters. Flooding in 2024 was hugely detrimental to otters both locally and nationally. Locally, two kits are known to have died and another was seen running along the footpath leading from the sewage works to the river. Separated from its mother, it is unlikely that the kit would have survived.

Otter kit rescued from the riverbank near Kingfisher Barn in April 2024. Unfortunately, it didn't survive.

Dead otter kit found beside footpath near Throop Mill Cottage. It's possible it became separated from its mother, wandered into hostile territory and was killed by a jaw bite from an adult male.

Mother and two kits observed at Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve in October 2024. These elusive mammals tend to be much more 'visible' when raising kits. The lack of any subsequent sightings, despite prolonged daily visits over the following three weeks, leads me to question if these kits survived.

Dead kits were sent to the Environment Agency and then onwards to Cardiff University for post mortem. The high mortality rate in 2024 may account for the infrequency of subsequent sightings into 2025.

Areas around Hicks Farm SANG and stretches of river upstream and downstream of the SANG were surveyed on various dates in June and October 2025.

A survey of the mill pond in June found a large number of fresh water mussel shells on both sides of the channel close to where it meets the main river. This could be indicative of otter feeding although no otter footprints were observed and no spraint was observed in the vicinity.

Freshwater mussel shells beside the mill pond – June 2025.

In August 2025, a reliable source advised me of their sighting of an otter near the weir bridge. It was observed on the path on the north side of the river, crossed the grass and entered the river under the weir bridge and then headed downstream.

In October 2025, I surveyed areas around the millstream, the north side of the river from the weir bridge, heading upstream, and the south side of the river from the weir bridge up to the Wessex Water road bridge. No evidence of otter activity was observed.

Survey conclusions

No evidence of water voles and limited evidence of otter activity in 2025 in the area of the SANG although otters are present a short distance upstream. The two kits observed in 2024 and 2025 will soon be separating from their mother and will need to find territory of their own so may take up territory in the vicinity of the SANG.

Report Submitted by Guy Finucane
30th October 2023

Appendix 3: Reports referenced

Hicks Farm SANG BAT REPORT 784-B032855 (Tetra Tech Limited, 2022)
Hicks Farm SANG BREEDING BIRD SURVEY REPORT 784-B032855 (Tetra Tech Limited, 2022)
Hicks Farm SANG WINTERING BIRD SURVEY REPORT 784-B032855 (Tetra Tech Limited, 2022)
2021 Odonata Survey Stour Valley · Millhams Mead · Throop Nature Park Report. Reference: BCP-OS-01 (BCP Council, 2021)
Hicks Farm SANG - Otter and Water Vole Survey – Spring 2022 (Guy Finucane, 2022)
Hicks Farm SANG - Otter and Water Vole Survey – Winter 2022 (Guy Finucane, 2022)
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: Proposed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace at Hick's Farm, Throop. August 2019 revised January 2021. (Abbas Ecology, 2021)
Hicks Farm Plant species list FA Woodhead 2018 (Felicity Woodhead, 2018)
Hicks Farm Species Records GF and Otter and Water vole survey 2025 (Guy Finucane, 2022)

Case Study II

Urban Greening project evaluation

The Urban Greening project (2023-2025) aimed to **'Enable communities to take practical action around urban greening'.** This case study describes the engagement, activities and pilot projects undertaken, and resources created in pursuit of that ambition.

Urban Greening project evaluation

The Urban Greening project aim was to: '**Enable communities to take practical action around urban greening (residents, business and private small-scale landowners or local facilities).'**

The two primary work packages were:

- 'Curate and create resources to enable people to make nature-positive changes on their own land.' (4.1)

- 'Provide practical support through pilot projects to enable action and test programmes for scalability.' (4.2)

These were split further and achieved as outlined in this Evaluation document.

4.1 Curate and create resources to enable people to make nature-positive changes on their own land

We created several different types of resources. Each to engage with different community groups, in different ways, with an aim to reach the widest audience achievable.

These include:

- 2 presentations made for in person wildlife gardening talks.
- 10 downloadable how-to guides on wildlife gardening.
- Multiple 'Back 2 Nature' events held in parks engaging people around and sharing the subject of the downloadable guides.
- 4 videos created for social media further adding to the content of the guides.
- Interactive map for members of the public to have their nature improvements added too, showing all nature friendly gardens across BCP.

Breakdown and Engagement numbers:

Wildlife talks: 8 talks given on wildlife gardening, 150+ attendees. Talks delivered at Stewarts Garden centre, Red House Museum, 2 Churches and 2 Community centres.

Talks always well received and requests for more. Presentations can continue to be used for future talks.

Testimonials from talks:

"You speak so well, the enthusiasm and passion is amazing, and it was a great balance of hard hitting truths, optimistic information about how people can help, all delivered with humour and sincerity. I'm sure the popularity of these will grow if there is appetite to continue in future." Stewart's garden centre

"Sorry this is late but I just wanted to let you know there were very many compliments about your talk a couple of weeks ago." Red House museum

“Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the talk at Stewarts last night. Very clear, interesting and helpful. I have tried to get my head around changing the lawn to wild flowers but always seemed so complicated. You made it easy to understand and have inspired me to get going! Many thanks Jane”

“Your talks were brilliant, it got all the important points across but I think you have so many do able solutions to people that they left feeling like they could have a positive impact.” Stewart’s garden centre

Downloadable How-to guides: 10 guides made covering Meadows, Composting, Ponds, Tree planting, Bird Boxes, Flowers for Pollinators, Butterflies and Moths, Garden Habitats, Gardening for Hedgehogs and Bulb planting.

Total downloads to date: 462

Example downloadable guide covering Meadows

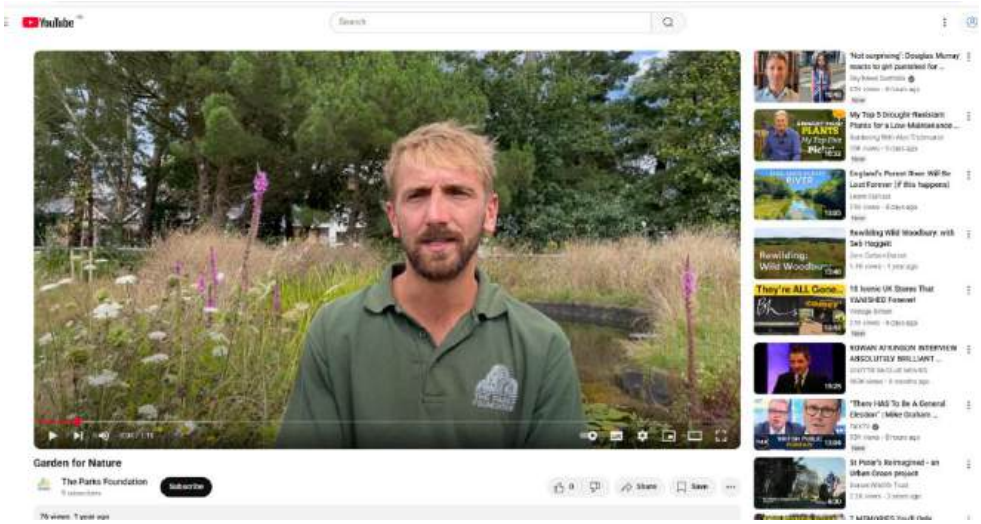
Back 2 Nature events: Events to engage residents with urban nature conservation. Each event had a take home message encouraging people to think about how they can encourage wildlife into their own outdoor spaces. Often more pitched at children and parents they expanded on the content of the downloadable guides.

- August 23 – Bird boxes: 159 attendees across GHPs
- September 23 – Hedgehogs: 177 attendees across GHPs

- October 23 – Magical mycelium: 124 attendees across GHPs
- Break for winter works, reduced number of parks where events were held moving forwards.
- March 24 – Meadows: 51 attendees
- April 24 – Ponds: 102 attendees
- May 24 – Butterflies: 12 attendees
- June 24 – Dragonflies: 19 attendees
- July 24 – Hawkmoths: 17 attendees
- **Total Back 2 Nature attendees: 661**

Craft butterflies made during an event

Social Media Videos: 4 Videos created shared across Youtube, Instagram and Facebook totalling



Garden for nature landing page video gained 80 views.

Gardening for Hedgehogs video gained 828 views total across multiple platforms.

Bird box installation guide video gained 1813 views total across multiple platforms.

Bulb planting video gained 642 views total across multiple platforms.

Gardening for Hedgehogs video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_s2eEEwfGs

Interactive Map: We created a map logging actual changes people had made in their own outdoor spaces after attending one of our events. The map is currently on TPF website and will continue to be updated as and when people send in locations and pictures of changes made. One of our bird boxes even made it further afield to Italy.

Left: Photos of bird boxes put up.

Top Left: Map of BCP

Top Right: Bird box in Italy!

4.1 Conclusion

The various resources were well received over the different medias, and the map demonstrates good engagement and community action.

Further work and Legacy post project

The benefit of the recourses created is they can continue to be present on our website and used or referred to during future events. We would expect to see videos continue to gain views and online guides continue to be downloaded. The guides are useful references when printed out and displayed during events and with minor adaption could be used in a 'train the teacher' methodology to expand school engagement capacity.

One more downloadable guide covering 'dragonflies' was near completion and will be completed and added to the website post project.

We intend to continue to add videos covering the topics in the guides as we believe the twin media format helps us reach the widest audience with minimal administration which benefits the core charity.

We will continue to update the map as and when members of the public submit improvements. The administration time needed for this is minimal and it benefits the charity's wider goals.

One more wildlife talk presentation was booked with Stuarts Garden centre with more of a focus on natural predator's vs pests rather than unnatural methods. These 3 presentations will then be able to be reused in the future if we feel the venue is suitable and benefits the charity's wider messaging or progression.

4.2 Provide practical support through pilot projects to enable action and test programmes for scalability.

We took part in seven main projects across the BCP catchment, with other smaller bits of work tying into each.

The projects are:

- Swift street and conservation
- House martin tower and pond
- Greening street planters
- Sustainable Urban Drainage systems(Suds)
- Littledown Greenway
- Schools adopting urban greening
- Maintenance Maps

Swift street – Portfield Close, Christchurch and Swift awareness.

The Parks Foundation worked with Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group and BCP Council to identify Portfield Close as a swift hotspot with potential for improvement. Swifts are a now red-listed bird that frequents our urban areas to next in buildings however it is facing issues in available nest sites and food source.

TPF and CHOG then started door knocking along Portfield close to engage residents with swift conservation and offer them the chance to have a swift nesting box and silhouette to attract them installed.

12 houses had boxes and silhouettes installed down Portfield close.

Christchurch Junior School on board with the project. See schools breakdown below.

We also helped CHOG to deliver events in 5 locations during Swift Awareness Week (29th June – 7th July 2024) – In these we promoted swift conservation and encouraged members of the public to get a box fitted or adopt urban greening principles to encourage flying insects(swift food sources) . 60 attendees.

Kings Park (Gloucester road) Swift Awareness event

House Martin tower and pond

The Hoburne estate has a good population of House Martins, however their long-term future is uncertain. Some residents actively deter the birds from nesting on their property, and the building site where they currently collect mud to build their nests is soon to be closed. The project aims to secure the birds longevity by providing alternative nesting sites (HM tower) and a long-term source of sediment (pond) to build their nests.

Collaborative project with CHOG, New Milton Men's Shed, NM Sand and Ballast. Men's shed built the nest tower. NMSB provided aggregates for pond works. BCP helped with permissions and Tower installation.

TPF installed a wildlife pond and native planting with the help of 20 volunteers. The house martin tower was installed in November 2024 with approx. 70 local people attending its official opening, including councillors, young rangers, residents etc.

Reduced mowing practices in surrounding greenspaces were added to a maintenance map to further encourage increased biodiversity and flying insects (House martin food source)

While it was expected to take some time for house martins to start using the tower/pond we documented multiple occasions of them using the pond to clean and gather mud during its first summer. Really good feedback from local residents including "best thing to happen to Hoburne" – Local resident.

Volunteers planting up the pond at Hoburne

House Martin tower grand opening event

House Martin tower during construction and installation

Local news post: https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/25134222.wildlife-area-help-house-martins-opens-highcliffe/

Greening street planters

We were approached by a community champion at Bourne Community Hub who put forward the idea of improving the baron and unloved chicane planters over a handful of roads on the Bourne estate, with the aim to create a nectar rich corridor running along Arne Ave, Northmere Rd, and Melbury Ave.

The Councils landscape architect created a suitable planting list. 1000 plants were bought as well as compost, funded by Bourne Big Local, a community group, for £3,000. Completed over several planting days with the team from the Parks Foundation, ensuring fellow residents were on board with 25 local volunteers. 24 planters were completed April 2024.

Bourne Community Hub to be responsible for planters going forward with TPF paying BCP to water over summer 2025 to help plants establish. Some issues later arose around volunteers maintaining the beds on a busy road.

Before

After

Sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) in parks

We pursued two Suds projects both with the aim of capturing rainwater and finding an alternative usage or allowing it to soak away naturally. This reduces pressure on urban sewage systems, reduced tap water consumption and can provide valuable wetland habitat for a large number of species.

The projects were:

- Community gardens rainwater harvesting. We identified several locations around our community veg growing gardens or next to our park ponds where rainwater could be harvested from a roof to provide water through hotter dry periods. Ponds particularly benefit from natural rainwater to sustain the delicate ecosystem in the water, whereas community garden volunteers could more easily water the vegetables during summer and not need excess tap water. The rainwater is stored in large heavy duty rainwater butts which we sourced and installed with relevant permissions.

Pelhams park growing space water butt

- Wetland Suds projects. We spoke with the BCP Councils expert to identify key drainage problem areas and attempted to come up with a solution. Often centred around tarmac areas with improper drainage. We would capture and divert the rainwater at source and slow down its flowrate with landscaping and native planting to allow it time to soak away naturally. This would also provide a wild area that would remain wetter than the surrounding landscape for longer, allowing a more diverse range of wetland suited wildflower and grass species and providing a different habitat for a wide range of wildlife. We identified 2 locations which would benefit.

Winton Rec wetland Suds

The Littledown Greenway

A multi stakeholder wildlife corridor project running from the river Stour in the east to Boscombe over cliff nature reserve in the south. By engaging various landowners with nature conservation green space management techniques, we can create a 3.7km nature corridor. Nature corridors are vital for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem health by connecting fragmented habitats. They enable wildlife to move freely between areas, supporting essential activities like foraging, breeding, and migration. This connectivity helps prevent local extinctions, enhances genetic diversity, and improves the overall resilience of ecosystems.

Key stakeholders:

- BHLive Littledown Park
- NHS – Royal Bournemouth hospital
- JP Morgan
- BCP council – Kings Park and Woodland walk
- Gloucester Road residents
- St Peters Catholic Primary School, Avonbourne Academies, Iford Academy (Tregonwell)

Littledown park

Site meetings with the BH live general manager and BCP parks ops to discuss long term management of greenspace resulted in them adopting a reduced mowing regime with cut and collect.


Royal Bournemouth Hospital and JP Morgan

Speaking with grounds staff, they were both keen to adopt some urban greening principles

Kings Park and Woodland Walk

~6000m2 meadow with cut and collect initially agreed with 1 semi mature oak tree planted. See ‘Further work’ below for woodland walk infrastructure improvements.

Gloucester Road

Initial engagement with residents to try to encourage adoption of Urban greening principles.

St Peters Primary, Avonbourne and Iford Academy

The 3 schools border each other through the Littledown greenway, enabling us to connect them with a circa 700m native hedgerow (and associated marginal meadow habitat) running along their perimeters. Further details in schools breakdown below. Planting occurred in two phases over two winters 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Schools adopting urban greening principles

12 schools engaged with Urban Greening principles. Schools were selected based on proximity to Green Heart Parks or in areas where there is potential to enhance wildlife connectivity. Emails were sent out offering free advice on how to enhance biodiversity of site, initial site meetings highlighted key areas to focus on. In some cases, we delivered planting events with the students and supported by paying for watering where necessary over the following years to ensure success of the project.

St Peters Catholic Primary School

- 425m native mix hedgerow planted (approx. 1900 whips)
- 1 wildlife pond installed

Part of the Littledown Greenway wildlife corridor project. We offered the school free advice and trees to enhance biodiversity onsite. The school already had funds for a pond but had doubts about installation. We helped plan and install the pond and fencing. Part of the Littledown greenway project this school received the largest portion of the planned hedgerow for connectivity.

Two planting events held over phase 1 and 2.

Phase 1, 2024: Planting of hedgerow carried out during Feb half term with students, parents and staff (45 attendees).

Phase 2, 2025: This event finished the hedgerow at this school (60 attendees)

Pond installed with students during school time.

Avonbourne Academy

- 150m native mix hedgerow planted (approx. 600 whips)

The second stretch in the Littledown greenway hedgerow. One planting event held in phase 2, 2025 during school (20 attendees).

Iford Academy

- 125m native mix hedgerow (approx. 550 whips)

The final section in the Littledown greenway hedgerow. Whips planted with students and staff.

Joseph Phillips – Iford Academy head teacher:

“The planting project you undertook at Iford was great as an opportunity to engage our students with their natural environment and also provide ecological enhancement on our site. You and your colleagues were great working with our very challenging cohort and the students responded really positively to you. The whips are growing well and we are already seeing the beginning of the hedgerow. We would be very keen to participate in any future projects.”

Iford Academy students and teachers planting the hedge

St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School –

- 9 semi-mature native trees

- 20m hedgerow
- Annual/perennial meadow sown (50m2)

Planted with students and staff

Ronald Rideout – Site manager:

“Dear Josh, sorry that you are leaving. As you know the assistance you gave us was invaluable in setting up our tree planting, hedge planting, and the wildlife garden. It is now getting established and made such a difference to the children's education in such a deprived area. Thank you again for all your help and we wish you well in your new position.”

St Joseph’s students planting trees

Somerford Primary School

- Annual/perennial meadows sown (80m2)
- Mowing regime reduced allowing natural meadow regeneration
- 3 x double swift boxes and 3 x silhouettes fitted

We had built a relationship with the school by inviting them across to Watermans Park in 2022 to help plant some trees. During the project we installed a meadow in their front green along with agreeing a reduced mowing plan. Swift boxes installed as they were near a potential hotspot and had a suitable building. They will continue to monitor the boxes for activity.

Somerford Primary School – Swift box installation and annual/perennial meadow

Christchurch Jr School –

- Installed 3 x swift double boxes and 3 x swift silhouettes as part of the Portfield close Swift Street project
- Advised on 3 semi-mature trees and native whips.
- Adopted reduced mowing regime

Due to their proximity to the Portfield swift street they agreed to have swift boxes installed on their building, they will continue to monitor them. Site walk and consultation lead them to reduce mowing and bring nature into their school.

Sam Fuller – CJS Head Teacher:

Since your involvement at CJS, we have seen a positive impact:

- We now have two areas of grassland within the school site which we have allowed to grow to meadow. This has seen increased wildlife and more children wanting to play/explore in these areas.

Swift boxes and silhouettes on CJS building

- We have Swift Boxes and silhouettes which are hoping will encourage swifts (part of the Portfield Road swift street project). We have shared information about this with our families and it has meant greater discussion and interest being shown.

There is a good deal more talk about our environment now, with children actively wanting to do their bit to help it thrive.

Longspee academy

- Advised on urban greening principles

We started delivering regular 'Longspee Ranger' sessions funded the academy and another project, getting the students out into Slades Farm to help with park maintenance.

Longspee has now built a polytunnel and growing space and the school collective plans to roll out more in other sites.

Magna Academy

- Advised on urban greening principles and native tree species.

Katherine Stafford – Magna Academy:

> "Working with Josh and the Urban Greening Project has been extremely beneficial for our academy. He has educated our Magna Changemakers for Climate group about how to re-wild the playground and which plants would thrive in that environment. He also advised our site team about what instructions to give our local council regarding rewilding our grounds and advised on

the purchase of trees for one of our playgrounds. Josh has always been willing to advise and visit the academy and the students have learnt a lot from him."

- Planted trees with the school and advised on hedge planting and the allotment space.

Site walks with other schools to encourage adoption of Urban Greening principles

- Bayside Academy
- Avonwood Primary School
- Manorside Academy
- Twynham School

Maintenance Maps

Site visits planned to all our existing Green Heart Parks with with BCP Council architects, park operative area managers and ground staff team leaders present to establish a maintenance map for each. The maps primarily look at mowing plans to identify areas that could be left to no-mow meadow or potentially to receive a yearly cut/collect. The maps would also be updated with completed tree planting and green infrastructure completed by us under the GHP project along with plans for future works. The resulting map will optimize the benefit for nature in that area while considering all other park uses and practicalities with input from park Ops. A copy will be made available for residents and the council will then adopt that plan as their primary maintenance reference.

This has resulted in 50km2+ of no mow meadow being officially committed to by BCP Council providing habitat for millions of invertebrates, which in turn will feed into the wider ecosystem.

Maintenance map for Muscliff Park

4.2 Conclusion

Each project was deemed a success by us and stakeholders, achieving its initial aim with further roll out and scalability only dependant on additional funding. While we would not expect to see an immediate biodiversity improvement as nature can take time to recover, the methods we used are well documented to be beneficial an in some cases we have seen a remarkably quick benefit to wildlife, E.g. Hoburne house martin pond.

Further work and Legacy post project

We have continued with swift awareness post project, with our partnership alongside CHOG. Using most of the materials created for the 2024 events we delivered 6 events in 2025 engaging 160 people with swift conservation.

The house martin tower and pond will receive its own maintenance map and will be maintained by BCP council alongside one of our GHP volunteer groups.

Not all the Suds have been installed by project end so we will continue to install them in time for water to be collected and used in summer 2026.

The Littledown greenway project has gained a lot of traction with interest from other potential funders and partners looking to get involved. As stated, watering is paid for until summer 2026 and we will continue to monitor the success of the hedgerow. Funding was sourced to install a wildlife pond, plant native understory whips and install bird boxes in Woodland Walk in 2025, this further adds to the nature infrastructure along the Greenway. We are looking to get as much of the greenway put into maintenance maps and will revisit stakeholders to check on progress and encourage more.

We will continue to develop our relationships with the schools involved with the project, inviting them to future events and checking on the improvements they made, offering further advice if needed.

Not all the GHP parks have been visited for their maintenance map or if they have, some are still awaiting the map to be completed by the BCP architects. We will continue to push the final parks and will adopt the same mapping method for any future green spaces the charity moves into.

GREEN HEART PARKS

We believe that our community parks can thrive when we work in partnership. The co-management of our community parks, where BCP Council continues with its current levels of maintenance and The Parks Foundation provides additional benefits including fundraising, community engagement, nature education, biodiversity improvements and café management. Continual collection of data about park use, satisfaction and changes in demand will help create spaces that communities can cherish.

Staff Efforts

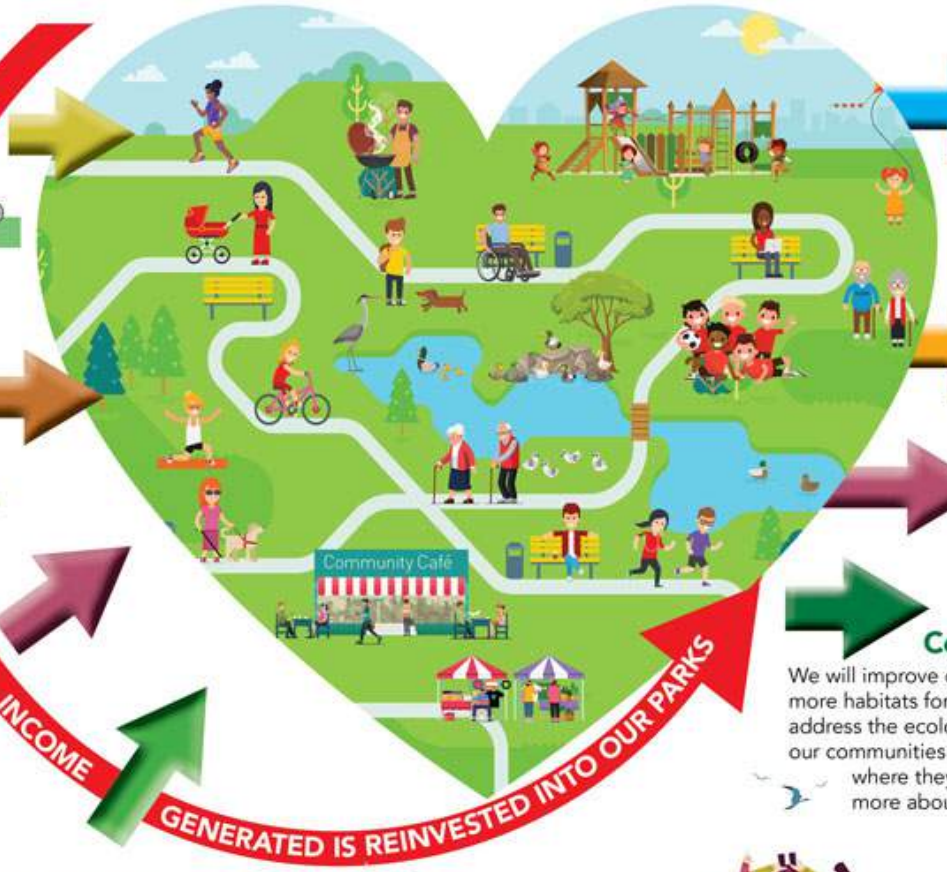
Co-ordination of the sites by Parks Activators who will bring together maintenance teams, local stakeholders, volunteers etc.

Team Park - Volunteers

Increased breadth and depth of volunteering meaning more opportunities to get involved.

Grants, Donations Legacies

Generate additional funding for parks by working with trusts, philanthropists and corporate partners, as well as promoting donations from residents.



Healthier communities

More welcoming spaces will encourage longer visits that will improve the mental and physical wellbeing of park users.

Closer communities

Work with individuals and groups to achieve specific goals, resulting in a community that feels better connected to their parks and each other.

Safer spaces

Anti-social behaviour and vandalism reduce in parks because of increased activities, informal staff presence and infrastructure improvements.

Connecting with nature

We will improve our parks for nature, creating more habitats for birds, animals and insects, to address the ecological crisis and to give our communities spaces on their doorsteps where they can connect with and learn more about wildlife.

Greenspace Economy

Increase income through the improvement of redundant buildings, introduction of new facilities and fundraising events.

THE PARKS FOUNDATION Working in Partnership

BCP Council

Case Study III

Nature Pledge

A call to local residents and businesses to sign up to a list of principles that help nature thrive in our gardens and greenspaces, whether at home or at work.

Nature Pledge

The Nature Pledge is a list of principles that help nature thrive in our gardens and greenspaces. Putting these principles into action, whether you have **a window box, a small area at your workplace or a large private garden**, can improve habitat for wildlife and insects, as well as mitigating the impact of climate change and improving your physical and mental wellbeing.

Could you, or your workplace pledge to support nature in the BCP area?

The pledge

Help our nature thrive. Whether you have a window box, small balcony, a large private garden or a small greenspace at your place of work; join us in pledging to do things better for nature, to help bring wildlife to your home, school or workplace.

- plant **native/wildlife-friendly** tree and plant species
- collect **rainwater** for watering
- stop or **reduce chemical use** to control weeds
- only use **peat-free compost** - or make your own if you can
- allow areas to **grow naturally** without interference and leave space for wildlife
- use **natural ground cover** and not artificial/plastic products
- install **bird and bat boxes**
- **reduce mowing** to allow more nature in your garden
- manage **trees for wildlife** value, leaving deadwood and ivy where possible
- install **ponds** or encourage **wetland areas** if safe to do so
- consider **nature-friendly material** choices
- create more **food growing** spaces
- **volunteer** some time to improve nature locally

Working together

THE PARKS FOUNDATION

BCP Council

Case Study IV

Dorset Peat Partnership

Peat is the biggest carbon store in the UK; it needs to be kept wet to lock in its carbon. BCP's Canford Heath is part of the Peat Partnership's ambitious restoration programme that aims to re-wet 172 hectares of the Dorset Heaths damaged peatlands in two years. Work was completed at Canford Heath in February 2025.

Programme Summary:

Dorset Peat Partnership

DORSET
Catchment Partnerships

Our programme focus

Healthy peat habitats support fantastically diverse and highly specialised wildlife. They reduce climate and flood risks by storing significant carbon and rainwater and improve water quality downstream by trapping nutrients and sediment. Dorset's peatlands are fragmented and often in poor condition due to historic land drainage. By restoring peat in Dorset, this programme will:

- Restore, connect and expand the range of protected habitats and species.
- Mitigate climate risks by holding water back in the landscape to reduce downstream impacts of high rainfall events and improve drought resilience.
- Reduce wildfire risk through removal of fuel load, increasing water in the landscape as a firebreak and providing a refuge for wildlife in high-risk areas.
- Reduce CO_2 loss from degraded peat and eventually sequestering additional carbon.

Discovery phase- December 2021-August 2023

80 sites were assessed for the potential to deliver high quality outcomes within a tight funding window. 16 sites covering a total of 172ha were prioritised for restoration, with a number of other sites noted as high potential for future restoration but where delivery is complex, long term or requires significant preparation.

At the 16 priority sites, in-depth surveys were carried out to assess peat depth and condition, water levels at different times of year, vegetation, and the implications of potential restoration on any historic environment features present. Detailed restoration plans were then developed.

Restoration phase- August 2023- March 2025

Spread over two years, the programme will deliver peatland restoration over 16 sites across the Dorset Heaths SAC. Restoration is tailored to each site, but primarily comprises:

1. Removing trees and scrub which very effectively pull water out of the peat through transpiration and break up the peat structure with their roots
2. Flailing Purple Moor Grass (*Molinia sp*) tussocks to limit regrowth and maximise habitat potential for peat-forming sphagnum mosses.
3. Identifying and blocking artificial drains to hold water within the mire and stop the remaining peat degrading further.

Canford Heath Focus

BCP's Canford Heath was part of this project and in 2025, two mires underwent restoration works, with pre and post monitoring.

- At Culliford Crescent an incised drainage gully was removing water from the mire habitat. This has been filled with the spoil banks and the material from the felled Scots Pine trees, utilised to create timber dams to slow the flow and block water in this area, also reducing flooding of the nearby urban infrastructure.
- Larger scale works on the north side of the heath, saw a main drain that ran west to east through the site, blocked with a series of timber and peat bunds, to improve and rewet

the habitat. Dense tussocks of Mollinia were mulched, to allow groundwater back to the surface.

Peat is the biggest Carbon store in the UK; it needs to be kept wet to lock in its carbon. If it dries and oxygen and sunlight reach the peat, it then starts to release Carbon Dioxide. These rewetting projects will increase the areas that retain water and hold it for longer.
A good functioning peatland captures more Carbon than woodland, though it's about the right system in the right place, so both peatlands and woodlands work together to mitigate climate change.

Information about the additional carbon capture, that has been calculated for the 16 site across Dorset, is detailed below and more information is available at Dorset Peat Discovery Project | Dorset Catchment Partnerships & Dorset Peat Partnership Project

Carbon dioxide equivalent emissions across the 16 sites before restoration was calculated at 3.32 tonnes per hectare/per year. By restoring these sites, the emission factor will reduce to 0.32 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, per hectare/per year, over a transmission period of 15 years.

Our partnership

The Peat Partnership is led by Dorset Wildlife Trust and includes the National Trust, RSPB, BCP Council, Dorset Council, Forestry England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The partnership also includes one private landowner.
The partnership has an established steering group, chaired by the Catchment Partnership. Our partners are experienced at working together and readily share expertise and resources to achieve the ambitious delivery plans of this programme within a tight window, as well as secure a sustainable legacy of monitoring and ongoing restoration.

Funding

The programme is funded through approximately £900,000 from Government's Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme covering the Discovery and Restoration phases. This has been matched by £100,000 from the Wytch Farm Landscape Access and Enhancement Fund and approximately £200,000 in cash and in-kind contributions from other partners. This funding will ensure the approved restoration of the 16 sites up to 31st March 2025. All activity after this date will be funded through other sources and partners' core maintenance budgets.
The current tranche of delivery is the beginning of the story of peatland restoration in Dorset and partners are working to embed future restoration in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and develop future conduits for building on the success of this initial work.