CHAPTER 4

Farming & Land Management

Straw bales – David Hall

Overview:

- A landscape under the influence of agricultural management with typically large farmed estates, over 50% of which are currently engaged in agri-environment agreements.
- Varied field patterns: the open downlands are characterised by large regular fields, largely the product of 18th Century parliamentary enclosure, with more recent boundary removals creating vast fields, as on the Marlborough Downs. By contrast, the Vale of Pewsey in the south west of the National Landscape is the product of mediaeval clearance which created numerous, small, irregularly-shaped fields or assarts.
- A growing forestry sector and different types of woodland, many with public access. Although oak and, historically, ash are the main forest canopy species, there is a wide range of stand types including hornbeam coppice, oak/ash stands, hazel/oak stands and birch and ash/wych elm coppice. The long-term impact of ash die-back on the landscape is still unclear.
- Equestrian activity, including the 'Valley of the Racehorse' in the Lambourn area that attracts visitors and businesses.
- Significant land management for field sports, including highly valued game fishing which supports the native brown trout.

"I like to look at the winding side of a great down, with two or three numerous flocks of sheep on it, belonging to different farms; and to see, lower down, the folds, in the fields, ready to receive them for the night."

WILLIAM COBBETT (1763-1835)

Lollingdon Hill, Cholsey – David Olinski

Farming and Land Management in the North Wessex Downs

4.1 Farmland and woodland dominate the landscape of the North Wessex Downs. Changes in these land uses have a major influence on the natural beauty of the area. Additionally, equine activities and field sports are significant in terms of land use and management. Land-based enterprises play a significant role in acting as stewards of the landscape and contributing to an economic balance for communities.

Agriculture

4.2 With 84% of the North Wessex Downs classified as farmland, of which in 2024 about 53% was under arable cultivation[1], agriculture is the dominant land use and the major influence on landscape character and quality. In 2024, the agricultural workforce totalled 2,346.

4.3 Annual farm census statistics since 1990 indicate land in the National Landscape in agricultural management appears to be fairly stable, with a slight net loss over time. This could be due to development but also changes in holding distributions may represent a move to other land uses not classified as agricultural. The total number of farms has slightly increased, by 4% over the last five years. 43% of farms in the NWDNL exceed 100 ha in size; nationally over 50% of farms are larger than 100 ha. There has been a significant increase of 18% in the number of farms between 20-50 ha over the last five years. DEFRA defines farm types for a holding as the crop or livestock enterprise (or group of enterprises) that contributes more than two-thirds of the total standard gross margin for the holding. The North Wessex Downs has seen a 33% increase in horticultural crops over the last five years. Statistical data from DEFRAs survey of Agriculture and Horticulture 2024 indicates that most farms fall in the 'cereals' and 'lowland grazing livestock' categories.

4.4 Sustainable agriculture can help to protect and enhance the natural resources that have created the rich diversity and natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs. Supporting farmers in adopting Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and other agri-environment approaches and working with farmer-led groups are vital strategies for securing landscape management, as demonstrated through the DEFRA-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

4.5 Analysis of trends indicates a decline in livestock farming and greater sensitivity of arable production to prices of inputs. Total cattle numbers have fallen by 14%, sheep by 22%, but poultry have risen by 84% in the last 10 years.[2] In some instances the reduction of numbers could be due to efficiencies. For example, by harnessing new technologies with support from the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund, dairy farmers are able to reduce herd size while maintaining or even increasing production. The Fund has also supported sheep farmers in subsidising electronic identification (EID) readers, allowing farmers to better identify unproductive ewes and remove them from flocks. There have also been positive changes driven by the implementation of targeted agri-environment schemes.

Cattle above Ashdown House – Petrer Orr

[1] *Total cereals and all other arable crops.*
[2] *www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets*

4.6 Conventional farming is predominant in the National Landscape. There are also a number of organic farms and some biodynamic farms. The closure of Elm Farm Organic Research Centre during the last Management Plan period was a significant loss to the area. There is an increasing interest in regenerative agriculture, which promotes minimising soil disturbance, maximising crop diversity, keeping the soil covered, maintaining a living root system and integrating livestock.

4.7 The evolution of ELMS (Environmental Land Management Schemes) and other agri-environment measures is a key driver to help deliver conservation for wildlife, soils and water quality. Over half of the North Wessex Downs farmed land is entered into one or more of these schemes and there is a strong commitment by farmers to utilise them. Farmers' willingness to apply for funding and deliver public goods that support National Landscape aims has also been demonstrated by the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL), with land managers covering more than 54% of the farmed landscape having engaged with the programme by March 2025. The need for farmers to deliver public goods for public money has also required farmers to respond more readily to world market conditions. Fluctuations in commodity prices and input costs are increasing uncertainty for future arable profitability. There is a risk that such market influences could thwart initiatives designed to improve natural resource protection and environmental enhancement. An example in the North Wessex Downs has been the difficulty in promoting arable reversion to chalk grassland under higher-level stewardship schemes in the context of fluctuation in cereal prices.

4.8 Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) have been designed to support the rural economy while achieving the goals of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan and a commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050[3]. Climate change is likely to be a key consideration in terms of the types and varieties of viable crops that are grown in the North Wessex Downs in the future. Farmers and landowners also need to consider flood mitigation and, where possible, consider adopting natural flood management, which is also being supported through ELMS. At the other extreme, planning for increasing water scarcity is likely to require greater water storage capacity on-farm. There are implications for sowing dates, irrigation, pests, diseases, water availability and soil erosion. Increased productivity needs careful management to maintain landscape character and realise the opportunities to expand wildlife habitats. There may also be diversification into novel crops and farming systems, or change of use from agriculture to other land uses, such as equestrian businesses and leisure.

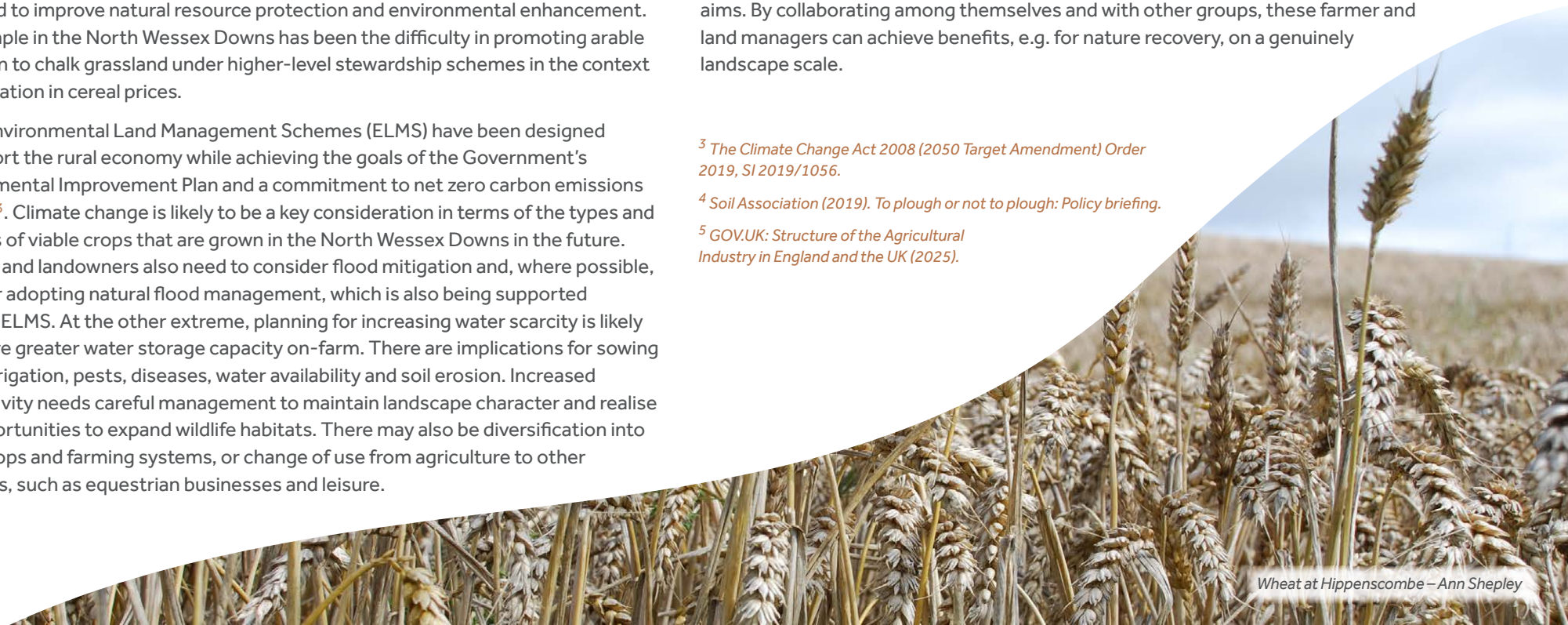
4.9 Soils are increasingly being recognised as one of our most valuable resources (see the Natural Resources chapter). Farmers and land managers are being encouraged, through ELMs, to preserve and protect soils as much as possible, for example through incorporating herbal leys to ensure the soil is covered at all times, while adding organic matter. Minimum or no tillage to limit soil disturbance is also being supported through other grants, such as the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund. Through increasing soil organic matter, soils can sequester more carbon, reduce nitrogen inputs and help farmers / land managers mitigate against climate change issues such as flooding and periods of drought.[4] Private finance companies are also emerging, further supporting efforts to increase soil organic matter for carbon credits.

4.10 Since around 2017, there has been an explosion of interest and activity relating to collaborative farmer-led groups (also known as farmer clusters) in and around the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. From two – the pioneering Marlborough Downs Space for Nature and the Pewsey Downs Farmer Group – by 2025 the number had grown to at least 13 active groups in the area. Several of these have been set up with the support and encouragement of the National Landscape and most have received National Landscape funding to develop and deliver their aims. By collaborating among themselves and with other groups, these farmer and land managers can achieve benefits, e.g. for nature recovery, on a genuinely landscape scale.

[3] The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, SI 2019/1056.

[4] Soil Association (2019). To plough or not to plough: Policy briefing.

[5] GOV.UK: Structure of the Agricultural Industry in England and the UK (2025).



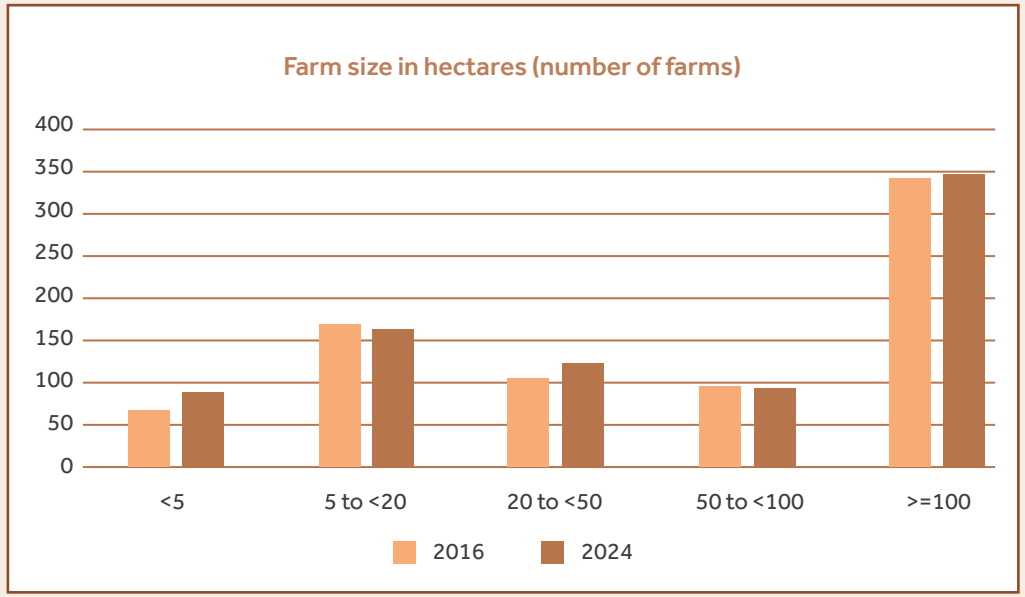
Wheat at Hippenscombe – Ann Shepley

Table 1: Number of farms by type[5]

Total holdings	Farm types (number of farms)						
	Cereals	General Cropping	Horticulture	Specialist Poultry	Dairy	Grazing Livestock (lowland)	Mixed
818	**289**	**154**	**12**	**16**	**23**	**258**	**54**

Table 2: Number of farms by size of holding

Total holdings	Farm size in hectares (number of farms)				
	<5	5 to <20	20 to <50	50 to <100	>=100
818	**90**	**162**	**124**	**95**	**347**



Ivory Farm, Beacon Hill – Lord Carnarvon

Trees and Woodland

4.11 Trees, woodland, wood pasture and hedges are a valuable and important feature of parts of the North Wessex Downs landscape. The Forestry Commission's National Forest Inventory data show that the area of woodland within the North Wessex Downs stands at 21,109 ha[6] (12.57% of the total National Landscape area). Broadleaf trees dominate, at just over 70% of all woodland. Well over a third, 8,823.9 ha or 41.8% is Ancient Woodland, of which 3,908 ha, or 18%, is Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). Despite an increasingly healthy market for timber and wood fuel, much woodland in the National Landscape still suffers from a lack of management, often due to difficulty of access. The ageing beech woods no longer produce significant volumes of timber and are more valuable as places for recreation than as a productive part of the rural economy. The continued promotion of wood as a renewable fuel may stimulate improved management of some woodland. There are now ELMS options that include woodland management plans, as well as the availability of grants to assist with some of the associated cost of ash die-back.

4.12 The National Forest Inventory indicates that the proportion of woodland within the National Landscape recorded as being managed has continued to increase, from 50% in 2014 to 62% in 2017 and 66% in 2024. This is a positive change which probably reflects the increasing demand for wood fuel in particular. The timber quality of much of the woodland area within the National Landscape is not high; many of the woods are extremely small, and a number of them comprise crops for which there is no longer a viable market. Consequently, the economics

Woodland Holies hanging Streatley – Dave Olinski

of forestry operations are problematic. There is a role for energy production in helping to manage small woods. Previously, progress was made in supporting the North Wessex Downs forestry sector through initiatives such as the EU-funded LEADER programme, but since that ended there has been less activity.

4.13 Owing to the landscape, heritage and biodiversity characteristics for which much of the North Wessex Downs is designated, scope for new woodland planting varies greatly across the area depending on local landscape character and the associated valued qualities. Some Landscape Character Types and Areas are not suitable for significant expansion of tree cover. However, in suitable areas there is significant scope for more trees and shrubs in the landscape, including: extending, buffering and linking ancient woodland habitat, hedge restoration, increasing the population of large hedge trees, management of scrub as part of an open habitat mosaic, reintroduction of important species such as disease-resistant elm, restoration and creation of wood pasture habitat, promoting new generations of veteran trees, riparian planting for shade in response to higher temperatures, and sensitively located and designed agro-forestry. Any new planting should meet the objectives of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan and tree guidance. The priority is to maintain and improve management of existing woodland, particularly that designated for its nature conservation interest and all ancient and semi-natural woodland. New woodland can act as a buffer to protect this resource and create wildlife corridors between woods, and which may in turn benefit natural flood management and water quality. The NWDNL Partnership encourages woodland owners to produce management plans in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard.

4.14 The dangers to trees from pests and diseases are growing, with ash die-back (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus, also known as Chalara) and oak processionary moth (Thaumetopoea processionea) being two recent examples. Ash die-back is having a major impact in woodland across England, including in the North Wessex Downs, and it will be prudent to consider promoting measures to mitigate the consequences of the loss of this important tree species for wildlife and the landscape. Damage to woodland from increasing deer populations and from squirrels is an ongoing problem, especially since it makes growing native broadleaved trees for timber difficult in spite of strong market demand. Overgrazing by deer can also dramatically reduce the value of woodland for other wildlife. This highlights the need for collaborative landscape-scale protection of woodland.

[6] *Natural England: Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework Statistics Release 2024.*

4.15 Climate change may lead to frequent drought and reduced summer rainfall, which could significantly impact the woodland of the North Wessex Downs. For instance, beech trees, which have shallow roots and struggle in dry soils, are likely to decline. In contrast, small-leaved lime trees, which require warmth to set seed, may thrive and become more prevalent. Veteran trees of all species are more likely to be felled by storm force winds. However, in woods the impact of these storms can be positive, creating glades that species adapted to sunlight can occupy. The impact of higher autumn and winter rainfall may be partly mitigated by planting, for example reducing soil run-off to rivers by hedge planting and management to interrupt overland flows. The recreational value of woodland may increase as people seek shade in the hottest months.

Racing and Equestrian

4.16 Horse owning and riding is a popular activity across the south of England. The North Wessex Downs is recognised as a nationally important horse-racing centre, second only to Newmarket, and the Lambourn area and other racing yards in the National Landscape make a significant contribution to the local economy. The non-racing equestrian sector is estimated to have contributed £5 billion of consumer spending to the national economy in 2023[7], an increase from £4.3bn in 2015. The contribution of the non-racing equestrian sector in Hampshire, an area part covered by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, was estimated at £330 million supporting many small businesses in the county[8]. It should also be noted that: the input of the non-racing equestrian sector in West Berks in 2022 has been estimated at £38 million per annum, but we believe this has not been published; in a report dated 2019[9], the racing sector in the Lambourn Valley was estimated to contribute £23 million per annum.

4.17 The North Wessex Downs is home to a range of important non-racing equestrian events, such as the annual Barbury Horse Trials. While there are no statistics to quantify horse ownership and riding in the National Landscape, it is evident that the network of bridleways and routes linked to The Ridgeway National Trail are popular and well-used.

4.18 How horses are cared for and the developments associated with keeping and training horses can have a significant impact on the character and quality of the National Landscape, and horse owners have an important role to play in maintaining the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs. The North Wessex Downs Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme has included well-received events providing advice to help ensure equine care and management makes a positive contribution to the landscape.

Field Sports

4.19 Commercial shooting has had a significant influence on the landscape, especially in the downland areas. Much of the management of some small-scale woodland has been motivated by shooting, while the downs and valleys, notably the steep scarps, provide an ideal landscape for partridge shooting. This has led to the planting of large blocks of maize cover crop and complemented grant-aided conservation plots such as wild birdseed mix. After a turbulent couple of years, with the Covid lockdown followed by avian influenza restricting egg imports, along with rising costs for shooting (bird prices, feed, maize and labour costs) a proportion of smaller shoots and farm shoots have ceased shooting. Some shoots across the landscape are now taking action to mitigate risk by growing less maize cover and taking up agri-environment options such as wild bird seed mixes. Gamekeepers can play an important role in the National Landscape, through predator control, deer management, woodland management and supplementary winter feeding of birds. Shooting also facilitates additional visitors to the landscape and generates significant revenue for local businesses. The shooting industry is being encouraged to self-regulate by joining schemes such as Aim to Sustain. The noise from shooting also has an impact on tranquillity and rural communities. s

4.20 Fly fishing is also an important feature of the National Landscape, especially the world-famous chalk streams such as the Kennet and Lambourn. Income from net fishing supports the conservation and restoration of these rivers and their unique ecology, fostering local tourism that benefits nearby businesses.

Odstone Down – Ann Shepley

[7] British Horse Society. (2025). Statistics on equestrian access.

[8] Hampshire County Council (2019). Equestrians in Hampshire.

[9] Jockey Club Estates & West Berkshire District Council (2018).

Farming and Land Management: Key Issues

Key issues with the potential to have significant influence on the National Landscape's Farming and Land Management Valued Qualities:

a) The need to manage resources to achieve sustainable consumption and production.

b) Potential for significant investment of public funding to promote diversification and micro-enterprise in the land management sector that aligns with National Landscape objectives.

c) the need for support and co-operation from farmers and land managers to achieve nature recovery in the North Wessex Downs.

d) The need to sustain and expand collaborative action among farmers to achieve National Landscape objectives.

Agriculture

e) Continuing opportunities to invest in the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape, for example through agri-environment measures such as Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS), to deliver public goods with public funds. Private funding opportunities are also beginning to emerge.

f) Market forces and major policy changes, such as demand for increased food security or biofuels, resulting in uncertainty regarding land management, influencing the mix of farming types and farm sizes.

g) Impacts of changes in farming technology, and energy and fertiliser prices.

h) Shortage of livestock needed to graze downland pasture.

i) Harnessing demand for locally produced food and drink in line with National Landscape objectives, with increasing interest in producing and marketing local food in the North Wessex Downs.

j) Climate change risk (increasingly identified by farmers in the North Wessex Downs as a key threat and opportunity for the future) and the opportunities for land managers to invest in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Flooding continues to have a significant impact on land management, with crops becoming waterlogged.

k) Potential for improved availability, co-ordination and consistency in the provision of agricultural land management advice to achieve National Landscape objectives.

l) Poor agricultural land management practices, including in livestock grazing and arable production, resulting in flooding from surface water run-off and detrimental impacts on watercourses from nutrient run-off and silt pollution, sometimes as a result of livestock damage to river banks.

m) Soil management plays a key role in sustaining the landscape, with best practices in maintaining, conserving and improving soils crucial in mitigating against climate change and providing long term sustainability for arable production.

n) Risk to agriculture from diseases such as bovine tuberculosis, avian influenza and bluetongue.

Trees and Woodland

o) Scope for more and better management of woodland in the National Landscape, especially smaller woods, to improve habitat for wildlife and provide an economic return.

p) Risk of harmful impacts on wildlife, archaeology and recreation from increasing exploitation of woodland to meet demand for timber, if not done in an environmentally sensitive way.

q) Opportunities for better co-ordination of forestry with agricultural land management under new environmental management schemes.

r) Widespread threats from pests and disease (e.g. *Phytophthora* and *Ash die-back*).

s) Rising deer numbers inhibiting the natural regeneration of some woodland and suppressing the ground flora. Deer Management Groups are helpful but are insufficient on their own to control deer numbers.

Racing and Equestrian

t) Small-scale changes to the smooth, rolling landform around new buildings, which cumulatively have an adverse effect on the character of the National Landscape.

u) Opportunities to support the racing industry, ancillary businesses and local communities through diversification, e.g. in responsible tourism.

v) Need to avoid soil erosion, overgrazing and loss of biodiversity arising from the creation of new fields and paddocks on open chalk downland by promoting opportunities for landscape enhancement through equine habitat management, such as creation of wildflower-rich grassland.

w) Change in landscape character by the replacement of hedgerows with fencing, leading to the suburbanisation of landscape.

x) Pressure to widen and straighten minor roads and tracks to improve vehicle access, leading to erosion of landscape character and sense of place.

y) Loss of integrity of historic settlements / hamlets / farmsteads.

Farming and Land Management: Priorities

1. Focus, facilitate and support landscape-scale conservation and land management initiatives that support the purposes of National Landscape designation.
2. Promote National Landscape priorities for targeting and investment in rural land management and development to take advantage of changes arising from the agricultural transition following Brexit.
3. Support the restoration of ancient woodland and creation and restoration of wood pasture and improved management of unmanaged and under-managed woodland across the North Wessex Downs, promoting multiple benefits, including for landscape character, wildlife, local economy and skills, recreation and climate change mitigation.
4. Support traditional and emerging land-based enterprises and their markets that respect and promote the valued qualities of the North Wessex Downs and its setting.
5. Promote and support sustainable best practice initiatives for farming, woodland management and all country sports.
6. Encourage and support farms / estates to take up ELMS and other agri-environment measures in ways that support National Landscape objectives.

Cherhill Down – greatwestway.co.uk

Grey partridge – GG Wildlife Experiences / Steve Gozdz

Farming and Land Management: Policies

FLM 01 Encourage national, regional and local land management policies to be consistent with the purpose of National Landscape designation.

FLM 02 Encourage and support farmer-led groups and other joint working, and expansion / replication of existing landscape-scale nature recovery and land management projects, both within and beyond the National Landscape, to assist in the delivery of National Landscape and *Big Chalk* objectives.

FLM 03 Support sustainable farm diversification and multi-purpose woodland management where it achieves National Landscape objectives and accords with planning policy.

FLM 04 Support efforts to identify future land use options that are best able to assist farm viability and reflect the environmental objectives of the National Landscape.

FLM 05 Support local markets for local produce and the development of local supply networks.

FLM 06 Encourage management of sites in public and tenanted ownership within the North Wessex Downs to be examples of best practice in the delivery of National Landscape objectives.

FLM 07 Support and promote efforts across the North Wessex Downs to reduce invasive, non-native species or unsustainable populations of species where these threaten the biodiversity and sustainable management of woodland, watercourses and other habitats.

FLM 08 Encourage the active and environmentally sensitive use of woodland resources for viable products, helping to enhance biodiversity.

FLM 09 Support and help guide publicly funded investment in rural development.

FLM 10 Support investment in new agricultural infrastructure and redevelopment of farm buildings where it increases the sustainability of local businesses and aligns with National Landscape purposes.

FLM 11 Encourage awareness of the valued qualities of the National Landscape among local businesses to help them understand and embrace their responsibilities alongside running a profitable enterprise.

FLM 12 Support improved availability, quality, co-ordination and consistency in provision of land management advice across the National Landscape.

FLM 13 Support efforts to identify and develop the skills required to care for the landscape and its valued qualities, with opportunities for all to acquire such skills.

FLM 14 Encourage and support the local provision of practical training in traditional land management and the skills necessary to deliver enhanced rural land management and business diversification with clear landscape benefits.

FLM 15	Encourage good agricultural land management practices and adherence to good practice to contribute to resource protection, such as healthy soil management, preventing flooding from surface water run-off and safeguarding watercourses from nutrient run-off and silt pollution.
FLM 16	Support the provision of advice on integrated management of grassland to enhance biodiversity as part of equine land management practices.
FLM 17	Support collaboration among stakeholders and initiatives such as better routes to market, working with game processors, to achieve sustainable deer populations across the National Landscape.
FLM 18	Encourage and support landowners to develop whole estate plans where suitable to enable long-term, integrated landscape management.
FLM 19	Encourage and support farmers and land managers to adopt practices that sequester carbon, minimise soil carbon loss and support climate mitigation and adaptation through nature-based solutions aligned with National Landscape purposes.

Farming and Land Management Support: Priorities for funding and advice by Landscape Character Type

4.21 National Landscape Management Plans have a role to play as the framework within which publicly and privately funded support mechanisms and other land management initiatives can be focussed and adapted to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscapes and their settings. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan provides the lens through which national objectives for farming and nature recovery can be applied to the landscapes and valued qualities of the North Wessex Downs

4.22 To support this role, the priorities set out in the following table identify broad priorities for environmental land management in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and its setting.

4.23 The first column in the table sets out a series of generic measures which could apply to more than one Landscape Character Type; subsequent columns set out measures which are aimed specifically at each of the eight Landscape Character Types (as described in Chapter 3).

Roe deer in farmland – David White

Table 3: Priorities for farming and land management support to conserve and enhance the valued qualities of the National Landscape by Landscape Character Type

Generic aims applicable to more than one Landscape Character Type in the National Landscape

- Support a landscape-scale approach to restoring, managing, buffering, extending and connecting currently fragmented, locally characteristic habitats. These include species-rich chalk grassland, arable field habitats, wet pasture and native riparian woodland in river valleys, heathland and common land, chalk rivers and streams, traditional orchards, ancient woodland (especially Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites) and wood pasture.
- Protect archaeological sites and features, including through removal from cultivation, reducing cultivation depth, scrub management, sympathetic woodland management and protection from livestock damage as necessary.
- Adopt catchment-sensitive farming techniques across chalk river and stream catchments to reduce both diffuse and point-source pollution, minimise sediment run-off into watercourses and improve water quality.
- Restore and maintain a coherent network of habitat corridors though sympathetic management of, in particular, the huge ecological resource represented by road verges and banks, public rights of way and National Trails across the National Landscape, harnessing their potential to form links between wildlife sites and other important habitat patches.
- Facilitate responsible public access to the landscape in places and in ways that are compatible with maintaining the valued qualities of the National Landscape.
- Encourage and support more wildlife-friendly management of public and private open spaces, including recreation, sports and school grounds, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, greens, allotments and commons.

Aims specific to National Landscape Character Types

Open Downland

- Restore and enhance unmanaged relict grassland and encourage greater diversity though sympathetic management.
- Maintain and enhance existing chalk grassland habitats.
- Maintain and enhance the value of arable land and chalk grassland for priority farmland bird and arable plant species e.g. through spring sowing and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes. Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges), wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.
- Increase the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland, especially where adjacent or close to unimproved grassland.
- Extend, link and buffer chalk grassland habitats e.g. through targeted arable reversion (linking existing grassland areas along ridgelines in particular), wildflower restoration of semi-improved grassland, scrub management and removal of inappropriate tree cover.
- Maintain the open, expansive, open landscape character by avoiding new tree and hedge planting, including small areas which can cumulatively erode the valued qualities of openness and sweeping views.
- Protect archaeological sites and features, including through removal from cultivation, reducing cultivation depth, scrub management and protection from livestock damage as necessary.
- Wherever possible create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, track and byway verges) across intensively managed arable and grassland, linking a range of different habitats including unimproved and semi-improved grassland and woodland.
- Support specific advice and options for sympathetic management of land used to keep and train racehorses to enhance its value for wildlife.

Aims specific to National Landscape Character Types

Downland with Woodland

- Maintain, enhance and restore the traditional pattern of field boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, restoration of historic hedge boundaries, creation of buffer strips and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.
- Restore and enhance unmanaged relict grassland and encourage greater diversity though sympathetic management such as controlled grazing.
- Maintain, enhance and extend existing chalk grassland habitats.
- Increase the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland, especially where adjacent or close to unimproved grassland.
- Maintain and enhance the value of arable land and chalk grassland for priority farmland bird and arable plant species (e.g. through spring sowing and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes). Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges), wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.
- Extend, link and buffer chalk grassland habitats e.g. through targeted arable reversion, scrub management and removal of inappropriate tree cover.
- Manage existing ancient woodland sympathetically to increase structural diversity, e.g. by restoring coppice, controlling deer numbers and promoting natural regeneration.
- Restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to conserve and enhance local landscape character and biodiversity.
- Conserve existing veteran and ancient trees with careful management and support succession of veteran tree habitat (e.g. by pollarding, including creation of maiden pollards, and identification and management of future veterans).
- Restore, conserve and enhance designed landscapes, other historic parkland and wood pasture.
- Conserve the intricate network of sunken and other country lanes, drove roads and tracks through sympathetic management of banks and verges.

Richard Horton and Geoff Homer – Ann Shepley

Combining - NWDNL

Aims specific to National Landscape Character Types

Wooded Plateau

- Conserve and enhance the intimate mosaic of woodland, farmland and hedges that surrounds and connects Savernake Forest and West Woods.
- Manage existing ancient woodland sympathetically to increase structural diversity e.g. by restoring coppice, controlling deer numbers and promoting natural regeneration
- Restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to conserve and enhance local landscape character and biodiversity.
- Conserve existing veteran and ancient trees with careful management and support succession of veteran tree habitat for lichens and invertebrates in particular, e.g. by pollarding, including creation of maiden pollards and identification and management of future veterans.
- Restore, conserve and enhance designed landscapes, other historic parkland and wood pasture.
- Encourage restoration of historic hedge boundaries and restore and enhance existing boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, creation of buffer strips and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.
- Restore, expand / link and sympathetically manage remaining areas of heathland.

High Chalk Plain

- Maintain and enhance existing chalk grassland habitats.
- Restore and enhance unmanaged relict grassland, encouraging greater diversity though sympathetic management.
- Increase the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland, especially where adjacent or close to unimproved grassland.
- Extend, link and buffer chalk grassland habitats, e.g. through targeted arable reversion, scrub management and removal of inappropriate tree cover.
- Maintain and enhance the value of the mosaic of arable land and chalk grassland for priority farmland bird and arable plant species, e.g. through spring sowing and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes. Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges), wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.

Downs Plain and Scarp

- On the Plain, encourage restoration of historic hedge boundaries and enhance existing boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, creation of buffer strips and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.
- On the Plain, consider opportunities for sympathetic, small-scale tree-planting integrated within a network of well-managed hedges.
- On the Plain, improve the value of the arable landscape for priority farmland birds, pollinators, arable plants and other wildlife, e.g. through spring sowing and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes. Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges) wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.
- Along the Scarp, maintain and enhance the diversity and wildlife value of the farmland / woodland / chalk grassland / historic parkland mosaic
- Along the western Scarp, promote sympathetic management of the varied and distinctive linear wooded hangers and wooded combes.
- Conserve, enhance and restore the ecological value of drove roads and tracks linking to Open Downland through sympathetic management of banks and verges.
- Support realisation of the potential for The Ridgeway National Trail to serve as a conservation corridor through the landscape, encouraging ecological enhancement of land adjacent and close to The Ridgeway.
- Conserve and enhance the monumental landscape of the Avebury World Heritage Site and its setting, including through targeted arable reversion, increasing the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland, scrub management and removal of inappropriate tree cover.

Aims specific to National Landscape Character Types

Vales

- Restore unmanaged remnant waterside pasture and encourage greater diversity though sympathetic management, including grazing.
- Extend existing and create new waterside pastures, wet meadows and fen.
- Maintain the traditional pattern of field boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, restoration of historic hedge boundaries, creation of buffer strips and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.
- Consider opportunities for sympathetic, small-scale, riparian native woodland creation along watercourses. This will both restore a feature of the historic landscape and help mitigate the warming effects of climate change on chalk stream ecology by providing shade.
- Restore, conserve and enhance parkland, estate landscapes and other historic features, such as watercress beds.
- In the Pewsey Vale especially, promote new hedgerow trees as part of a landscape recovery strategy to counter the effects of dutch elm disease and ash die-back.

Priorities for River Valleys

- Encourage the restoration of historic hedge boundaries and improve existing boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, creation of buffer strips, and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.
- Improve water quality and protect the ecology of chalk rivers and streams through sympathetic management of riparian land (e.g. by creating watercourse buffer strips, minimising sediment run-off, removing point sources of pollution and controlling poaching by livestock).
- Maintain the landscape and ecological value of existing Valley habitats (including seasonal flood meadows, grazed pasture, fen, wet woodland, marsh, riparian woodland and pollards) through sympathetic management.
- Conserve and enhance key wildlife sites (e.g. Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC) by establishing buffers, and creating and linking areas of complementary habitat along River Valleys.
- Restore, extend and link unmanaged or neglected flood meadows, valley pastures, fen and marsh, and encourage greater diversity though sympathetic management such as grazing where appropriate.
- Consider opportunities for sympathetic, small-scale, riparian native woodland creation along watercourses to provide shade, thus helping to mitigate the warming effects of climate change on chalk stream ecology.
- Restore, conserve and enhance ornamental and other historic parkland and River Valley features.

Priorities for Lowland Mosaic

- Maintain the remaining fragments of lowland heath through sympathetic management.
- Improve the value and resilience of isolated patches of heathland by restoring, enhancing and expanding abandoned or under-managed areas, and linking to other remaining heathland.
- Maintain the traditional pattern of field boundaries, particularly the ancient hedges that are a feature of the Lowland Mosaic, through sympathetic hedge management, restoration of historic hedge boundaries, creation of buffer strips on arable land, and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.
- Restore, conserve and enhance designed landscapes, historic parkland, wooded commons and wood pasture.
- Manage existing ancient woodland sympathetically to increase structural diversity, e.g. by restoring coppice, controlling deer numbers and promoting natural regeneration.
- Conserve existing veteran and ancient trees with careful management, and support succession of veteran tree habitat, e.g. by pollarding (including the creation of maiden pollards), and identification and management of future veterans.
- Conserve and enhance the intricate network of sunken and other country lanes and tracks through sympathetic management of banks and verges.