

Farming in Protected Landscapes North Wessex Downs AONB

Case Study

Project Name: Generating a Buzz: Pollinators for the Pewsey Downs and Vale

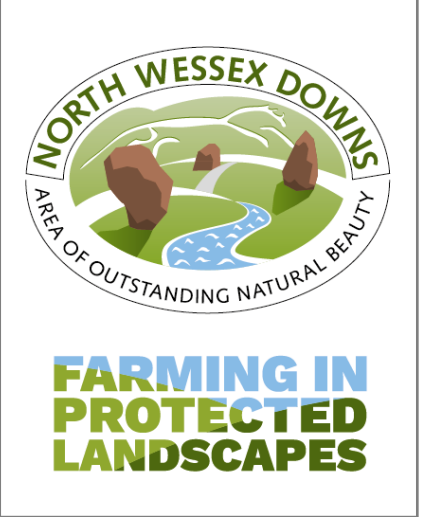
Applicant Name: Simon Smart

Farm Name: Pewsey Downs Farmers Group

Amount of grant: £9,938

% of total funding awarded:

Year of Project: 2021/22 & 2022/23



Project Overview

Farm description

This group was setup in 2016 to help farmers in the area work **collaboratively to enhance the landscape for wildlife**. Covering more than 10,000 hectares of the south-west of the North Wessex Downs AONB, between Devizes and Pewsey, and involving more than 20 farmers, this group offers a barometer for success to other similar farmer-led groups. Simon Smart is the facilitator for the group and has guided them through various projects on **sustainable farming, farmland birds, historic environment including the huge feature of the Wansdyke, chalk downland and the Kennet & Avon canal**.

To learn more, check out the website here: [Home | Pewsey Downs Farmers Group](#)

Project description

One of the Groups priorities is to **provide a landscape rich in pollinators and other invertebrates**. This project sought to support this aim and involved **mapping of the entire holding** of the group for key **habitats for pollinators** and **identifying gaps in habitat availability, pollinator surveys** undertaken by a specialist, **training of the farmers** on species identification and suitable habitats and **engaging with the local community** around pollinators, their requirements and the need to enhance the landscape specifically with pollinators in mind. Additionally, the group are making a film of the project and the group to do further promotion and engagement.



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Objectives

- Improve knowledge of pollinator species found on the Pewsey Downs and Vale. Use this to target habitat creation and management to enhance their populations and viability for both rare and widespread species associated with the farmed landscape.
- Incorporate pollinators, and other beneficial invertebrate groups, into more sustainable farming systems.
- Improve local communities understanding and appreciation of the role of pollinators and the essential ecosystem services they provide.

Management Plan Strategic Objectives

From the eight themes in the Management Plan, this project seeks to fulfil the following Strategic Objectives: **S02, S03, S07, S16, S20, S21, S23, S25.**

Thematic Programme Objectives

Nature	There is a greater area of wildlife rich habitat		People	There are more opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape	X
	There is greater connectivity between habitats	X		There are increased opportunities for more diverse audiences to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape	X
	Existing habitat is better managed for biodiversity			There is greater public engagement in land management, for example through volunteering	X
	There is an increase in biodiversity				
Climate	More carbon is stored and/or sequestered		Place	The quality and character of the landscape is reinforced or enhanced	
	Flood risk has been reduced			Historic structures and features are conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively	
	Better understanding among farmers, land managers and the public as to what different habitats and land uses can deliver for carbon storage and reduced carbon emissions			There is an increase in the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, which in turn contributes to a more thriving local economy	X
	The landscape is more resilient to climate change	X			



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Outputs

- Mapping pollinator habitat report
- Community events
- Pollinator survey report
- Film of project and group

Outcomes

This project will result in the group having an improved **understanding of pollinators in the landscape**, their distributions and reasons behind these. It will help them to **plan interventions** over the coming years to **increase connectivity, habitat quality and extent** with the support of FiPL and other schemes and grants. The project in turn increases the engagement with the local community, their awareness and understanding of the AONB and biodiversity in the farmed environment.

Key Learnings

- An effective farmer led group can have a **significant impact on a huge area of land** for the betterment of biodiversity in a coordinated way.
- **Facilitators provide a key link to farmers** and to help **deliver landscape scale projects**.
- **Local communities are hungry for engagement** and keen to learn about biodiversity in their local areas. Supporting this **via farmer led groups is effective and achievable**.



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Map credit – Simon Smart 2022

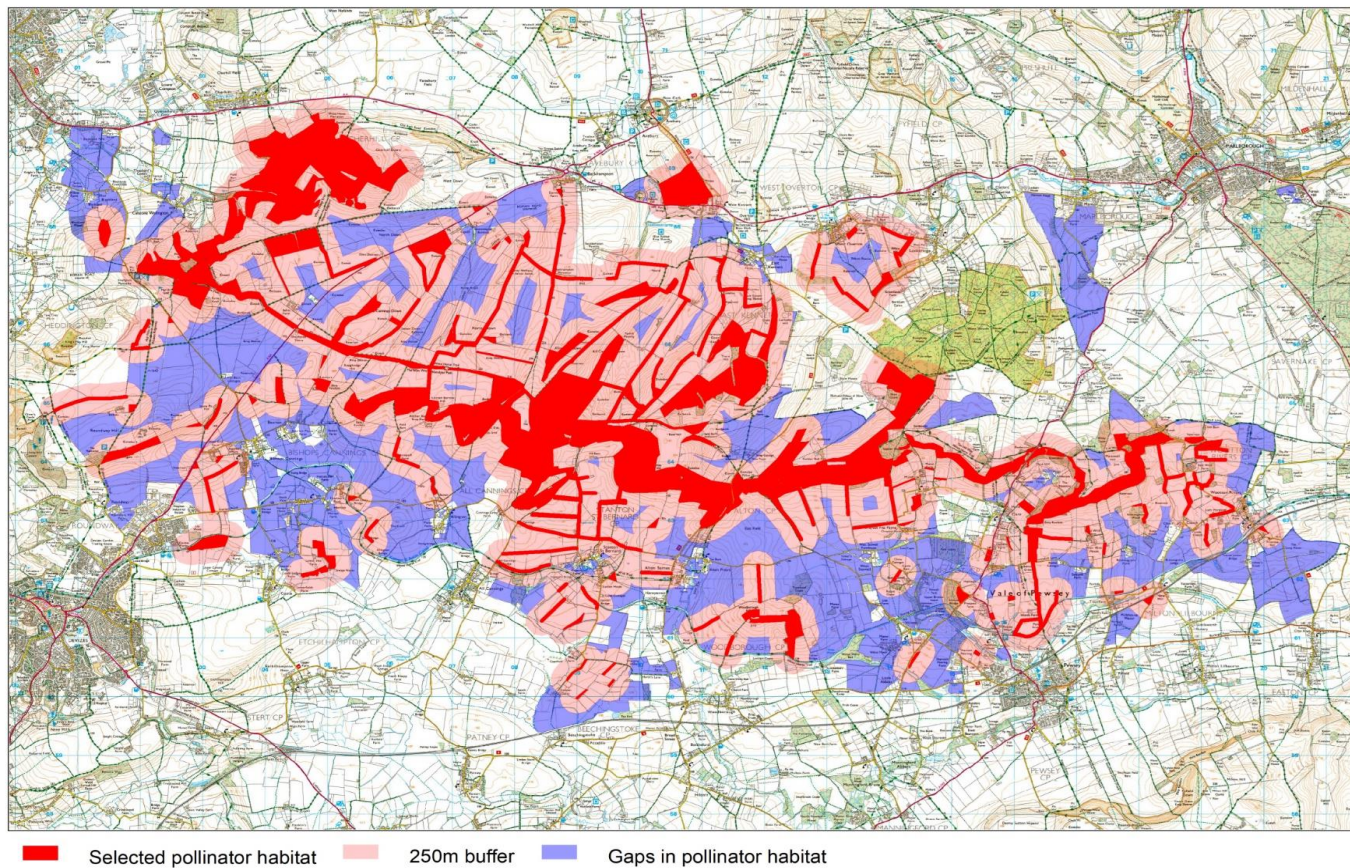


Figure 1 Distribution of Priority Pollinator Habitat showing gaps in provision based on a 250m buffer



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For More Information

Contact Rob West, Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer

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Refer to the North Wessex Downs AONB website for latest information

<https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/farming/farming-in-protected-landscapes/>

Also refer to <https://www.pewseydownsfarmersgroup.org/>

