North Wessex Downs
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Downland Heritage Initiative

Local Seed Harvesting Project
Final Report

Jemma Batten & Simon Smart

black sheep
countryside management

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Black Sheep Countryside Management
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Produced on behalf of the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership with funding from Natural England

The North Wessex Downs AONB was designated in 1972 to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

black sheep
countryside management

DEVELOPMENT OF A
LOCAL SEED HARVESTING NETWORK

An Analysis of Management Issues and Infrastructural Needs

1.0 Introduction

The North Wessex Downs AONB's Chalk Grassland Strategy (CGS) identified three key areas where targeted restoration and recreation of downland would bring maximum multiple benefits to landscape character, biodiversity and archaeology. These areas are the Horton Downs, the Hampshire Downs, and the Letcombe to Liddington Escarpment.

Environmental Stewardship encourages the use of native and local seed for chalk grassland creation and restoration and a supplement for using native seed mixes is available which covers 100% of the costs.

Thus it would appear that the requirement and therefore the market for seed harvested locally within the AONB will expand in future years.

2.0 Survey

All chalk grassland sites within the three target areas identified by the Chalk Grassland Strategy (see Figure 1 overleaf) were checked on the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map and some rejected without survey because they were obviously too steep for harvesting. Over the last eighteen months all remaining sites within the target areas have been surveyed for their seed harvesting potential. This was done using a rapid survey method (attached at Appendix 1) to assess each site according to slope, topography, anthills, accessibility, sward condition, weed species and scrub cover.

Slope, topography, and anthill cover are physical characteristics of the sites which cannot be altered by site management so sites which did not meet requirements under these criteria were discarded. However, sward condition (unless agriculturally improved), weed species, scrub cover, and on some sites, accessibility, may be improved by good management. Thus even sites failing these criteria at the time of the survey could, with appropriate management, be suitable for harvesting at some time in the future.

3.0 Sites

The Chalk Grassland Strategy maps show 1926.88 ha of chalk grassland within the three target areas. Of this area 31 sites were identified across the three target areas as being potentially suitable for harvesting seed. Individual site record sheets are attached at Appendix 2. Many of these sites were variable and so were split into "Units", each having more uniform characteristics. In total, 54 Units covering an approximate area of 571.85 ha were found to be potentially suitable for seed harvesting in the three target

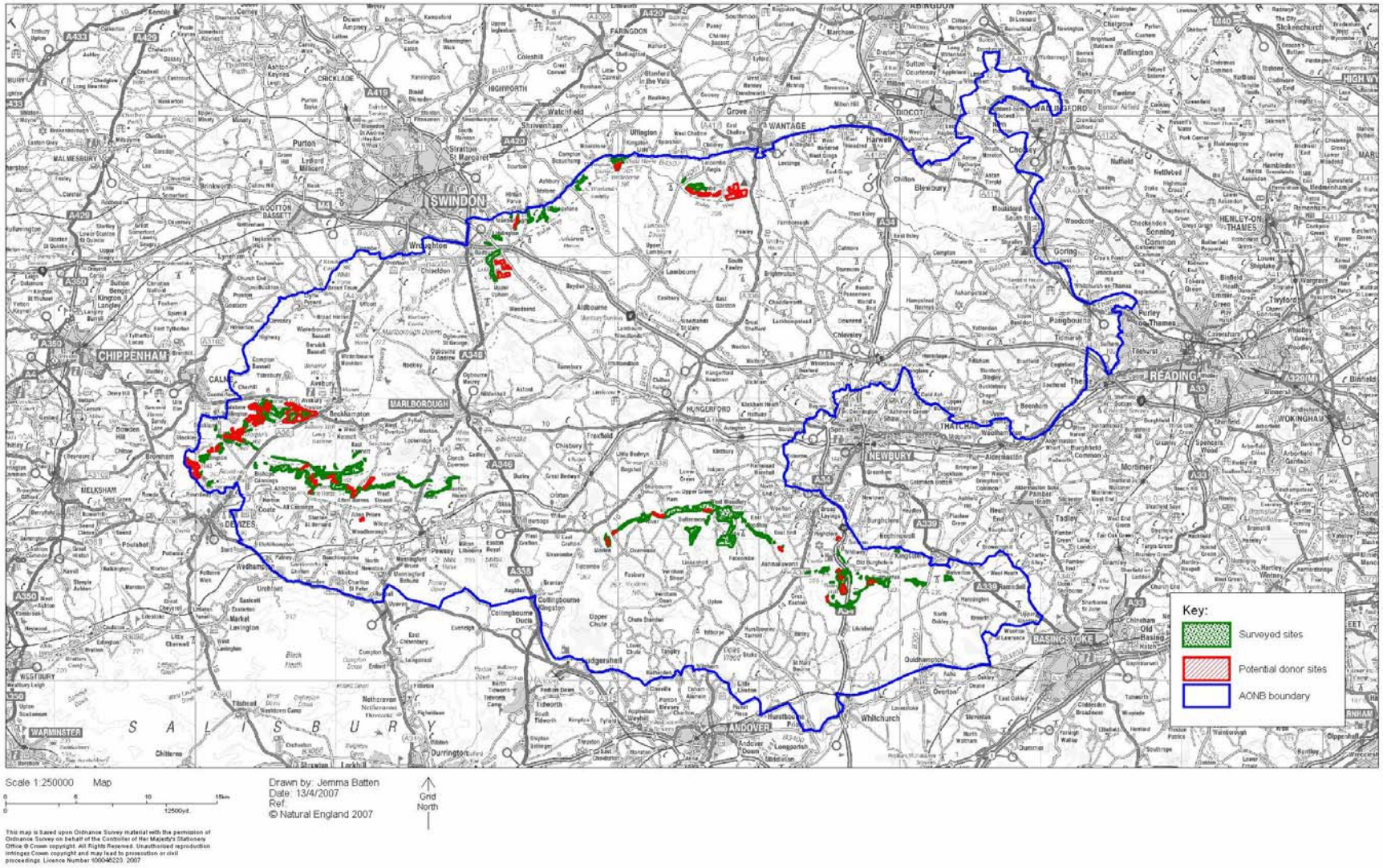

Figure 1: North Wessex Downs AONB Local Seed Harvesting Project: Survey area and potential donor sites

areas. Of these 54 Units, 31 are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 37 are believed to be managed under a "higher level" agri-environment scheme Agreement (Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, Countryside Stewardship Scheme or Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme).

3.1 Horton Downs

The majority of the survey work for this target area was carried out in the autumn of 2005 as part of a pilot project during which the Rapid Survey scoring system and methodology were developed, though some sites were re-visited during the main project of 2006/07.

The Horton Downs includes two distinct areas: the first running roughly from Devizes to east of Pewsey; and the second from north of Devizes to Beckhampton. These two areas were quite different in character, with the Devizes-Pewsey section being of generally better quality grassland though on much steeper slopes, while the Devizes-Beckhampton section included some larger areas of accessible grassland, some of which was good quality arable reversion. Neither section is particularly wooded.

The Horton Downs target area contains fourteen sites (35 Units) covering up to 315 ha of potentially harvestable grassland. Seven of these sites (23 Units, ≈ 270 ha) are in the Devizes-Beckhampton section, and the remaining eight sites (12 Units, ≈ 45 ha) lie along the Pewsey scarp.

3.2 Letcombe to Liddington Escarpment

This target area was surveyed during autumn 2006 or spring 2007, and was found to be quite different from the Horton Downs in that there is far less chalk grassland. However, what there is, is generally restricted to small steeply sloping areas, with much of the more accessible areas having been agriculturally improved and in this way the area resembles somewhat the Devizes-Pewsey section of the Horton Downs.

The Letcombe to Liddington Escarpment target area contains seven sites (7 Units) covering 93 ha of potentially harvestable grassland.

3.3 Hampshire Downs

The most significant difference between this and the other two target areas is the higher proportion of woodland on the Hampshire Downs. Like the Horton Downs, this target area contains a good deal of chalk grassland though much of it is present only on inaccessible steep ground.

The Hampshire Downs target area contains nine sites (12 Units) covering up to 40 ha of potentially harvestable grassland.

Table 1: Summary of rapid survey results for chalk grassland sites in three target areas of the North Wessex Downs AONB

Key: ✓ Minor management/harvesting issues which would not preclude harvesting if addressed

× Serious issues which would preclude harvesting at this time but could be addressed

Target Area	Site	Unit	Designation	AE	Flat area	Topography	Anthills	Access	Sward	Weeds	Scrub	Score
Hampshire Downs	Beacon Hill	A	SSSI, SAM	CSS		✓				×		19
		B	SSSI, SAM	CSS		✓		✓		×	✓	15
		C	SSSI	CSS		✓	✓			×		16
		D	SSSI	CSS			✓			×	×	14
	Botley Down		SSSI, SAM	CSS		✓			✓	✓		18
	Bunkhanger Copse		CWS					✓	✓	×	×	13
	Combe Gibbet		SSSI	CSS					✓	×		17
	Ladle Hill		SSSI, SAM			✓				×		17
	Rivar Down		CWS		✓	✓				×		14
	The Temple		SSSI	CSS						×		18
	Wansdyke Farm		CWS						✓	×		17
	Woodcott Down		CWS	CSS		✓				×	✓	16
Horton Downs (Devizes to Pewsey)	All Cannings Down		SAM	CSS		✓				×		17
	Cannings Cross		SSSI		✓			✓		×		16
	Clifford's Hill	A	SSSI	CSS				✓		×		17
		B		CSS		✓		✓				19
	Golden Ball Hill									✓		20
	Walkers Hill	A	SSSI							×		18
		B	SSSI, SAM			✓				×		17
	Knap Hill	C	SSSI, SAM							×		18
	Milk Hill	A	SSSI			✓				×		17
		B	SSSI							✓		20
	Woodborough Hill	A	CWS									21
		B	CWS			✓	✓					19

Target Area	Site	Unit	Designation	AE	Flat area	Topography	Anthills	Access	Sward	Weeds	Scrub	Score
Horton Downs (Devizes to Beckhampton)	Beckhampton Gallops	A	CWS			✓			✓		×	16
		B	CWS, SAM									21
	Calstone Down	A	SSSI	CSS		✓				✓		19
		B	SSSI	CSS		✓				✓	✓	15
		C	SSSI	CSS		✓	✓	✓		×		15
	Cherhill Down	A	SSSI	CSS?		✓	✓					19
		B	SSSI	CSS?						×		18
		C	SSSI, SAM	CSS?		✓				×		17
		D	SSSI, SAM	CSS?		✓	✓					19
		E	SSSI, SAM	CSS?						×		18
	King's Play Hill	A	SSSI	CSS		✓				✓		16
		B	CWS	CSS		✓				×	✓	13
	Horsecombe Bottom	A		CSS								21
		B		CSS		✓				✓		19
		C	SSSI	CSS		✓				✓		19
	Morgan's Hill	A	SSSI, SAM	CSS		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	16
		B	SAM	CSS		✓			✓	✓	×	15
		C	SAM	CSS								21
		D	SAM			✓			✓	✓		18
	Roundway Down	A		CSS						×		18
		B		CSS						✓		20
		C		CSS						✓		20
		D	SSSI, SAM	CSS						✓		20
Letcombe to Liddington Escarpment	Hackpen Hill		SSSI	WES?						✓		20
	Liddington Hill		SAM	CSS					✓	×		17
	Liddington Warren					✓			×	✓		16
	Segsbury Castle		SSSI, SAM	CSS								21
	The Coombs		SSSI	CSS		✓	✓		✓	×		15.5
	Uffington Castle		SSSI, SAM	CSS		✓						20
	Warren Hill			HLS			✓					20

4.0 Site Constraints

Table 1 (previous page) gives a summary of the sites and Units identified as being of potential use for seed harvesting along with any constraints that may be of significance on each site.

4.1 Weed burden

Following the original pilot survey of the Horton Downs the major factor identified as reducing the quality of otherwise suitable sites was the presence of injurious weed species. The survey of the Hampshire Downs confirmed the presence of weeds as a major barrier to site suitability.

Of the 31 sites identified as having potential for seed harvesting 24 had weed cover that would preclude the harvesting of quality seed on at least some of the Units. The most common weed species were ragwort and spear thistle, with creeping thistle and nettles also occurring on some sites. Docks were generally more abundant on improved grassland areas but were less common on sites identified for seed harvesting.

Interestingly, however, the presence of injurious weeds was not as significant along the Letcombe to Liddington Escarpment. This may be because of more intensive management practices in the Letcombe to Liddington target area leading to sward improvement of gentler slopes and greater control of injurious weed species in general.

Even on sites with weeds distributed at a low density, seed harvesting should not be considered until the weeds have been controlled. Indeed, the transfer of injurious weed seed from a donor to a recipient site would be illegal under the Weeds Act 1959 and could conflict with Cross Compliance GAEC11.

4.1.1 Weed control training

The control of weeds in “conservation” grassland was identified as a significant problem area during Downland Heritage Initiative stakeholder meetings. The observation that many potential harvesting sites are infested to a greater or lesser degree with injurious weeds further highlighted the need to support land managers in addressing this particular issue.

Thus, a workshop was organised to focus attention on the control of injurious weeds in grassland where low intensity management requirements preclude the use of generally applied (i.e. boom-sprayed) pesticides. The event covered the use of a variety of weed control techniques including cultural, mechanical and targeted chemical control.

Following an introduction to the Local Seed Harvesting Project from Jemma Batten (Black Sheep Countryside Management), a presentation by Heather McCalman (IGER) described opportunities for managing weeds using cultural and mechanical techniques. The presentation covered grazing systems and sward management to prevent weed problems before they occur and to reduce existing weed burdens. Mechanical control including physical removal by pulling, both by hand and machine (ecopuller), and topping at the appropriate growth stage, was also considered.

This was followed by a presentation by Ian Ball (Natural England) who described some of the chemical techniques available to those managing grassland in agri-

environment schemes. This included a summary of application methods such as weed wiping and spot spraying, and explanations of factors such as application rate and weed vigour which may affect control success. The benefits and limitations of weedwipers, and management requirements prior to weed wiping were also covered.

Both speakers emphasised the importance of understanding the lifecycles of the different weed species in order to optimise control both through choice of method and timing.

The morning talks were followed by a display of a range of weed management equipment, during which participants had the opportunity to discuss the practicalities of weed management with the machinery owners and contractors.

Those who attended the event were also provided with an extensive folder of information on various aspects of weed control, including machinery suppliers, contractors' details, thorough speakers' notes and sources of further information.

One of the issues highlighted previously was that many landowners who manage their chalk grassland under agri-environment schemes assume that there is very little opportunity to undertake weed management within the management prescriptions. One of the outcomes from the event was to show that there are a number of proactive management opportunities for weed control within the bounds of agri-environment grassland prescriptions.

All land managers who were within the three target areas were invited and 22 attended the weed control event. This included land managers for five sites which had been identified as suitable for harvesting seed. All five of these sites were also identified as having a weed problem. It is hoped that this event will have provided the managers of these sites with the skills, confidence, and contacts to address the weed issue.

Those site owners and managers who did not attend have been contacted individually and provided with management advice including information on weed control where necessary.

4.2 Scrub

Scrub was identified on nine Units (seven sites) and on four of these Units was judged to be sufficient to preclude the harvesting of seed at present. The occurrence of scrub is most likely on more isolated difficult sites where suitable grazing regimes are not possible and/or where stock is not available (see section 4.4). Whilst initial scrub removal is essential it is equally important to continue long term control of the scrub by either continued mechanical and chemical control or by instigating an appropriate grazing regime.

4.3 Agricultural improvement of sward

Whilst the timing of the surveys prevented a full assessment of sward diversity, as highlighted in the site assessments some of the sites show a degree of agricultural improvement, whilst still supporting species indicative of more species rich chalk grassland.

There may be an opportunity to enhance the condition of the existing chalk grassland resource by using seed from the most species rich sites. Not only will this improve the quantity and quality of future donor sites but, as stated in the Chalk Grassland

Strategy, management and enhancement of the existing resource should be the priority.

Those sites showing some degree of improvement need to be surveyed at a more appropriate time of year to assess the level of improvement. It should be borne in mind that the diversity of grasses should be considered and not just diversity of broad-leaved flowering plants. If necessary, it would be possible to add locally sourced seed of flowering plants to increase the number of species present once seed has been harvested from such sites.

4.4 Lack of grazing

The sward was classed as tussocky and under-managed on eight sites (ten Units), which may be a result of declining livestock numbers in the AONB. This is likely to be an increasing problem in the future particularly if predictions made following the introduction of the Single Farm Payment and the resulting loss of previous headage payments ring true. An ADAS survey funded by English Nature predicts a decline in lowland suckler cows of around 10%, although the report also suggests that sheep numbers may increase.

Environmental Stewardship offers some financial support for the maintenance of appropriate grazing systems (Options EK5, HK5, HR1, and HR2) but this is unlikely to support livestock on a wider scale, particularly in the current funding situation.

The grazing issue could also be addressed by promoting the involvement of owners of under-grazed sites with local grazing schemes including the Wiltshire Grazing Animals Programme (which is currently awaiting funding?) and the SheepKeep Website (http://www.sheepkeep.co.uk). Furthermore, as grazing problems are arguably the single most significant barrier to achieving "favourable condition" on SSSIs (a Natural England PSA target), on County Wildlife Sites, and on other undesignated though species-rich grasslands, it would seem sensible for each Natural England office to have a member of staff responsible for grazing issues within their area.

4.5 Arable reversion

At least four of the sites[1] contain areas of arable reversion managed under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. These score highly due to their flat, even topography, which is obviously why they were originally ploughed. The reversion sites also lack anthills and scrub, as this has generally not had time to develop, at least on recent reversion.

Even on reversion sites with currently poor species diversity, with appropriate long-term management these could potentially be good donor sites. However, this depends on the origin of the seed used to establish the grassland which, if inappropriate, may be a site constraint. It should be ensured that the seed source was local or that the sward developed from natural regeneration.

5.0 Facilitation and meeting infrastructural requirements

In order to further facilitate the harvesting of seed from the sites which have been identified as having potential, site managers need to be able to access details of

[1] Unit C of Morgan's Hill; Units A, B & C of Roundway Down; Liddington Hill; and Segsbury Castle.

those organisations and/or persons who can assist with practical management. This will enable them to address any management issues which are currently reducing the quality of the site for seed harvesting, primarily weed control and scrub management. To this end, a database of useful contractors would be useful.

Table 2 provides contact details of contractors who undertake practical land management within the AONB.

Table 3 provides the details of seed harvesting contractors who operate within the AONB. A sample seed harvesting contract, including guidance on best practice and health and safety, is attached at Appendix 3.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of the Local Seed Project, the potential end-users of the project outputs need to be made aware of the resource. Table 4 identifies potential users of the seed harvesting project outputs.

Table 2. Contractors who carry out scrub management and weed control within the AONB

Company	Contact name	Address	Telephone	Mobile	E-mail	Scrub Management	Weed Control
J & M Bodman		Knights Leaze Farm, Cuckoo Corner, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts. SN10 4RA	01380 840273			✓	
BTCV		Sedum House, Mallard Way, Potteric Carr, Doncaster. DN4 8DB	01302 388888		information@btcv.org.uk	✓	✓
	John Cheke	Kepnal Farm Buildings, Kepnal, Pewsey, Wilts. SN9 5JL		07831 839755	john.cheke@virgin.net	Light scrub and follow up scrub clearance with mulcher	✓
Conservation Contractors	William Warden	End Farm, Marston, Devizes, Wilts. SN10 5SR	01380 726739	07889 461358	info@conservation-contractors.co.uk	✓	✓
Dryad Land and Tree Care Ltd.	Matt Dry	106 Anchor Road, Calne, Wilts. SN11 8EB	01249 815186	07967 505624		✓	
Dryad Tree Specialists		Unit 19 Enterprise Estate, Noorfield Road, Guildford, Surrey. GU1 1RB	01483 455555		-	✓	
Five Rivers Environmental Contracting	Jason Lovering	Ford Mill, Ford, Salisbury, Wilts. SP4 6EN	01980 610550		jason@five-rivers.com	✓	✓
	John Hawkins	3 Swedish Houses, Shalbourne, Marlborough, Wilts. SN8 3PX	01672 870934	07970 686876		✓	

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Table 2. Contractors who carry out scrub management and weed control within the AONB

Company	Contact name	Address	Telephone	Mobile	E-mail	Scrub Management	Weed Control
	Mark Hooper	4 Manor Farm Cottages, Rockbourne, Fordingbridge, Hants. SP6 3NP		07971 252519	mjhooper@globalnet.co.uk	✓	✓
Wessex Woodland Management Ltd.	Chris Denton	Foxley Wood, Hungerford Park, Hungerford Road, Hungerford, Berks. RG17 0UT	01488 685007	07717 366405	info@wessexwoodland.com	✓	✓
Woodland and Garden Limited	Duncan Tough	71 Park Farm, Seend Cleeve, Melksham, Wilts. SN12 6PX		07779 131563		✓	✓

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Table 3. Contractors who carry out seed harvesting within the AONB

Company	Contact name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Alaska Environmental Contracting Ltd.		Stokeford Farm, East Stoke, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 6AL	01929 463301	will@alska.ltd.uk
Emorsgate Seeds	Richard Brown	Limes Farm, Tilney All Saints, King's Lyn, Norfolk. PE34 4RT	01553 829028	enquiries@emorsgate-seeds.co.uk
	Sue Everett	122 Derwent Road, Thatcham, Berkshire. RG19 3UP	01635 847164	suejeverett@hotmail.com
Flower Farms	Charles Flower	Carvers Hill Farm, Shalbourne, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3PS	01672 870782	flower.farms@farmersweekly.net
Herbiseed Goring Gap Wildflowers		New Farm, Mire Lane, Twyford, Berkshire. RG10 0NJ	0118 934464	s.morton@herbiseed.com
Heritage Seeds		Osmington, Weymouth, Dorset. DT3 6EX	01305 834504	mail@hseeds.fsnet.co.uk
	Andrew Macdonald	3 Coombe Cottages, Marlborough Road, Everleigh, Wiltshire	1264850674	andrew.j.macdonald@btinternet.com

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Table 4: Potential end users of Local Seed Project outputs (data and/or seed)

Organisation	Contact name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Auborn	Jude Buckland	Rolfes House, 60 Milford Street, Salisbury, SP1 2BP	01722 426859	jbuckland@auborn.com
Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust		The Lodge, 1 Armstrong Road, Littlemore, Oxford. OX4 4XT	01865 775476	info@bbowt.org.uk
Black Sheep Countryside Management	Jemma Batten	5 The High Street, Rowde, Devizes, Wiltshire. SN10 2NA	01380 726043	jemma.bat@btinternet.com
	Simon Smart	4 White Horse Cottages, Bratton, Westbury, Wiltshire. BA13 4RS	07748 155143	simonsma@tiscali.co.uk
Business Link, Berkshire and Wiltshire	Tim Evans	22 Bedwyn Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP1 3UT	0845 6004141	tim.evans@blbw.co.uk
Chalkhill Environmental Consultants	Janet Burnell	Elm Tree Court, Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire.	01380 726043	janetburnell@wiltshriewildife.org
Cleanacres Ltd	Russell Frost	Andoversford, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. GL54 4LZ	01242 820481	russell.frost@masstock.co.uk
Countryside Service, Hampshire County Council		The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UJ	01962 841841	info.centres@hants.gov.uk

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Table 4: Potential end users of Local Seed Project outputs (data and/or seed)

Organisation	Contact name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Countryside Service, Oxfordshire County Council		Holton, Oxford, OX33 1QQ	01865 810226	countryside@oxfordshire.gov.uk
English Heritage	Phil McMahon	South West Region, 29 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4ND	0117 975 0700	phil.mcmahon@english-heritage.org.uk
EnSynch	Peter Carpenter	North End, Wood Green, Fordingbridge. SP62AN	01725 512307	petercarpenter@ensynch.co.uk
Environment Agency	Graham Scholey	Thames Region, Isis House, Howberry Park, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8BD	01491 828346	graham.scholey@environoment-agency.gov.uk
Environment and Planning, West Berkshire Council		Market Street, Newbury, West Berkshire, RG14 5LD	01635 42400	info@westberks.gov.uk
Environmental Land Management	Jane Nordstrom	30 Gravel Lane, Ringwood, Hampshire. BH24 1LN	01425 479417	jane@elm-consultancy.co.uk
	Sue Everett	122 Derwent Road, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 3UP	01635 847164	valuingbiodiversity@ntlworld.com
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)	Paul Holmes-Ling	148 Chyngton Cottages, Eastbourne Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 4BJ	01273 490877	paul.holmes-ling@fwag.org.uk

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Table 4: Potential end users of Local Seed Project outputs (data and/or seed)

Organisation	Contact name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
FGC	Vicky Cox	Whitelands Cottage, Days Lane, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wiltshire. SN15 5PD		
Forestry Commission	Ian Briscoe	Forestry Commission, Postern Hill Lodge, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4ND	01672 511767	ian.briscoe@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Great Western Community Forest	Patrick Norris	1st Floor, Premier House, Station Road, Swindon SN1 1T2	01793 466324	pnorris@swindon.gov.uk
Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre	Nicky Court	Ashburton Court West, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UE	01962 845046	nicky.court.hbic@hants.gov.uk
Hampshire Wildlife Trust		Beechcroft House, Vicarage Lane, Curdridge, Hampshire, SO32 2DP	01489 774400	feedback@hwt.org.uk
Hutchinsons	Colin Watts	Double Hedges, Andover Road, Chirton, Devizes, Wiltshire. SN10 3QL	01380 840040	colinwatts@hutchinsons.co.uk
Just Ecology	Eleanor Hewins	Woodend House, Woodend, Wootton under Edge, Gloucestershire. GL12 8AA	01453 811780	eleanor@justecology.co.uk
Kennet District Council	Will Harley	Kennet District Council, Browfort, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2AT	01380 724911	will.harley@kennet.gov.uk

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Table 4: Potential end users of Local Seed Project outputs (data and/or seed)

Organisation	Contact name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Kynet Consultancy	Gill Swanton	North Farm, West Overton, Marlborough, Wiltshire. SN8 1QE		grswanton@aol.com
Lane Fox	Fiona Yarrow	15 Dyer Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. GL7 2PP	01285 659661	enquiries@lanefox.co.uk
National Farmers Union	Denise Plummer	Leaze Farm, Stanton St. Quintin, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6DQ	01666 837250	denise.plummer@gmail.com
National Trust	Chris Gingell	Wiltshire Countryside Office, West Kennet Farm, West Kennet, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1QF	01672 539167	christopher.gingell@nationaltrust.org.uk
Natural England	Tim Frayling	Prince Maurice Court, Hambleton Avenue, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2RT	01380 725670	tim.frayling@naturalengland.org.uk
Natural England	Stephanie Payne	Block 3, Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS10 6NJ	0117 959 1000	stephanie.payne@naturalengland.org.uk
	Jonathan Olver	36 The Grove, Hayles Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 6SX	01242 260310	email@jonathanolver.co.uk
RSPB	Julia Gallagher	Enterprise House, Cherry Orchard Lane, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7LD	01722 427251	julia.gallagher@rspb.org.uk

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Table 4: Potential end users of Local Seed Project outputs (data and/or seed)

Organisation	Contact name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre	Adrian Hutchings	TVERC Berkshire, c/o Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury, Berks RG14 5LD	01635 519179	AHutchings@westberks.gov.uk
West Berkshire Heritage Service	Duncan Coe	The Wharf, Newbury, Berkshire. RG14 5AS	01635 30511	heritage@westberks.gov.uk
Wiltshire and Swindon Biodiversity Records Centre	Purgle Linham	Elm Tree Court, Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1NJ	01380 725670	purgleL@wiltshirewildlife.org
Wiltshire Archaeology Service	Sue Farr	Wiltshire County Council, County Hall, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8JD		suefarr@wiltshire.gov.uk
Wiltshire County Council	Steve Russell	Countryside Manager (Landscape), Wiltshire County Council, Environmental Services Department, County Hall, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8JD	01225 713425	steverussell@wiltshire.gov.uk
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Rob Large	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Elm Tree Court, Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1NJ	01380 725670	roblarge@wiltshirewildlife.org

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Appendix 1: Site assessment for seed harvesting and/or hay making

1. Slope

All land on steep (>1 in 6) slope	Site not suitable - reject
Site includes an area of flat* land > 0.5 ha	Score 2
Site includes an area of flat land >1 ha	Score 3

* Accessible with seed harvesting/hay making equipment

2. Topography

Earthworks or other significantly uneven ground across large areas which would either preclude harvesting/hay making entirely or significantly reduce the available area*.	Site not suitable - reject
Areas of uneven ground are not sufficient to preclude seed harvesting or hay making though field operations may need to be undertaken with more care.	Score 2
Ground is uneven only in discrete areas (e.g. chalk pits, lynchets) which may be avoided without significantly reducing the available area.	Score 2
The ground across the entire site is relatively even.	Score 3

* To less than 0.5 ha.

3. Anthills

Frequent anthills (<5 m apart) across much of site.	Site not suitable - reject
More frequent anthills restricted to small areas only.	Score 2
Some widely scattered anthills (5 to 10 m apart).	Score 2
Very few or no anthills.	Score 3

4. Accessibility with seed harvesting/hay making equipment

Site inaccessible with harvesting or hay making equipment.	Site not suitable - reject
Access difficult: poor or no track, tight corners, nearest setting up point some distance from harvesting site.	Score 1
Access OK but care needed: no access for larger equipment due to narrow points and/or tight corners.	Score 2
Access easy; site adjacent to good road or track; no narrow points or tight corners.	Score 3

5. Sward condition

Sward agriculturally improved over much or all of site.	Site not suitable – reject
Sward significantly over-grazed, and/or poached.	Site currently not suitable but has future potential.
Sward tussocky and/or seriously under-managed or unmanaged.	Score 2
Evidence of species diversity; relatively uniform structure across harvestable area.	Score 3

6. Weed species

Injurious weeds* present, even at low density, across large areas.	Site currently not suitable but has future potential
Injurious weeds and /or nettles restricted to specific patches which could be avoided without significantly reducing the available area.	Score 2
Few or no injurious weeds or nettles.	Score 3

** Ragwort, creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock*

7. Scrub cover

Scrub blocking access points or key links between harvestable areas.	Site currently not suitable but has future potential
Scrub distributed across more than 50% of site with scattered areas of grassland within more or less dense scrub.	Site currently not suitable, but has future potential
Scrub cover would not preclude seed harvesting or hay making nor significantly reduce the available area.	Score 2
Scrub absent or present only as widely scattered bushes (<10% cover) or isolated clumps which would not significantly impede straight runs when harvesting or hay making.	Score 3

Additional points to note

Location of any badger setts or rabbit warrens.
Site designations (e.g. SSSI , SAM) and consents required.

Total score	**13 to 15**	**OK**
	16 to 18	**Good**
	19 to 21	**Very good**