

Case Study: Dorset's Natural Capital at its best

Growing for Pollinators: tenant farmer engagement for the benefit of pollinators



Lead Partner: National Trust

Other Partners: Bournemouth University

Project Background

As part of the National Pollinators Strategy Defra launched its second round of Local Pollinator Project funding for Local Nature Partnerships. Dorset LNP were successful in its bid for a joint project between the National Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust and Bournemouth University to run between 2017-18.



Wildflower meadow seed harvested from local National Trust sites is prepared for broadcasting at the receptor site in 2017 © National Trust

"This project has been a great opportunity for us to make a start on restoration of our grassland habitats in West Dorset and to start working with our tenants to plan future restoration work across our sites. Eventually the hay meadow at Burton will be used as a source of green hay and seed for future restoration projects. We'll also use the lessons learned during this project to inform our future plans and to help us work with our tenants in the future." Ecology Officer, National Trust

Project Summary

The National Trust identified two areas of estate land at Golden Cap Estate and Burton Bradstock totalling 6ha for wildflower meadow restoration work.

Donor sites for seed were identified at Golden Cap and Cogden and these were brush harvested in August, and the seed sorted and prepared by a contractor. A total of 55kg of suitable seed was harvested. Burton Bradstock had more suitable ground conditions at that time, and so the land here was prioritised for re-seeding. The receptor field at Burton (4ha) was cut for hay in August, and grazed by cattle during the autumn. National Trust staff then followed on from this by harrowing to create bare ground. Seed harvested from Golden Cap and Cogden was hand broadcast across the site in October 2017.

At Golden Cap, the National Trust worked with the tenant to plan for meadow restoration. The tenant has undertaken spot treatment of docks and other weeds, and adjusted the grazing regime to prepare the site for wildflower sowing in 2018.

Both sites had baseline botanical surveys completed in July by the National Trust Ecologist and volunteers. The National Trust have been in discussion with tenants to manage the sites (and other areas) appropriately for wildflowers and pollinators in the future, and in some cases conservation clauses specifying this have been included in tenancy agreements.



Golden Cap © National Trust

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How partnership working benefited the project

The project has enabled future partnership working between the National Trust and Bournemouth University. This includes setting up student placements for summer 2018, when BU students will work on projects at National Trust grassland sites, monitoring the progress of habitat restoration and the impact on pollinator species.



Harrowing a field at Burton Bradstock in preparation for re-seeding in 2017 © National Trust

Sharing good practice across the National Trust

An article about the project was included in a tenant farmer newsletter during the year to share good practice.

Future monitoring

The follow up monitoring will be undertaken in the Spring/summer 2018 and subsequent years, and the results will feed into future habitat restoration plans.



The National Trust team hand-broadcast meadow seed at Burton Bradstock in 2017 © National Trust

“Our tenant has started the restoration process by removing dock and thistle from the fields in 2017, both of which have reduced in abundance this year. Later this summer he will be sowing strips of locally sourced green hay to help increase the diversity of the sward and introduce some wildflower seed which will provide a pollen and nectar source for pollinators in future years. He manages the land in a low intensity way, cutting and grazing with belted Galloway cattle and sheep, and this management will help to maintain the restored grassland into the future.” Ecology Officer, National Trust

More Information:

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