



FIFTH WORKSHOP REPORT LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT

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Workshop 5 Landscape and Habitat

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Workshop 5 Landscape and Habitat

SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – WORKSHOP 5 LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT

Date: 25th June 2024

Venue: Merrist Wood Agricultural College

Time: 10am to 3pm

Facilitators: Resources for Change (R4C)

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

To involve a group of local stakeholders in learning about, deliberating, and identifying priority outcomes related to local nature recovery in the county.

PRINCIPLES / OBJECTIVES

- Participants learn about local nature recovery and establish common understanding.
- Participants work together to develop draft outcomes.
- Participants finalise and prioritise outcomes.

PREPARATION/ HOMEWORK

Participants that have not been to the webinars were asked to watch these back (there was a short recap at the beginning of the event).

EVENT REPORT

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT SURREY?

Responses were:

- Diversity of geology and therefore habitats
- Chalk downland - moved from Devon
- Beautiful, attractive - way you can engage a community and bring them together through nature conservation
- Size of local authority owned estate (countryside). Largest in England (?). A lot of heathland and registered SSSIs etc.
- Also MOD land.
- Easily accessible on your doorstep.
- Deceptively / contradictorily rural rather than perception its built up.

SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – SEE PRESENTATION (APPENDIX)

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Q&A

Following the presentations, there was the opportunity to ask questions. These will be used to generate a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) page on the website:

Questions	Answers
Only the landowner/s would be able to have their land removed [from the base map]. Is this correct?	The regulations state that this is the case.
Have the measures / targets been set yet?	No that is the role of the LNRS. Also, Natural England haven't yet extrapolated down to local areas i.e. at a county level.

NATURE RECOVERY IDEA GENERATION BY HABITAT (GROUP ACTIVITY).

The participants undertook a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for the following themes:

- Heathland
- Woodland and forestry
- Waterways, wetlands
- Species rich grassland (watermeadows)
- Farmland including hedgerows, field margins
- Parks, golf courses, school grounds, health, higher education, business and industrial estates

In the last few minutes they were asked to underline the most important factor (particularly but not exclusively from “opportunities”). The results are set out below:

PARKS, GOLF COURSES, SCHOOL GROUNDS, HIGHER EDUCATION, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Strengths	<u>Large areas</u>
	MOD land in good condition
	RHS leaders in education
	Lots of environmentally friendly gardeners
	Community interest / groups
	Registered common land - provides protection
	Grass cutting of verges often no connection with local/ county biodiversity expertise opportunity better alignment via LNRS
Weaknesses	Disparate
	Biodiversity not top priority
	Hard to engage with distant landowners eg out of county universities
	Lack of joined up management between landowners
	Lack of perceived value of areas for nature. Don't know what's there.
	Don't see bigger picture
	Don't realise NERC is coming
Lack of enforcement (planning)	

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	Large number of owners and managers - large variety of responses
Opportunities	Consistent approach
	Potential for joining up
	Education - wildflower meadows, rainwater gardens, signage, children educate their families
	Greater policy alignment
	Public bodies have biodiversity duty - NERC and Environment Act [2021]
	Corporate Social Responsibility and growing awareness of need for corporations to manage their estates
	Kite Marked Scheme
	Surrey County Council private gardens
	Younger people involved in volunteering - green skills, eco schools
Golf courses - responsibility for better management - looking beyond courses	
Threats / Barriers	Lack of resource
	The need to be commercial
	Don't understand NERC duties
	Water courses not recognised
	LNRS provides framework
	Public perception of ownership - don't care / understand

HEATHLAND

Strengths	MOD protection
	Current good numbers of wildlife despite visitor pressures
	Can recover relatively easily
	Diversity of species and habitats
	Cultural landscape - rich history
	Sense of green space, wide horizons
	Level of international protection
Weaknesses	Dogs! (Recreational disturbance)
	Public pressure
	Transitional habitat requires management and processes
	Public education
	Sensitivity of heathland species
Opportunities	Still more opportunity for heathland restoration from pine plantation especially
	Improve access to SAMM pot
	More green bridges to connect habitat
	Re-wet the heather (habitat & mitigate fire risks)
Threats / Barriers	Climate change
	Development
	Eco-traps - attractive places to go / fill up with people
	Right over responsibility!

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	Flea treatment - water bodies
	Nutrient deposition - nitrogen

WOODLAND

Strengths	Combination of habitats
	National appeal / aesthetic
	Well being
	Diversity
	A lot of it!
	Microclimate of urban areas
	Cool , air pollution, screening [woodland]
	Screening at landscape scale
	People love them for recreation
	Ancient and veteran trees and associated biodiversity
Weaknesses	A lot in poor condition/ lack of understorey
	Conifer plantation (seen as 'woodland')
	Tubes, stakes, inappropriate planting
	Lack of resource to manage what we already have
	Time to establish
	Misconception they will solve climate change and biodiversity loss
	Lack of market for low-grade woodland products
Opportunities	Provide linkages for some other habitats
	Natural regeneration
	Public engagement through well-being
	Venison
	Education - forest school[s]
	Dead hedging to corral people and dogs and good for habitat
Threats / Barriers	Deer / grey squirrels
	Woodland for sale - small holdings
	Disease, invasives
	Climate stress
	1.2 million trees target!
	Improper management
	Infrastructure contractors
	Uneducated people
	Green washing eg tree planting
Perception that trees are dangerous	

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WATERWAYS AND WETLAND

Strengths	Chalk streams
	Habitat / wildlife
Strengths	New habitats from quarry sites
	River fly monitoring
	Public engagement
	Well established landscape partnerships for Wey and Mole
	Peat mires
Weaknesses	Pollution
	Many [rivers] still canalised
	Fragility
	Not understood - Winterbournes [unreadable] red listed habitat
	Flooding
	District Level Licensing yet to prove useful
	Lack of resource to manage
	No funding for strategy
	Lack of regulatory control to hold water authorities to account
	Environment Agency procedures
Opportunities	Grants from fines
	Recreation - can also bring funding
	Peat restoration - carbon capture
	Reducing flood risk can improve habitat
	Re-meandering
	Fen creation - flood protection
	Beavers
	Natural flood management
	CS money has increased
Threats / Barriers	Pollution - farming, sewage
	Non-native invasive species
	Dogs - flea / tick treatment, erosion, disturbance
	Cost of restoration huge!
	Time take for projects eg RTS
	Wish to act - water off land asap
	Climate change - worse[ning] pollution

FARMLAND INCLUDING HEDGEROWS AND FIELD MARGINS

Strengths	Not very arable (ration pasture - arable)
	Big estates, well managed & longevity
	Poor soils = bad for farming! Opportunity for nature and carbon sequestration
	Diversification (in some areas) of use. Other income streams i.e. filming

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	Arable pockets are important strongholds for declining hedgerow species
	Arable weeds that are important
Weaknesses	Lack of skilled farmers
	Long-term tenancies on farms leading to neglect
Weaknesses	Fragmentation due to small holdings
	Lack of suitable grazing animals
	No value perceptions of land for wildlife by land owners / managers
	No true farmland left in some parts of Surrey
	Rising cost of materials / resources
	Availability of natively grown trees
Opportunities	Farm clusters
	Jeremy Clarkson effect!
	Consistent field boundaries for hedgerow restoration
	Gate placement in correct areas stops run-off
	Dead hedging
	ELMS and other funds
	LNRS and DEFRA money
	Make nature profitable
	Training how to understand and manage hedgerows & riparian fringes (ie 7km of hedgerows planted)
	Green work - community / youth etc
	Connect with woodland shaws
	Talk now to private landowners
	New income streams / self-sustaining
	Restoration on sands & gravels, areas such as Hogs Back & Chalk - use derelict farmland
	(Awareness work)
	Require holding land, connect to grazing on heathland.
	Put the poo in the right place (in field / out field)
	A lot of these areas sit in enclosed, designated land
	Regenerative farming / healthier food (less meat, better quality for example)
Corporate hedgerow planting	
Threats / Barriers	Lack of hedgerow management
	Watercourse contamination due to run off (silage etc)
	Increasing trend towards intense farming methods (lack of expertise)
	Permitted development rights (i.e. land / buildings to storage)
	"Horsiculture"
	Fragmentation
	Bottom line profitability of farms
	Lack of perception of value of this land for schemes like BNG
	Overuse of pesticides
<u>Multiple pressures on land i.e. food production</u>	

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	Wrong tree, wrong place
	Pressure on farmers to "do it all"
	Game birds

SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND

Strengths	Diversity of grassland types
	Blue Heart and associated volunteers
	Active parish, town councils and residents' associations
	Beeline
	Easiest way for individuals to get involved - no mow summer
	Lots of verges to help connectivity
	Operational staff and volunteers building relationships
	Cluster projects already running
	Surrey Botanical Society Inventory
	Easiest habitat for individuals i.e. uncut grass [garden lawns]
	Pockets of great activity in educating (i.e. Betchworth)
Weaknesses	<u>Communication between local authority and contractors down to individual level</u>
	Lots of common land
	Lack of farmers to cut hay on low value hayfields
	Habitat fragmentation
	Still fail to have restoration plans on grassland down [River] Wey
	Lots of land along Wey is privately owned
	Fragility of habitat
Opportunities	Modern technology (AI, drones)
	Lots of road verges in Surrey
	Education - contractors and residents
	<u>Expand grazing projects</u>
	No fence technology
	Cut and collect machinery eg flail and training to use
	<u>Share equipment</u>
	Facilitate training in management
	Default Blue Heart?
	Tree poppers!
	Dead hedging to establish natural barriers i.e. Ash dieback, pond safety
	Donor sites
	Community ownership of projects
	Reconnect river to its flood plain to create more species rich landscape
	Relationship building with landowners
<u>Back farm clusters (again) in right place. Led by the farm community.</u>	
And expand to landowner clusters	

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	Funding pots
	education opportunities / schools
	Use School Grounds. National Biodiversity Park.
Threats / Barriers Threats / Barriers	Management of grasslands and verges
	Lack of suitable grazing animals means habitats not managed
	Atmospheric deposition and road run-offs (mainly nitrogen from vehicles) - changes species
	Succession to scrub woodland
	Contradictory opinions about how to use land by experts
	Farm clusters shutting down to due difficulty to administer and expensive
	Species isolated due to fragmentation
	Lack of equipment / ££s to buy / resource
	Overuse of pesticides

IDEA GENERATION BY PLACE

Participants were able to review maps showing already designated areas (SSSIs, SPAs etc) and ancient woodland (irreplaceable habitat) and asked using the Lawton principles:

1. More
2. Bigger
3. Better
4. More joined up

... to identify opportunities for Nature Recovery in specific locations. These will be mapped for the September / October workshops but in the meantime here are the results in a table:

Location	Comment / action
East	River Eden catchment area
Wotton	River Mole Natural flood management scheme
Partnership National Nature Reserve	Frensham, Hankley, Thursley, Bourne Woods, Frensham Heath - Heathland Connections
Merrist Wood	[Connectivity?]
Langshot and Gracious Pond Farm	Peat
Sandy Cross	Mineral sites
Dippenhall	Arable landscape restoration NFM
Farnham	Floodplain reconnection
General comment	District level maps?
Woldingham Village	Engage with parish council
East Surrey	Field margins on arable land to connect chalk grassland
Priest Hill to Epsom Downs	Farm fields
Epsom Common	Is an SSSI as well as LNR (use patterns as well as colours to distinguish between designations)
Buckland, Betchworth,	Attempt to connect habitats www.biodiversitypark.uk

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Location	Comment / action
Brockham and Box Hill	
Bookham - Epsom Common	Green bridge across M25. Hedgerows to link woodland/woodland pasture
General comment	Map back gardens to show links and which residents to approach
Cranleigh	Green but undesignated
Frimley	Corridor between MOD land and habitats
South London Downs (super) NNR	Surrey Hills extension [suggested]
Caterham (Springbottom)	Potential for arable reversion to chalk grassland
Holmewood Sandhills	meadow restoration
Eden for Nature	Farm Cluster
Dormansland	Bee (biodiversity) lives, Drove Road, "Nightingale Way"
Gatwick Greenspaces	Opportunities to connect habitat and people to greenspaces
Gatwick Greenspaces	More effective water management - holding water where it creates a wetland habitat. Could be used to prevent so much water going into sewage works?
Buckland Estate	Scarp between Dawcombe and Colley Hill, owned by Buckland Estate needs scrub clearance.
Leigh	Sensitive arable / hedgerow management for Hares. Last population in the area. CONFIDENTIAL
Betchworth Quarry	Land between Betchworth Quarry and Fraser Down - need for scrub management / grassland restoration
Brockham	SCC owned scrub between Brockham and Betchworth Quarries. Need clearance to create / restore grassland links
Dorking NFM	Beaver (re)introduction
Leatherhead	Fen creation along dip on North Downs
Leatherhead	Skills opportunity with local companies (Space and NI Rod)
West Horsley	Opportunities to develop fens along spring lines. Better understanding of winterbournes.
Gomshall	Privately owned. Need for scrub management east of Colekitchen
Hurtwood	Pine Marten introduction (squirrel control)
Chiddingfold	Habitat links across county boundary
Tilford and Frensham Heathland Hub	At Rural Life Museum
Hogs Back A31	Potential for better road verge management along A31 Hogs Back
Bisley	Opportunities to link TBHs
Haslemere	Ecological Network - Neighbourhood Plan
Sutton Park / Slyfield	Water treatment improve storm controls

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Location	Comment / action
Guildford	Wetlands at base of high street
Wey and Arun Canal	Biodiversity link to Knepp etc
Farncombe	Water treatment improve storm controls
River Wey	87 testing sites along River Wey. Water Rangers clean up of river very important biodiversity connector
Milford / Mousehill	Manage better for nightingales

REFLECTIONS

Before a break for lunch, participants were asked for their reflections on the morning's activities:

- Private landowners are key
- Lack of understanding / clarity of BNG by central / local government
- Basics aren't being done on the existing estate
- You can't manage for biodiversity without managing access
- Lots of strategies in the past - good ones - but what have they achieved
- BNG isn't the magic bullet. Look at other funding streams. BNG rewards the "worst" farmers
- Thames Basin Heath Partnership - delivered 30 SANGS. LNRS is operating / emerging in this context / environment
- We're seeing so much less species and habitat - public get that. We need to capture people's imagination
- Heathland is "poor mans" habitat. Seen as disposable, less valued - suitable for building
- Education is key at every level from primary school to community level education. Where individuals can contribute in their gardens
- Also link to other [neighbouring] LNRS
- What "good" looks like. More people need to be trained, curious and report knowledge and improvement. Chalk stream example.
- A shifting baseline - that memory is being lost.

DEVELOPING NATURE RECOVERY OUTCOMES (GROUP ACTIVITY)

Following a break for food and networking, participants were asked to select a high priority from the earlier SWOT activity to explore in more depth and to identify priority outcomes and actions that could be taken forward into the strategy. They were also asked to underline the most important outcomes and actions for their topic. The following are the results:

DOGS, RECREATION AND DISTURBANCE

Outcomes	Actions
Support and foster groups that encourage sensitive dog walking eg Heathland Hounds	Engage groups on LNRS
Flea and tick treatment on dogs entering water courses	Educate public on types of chemical treatments and effects on water
Engage groups including dog walkers on LNRS	Educate public on types of chemical treatments and effects on water. Also vets.

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People - free zones	<u>Section off wilder areas for nature (eg close paths temporarily)</u>
Encourage sustainable use of sites	<u>Limit car parking (eg close seasonally)</u>
Manage visitors accessing the countryside	Advice on using vegetation to manage visitors such as dead hedges and logs

BIODIVERSITY DUTY OF PUBLIC BODIES (PARISH, TOWN, BOROUGH)

Outcomes	Actions
Engagement of council officers	Hold LNRS workshop at parish level. Show this is happening anyway and they need to own it for their area.
Biodiversity Action Plan by 2026 (Jan)	
Specific biodiversity objectives - report on progress	Surrey Association of Local Councils (Chris Howard - ally - to help with this)
<u>Linked delivery of multiple biodiversity strategies and plans</u>	<u>Production of Surrey-wide reporting framework. Convening conferences / groups on biodiversity.</u>
<u>Linked delivery of multiple biodiversity strategies and plans</u>	<u>Collating locally captured data at the Surrey Record Centre</u>
<u>Linked delivery of multiple biodiversity strategies and plans</u>	<u>Pilot Parish LNRS / BAP</u>
Surrey-wide reporting framework	Facilitation of workshops at local level drawing on central resources
LNRS sites identified in local and neighbourhood plans	Education to dovetail LNRS, biodiversity duty, local plans
Collating locally captured data from surveys, gathering citizen science data or that from local interest groups	YouTube videos to educate

WETLAND CREATION

Outcomes	Actions
Better water management - restored habitat, flood mitigation	Training at community level
Better understanding of hydrology	Drawings to understand hydrology of the area
More wetland habitats - fens, bogs, ponds - used to manage water	Create wetlands that absorb slow down the spring water
More wetland habitats - fens, bogs, ponds - used to manage water	Use natural filtration systems to control run off from land / roads etc

DIVERSITY OF SPECIES AND HABITATS

Outcomes	Actions
More of everything - habitats, connectivity and resources	Equipment share especially cut and collect flail including for seed collection
More of everything - habitats, connectivity and resources	Identify priority areas for habitat restoration for connectivity

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Outcomes	Actions
More of everything - habitats, connectivity and resources	Data, monitoring
Gardens	Small actions that people can take
Public buy-in / ownership	Champions
Public buy-in / ownership	Culture of sharing resources / what works
Public buy-in / ownership	Public engagement
Public belief that they can make a difference	Share the wonderment with the public
Public belief that they can make a difference	Share what's not good with the public
Delivery through private landowners	Stories about species
Delivery through private landowners	Small actions - publicise
Understanding of link between species and habitats. Web of life and where are we now?	Education, curation - local / parish based.

CARROT SACK (SOMETHING TO CHEW OVER LATER)

Participants were able to comment more generally during the sessions and the following points were captured:

- If a landowner asks for their land to be removed from the LNRS map, will this be in the public domain?
- Is that a disincentive / incentive for i.e. mineral companies
- If a fen - which we are mapping - goes onto a baseline map, need to ensure it remains mapped. It may increase its BNG value.
- Danger we get distracted by potential measures, rather than looking after the good stuff we already know about.
- Is the expected level of detail achievable?
- SSSIs in unfavourable condition in private ownership (i.e. chalk grassland) will be included
- Can we join up areas within an SPA
- Who makes the decision on what finally goes in? The steering group (list partners) decides, Natural England "marks the homework". Signed off by SCC and Local Authorities.
- More information / understanding of the "duty to prepare a biodiversity plan". Who does this apply to?

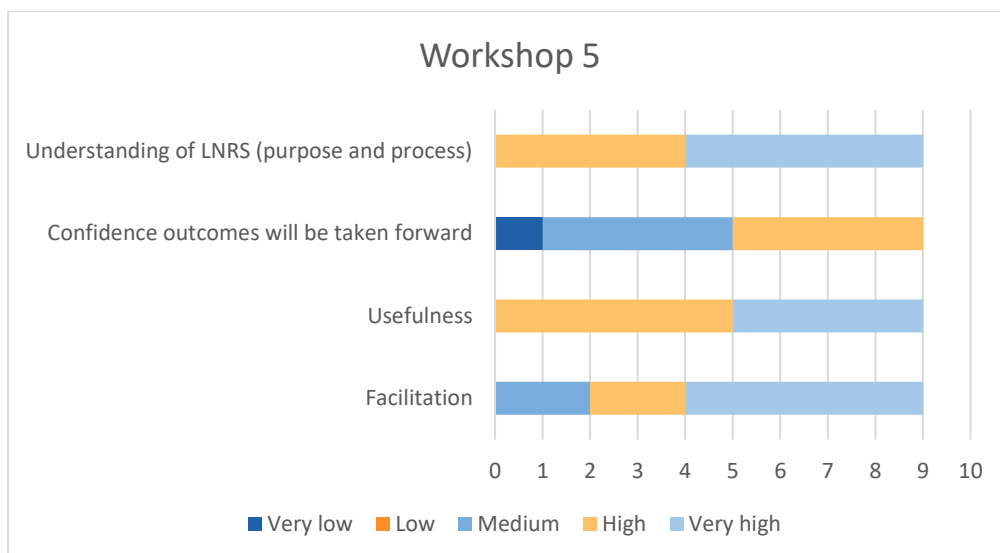
EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Participants were asked to evaluate the workshop and give some feedback at the end:

- Some key actions and outcomes not listed on sheets due to lack of time
- LNRS step change will come from brand new areas not just tinkering around edges of SSSIs

See over for chart:

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GLOSSARY / JARGON

At this and the other events, inevitably some acronyms or jargon were used. These will be used to populate a glossary on the website. Here they are explained:

NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
SAMM	Strategic Access Management and Monitoring funding
NFM	Natural Flood Management

Jim Boot, Senior Consultant, R4C 6th August 2024