

Dorset LNP Annual Forum: Nature Recovery



8 February 2024



Annual Forum 2024

For this year's Annual Forum, Dorset Local Nature Partnership was delighted to host a special Local Nature Recovery event for Dorset.

Dorset is buzzing with amazing nature recovery activities already taking place, the Annual Forum focused on some of this fantastic work and the different approaches being taken across various sectors in Dorset, from farms to urban parks, and river catchments to landscape scale changes.

While great work is already happening, we need to do more, so the event included details of the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy being created in Dorset, and included a range of interactive workshop sessions, to inform the development of the strategy.

125 people attended the forum from a wide range of stakeholders including environmental charities and organisations, non-governmental organisations, the two councils, farmers and landowners, parish councils and community groups.



Presentations

The event was divided into 4 sessions and inspiring presentations were given – slides are available on the following links.

Session 1 – Landscape Recovery

[Nature Recovery: Importance, Opportunities and Limits](#) – Dr Phil Sterling, Independent Chair, Dorset National Landscape Partnership

[Wareham Arc: Delivering Landscape Scale Change](#) – Lizzie Hibbard, RSPB

[Upper Axe Landscape Recovery Project](#) – Alisdair Moffet, Upper Axe CIC (unable to attend on the day, but provided a presentation)

[Win'ning the Allen](#) – Nick Shaftesbury, River Allen CIC

[Brit Catchment Recovery Project](#) – Sam Rose, West Dorset Wildling



Presentations

Session 2 – Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy

[Introduction to Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) – Amy Smith, Dorset Council

Session 3 – Space for Nature

[Urban Nature: Connecting It All Together](#) (final slide video) – Martin Whitchurch, BCP Council & John Hanson, Parks Foundation

[FLAVOURS: A Taste of Dorset’s Countryside](#) – Caroline Richards, Dorset National Landscape

[Wild Woodbury: Making Space for Nature](#) – Seb Elwood, Dorset Wildlife Trust

[Investing in Healthy Soils: Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) – Video from Tom Gregory, Marsh Farm

[A Million-Pound Project to Restore Dorset’s Peatlands](#) – Grace Hervé, Dorset Wildlife Trust



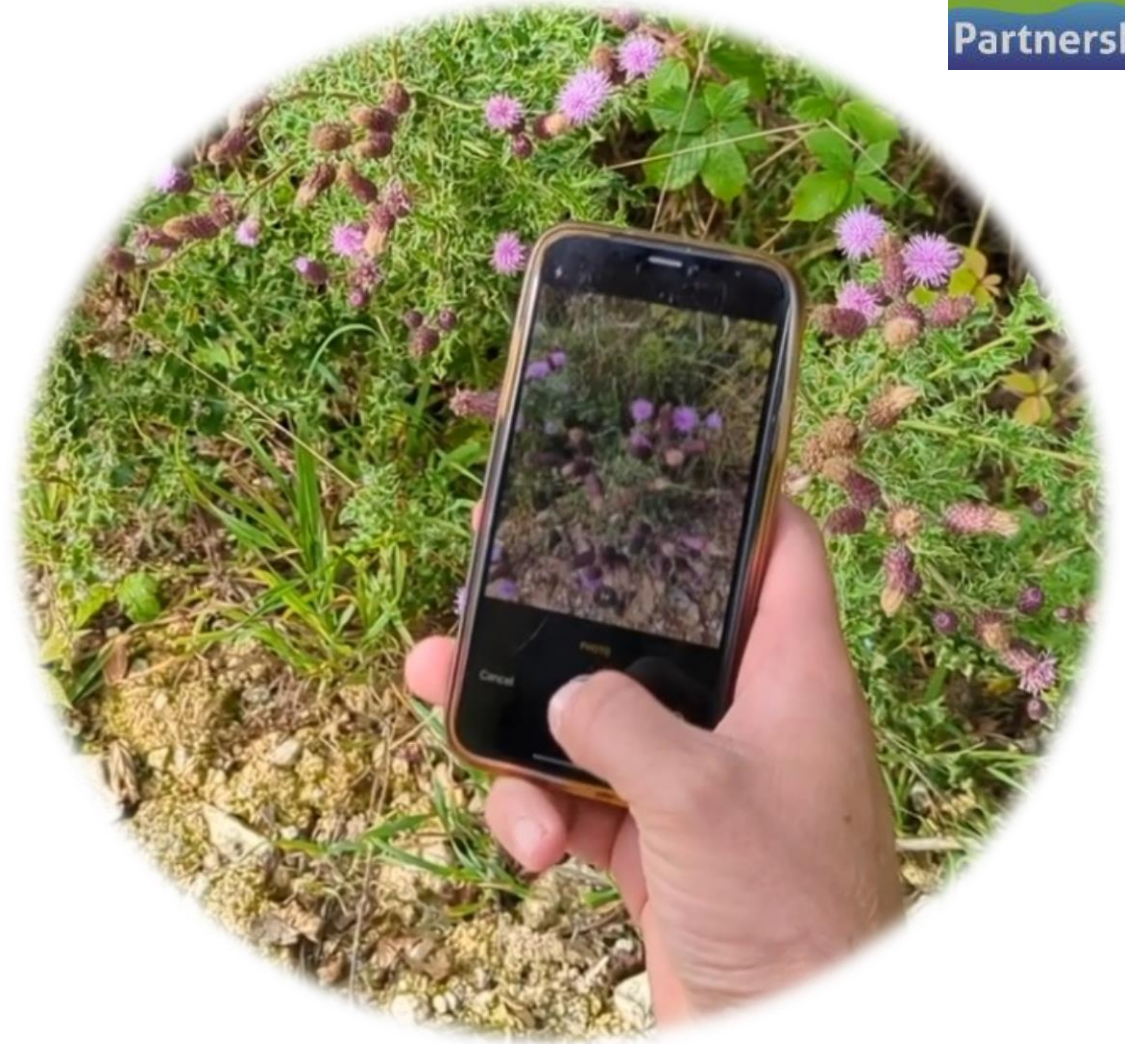
Presentations

Session 4 – Measuring Recovery

15.10 [Can Citizen Science and AI Help Record Wildlife on Farms? Lesson from a Dorset farm](#) – Sophie Alexander, Hemsworth Farm

15.20 [Farmer Cluster: Setting the Baseline for Nature Recovery](#) – Emily Newton, Dorset Wildlife Trust

15.30 [The Great Big Dorset Hedge Project](#) – John Calder, Dorset Climate Action Network



Interactive Sessions

One aim of the event was to engage participants in the development of the Local Nature recovery Strategy. Attendees were grouped on tables and asked a series of questions for discussion as a group (except for question one).

The following pages gives a summary of the responses. The full write up is available [here](#).



Question 2: What are the pressures on habitats and species in Dorset?

Comments were collated, themed and the frequency of comments analysed. Land management was seen as the biggest pressure facing habitats and species within the county.

Themed pressure	Frequency
Land management: e.g. historic modification – drainage/infrastructure; changes to river structures (manmade and natural); fragmentation – terrestrial, aquatic & marine; lack of ‘supporting habitat’ for species e.g. nightjar/wading birds; food production - intensive agriculture; food security; lack of management	36
Lack of understanding / Awareness / Apathy: e.g. shifting baselines; lack of understanding of impact of individual actions/organisational actions on nature/habitats; apathy/crisis denial; lack of equality in the sector	19
Development: e.g. need for housing & infrastructure; coastal squeeze; industry change – new opportunities; building/development on floodplains – pressure on rivers	18
Climate change: e.g. flash floods; temperature – waterways; species distribution is changing – climate change extreme weather unpredictable	16
Pollution: e.g. light pollution/noise pollution; agricultural run-off; ‘forever’ chemicals	12
Water quality: e.g. water quantity (flooding & abstraction); eutrophication – excess nutrients bureaucracy	11
Invasive species: e.g. invasive species e.g. deer, squirrels, marine, Asian hornet, rhododendron; signal crayfish	11
Funding / Finance / Economy: e.g. financial challenges/funding; lack of funding for EA for monitoring & enforcement; uncertainty re incentives & incomes	10



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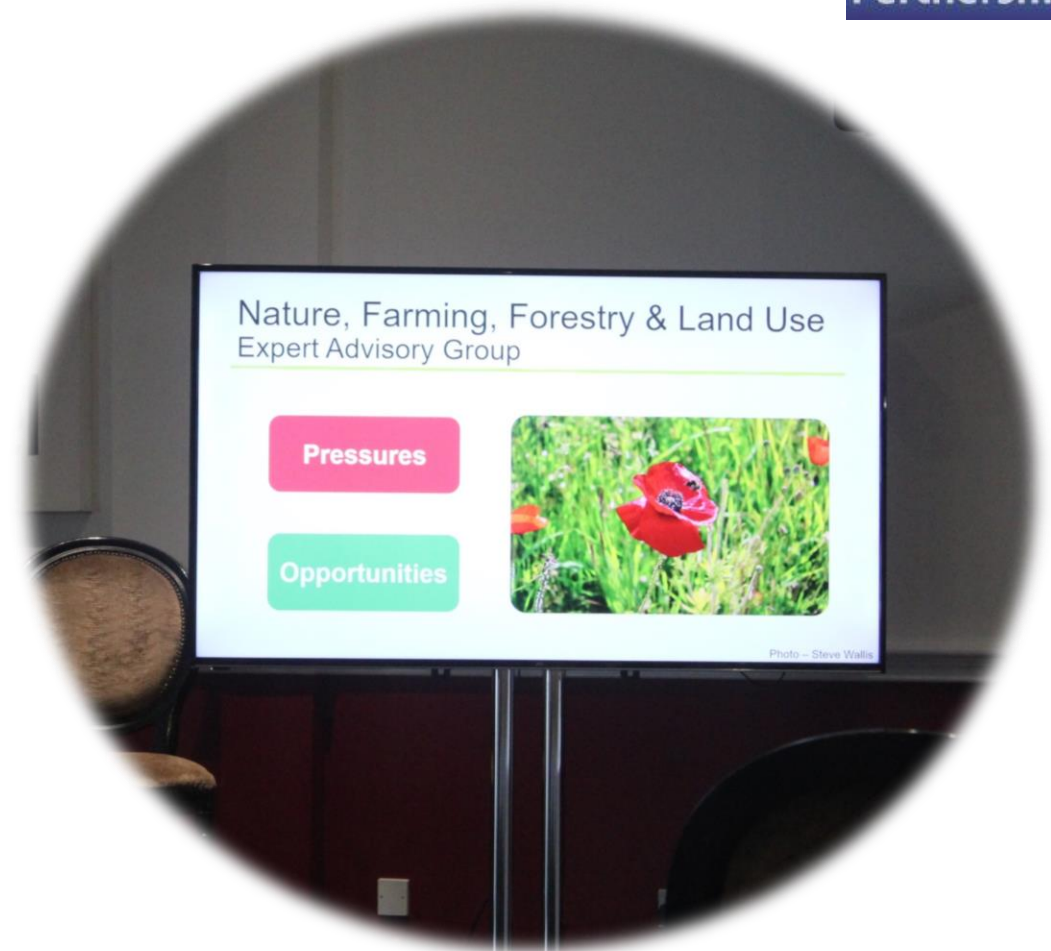
Themed pressure	Frequency
Tourism: e.g. tourism pressure – sheer numbers, litter, behaviours but brings in necessary income; paddle boarders (bird disturbance); tourism pressure – sheer numbers, litter, behaviours but brings in necessary income	8
Dogs/Cats: e.g. dog ownership (irresponsible); dogs/cats on sensitive flora & fauna	8
Human behaviour: e.g. litter – plastic/microplastic waste; human behaviour/choice - individual responsibility (behaviour changes/cultural change)	7
Other human pressures: e.g. seasonal transport pressure (influx population); call for facilities (e.g. toilets); transport emissions, lack of public transport	7
Pests / Diseases / Pesticides / Fertilisers: e.g. use of pesticides and insecticides; pests & diseases – crops/food production	6
Politics: e.g. political landscape – short-termism; poor legislation & poor implementation	6
Population: e.g. population growth, population increase – waste	5
Disconnection: e.g. nature disconnects, not a social norm; access & management – more people = less nature	4
Other: e.g. we’ve a long way to go from a nature depleted state; global pressure – predatory/migrating species	4
Energy: e.g. green energy; power generation (decarbonising grid/us)	3



Question 3 – What are the top 3 pressures from your list?

Each table was asked to chose the top three pressures they had listed. Similar pressures were chosen as the top three as those highlighted as most frequent on question 2.

Frequency of top 3 pressures	
Intensive land management / agriculture	6
Human impacts - population increase / choices / dogs	6
Housing / development	5
Funding	4
Water abstraction / quality	4
Access / management / tourism	3
Political landscape / short term thinking	3
Pollution	3
Climate change	3
Industry change	2
Connectivity of habitats	2
Interruption of natural processes	1
Lack of public understanding	1
Invasive non-natives	1
Food security	1

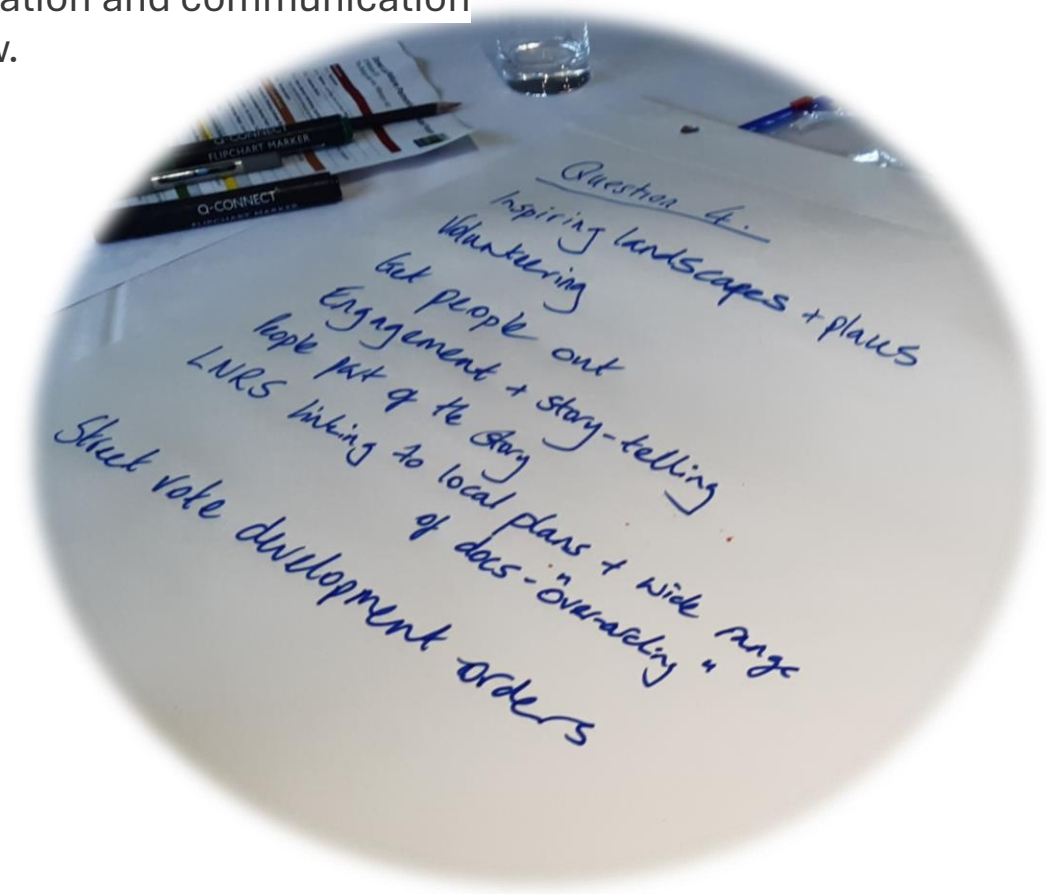


Question 4: What are the opportunities for nature recovery in Dorset?



Comments were collated, themed and the frequency of comments analysed. Responses included practical outputs and outcomes for nature recovery (i.e. direct project delivery) and opportunities linked to the process of developing the strategy such as news ways of working, collaboration and communication and awareness raising. Examples of specific comments are included below.

Themed opportunities	Frequency
Habitats / species / landscape scale: e.g. changes to river structures (manmade and natural); woodland planting to offset carbon, improvements to soil management; super NNR – priority habitats – e.g. chalk streams, very valuable internationally; reintroduction – beavers, pine marten; improve quality: water, air, soil	40
Funding: e.g. green finance; corporate social responsibility; loss of basic payment scheme	19
Collaboration and partnerships: e.g. build on excellent Dorset partnerships; partnership working – joined-up solutions; working with employers/businesses; provide more support & expertise to parish/town councils & the public	18
Changes in approaches / new ways of working: e.g. new landowners – ecologically enlightened landowners; advances in agroecology & wider adoption	17
Changing attitudes / behaviours: e.g. exploiting cultural shift towards sustainability; growing societal recognition of importance of nature	15
Community engagement: e.g. engagement & educate & enthuse our residents; public will & landowner engagement; citizen science – good entry point	14



Question 4: What are the opportunities for nature recovery in Dorset?

Themed opportunities	Frequency
LNRS Development / Delivery: e.g. unified vision for Dorset that all can contribute to; strategic approach to landscape recovery; co-creation, sense of ownership/responsibility	12
Education: e.g. optimism for the future including learning from children; Education – all sectors/ages	10
Communication: e.g. inspirational naturalists; local identity; guidelines/community guides for good environmental citizenship	8
Policy / Political change: e.g. new agricultural policy since BREXIT / ELMS implementation; change of Government; agricultural transition	7
Monitoring / Data / Mapping: e.g. monitoring of pollution (water, air etc.); build on Dorset baseline	6
Wellbeing agenda: e.g. engage Dorset LEP further on One Health agenda, social prescribing, well-being; health & wellbeing links	4
Council leadership: e.g. Dorset Council as leaders e.g. farm estate	3



Question 5: What are the top 3 opportunities on your list?

Each table was asked to chose the top three opportunities they had listed. Similar issues were chosen as the most important pressures as those that were frequently mentioned. Examples listed below were in response to question 4 and priorities in question 5.

Frequency of top 3 opportunities	
Community engagement including school engagement / increased understanding / using inspiring landscapes	15
Citizen science	2
Collaboration / partnership / co-creation	4
Generational change	1
Change in Government	2
Technological advances	1
Green finance / investment / CSR / targeted funding / tax parity	10
Sustainable food production	1
Climate change - new spaces for species / business opportunities	2
Successful development and delivery of LNRS	3
Monitoring and Enforcement of pollution	2
Nutrient management plans	2
Eco Tourism	1
Restoring catchments / connectivity of habitats including hedgerows / improving quality	4
Dorset Council as leaders	1
Connecting communities - reducing isolation	1



Question 6: How do you want to use the map and what would make it useful for you?

Groups were asked to say how they would use the maps and what would make them most useful. Specific data layers were the most frequent responses, followed by the importance of the system being easy to use and wider communication issues.

Summary of themes	Frequency
Layer on map: e.g. high-level habitat types; land ownership; buffer zones; SNCIs; marine habitats	74
Communications: e.g. interactive tool, easy to use; compatible data sets; avoiding duplication/being more efficient	38
Nature opportunity area: e.g. opportunities for planting inc. trees, hedgerows; identify BNG opportunities; prioritise effort/investment	23
Signposting: e.g. Green finance opportunities; connecting projects - greater awareness of what is happening	24
Other: e.g. ecosystem valuation tool; gaps in species recording to help target efforts	7
Maintaining/updating: e.g. regularly updated	6
Dashboard: e.g. see progress; wildlife decline	5
Citizen science: e.g. for the public to share ideas - wildlife friendly spaces and community stewardship	3



Question 7: How can we make the strategy useful and beneficial to your work?

In order to make the Local Nature Recovery Strategy most useful, attendees were asked what would make the strategy useful for them. Responses included suggestions for it being a flexible approach, ensure it developed consensus, enabled communities and landowners to be inspired to take action as well as setting out clear actions for the future.

Summary	Frequency
A strategic framework for shared objectives and priority areas	24
Easily accessible / readable for a range of people / organisations	20
A SMART plan	13
Opportunities for green finance investment / guide funding	13
Tangible outcomes - actions for communities, business, individuals	10
Maps and GIS / ID functionality	9
Empowering orgs/people to take action / advice & support / good practice	9
Opportunities for collaboration inc. contacts	7
Demonstrate the wider benefits of nature recovery / multiple benefits	6
Tool to promote the importance of nature recovery to policy makers	4
Keep it live / updated online	4
Includes flexibility	3
Build on existing work and data	3
Consensus building and widely endorsed	2
Tool to help engagement	2
Include a useful summary or keep it short	2
Lots of graphics / infographics	2



Question 8: How are we already measuring nature successes that could link to the Local Nature Recovery work?

Responses to the question on what is already measured fitted into types of measures (such as monitoring and surveys), techniques (e.g. technology), who was undertaking the measuring (e.g. organisations, landowners, citizen science) and issues with current processes (e.g. limited funding, and data sharing). Examples are included below.

Summary	Frequency
Types of measures: e.g. site conditions monitoring SSSI/SNCI; tagging - fish, bird ringing; radio tracking; income and expenditure; soil; air quality mitigation	90
How is it being measured: e.g. GIS mapping; remote sensing; satellite imagery; BNG metric; questionnaires; qualitative - stories, photos, conversations, social media	33
Who's doing the measuring and storing/reporting the data: e.g. key organisations - NGOs, Defra family, farmers; project funded activities; DERC; Dorset mapping (Dorset Explorer); DLNP State of Nature Report	57
Issues with measuring / changes needed: e.g. lack of funding; data sharing / crossover of information; quality of measures	11
Other comments: e.g. nature pledges; good way of measuring 30:30 target	5



Question 9: What do you think are good ways of measuring Dorset's progress towards the 30 by 30 target?

Groups were then asked what were other ways of measuring success. Existing tools and measures were reiterated along with further ideas. Examples are listed below.

Summary	Frequency
Specific Measures: e.g. condition of habitat; habitat resilience; SSSI monitoring; air / water quality; numbers engaged – inc. landowners / organisations / schools / community projects; private investment	46
Community Involvement / engagement: e.g. citizen science; public engagement – inc. apps; peer campaigns; build capacity of volunteers	21
Technology: e.g. embracing technology; AI; remote sensing; photography	16
Leadership / coordination: e.g. turbo-charge DERC – lead role in coordinating; largescale studies; needs coordination / processing / dissemination; linking datasets	12
Standardised approaches / comparisons: e.g. build consistency; universal standards; set generic approach with the same criteria – agree KPIs; establish protocol for baseline data	8
Commitment for monitoring: e.g. required funding and long-term commitment; need regular and ongoing surveying; include baseline data in every funding application to standardise the approach	6
Qualitative measures: e.g. public perceptions of nature recovery; health and wellbeing / connection to nature	5
Engaging new audiences: e.g. links with further education and academia; engaging with health organisations; diverse populations	5
Mapping: e.g. interactive public mapping; metric-based habitat connectivity mapping	4
General: e.g. moving towards a holistic measure of ecology not just diversity and abundance; meeting targets	4



Informing the LNRS



The responses from the workshop sessions were collated, analysed and fed into the relevant Expert Groups to inform the development of the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

This report (and appendix) will form part of the evidence for the Dorset LNRS.

Find out more about the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy at:
www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/nature-recovery



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