

## Dorset LNP Annual Forum: Chat

14 March 2022

Some of the questions were answered during the live session.

From Julie Leah: What cops does Ffinlo define as whole foods?

Will Bond: ffinlo, farmers respond to economic signals. An increasing number are interested in soils, but there are limited direct links to profitability on a year to year basis. Furthermore, society, government, finance, even EA, don't really get the importance of soils. How do we catalyse the changes you identify?

Felicity Rice: How can soil health be included in local plan policies?

Michael Bullen: Agree with much of what Ffinlo says, only to add that we should be employing a systems approach to sustainability and resilience, considering all aspects of the value chain, reducing food processing losses, as well as waste at the level of the retailer and consumer.

Janet Davis: Is there anything which will encourage public access to the countryside in any of these schemes?

Ffinlo Costain: Just a quick note to say that I agree entirely with Michael's point above. Worth looking at the Global Farm Metric <https://www.globalfarmmetric.org/>

Ian Alexander: It is likely, but not yet certain, that there will be some payments for enhancing public access to the countryside.

Ffinlo Costain: Also - just want to share our website, and link to our soil & security report. The second link is directly to the article/chapter on holistic solutions for food systems.  
[www.foodandsecurity.net/](http://www.foodandsecurity.net/)  
[www.foodandsecurity.net/files/ugd/Of4d79\\_6fd0a01a54b542cc9c4dbe9a99af7706.pdf](http://www.foodandsecurity.net/files/ugd/Of4d79_6fd0a01a54b542cc9c4dbe9a99af7706.pdf)

Julie Leah: Which grant for example would cover herbal lays?

Sophie Gregory: There is an option under stewardship - GS4

Julie Leah: thank you

Ffinlo Costain: Also as part of a broader programme under Farming in Protected Landscapes grant, if you're within AONB.

Ian Rees:

[www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/resource/farming-in-protected-landscapes/](http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/resource/farming-in-protected-landscapes/)  
<https://cranbornechase.org.uk/our-work/farmland-conservation-project/farming-in-protected-landscapes/>

Fiona Bowles: Sophie, that looks interesting-are milking cows out/mob grazed too and if so, outdoors for how much of the year?

Ffinlo Costain: This is a good farmer-led forum for Regen Ag: <https://primalweb.mn.co/feed>

Michael Bullen: Bravo Sophie and Tom.

Sophie Gregory: Cows are out at least 9 months of the year hopefully longer.

Cllr Ray Bryan: Always interesting to hear both sides of a story.

Sophie Gregory: Books to read English Pastoral James Rebanks Holy Shit by Gene Logsdon Dirt to Soil Gabe Brown Dirt by Montgomery.Podcasts Farm Gate.

Ffinlo Costain: [www.faifarms.com/podcasts/](http://www.faifarms.com/podcasts/)

Alice Favre: I also think Wicked Leeks and Sustainable Food Trust have some interesting articles and podcasts.

Sophie Gregory: Thank you everyone for listening so great to hear so many people excited about the future of the land I am going to have to go as my dad is leaving for Poland to help refugees, so I want to see him off. Also share quite a lot on instagram under farmer in training. Thanks again.

Maria Clarke: Huge thanks Sophie.

Fiona Bowles: Oliver, what are the financial effects of your approach on the price of goods, longer term and are there other incomes that are contributing?

Michael Holm: Ian (AONB) mentioned that a Strategic Landscape Plan is needed. As it would need to integrate with all private and public sectors who should / is leading on this?

Hilly Chittenden: Suggest Dorset Local Plan should have much responsibility here?

Ian Rees: You can find our tentative steps into Strategic Landscape Plans here for three areas in Dorset AONB: [www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/resource/defra-tests-and-trials-project-2/](http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/resource/defra-tests-and-trials-project-2/)

Michael Bullen: The work of our Dorset Downs Farmer Cluster should help support Local Nature Recovery.

Felicity Rice: I think perhaps Luke was talking about people that experience income poverty/inequality and are not able to choose what type of food they eat. I would hope that it is possible to create the type of change we need to see to ensure carbon stays in the soil and create a range of societal changes that allow everyone access to healthy food. i.e. policies only allow healthy food to be grown, which is planet friendly, so it's not possible to buy food that isn't healthy and biodiversity friendly.

Geoff Pettifer: Dorset's Ecological Network could be integral part of Local Nature Recovery Strategy allowing wildlife and people (by foot and cycle) to move more widely. People would see farming and landscape more closely.

Maria Clarke: Geoff, I completely agree, and the LNP will certainly be working with the councils on this work.

Cllr Ray Bryan: Let's not forget the importance of being self-sufficient on food supply where possible. The last few weeks have highlighted this.

Tom Munro: Agree, Ray - ffinlo's recommendation for an integrated agroecological approach to this is essential if it is to be long-lasting and secure - what we really don't need is a rush to produce food that further damages our already fragile natural support system for instance by ploughing up grasslands.

Michael Bullen: Would be good to explore these challenges a bit more in the panel discussion @Tom @Ray.

Robin Walls: My understanding is that we have no chance of being self-sufficient with the current population density and typical consumption rates. I believe British farms produce a very small proportion, perhaps as low as 10%. But somebody will have the data I'm sure.

Ffinlo Costain: The Food Farming & Countryside Commission have been looking at scaling agroecology for a while and this report is a helpful start - looking at how agroecology can feed Britain, and at some of the trade offs that will need to be made:  
<https://ffcc.co.uk/library/farmingforchangereport>

Cllr Ray Bryan: Two supermarkets have banned the sale of portable barbeques; I have written to their CEO's to thank them and written to other supermarket CEO's to challenge them to join the ban.

Ffinlo Costain: Britain can be entirely self sufficient, Robin, but this will require dietary change. However, we will become healthier and more resilient as a result. We are currently around 60% self sufficient, and reaching 80% could be delivered within a decade with the right policies and incentives.

Fiona Bowles: Ray, I don't think that we have ever been self sustaining, is it realistic to be AND to restore sustainable farming for the current UK population? It would be good to see these desirable goals all been jointly modelled in terms of public goods and economy (farmers and customers) to see

what is feasible at different national and world scales. The tensions between the climate and nature need, and the farming realities has been clearly expressed today. along with the exemplars of Sophie and Oliver's work.

Janet Davis: Really good to see that public access is being promoted as part of this. People need to see nature close up and to understand what is being done.

Ffinlo Costain: See above link Fiona to the FFCC work (Farming for Change). Working with IDDRI they modelled exactly what you're asking about (and found it entirely doable). IDDRI had previously modelled this for the whole of the Europe, and again found it was eminently achievable.

Ian Alexander: Previous exchanges assume implicitly that our future food will come from, broadly, the same sorts of agriculture that have supplied us for generations. Important also to understand that over 50% of farmland globally is used for animal agriculture (mostly to grow the inputs for intensive livestock systems). Replacing those industrial livestock systems will likely be key to a more sustainable future as outlined here: <https://dorsetlnp.org.uk/blog-nov-2020/>

Ffinlo Costain: Agree with Ian - we will have to see a real transition away from intensive ag, whether animal, veg or cereal.

Robin Walls: I'm sure access is important, but maybe that's wishful thinking. The present restriction to rights of way reinforces the perception of farming as an industry we need to be kept away from for our safety. With the sort of access enjoyed in Scotland I'd like to think we'd be more informed and these debates can be more useful.

Ffinlo Costain: Access essential. Agree, Robin. People pay almost nothing to support farming - less than a pound per citizen per week (less than it costs to join the National Trust) to support land management across 70% of the UK. We need to increase farm support to deliver the public goods and food we need, and increased access must be part of that deal - improved in terms of being more available, but also in terms of actively attracting more diverse groups of people. The Scottish model is great, but there are very few rights of way in the low lands making access practically difficult. A combination of open access, rights of way & permissive paths provide the best mix imho.

Janet Davis: Thanks Ffinlo. Couldn't agree more. This is why the Ramblers and others are pushing for improvements to access to be an element of ELMS.

Michael Bullen: A fine example of just rural transition, probably the best I've seen, anywhere. Bravo, Alice and Becky.

Ian Alexander: Agree!

Ffinlo Costain: Alice - do you have a website, please?

Robin Walls: To be provocative, a broad breakdown that I've heard is that we only pay a third of the cost of food in the shops. Another third is the various grants to farmers and the last third is the cost

of cleaning up the pollution, particularly for clean drinking water. So I am supporting the industry via taxes and feel I'd like a bit more right of access to see how my money is spent.

Peter Robertson: To find out more about the Purbeck Heaths NNR, go to:  
[www.purbeckheaths.org.uk](http://www.purbeckheaths.org.uk)

Alice Favre: Sadly no website at the moment but we have started a YouTube channel and have an active Instagram which shows what we are up to... Website coming when I have time.  
[www.instagram.com/chettlevillage/](http://www.instagram.com/chettlevillage/)  
[www.instagram.com/chettle\\_village\\_store/](http://www.instagram.com/chettle_village_store/)  
[www.youtube.com/channel/UCbyv5G-UFhPsoVV1fodhO2Q](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbyv5G-UFhPsoVV1fodhO2Q)

Ffinlo Costain: Robin, I'd like to see more access too. However, to put some context here, farming is subsidised to the tune of around £3bn/year - sounds a lot - but when you realise that just administrating central Gov costs £11bn, you can see just how little that is. So yes, let's have more access - but let's pay farmers to deliver these public goods that we require. I think that third to clean up external costs is a gross underestimate btw.

Tom Munro: Chettle also features as a case study on the Wessex Community Assets website - is this a good overview to share, @Alice? <https://wessexca.co.uk/2021/10/05/changing-chettle/>

Ffinlo Costain: Thanks Alice - great presentation. Fab.

Peter Robertson: Agree that there is only a conflict between public access and wildlife because there is so little public access to green space which overlaps hugely with the best places for wildlife.

Alice Favre: Yeah. We also did a presentation for Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at the beginning of the year - which you can find on youtube. And I have just written a piece for the Dorset Heath newsletter run by Robert Sharp the botanist.

Fiona Bowles: Given that access is needed to engage people with nature and to promote active transport (to reduce CC and traffic nuisance), if ELMs is only a 'maybe' for funding it, then how else can it be funded? The farmers speaking today clearly use it well to engage people with their products- more resistance to access can be on intensive /monoculture farms where the impact on wildlife would be less.

Robin Walls: Yes Alice - good talk from you and Becky. We are looking forward to looking at the botany this summer and perhaps the start of a monitoring scheme to follow the improvements from your management.

Michael Bullen: Let's talk, @Ian @Julie. This fits well with our aims in the Dorset Down Farmer Cluster.

Julie Leah: great. the gertbigdorsethedge@gmail.com is best contact

Michael Bullen: Noted, thanks Julie

Alice Favre: Good point. We struggle to find volunteers unless we know them. Just sent an email to someone in the community to see if they want to set up a TikTok account for us next! Thanks for the nudge Finley and Alana.

Alice Favre: Would love to do a Food Hub focus group with the KM students...

Luke Rake: Thanks Alice - would love to take this offer up.

Alice Favre: We have done one with local residents and the wider community but not had a young perspective.

George Streatfeild: Discover Farming (Melplash Agricultural Society's education initiative) tries really hard to involve secondary school children but it is an uphill struggle ([www.discoverfarming.co.uk](http://www.discoverfarming.co.uk))

Charlotte Loving: just to say thank you - all very interesting

Finley Cruse-Drew: is there any projects going on for involving lower economic groups with conservation farming?

George Streatfeild: We have had some success recently but our real success is in the Primary Schools

Chris Turner: Yes, very interesting and inspiring. Thanks to all contributors and experts.

David Brown: Yes well done all, some great talks

Caroline Kelly: REALLY excellent talks! Inspiring and thank you all

Maria Clarke: Please sign up to the LNP Forum mailing list if you're not already a members:

<https://dorsetlnp.us12.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=75037351babf95d6b7057837b&id=2dc93d13b9>

Maria Clarke: The presentations and the recording will be added to the LNP website later this week.

Fiona Bowles: great talks, well done all

John Calder: Inspirational presentations from everyone. Well done everybody.

Hilary Habberfield: Some fantastic food for thought, thank you. Food prices should reflect the true costs of food production. Well-educated, financially comfortable people can make good choices. A mixture of grants and regulations must ensure environmentally sustainable and regenerating practice is the only practice. Aligning the education of future farmers and ecologists (as promoted by

Reebanks's English Pastoral, Alana and Finley) is essential – great to hear that farm visits, work experience/apprenticeships are being integrated in pioneering work. Curriculum reviews needed too? Why should people care about the countryside if they have no connection with it? Grants should also support access. Hooray for innovative leaders – your visions and hard work are inspiring. Really encouraged by Chettle's 'calf at foot dairy' and incredible community involvement. Wow. Let's work equally hard to bring along farmers who are head down doing things 'the way they have always been done' and those that have opted to farm right to the edges.

Hilary Habberfield: There's lot to do but it can be done if everyone gets involved to join the dots. I look forward to working with you. Thanks all

Cllr Ray Bryan: Our waste team tell me waste over 700 tons of food each WEEK.

Michael Bullen: Recommend [www.toogoodtogo.co.uk](http://www.toogoodtogo.co.uk) innovative solution to avoid food waste

Felicity Rice: It would be good for the Dorset Pension Fund to invest in local food growing.