



North York Moors
National Park

Meadows, verges and boundaries: connecting Parishes through nature

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Meadows, verges and boundaries

Connecting Parishes through nature



- The challenge of nature decline
- What does nature need?
- What is being done: regional and national actions
- What can Parishes do to make a difference?
- Resources



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The challenge of nature decline

The challenge of nature decline

- Biodiversity across the world is in trouble
 - 1m of the world's (estimated) 8m species are threatened with extinction (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - IPBES)
 - 75% of the Earth's land surface, and 66% of the ocean area, is significantly altered or impacted by human activities (IPBES)
- England is 234th out of 240 countries and territories in ranking of biodiversity intactness (UK considered collectively 228th)
- Losses not just historic – declines ongoing (State of Nature Report 2023)



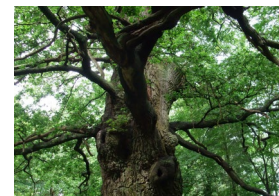
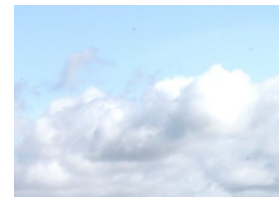
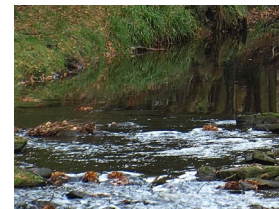
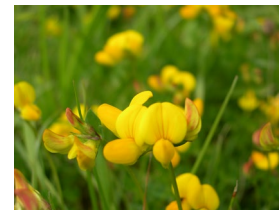


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What does nature need?

What does nature need?

- Basic requirements for (most) species; food, water, oxygen, shelter/substrate
- All species have slightly different requirements. To support a nature rich environment species need;
 - Space to adapt, change and move
 - Variety!
 - Connections to other nature rich areas
- In essence ‘bigger, better and more joined up’ as summarised in the Lawton Report ‘Making Space for Nature’ (2010)



What does nature need?

Space to adapt, change and move

- ‘Bigger’
- Larger areas are in general more resilient to pressures.
- Support more stable populations of species – lots of potential mates so wider gene pool and greater potential of adapting to long term pressures
- More individuals means at least some likely to survive temporary population declines
- When conditions are challenging, food and/or water more likely to be present somewhere that can reach
- Likely to cover different topography and/or geology so may be ‘refuge’ areas present unaffected by pressures

What does nature need?

Variety

- ‘Better’
- Different soils, altitudes, aspects, vegetation structure and other conditions will support different species.
- The more variation the more opportunity for more species to thrive!
- Variety helps support resilience to pressures like climate change.

What does nature need?

Connections to other nature rich space

- ‘More joined up’
- Live in a dynamic world. Natural and human impacts will continue to put pressure on natural habitats and spaces. Connected habitats enable species to move in response to pressures.
- Connected populations of species enable genetic resilience and adaptation, reducing local extinctions



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What is being done?

National and regional actions

What is being done?

National policies

- Local Nature Recovery Strategy
 - Will set out approaches to improving conditions for nature at a regional scale. Locally in North Yorkshire and Tees Valley.
- Government derived funding opportunities
 - DEFRA, Natural England, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency grants
 - Agri-environment agreements
- Leveraged private investment
 - Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality
 - Carbon credits and natural capital investments

What is being done?

Actions in the National Park

- Producing Local Nature Recovery Plan
 - Bespoke for North York Moors National Park but will feed into regional LNRSs produced
- Delivery of projects, providing advice and funding to land managers in the National Park





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What can Parishes do to make a difference?

What can Parishes do to make a difference?

- Work with local community to understand specific local biodiversity features and pressures
- Management of areas under Parish Council control
- Liaison with community to influence management of land outside of Parish Council control

What can Parishes do to make a difference?

Understand local biodiversity features and pressures

- You may have local naturalists or other experts in your area – use their knowledge and expertise!
- What natural habitats already exist in the parish? What uses them? Are particular times of year important?
- What are the current pressures on local biodiversity?
Examples include;



- Foot fall / visitor pressure
- Community wish for 'tidiness'
- Maintenance of sight lines for safety



What can Parishes do to make a difference?

Management of areas under Parish Council control

- Hedge trimming
 - Where possible don't cut every year – alternate which hedges cut
 - Winter cuts ideally should be left until Jan/Feb
 - Raise the cut height – just 5-10cm can be hugely beneficial and prevent 'knuckles' forming
 - Where will not impinge on road safety allow hedges to get bigger and more diverse!
 - Allow hedgerow trees to form at intervals along the hedge
 - Consider introducing hedge laying to well established hedges of the right age – great community activity!



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Image ©Nigel Dowsett



Image ©Kirsty Brown

What can Parishes do to make a difference?

Management of areas under Parish Council control

- Verge management
 - Reduce cutting! Cutting only twice a year in around March/early April and September/October will enable plants to flower and set seed.
 - Remove cuttings after mowing – this reduces nutrients and helps to prevent grass dominating all other species.
 - Where more frequent mowing required (eg for safety) try to minimize the area for this and allow the back of the verge to grow longer.
 - Introduce a more diverse range of species where appropriate by locally sourced green hay, plug plants or seed.



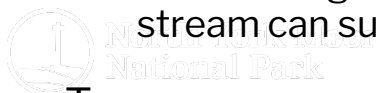
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What can Parishes do to make a difference?

Management of areas under Parish Council control

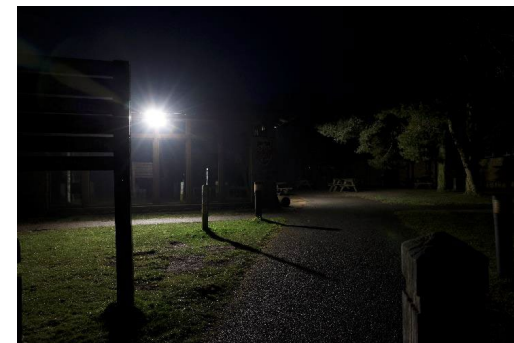
- Can village greens and other community spaces help nature as well as people?
 - Use native species instead of non-natives for display planting where possible
 - Tree planting – even single trees can make a big difference, eg fruit trees that can provide a harvest as well as food and structure for wildlife
 - Wetness – great for wildlife! A small pond, scrape, slow bit of stream can support loads of species.
- Tree management – where required, retain some cut wood for log piles for nature. Can the trunk of a diseased tree be retained for nature?



What can Parishes do to make a difference?

Management of areas under Parish Council control

- Supporting measures to promote and protect dark skies
 - Dark skies beneficial for protecting biodiversity – particularly the natural habits of invertebrates and other nocturnal fauna.
 - Also benefits for saving money, improving health and well-being and conserving dark landscapes
 - Consider impacts on dark skies when commenting on planning applications
 - If have adopted street lights – ensure dark skies compliant (no upward light spill, <2700K, low wattage) and consider part night lighting.



What can Parishes do to make a difference?

Influence management of other land

- Share good practice and advice within the parish (and with other parishes!)
- If changing management of parish council land, let everyone know why! Take pictures of the work and record the wildlife seen.
- Encourage land managers of assets that affect the community to adopt practices that benefit biodiversity eg land near streams and alongside footpaths and other rights of way.
- Gardens are a great resource for benefitting biodiversity! Small changes can make a big difference
- Encourage residents to consider dark skies when lighting their properties and adopt appropriate lighting methods.





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Resources

Resources

- Some works may be eligible for grant funding
 - Hedgerow creation/management (SFI, Traditional Boundary Fund)
 - Diversifying grasslands (potentially FiPL and Ryevatilise)
 - Ponds (Birds on the Edge, FiPL)
 - Proposed new project GrubsUp!
- Useful links and guidance
 - Hedge management: www.ptes.org/hedgerow and www.hedgelinek.org.uk/guidance/hedgerow-management-advice
 - Road verges: www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/road-verges
 - Ponds/wetland: www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/million-ponds/pond-creation-toolkit



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Thank you
Any questions?