Chew Valley
Nature Recovery
Network

Local Nature Recovery Toolkit

A practical guide for parishes

Local Nature Recovery Toolkit. A practical guide for parishes

July 2024

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Chew Valley Nature Recovery Network's ambition is to enhance the natural world around us for the benefit of all. It intends to deliver this vision by harnessing the energy of the many local groups and individuals already active in nature recovery across the area and by ensuring that the community voice is heard at parish and unitary authority level. A collaborative approach like this is an effective a way of identifying and pooling local resources, expertise, and project opportunities whilst also maximizing the reach and influence of community groups.

Local residents will play an important part in the delivery of this vision. Both as individuals in the way they manage their gardens and their own landholdings (such as pony paddocks, orchards or meadows) and as local communities through the creation and delivery of nature action plans for the parishes that make up the Chew Valley area.

LOCAL NATURE ACTION PLANS

CVNRN has produced this local nature recovery toolkit to help support communities develop local nature action plans. The toolkit is intended to complement and expand upon Bath and North East Somerset Council's publication 'Parish and Town Nature Action Plans – guidance for parish and town councils'.

A nature action plan should set out a medium-term plan for the creation of more nature rich habitats in our villages and the surrounding countryside. We suggest that each plan covers an initial 3 to 5-year period, although many of the projects that communities will want to start – such as planting trees for example - will take much longer to come to maturity.

We also suggest that each plan sets out clear outcomes, so that local people can take interest and pride in the progress they are making in creating and maintaining habitats. These might include targets such as planting or restoring hedgerows; creating a wild-flower meadow or developing new ponds, as well as monitoring and recording key species, such as the number of bats and birds flying around, hedgehogs seen in gardens, or swifts and swallows nesting on buildings.

We believe it is important that community nature action plans are developed by local people, to meet their local aspirations and reflect the nature that inspires them. Ideally, they will be developed in partnership with the local parish council who will then agree and formally endorse the plans.

The success of the local nature plan will in part be down to the support of local residents and landowners, therefore the development of the plan and its delivery should be communicated to as wide an audience as possible, helping to encourage volunteers and

supporters. No plan should seek to suggest ideas for how private land should be managed without the specific consent of the landowners and only after careful discussion and engagement with their interests.

CREATING A LOCAL NATURE ACTION PLAN

As part of the development of the local nature action plan, you will need to identify what you currently have and what could be possible.

We recommend the following steps to create your plan:

1. Make a simple map of wildlife habitats in your area, identifying where the most important places for nature are and why they matter

2. Based on this, decide the objectives for your nature action plan. What habitats do you want to improve or create and what species do you particularly want to see increase in your area?

3. Develop a nature recovery map that illustrates where you want to create new habitats and the existing habitats that can be improved.

4. Develop a timeline for habitat creation or improvement, recognising that the plan is best delivered in bitesize pieces over the ten-year period.

5. Develop a plan for maintaining and monitoring these habitats and the wildlife that lives there

All plans must respect the interests of landowners and must not suggest land management or land uses on specific areas of land that have not been previously discussed and agreed with the landowners. As an example, it would be acceptable to include a statement about a desire to work with landowners to create wildlife corridors in particular generic areas (for instance, between one area of existing wildlife rich habitat and another), but not to state that a particular field should be converted to a wildflower meadow or woodland, unless that is what the landowner wishes to do.

MAKING A MAP OF WILDLIFE HABITATS

Any plan needs to start with an appreciation of the current state of nature locally. This will involve creating a map of the current nature-rich sites in each location and sites that can be improved to benefit nature.

When undertaking surveys, groups should prioritise certain core habitats, because restoring and enhancing these areas and filling in connectivity gaps is likely to have the greatest effect on nature recovery.

Once priority habitats have been mapped, attention can then be given to other sites with potential for enhancement.

Priority habitats are:

- Designated sites / Nature reserves
- Hedgerows
- Woodlands
- Non-improved and semi-improved grasslands
- Waterways / rivers
- Waterbodies / ponds

Sites with potential for enhancement might include:

- Gardens and allotments
- Churches and their grounds
- Other public buildings
- Road verges
- School grounds
- Farmland
- Properties that have bird or animal boxes

Some communities may already have a lot of evidence about the wildlife and natural habitats in their area from previous surveys. Others may want to do some surveys as part of this work. Creating a database of photos at the start of the project can also be helpful as it enables visible progress to be recorded over time.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR MAP

Use a blank map and the symbology and classification[1] outlined in the sections below to create your map. To provide additional information about a site or feature, please use a numbered reference on the map and supply notes separately. This can then be incorporated into the final map.

Before starting survey work, it is worth exploring existing resources to assist the mapping process, such as habitat maps held by Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre and BANES' Woodland Opportunity Mapping.

Maps can be produced in both hard copy or digital form, depending on the availability to each group. User-friendly free digital mapping services include Ordnance Survey Online Maps and Google My Maps. More detailed mapping can be undertaken using open-source Geographic Information Systems (GIS) such as QGIS. For those undertaking habitat surveys for parish councils, Parish Online is a useful mapping tool.

All survey work should fully respect landownership and only be completed using public rights of way (or with landowner permission).

[1] Based on the JNCC Phase 1 habitat methodology and classification which is the standard technique for habitat surveys adopted by government agencies across the UK

SYMBOLOGY

By using colour and shapes/symbols you will be able to collect a lot of information that can be read easily. There are some standard colours and symbols and we have provided a summary of the main ones in the sections below. By using these symbols, the maps that you create will be consistent with national standards enabling them to be used easily by local authorities and nature conservation bodies.

TARGET NOTES

As you start to collect information for you map you may identify areas that provide opportunities for further study. These can be added as 'Target Notes'. Examples might be:

This wet field depression is shown as a pond on old maps of the area; it could form a restoration project.

or

This hedgerow no longer links with others by x metres; it could easily be replanted as a habitat linking project.

SUGGESTED SYMBOL

Target notes	ʘ

SAMPLE HABITAT MAP

This is an example from a map of habitats using the standard JNCC colours and symbols. [Source: Stuart Spray Wildlife Consultancy at: *https://www.stuartspraywildlife.co.uk/phase-1-habitat-surveys/*]

The following sections provide additional information about each of the key wildlife sets, along with questions to ask during the baseline survey and symbology for the mapping.

SECTION 2: PRIORITY HABITATS

HEDGEROWS

Hedgerows are easily recognised features of the countryside and urban settings. The sensitive management of hedgerows can actively increase diversity when it is undertaken correctly and at the appropriate time of year (in the winter). While it is possible for a nature recovery plan to identify the potential to restore hedgerows, this must be done with the consent of the landowner.

A useful resource providing more detailed information about hedgerow surveying is the 'Hedgerow Survey Handbook' published by DEFRA in 2007.

DEFINITION

- A hedgerow is any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Is the hedgerow *intact* and more-or-less stockproof or *defunct* (with gaps and no longer stockproof)
- Is the hedgerow *species-rich* (5 or more native woody species in a 30 m length or fewer woody species but a rich variety of herbaceous plants at its base) or *species-poor*?
- Are there trees in the hedge?
- Does this hedgerow require restoration, gaps to be re-planted or further tree planting?
- Is this hedgerow within 15m of another hedgerow or woodland that it could link up to?
- If forming the boundary to an arable field, is there a field margin alongside the hedgerow and how wide is it?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Intact hedge
- Species rich
- Species poor

Defunct hedge
- Species rich
- Species poor

Hedge with trees
- Species rich
- Species poor

DESIGNATED SITES/ NATURE RESERVES

There are a range of sites that are important for nature in the Chew Valley. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and other sites managed for nature such as Folly Farm.

They offer a range of opportunity for both the rare and special wildlife of this area, but also some of the best places for people to interact and engage with nature.

Whilst the management of these sites may not be directly in your control, there may be activities on land that you manage adjacent to the reserve which can help support conservation and/or public engagement aims of the site managers (and conversely, actions that should be avoided).

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- What sites are designates or managed for nature in your area?
- Do you have any statutory protected areas such as SSSI or Ancient Woodland?
- Do you have any locally designated protected areas such as SINCs?
- If these aren't under your control, are there measures you could discuss with landowners of adjacent land that will support the wildlife or act to buffer those sites from harm?
- What are the key species that the site is managed for? Are there ways you can encourage creation of supporting habitat nearby for them?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Coloured according to the main habitat type and labelled:

- SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest
- SNCI – Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- IAW – Inventory of Ancient Woodland
- SAC – Special Area of Conservation
- SPA – Special Protection Area
- NNR – National Nature Reserve
- NL – National Landscape (formerly AONB)
- RIGS – Regionally Important Geological Site
- LNR - Local Nature Reserve

WATER BODIES / PONDS

Whether large or small, in the countryside or in a garden, ponds and other water bodies can be of great benefit to nature. The most diverse wildlife is often found in waterbodies which are unshaded and have a range of depths, including sinuous shallow margins and deeper central areas that will remain wet even during times of drought. However, it is important that a wide variety of waterbodies are maintained. Seasonal ponds, that dry completely in the summer and may hold only shallow water for a few months of the year, are an important habitat which has suffered dramatic decline through drainage or conversion to "real" ponds, for example.

A range of fringe vegetation and both floating and submerged aquatic plants will provide additional diversity. However, many species need bare mud and some like weed-free water. Water quality is a critical factor in ponds of all types, and some of the best ponds are spring-fed. Water bodies, especially small ones, can be rapidly damaged by nutrient or silt inputs, and introduced species from gardens.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Does the waterbody support any protected species e.g. great crested newt or water vole?
- Are there non-native invasive species e.g. New Zealand pygmy-weed?
- What is the water clarity like? Is the water body regularly used by large numbers of ducks/geese? Is it regularly disturbed by dogs swimming in it?
- Where does the pond get its water from? Spring-fed, rain, drain, etc.
- How wide and deep is it when full?
- How many kinds of aquatic and marginal plants does it have?
- Does it dry out, and if so, how often and for how long?
- What proportion of the pond is shaded? On what aspect are the trees located (N, E, S, W)?

CLASSIFICATION

Ponds are so varied that it is difficult to define features that make a "good" pond. Water quality is important, and most of the best ponds are largely unshaded. Proximity to other water bodies is always helpful, and the presence of invasive alien species never is. Varied vegetation is good if the pond is permanent. The best way to decide the quality of a pond is to survey it to see exactly what is there.

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Standing water (reservoirs, lakes, ponds etc.)

WATERWAYS / RIVERS

The Chew Valley is named after the River Chew, which rises at Chewton Mendip, and joins the River Avon at Keynsham.

Backchannels and ditches provide important refuges and habitat corridors for wildlife and are often important historic and cultural features in their own right.

Key aims for our waterways and rivers are to help them to avoid impacts of nutrient run-off, pollution and invasive non-native species; to protect and manage riverbank vegetation and trees so that they support a range of species; and to ensure any maintenance work is carried out in a way that benefits species such as water voles, otters, kingfishers, and encourages a diverse array of fish and aquatic invertebrates.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Are there any man-made obstructions to flow (dams, weirs or sluices)?
- Can livestock get access to the waterway?
- Does the water flow swiftly or slowly?
- How much vegetation covers the channel?
- Are there nearby trees (note especially any willow pollards, and whether they are still managed)?
- Is there woody debris in the water to provide additional habitat?
- Does the waterway support any protected species e.g. otter or water vole?
- Are there any non-native invasive species present e.g. Himalayan balsam?
- Are there opportunities to improve management of the banks, or create/restore adjacent pools or backchannels?

CLASSIFICATION

Describe key features along the river, such as vegetation cover in the channel; presence of substantial bankside trees; pools, riffles, and gravel areas; or woody debris/broken branches in the channel.

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Running water (arrow indicating direction of flow)

Use target notes for significant findings (such a dams/weirs, areas where livestock can gain entry to the waterway etc)

WOODLANDS

There are striking variations of woodland cover across England and the UK. Some are ancient and have had tree cover for hundreds of years; others have developed more recently through colonization of previously open land; and some are recently created plantations or shelterbelts. They may be isolated from other woodlands by roads and arable farmland.

Woodlands are a major habitat type, can be havens for wildlife, and can be used as a tool in addressing climate challenges. Ancient woods are our richest and most complex terrestrial habitat in the UK and they are home to more threatened species than any other.

Woodlands may be designated and legally protected for their nature conservation value.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Is the woodland designated as a wildlife site?
- What tree species are present and are there any known protected or rare flora or fauna?
- Is there a pond within or near this woodland? If so, please map following the pond guidance below.
- Approximately how old is the woodland? Is it Ancient?
- Is the woodland managed? Trees felled for timber, coppiced, rides mown etc.
- Does the woodland contain veteran trees?
- Does the woodland contain rides, glades or other areas of open space?

DEFINITIONS

- Woodland: a habitat dominated by trees where the cover of trees exceeds 30%
- Broadleaved woodland: 10% or less conifer in the canopy.
- Coniferous woodland: 10% or less broadleaved in the canopy.
- Mixed woodland: 10-90% of either broadleaved or conifer in the canopy.
- Parkland/scattered trees: a habitat where the cover of trees is less than 30% of the total area.
- Semi-natural woodlands; those that do not obviously originate from planting. Woodland with both semi-natural and planted trees should be classified as semi-natural if the planted trees account for less than 30% of the canopy composition, but as plantation if more than 30% is planted.
- Plantation woodland refers to any wooded area that has obviously been planted, irrespective of age.

WOODLAND (Continued)

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Woodland

1. Broad-leaved
    - Semi-natural
    - Plantation
2. Coniferous
    - Semi-natural
    - Plantation
3. Mixed
    - Semi-natural
    - Plantation

Parkland, scattered trees

1. Broad-leaved
2. Coniferous
3. Mixed

ANCIENT/VETERAN TREES & TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

Ancient and veteran trees are some of our most special trees. They play an important role in maintaining ecological processes and supporting many species.

The terms ‘ancient’ and ‘veteran’ are sometimes used interchangeably, but the Woodland Trust makes a distinction between them. A veteran is a mature tree that has developed valuable decaying wood features, not necessarily as a consequence of time, but due to its life or environment. Veteran trees may not be very old, but share similarities with ancient trees, such as trunk or branch hollowing, or significant amounts of other decaying wood. An ancient tree is one that has passed beyond maturity into an ancient life stage, or is old in comparison with other trees of the same species. Thus, not all veteran trees are ancient, but all ancient trees are also veteran trees.

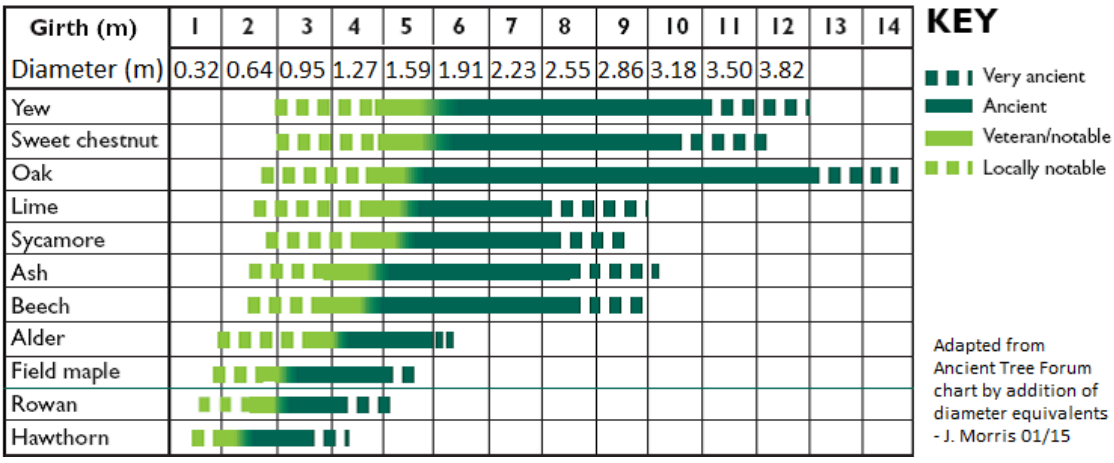
The typical lifespans of trees differ according to species; for example, birches tend to live shorter lives than oaks. As a result, the age at which different species reach ancientness can also vary by a few hundred years (see chart below).

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are a mechanism for protecting specific trees or a particular woodland from deliberate damage and destruction. A TPO is a discretionary order made by the local planning authority usually as part of a local council.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Where is this tree: private garden, private land, waterway, road, railways etc
- Is the tree in a conservation area or has a TPO issued?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND



GRASSLANDS / FIELD MARGINS/ ROAD VERGES WITH WILDFLOWERS

Approximately 90% of grasslands were lost in the 20th Century after they were cleared for agriculture or development or following changes in management. Use of artificial fertilisers create nutrient-rich conditions that are not suitable for many wildflowers and, as a result, species-rich grassland is still being lost as vigorous grasses and plants dominate over slower-growing more delicate species.

Grassland habitats are not limited to meadows – many road verges are rich with wild plants and are excellent corridors between larger sites, as are margins to arable fields that support a diverse range of plant species.

Nature recovery plans should focus on joining up areas of unimproved and, to a lesser extent, semi-improved grasslands.

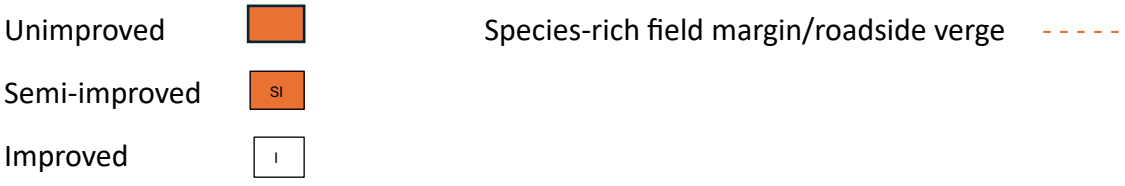
DEFINITIONS

- Unimproved grasslands: incredibly species-rich grasslands that have never been ploughed, reseeded or heavily fertilised. These are likely to be rare in the Chew Valley so, if in doubt, record as semi-improved.
- Semi-improved grasslands: a transition category between improved and unimproved grasslands that have undergone some modification through the use of, for example, fertilisers, herbicides and grazing. Have a wider diversity of species than improved grasslands and contain a mixture of fine leaved and coarse grasses together with plants such as dandelion, plantain, yarrow and meadow buttercup.
- Improved grasslands: have undergone high modification or intensive agriculture and thus have fewer species with a limited variety of grasses and flowering plants (e.g. white clover, perennial ryegrass, docks, thistles, nettles and agricultural clovers).

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Does it have a mix of wildflowers and grasses?
- Does the area have a lot of weeds such as thistle, nettle and bindweed?
- Is it grazed by livestock? Is it cut for hay?
- Are field margins/road verges present that contain a diverse range of plant species?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND



SECTION 3: SECONDARY HABITATS

GARDENS AND ALLOTMENTS

Together, the UK's gardens are larger than all our National Nature Reserves combined. They play a key role in connecting habitats, especially across urban areas, and provide safe refuges for wildlife in an ever-busy environment.

Gardens do not have to be large to benefit wildlife and it's not necessary for individual gardens to offer everything a species needs if nearby gardens contribute too, for example a blackbird will nest in one garden but forage and bathe in others.

You may wish to map where all gardens are and consider them as one unit with many owners.

Allotments often have many of the same features as gardens but without the physical boundaries between plots so offer a large area for wildlife to utilise.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Do garden boundaries restrict movement of wildlife e.g. hedgehogs?
- Are there any stone walls supporting important populations of solitary bees, or assemblages of ferns, mosses and lichens?
- Do people use water butts or compost heaps?
- Are there other features to support biodiversity, such as flowering plants, log piles, ponds, fruit trees?
- Is the garden/allotment site chemical-free?
- If an official allotment, is there any adopted wildlife policy and what are the rules?
- What species do people see in their gardens and what would they like to encourage?
- Also consider houses and whether they accommodate bats or swifts.

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Light green with * for especially good gardens

ORCHARDS

Orchards can be hotspots for biodiversity in the countryside, supporting a wide range of wildlife and containing UK priority habitats and species. Alongside woodlands, they can have an array of Nationally Rare and Nationally Scarce species. The wildlife of orchard sites depends on the mosaic of habitats they encompass, including fruit trees, scrub, hedgerows, hedgerow trees, non-fruit trees within the orchard, the orchard floor habitats, fallen dead wood and associated features such as ponds and streams.

It is generally accepted that five well-spaced trees is the minimum number of fruit trees necessary to form an orchard.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- What fruit trees are present? Apple, pear, gage, plum, cherry, nut, medlar, quince?
- Is the orchard older than 20 years?
- Does the grassland surrounding the trees contain wildflowers?
- Is the orchard managed i.e. trees pruned, grassland cut?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Coloured Red with Letter N- New or O – Old (If planted less than 20 years ago it is new)

ANIMAL BOXES

You can help increase bird, small mammal and insect populations by providing plenty of places to nest. A nestbox is an excellent substitute for a missing habitat, like a tree hole; however, the priority should always be to try to provide a natural habitat.

The species you attract will depend on the location, the type of box, and the size of the entrance hole, so target species will need to be considered first. With bird boxes it is best to face them between north and east. This will reduce exposure to strong sunlight from the south and to prevailing winds and rain from the south-west. Have a strategy for cleaning the box, during the dormant times. If making a box, avoid using heavily treated woods or applying wood treatments as the residual chemicals used are highly toxic.

Bat boxes are also available and can be attached to appropriate sites on trees or buildings. It can take a few years for bats to start using a box. A single roosting bat only requires a very small crack to roost in and is likely to find this already in older buildings or trees.

Hedgehogs are particularly vulnerable during their winter hibernation and disturbance during this time can be detrimental to their health. To enable peaceful hibernation, hedgehog homes can be provided in well-connected gardens.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- What species are already using man-made boxes in the area?
- Are all available boxes being used? Is there a surplus or are more needed?
- What species would you like to encourage through providing more boxes?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

Each shape and letter to be written in green if used or red if unused or not sure

- Circle for generic small bird box
- Circle and SW for swift box
- Circle and HS for House Sparrow box
- Triangle for owl box
- Square and H for hedgehog box
- Square and B for bat box

CHURCHES AND THEIR GROUNDS

Churches have been a focus for communities for thousands of years and, alongside their primary purpose, are refuges for many species. Bats are well known for inhabiting churches due to their open structure and relative quiet. The ancient stonework can be rich with lichens and mosses while the ledges and roofs can be ideal places for nesting birds. The church grounds have often escaped the damaging effects of fertilisers and ploughs so contain remnants of ancient grassland where fungi thrive and wildflowers flourish.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Do you know of any animals using the church building? E.g. bats or birds
- Do the church and grounds support lichens and mosses or wildflowers in the grass? Is it closely mown?
- Are there mature trees in the grounds?
- Are there gravestones with lichens or mosses on them?
- Is it an active burial site?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

See section on Trees for other useful codes.

- CH – for religious building
- CHB – Bat roost in the building or tree in the grounds
- CHM – for closely managed church grounds
- CHW – for less managed church grounds where areas of grass are left long

SCHOOL GROUNDS AND AMENITY AREAS

The grounds of a school are much the same as a garden and can encompass many of the same features – flowering plants, trees, ponds, vegetable patches, log-piles. In this situation though, consideration must be taken as to how the area can be used as an educational resource as the students are our ecologists of the future. A balance needs to be found between the needs of the schools, providing for the local wildlife and attracting those species that are happy with a bit of disturbance.

Amenity areas such as playing fields, playgrounds and sports courts will inevitably need to be closely managed to maintain their primary purpose. However, there is bound to be an area suitable for some wildflowers, a thick hedge could be planted around the boundary or some trees planted to provide shade.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Does the school have a designated wildlife area?
- Is it used by students?
- Are there opportunities around amenity areas to have longer grass or plant trees?

SUGGESTED SYMBOL / LEGEND

with relevant legend:

- SCHF – School field
- SCHW – School wildlife area
- RG – Recreation ground/sports court/playground

SECTION 4: CREATING YOUR NATURE ACTION PLAN

DECIDE YOUR OBJECTIVES

The next step is to agree what habitats you want to create or improve.

Examples might include:

- Plant 50 individual broadleaf/mixed species trees across the area;
- Restore or create 3-ponds;
- Create two small wildflower rich areas of grassland;
- Plant wildflowers in roadside verges;
- Increase the number of swifts that can be seen flying over the neighbourhood by putting up 20 swift nest boxes;
- Increase the number of hedgehogs that are reported in village gardens by encouraging more nature friendly gardening and the creation of hedgehog routes through gardens.

Planting of trees and wildflowers should be native and preferably of local provenance.

PRODUCE A NATURE RECOVERY MAP

Using the map you have created showing the existing habitat, mark where you want to create or improve habitats and how they link up with what is already in place.

Examples of what you might put on a map include:

- Hedgerows that could be restored (gapped up) or opportunities to plant new hedges;
- Road-side verges that could become wild-flower rich;
- The locations of old ponds that could be restored or new ones created;
- Areas that could be sown as wild-flower rich grassland;
- Places for tree planting – either groups of trees or individual, ‘standard’ trees that could make landscape features;
- Land in public ownership or that landowners have volunteered that might be used to create community orchards;
- Locations for nesting boxes.

TIPS FOR CONTENT

Some tips for producing an effective Nature Action Plan (NAP) are:

- Keep the plan concise and use plain language. This will get the message across and ensure the document is accessible to everyone.

- Develop a time frame for the action plan. It could be a 3-year plan or a 5-year plan, and it could also be framed with ambitions or targets for 2030 and 2050, mirroring national and international nature recovery ambitions.

- Make actions 'SMART': Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound, where possible. This will make actions easier to progress and monitor. For example, 'from 2024, reduce the mowing frequency on the Common to twice a year, in early May and September' compared to 'mow grass less frequently'.

- Do not be over ambitious. It is better to focus on a smaller number of actions that can confidently be delivered, rather than lots of actions that may be hard to progress. Plans can always be updated with further actions at a later date.

- Consider how actions will be funded and how they will be delivered (see DELIVERING YOUR ACTION PLAN').

SUBMITTING A NATURE ACTION PLAN FOR REVIEW

Draft NAPs can be submitted to the Nature Recovery Team at B&NES council using the following email address: Nature_Recovery@bathnes.gov.uk. The Team will review the document and will return any feedback. Response times will depend on workload, and at busy times it may take up to four weeks.

Once published, NAPs should be updated every year to keep it as relevant as possible. This will also enable B&NES council to help identify potential opportunities in each parish or town.

Remember, the NAP will not be a statutory document: it is intended to support parish and town councils in taking action for nature.

DELIVERING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Funding may be available for some actions identified in individual Plans, especially if these are deemed 'shovel ready'. B&NES council's Nature Recovery Team aim to keep parish

councils aware of relevant funding opportunities and may be able to provide letters of support for funding bids where NAPs have been submitted and reviewed by the Team. Local funding opportunities include:

- The Trees for Climate Fund for tree planting, including orchards and hedgerows
- The Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership Fund Community Grants Scheme for water/river-related projects
- Money that your parish or town council has received through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- S106 funding (off-site open space contributions secured through the planning process)
- Free trees and support from the Woodland Trust
- Other external grant funders, such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Sponsorship by residents or business (e.g., sponsor a tree, pond or square metre of meadow)
- Community benefit money from nearby developments like solar farms and waste transfer stations
- Developers still working on nearby development sites

B&NES council have also launched a Call for Nature Sites, which identifies and shares the location of areas of land where the owners are interested in taking action for nature recovery and are looking for funding or assistance in doing so. Nature Sites could be identified through the NAP process and subsequently submitted through the Call for Nature Sites. This provides opportunities to promote land for nature recovery for example to developers needing to provide Biodiversity Net Gain, or NGOs who are looking for sites to work on with nature volunteers.

CREATE A MAINTENANCE PLAN

It is important to think about how you are going to manage the new habitats for the long-term. Your plan needs to think about what work will be required to keep the habitats in good condition and what that will mean in terms of resources – both human and financial.

In addition to engaging with the local community in the creation or initial improvement of habitats the plan should develop ideas for how the habitats within the area will be maintained. This might include links to external organisations or groups (e.g. local GP

surgeries that have adopted social prescribing) who will benefit from the opportunities provided by working and visiting the area.