

## Blackdown Hills National Landscape

### Minutes of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape Partnership Management Group held on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Awliscombe Village Hall

#### Present:

Cllr Bob Nelson (BN) (Chair)	Blackdown Hills Parish Network
Gordon Field (GF)	Blackdown Hills Artist & Makers
Cllr Graham Long (GL)	Blackdown Hills Parish Network
Cllr Natasha Bradshaw(NB)	Mid Devon District Council
Simon Richardson (SR)	Natural England
Daniel Lazar (DL)	Co-opted Member
Janette Ward (JW)	Campaign to Protect Rural England
Cllr Yehudi Levine (YL)	East Devon District Council
Phillip Hackett (PH)	The British Horse Society
Martin Turner (MT)	Blackdown Hills Hedge Association
David Northcote-Wright (DNW)	Somerset Wildlife Trust
Cllr John Berry (JB)	Devon County Council
Doug Eltham (DE)	Devon County Council
Jonathan Farey (JF)	Co-opted Member
Cllr Mike Canham (MC)	Blackdown Hills Parish Network
Trudi Righton (TR)	Member of the public
Rosemary Berry (RB)	Member of the public

#### Blackdown Hills National Landscape staff team:

Tim Youngs (TY), Lisa Turner (LT) Hannah Metson (HM) Di Weeks (DW) (Minutes)

**Apologies:** Robert Derryman (National Farmers Union), Fiona Rew (National Farmers Union), Tommy Muncie (National Trust), Carolyn Dare (Blackdown Hills Transition Group), Cllr Sarah Wakefield (Somerset Council), Alex Swan (Environment Agency), Cllr Martin Wale (Somerset Council), Paul Spearing (Co-opted Member), Charlie Plowden (East Devon District Council), Tristan Peat (Mid Devon District Council), Stephen Dury (Somerset Council), Sarah Jennings (Devon County Council), Adam Powell (Co-opted Member), Ross Henley (Somerset Council), Jon Burgess (Forestry Commission), James Divall (Somerset Council).

#### Members of the public: Two

ITEM 1 Welcome and Introductions	By whom
<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies were made, including welcoming Trudi as a member of the public. Starting on a sad note, to announce the passing of Bruce Payne and funeral arrangements for 19<sup>th</sup> March. BN commented that Bruce had played a massive part in making the Blackdown Hills what it is today.</p> <p>BN also announced that John Berry was standing down after over 20 years and thanked him for his contribution and time.</p> <p>Declarations of interest: GF declared his interest as the BHAAM website is being funded through FiPL.</p>	BN

The Chair reminded members to complete an updated Register of Interest form which had been circulated with the previous minutes (regardless of whether they have one for their own organisation), a copy will be sent with the minutes.	BN
<b>ITEM 2 Questions from the public</b>	
Questions from the public – None Received. The chair welcomed TR as a member of the public (RB arrived later during the meeting) and invited her to speak.	BN
<b>ITEM 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November</b>	
The minutes of the meeting held 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 and any matters arising - The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.	ALL
<b>ITEM 4 Workshops</b>	
<p><b>Presentation on the Management Plan Review.</b></p> <p>LT reported on consultation responses, and explained that only 12 responses received, have extended the deadline for Parish Councils for two further weeks until 19/03/25. NB mentioned this was a disappointing level of responses &amp; asked how many of those 12 replies were from planning authorities, the answer was none. Discussion continued on the importance of them being involved as these policies are what they will be working with for the next 5 years.</p> <p><b>What did they like/ supportive of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive reaction to Special Qualities</li> <li>- Agree with Vision statement</li> <li>- Agree with objectives and guiding principles, priorities for action and policies</li> <li>- Helpful suggestions for additional points or strengthening content</li> </ul> <p><b>What do we need to address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Points raised about navigation, length of document, will be addressed through design and online navigation tools</li> <li>- Messaging – meeting targets vs maximising opportunities/ meeting needs of Blackdown Hills</li> <li>- Vision statement – amplification/ wordsmithing of words</li> <li>- More emphasis on ‘seeking to further purpose’ duty</li> <li>- Reference to small scale local renewable energy and our view in Place</li> <li>- More clarity on how the plan is relevant to organisations, collaboration, delivery &amp; monitoring</li> <li>- Benefit of setting context/ building on what has gone before</li> <li>- Expressing the number and range of local community organisations and groups</li> </ul> <p><b>LURA (Levelling up and Regeneration Act).</b> TY talked through the LURA briefing paper (circulated with agenda) and discussed how LURA can be embedded across relevant authorities / local authorities in order to discharge their duty. (sent as an attachment to minutes)</p> <p><b>5 year Delivery plan (2025-2030).</b> Overview of 5 year delivery plan. What is it/ where does it sit, TY ran through the key priorities and proposed strategic actions for each of the themes.</p>	LT/ TY

<p>SR commented that many farmers are in schemes, JF queried how many are in a scheme as queried the actual numbers, NB said this is a really important issue and a massive opportunity to get a better dialogue with farmers. Discussions continued, LT confirmed that the 5 year plan would be published alongside the Management Plan.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft 5 year plan to be circulated and if comments then to submit by email / face to face - (send as an attachment with minutes)</li> <li>• SR to confirm numbers of farmers in schemes, ready for next meeting</li> <li>• Send out LURA briefing paper with minutes</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Item 5 Team Report</b></p>	
<p>TY updated on the Core Work : 1 year Defra funding settlement (25/26) figures are confidential Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) extended for another year, budget amount is confidential. New faces introduced of John Hickey who has joined Grant in Aid to work alongside Lucy Jefferson and Emily Hobson-Martin as the Ranger alongside Jane Robertson on the Rivers Run Through us project.</p> <p>A brief summary was given on the following live projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting the Culm – Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP), National Highways, [Grant in Aid]</li> <li>• Triple Axe (Farming, Nature, People)- Rivers Run Through us National Lottery Heritage funding, plus Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF)</li> <li>• Blackdown Hills Sustainable Farming Network (Facilitation fund)</li> <li>• Nature Recovery Plan / 30x30 / Local Nature Recovery Strategies</li> <li>• Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Linking People and Places (LPAP)</li> <li>• Pathway to net zero</li> </ul> <p>Financial summary – TY confirmed that we are working on a balanced budget and have about £20,000 left over as some projects have been delayed but in summary, in a good place. BN confirmed that the Officer Support Group (OSG) are ok with this.</p>	<p>TY</p> <p>HM/ TY</p> <p>TY</p>
<p><b>ITEM 6 Creative Beings presentation</b></p>	
<p>Sue from Creative Beings introduced and explained Creative Beings and showed us a photo of the compost toilet that was funded by the Blackdown Hills National Landscape. Sue invited everyone to visit following the meeting.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p><b>ITEM 7 National Landscape Partnership – briefings from Partners</b></p>	
<p>YL – no comments – left the meeting early</p>	<p>ALL</p>

<p><b>GF</b> updated that they are updating their website with support from a FiPL grant and that he is concentrating on how the energy of the earth is increasing rapidly and an important time to reconnect with the earth.</p> <p><b>MT</b> reported that the 27<sup>th</sup> annual BHHA hedge laying event had taken place last weekend, a very successful day with 86 competitors, making it the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the country. 50% of these were trained over the years.</p> <p><b>DNW</b> reported that SWT and lots of landowners are clearing up following various storms and in particular wind tunnels that have formed because of ash die-back which is having an impact on the landscape as trees have blown down.</p> <p><b>JF</b> said their Watch project in Chard was in the process of changing from a CIC to CIO which would open up opportunities for additional funding. JF mentioned that had volunteers digging ditches and laying hedges and how it was great for their mental health, would like to link with LPAP so schemes can continue to help and support people.</p> <p><b>NB</b> updated that since the last meeting, Mid Devon District Council has had their Climate strategy approved.</p> <p><b>GL</b> nothing to add.</p> <p><b>BN</b> discussed a Judicial Review in progress involving East Devon District Council reference the potential of a site for development on the edge of Broadhembury.</p> <p><b>GL</b> added that Upottery have the opposite problem to Broadhembury as have been classed as unsustainable so no more housing allowed.</p> <p><b>DE</b> discussed registering for the Local Nature Partnership conference and said that they were working on the Devon Energy Plan and explained the 1<sup>st</sup> step of looking at where does our energy come from and how is it used.</p> <p><b>SR</b> confirmed he would gather data regarding scheme sign-ups and bring ready for the next meeting.</p> <p><b>BN</b> Thanked John Berry for his support over many years and thanked Rosemary Berry for attending and her feedback.</p> <p><b>MC</b> updated on Broadband speeds still being low, Broadhembury planning issues on-going and offering moral support for them. Some local doctor surgeries, closing for the afternoons, and currently working with the practice Managers to resolve, conversations are on-going.</p> <p><b>DL</b> reported that the thermal imagery camera is still in use but weather has played a part in this being affected.</p> <p><b>PH</b> nothing to add.</p>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>ITEM 8 Any other Business</b>	
Next meeting will be held on Thursday 26th June 2025 from 9.30am – 12pm, venue to be confirmed.	<b>ALL</b>

Signed as a true record:

Chairman.....

Date.....