



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



**North Wessex
Downs**
National
Landscape

Farming in Protected Landscapes

2021-2025 Review

Working in partnership with farmers
and land managers to look after our
landscapes together



Contents

Chair's Foreword	3
Background	4
North Wessex Downs Management Plan	5
Meet the Team	6
Habitats	8
Species	11
Farmer-led Groups.....	13
Composting and Reducing Inputs	14
Education	15
Diversification and Food	17
Great Cotmarsh Farm	18
History and Heritage	18
Grant locations 2021 - 2025.....	19
Further Information	19

Local Authorities

FiPL grants have been spread across the North Wessex Downs (see page 19), supporting projects in all nine of the local authorities that make up this area. This is one way that belonging to a National Landscape can directly benefit businesses and local communities, providing funding to enhance the landscape, support nature-friendly farms and improve access for local communities and visitors to the area.

Grants awarded in each Council

Wiltshire Council	£1,512,715
Swindon Borough Council	£19,505
Oxfordshire County Council	£285,847
Vale of White Horse	£205,322
South Oxfordshire	£80,525
West Berkshire Council	£742,536
Hampshire Council	£551,766
Basingtoke & Dean	£369,517
Test Valley	£182,248
ACROSS THE NWD (education grants)	£111,958

NB - some grants cover more than one council - cost allocated to both



Chair's Foreword

The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme has, from the very beginning, been about more than just grants - it has been about recognising and supporting the vital role that farming and land management play in shaping the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Our panel has assessed each application with care, guided by clear priorities.

We have been especially keen to support projects that:

- Strengthen our connection to the food system and the countryside, including educational initiatives.
- Champion soil health.
- Help young or new entrants into farming and related enterprises.
- Bring farmers together to share knowledge and experiences.
- Deliver benefits at a landscape scale.
- Create or restore habitats in the right place for maximum benefit.
- Support resilient, sustainable farm businesses that are adapting to the needs of a changing planet.
- Tackle species-related pressures on biodiversity, such as deer or grey squirrels.

Over these four years, the programme has encouraged innovation and creative thinking about how to best use its resources - empowering farmers, land managers, and partners to make lasting improvements on the ground.

We have welcomed applications from a rich diversity of applicants: from tenant farmers managing just a few dozen hectares, to large estates covering thousands; from local environmental charities to statutory agencies and even national organisations. Among the many successes, one of the most inspiring has been the growth of farmer-led groups, whose collaborative spirit and shared vision are helping shape the future of the North Wessex Downs.

Our panel has been a team in the truest sense - bringing together ecologists, archaeologists, farmers, estate managers, and other experts. Over time, we have developed a shared understanding, making thoughtful and well-informed decisions about where FiPL can make the greatest difference, and when a proposal might be better supported by other means.

It has been a privilege for all of us to help guide this programme, and a personal honour for me to work alongside such dedicated and insightful colleagues.

I would also like to pay tribute to our FiPL officers. Their expertise, tireless commitment, and genuine

passion have been at the heart of every success we celebrate in these pages. Without their energy and skill, none of what we have achieved together would have been possible. For that, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

Richard Clarke



Background

The DEFRA Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme was launched in July 2021; funding is provided directly from DEFRA and administered locally by Protected Landscape organisations (National Landscapes and National Parks).

This represented a new way to engage with farmers and landowners, enabling on-the-ground support and advice for farmers from a local FiPL Officer who knows the area. It was introduced as part of the Agricultural Transition Plan (ATP), which shifts public funding from landbased subsidies to payments tied to delivering environmental and public benefits.

The programme offers grants of up to £250,000 for farmers and land managers, to deliver outcomes under at least one **'FiPL theme'**, although many deliver multiple outcomes across several themes:

- **Climate** – reducing flood risk, increasing carbon storage and supporting more resilient landscapes
- **Nature** – more and better managed wildlife rich habitats, increasing biodiversity
- **People** – improving access for all and supporting public engagement
- **Place** – improving the landscape and historic features, supporting nature-friendly farm businesses

Programme delivery

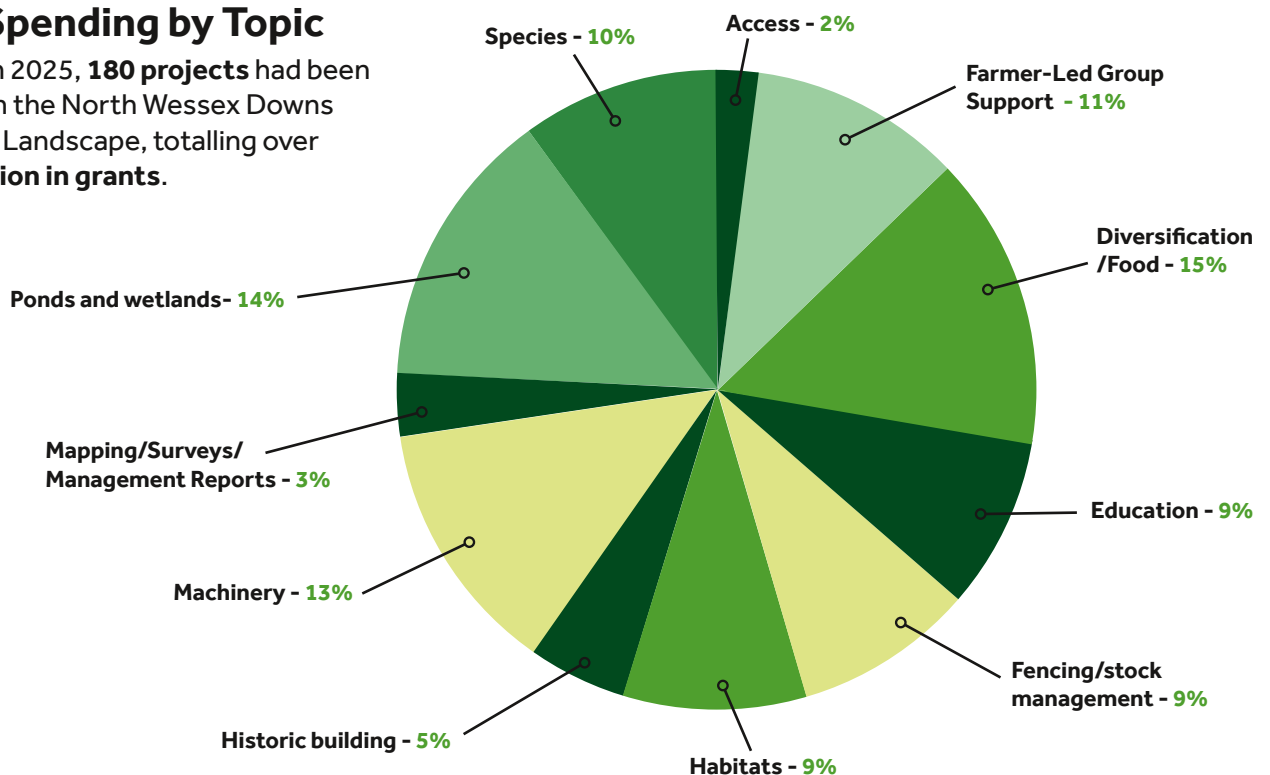
FiPL has been delivered through a flexible, farmer-focused approach. FiPL Officers provide support throughout the application process, usually beginning with a farm visit to identify needs and explore project opportunities.

Applications are then reviewed by a Local Assessment Panel comprising farmers, Wildlife Trusts, NFU, Natural England and CLA representatives as well as North Wessex Downs representatives. They sit regularly and use their varied experience and knowledge of the area to assess the applications.

Grant values vary significantly, funding everything from small equipment purchases to large-scale landscape-wide collaborative initiatives. Farmers often contribute their own investment alongside FiPL funding, or with match funding from other organisations, with few projects receiving 100% funding. This shared public/private investment has strengthened the programme's impact.

FiPL Spending by Topic

By March 2025, **180 projects** had been funded in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, totalling over **£3.3 million in grants**.



North Wessex Downs Management Plan

A key feature of the national FiPL programme is its requirement that all projects also contribute to the objectives and priorities of their local Protected Landscape as set out in the statutory Management Plan. In the North Wessex Downs, where 84% of the land is farmed, this means recognising the area's strong agricultural character alongside its rich heritage and beautiful landscape open to all. Every project should deliver for at least one of our eight priorities.

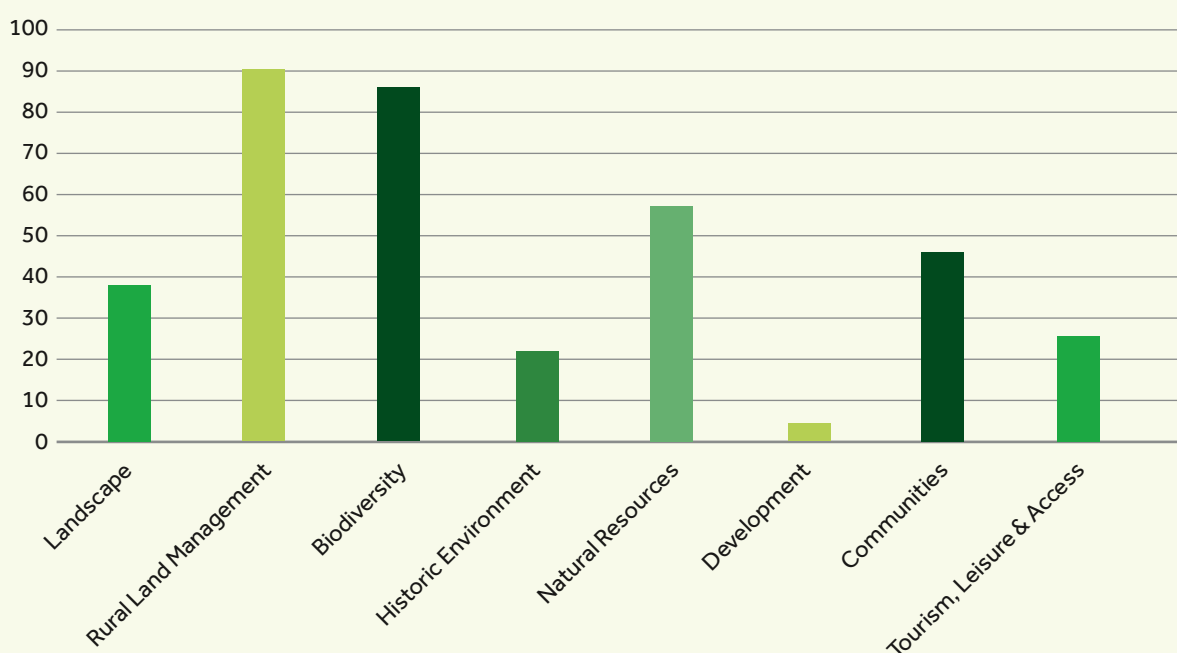
- **Landscape:** projects to support and protect the distinctiveness and valued qualities of the North Wessex Downs;
- **Rural Land Management:** supporting farmers and landowners to manage their land sustainably, supporting changes in farming practices that benefit the environment; supporting farms to work together for the environment;
- **Biodiversity:** supporting projects to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and bioabundance;
- **Historic Environment:** restore and protect historic buildings, scheduled and unscheduled monuments and historic landscape character;
- **Natural Resources:** projects to improve soil health and water quality in the area;
- **Development:** supporting farm diversification consistent with the purposes of designation;
- **Communities:** supporting local community-based projects;
- **Tourism, Leisure and Access:** improving access for all to the countryside.



Field sketching at Lower Wyke Farm ©Liz Lake

Projects delivering for North Wessex Downs Priorities

(many projects deliver for more than one priority)



Meet the Team

A distinctive feature of the FiPL programme has been its dedicated support for staff time, enabling meaningful engagement with farmers and landowners. This support has not only facilitated the development of projects but also offered signposting to other funding opportunities and practical, on-the-ground advice. As a result, we were able to fulfil the North Wessex Downs Partnership's ambition to strengthen relationships with farmers across the area, delivering tailored guidance and up-to-date agricultural advice specific to the North Wessex Downs. The programme was launched nationally in summer 2021 and the North Wessex Downs team were quick to get the programme up and running.

In September **Rob West** joined the office to take on the key FiPL Officer role, and hit the ground running; reaching out to farmers and landowners across the area, building relationships and getting into the landscape to develop projects large and small. He was supported in the office by **Katharine Cook**, keeping on top of finances, working with grantholders and meeting the requirements of DEFRA.

After a highly successful two years Rob moved on and in Autumn 2023 **Jemima Sellwood** joined the team. She was quick to take advantage of her many contacts in the area and in farming, continuing to bring innovative and exciting projects to the programme. Katharine also stepped into some FiPL Officer duties, working particularly with the educational awards.



Rob
West



Katharine
Cook



Jemima
Sellwood



Farrell Pond
©Mike Farrell

FiPL Headlines



70+

grants to individual farmers

4,500ha+

of wildlife rich habitat managed or created



30 ponds

restored or created



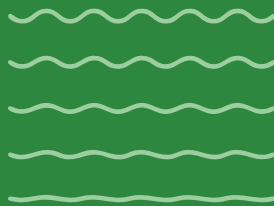
9 threatened species targeted

dormice, lapwing, tree sparrow, large blue butterfly, beavers, dormice, black poplar, disease resistant elm, juniper



35

projects to reduce flood risk



7,000m+

of new hedges



1,500m

of hedges restored

200+

volunteers



Nearly 20 schools

visiting the North Wessex Downs

500+



Volunteer days enabled



4 NEW farmer-led groups created

10

Farmer-Led Groups supported, comprising over **180 farms**

39

grants for facilitation, joint projects and shared equipment



6

scheduled monuments protected



5km+

of new permissive paths created

7

SSSIs supported

Habitats

One of the four main FiPL themes is Nature, which encompasses biodiversity, habitat connectivity and nature recovery. The North Wessex Downs is a large landscape with a wide variety of habitats and at FiPL we have been able to support a range of projects that create, connect and enhance habitats. This has included many kilometres of hedgerows, ponds and wetlands, river restoration, and chalk grassland projects. We've also supported habitats by funding resources such as bird boxes and plug plants which improve offerings to specific species. Finally we've also supported many surveys and mapping initiatives to inform farmers and landowners about the state of biodiversity and habitats on their land. These have included bird and bat surveys, pollinator habitat surveys, UKHAB surveys, land management plans and even dung beetle studies.

Many of these projects have also supported our own **North Wessex Downs Nature Recovery Plan**, which sets out our vision for the area and includes measurable targets for nature recovery in the area.

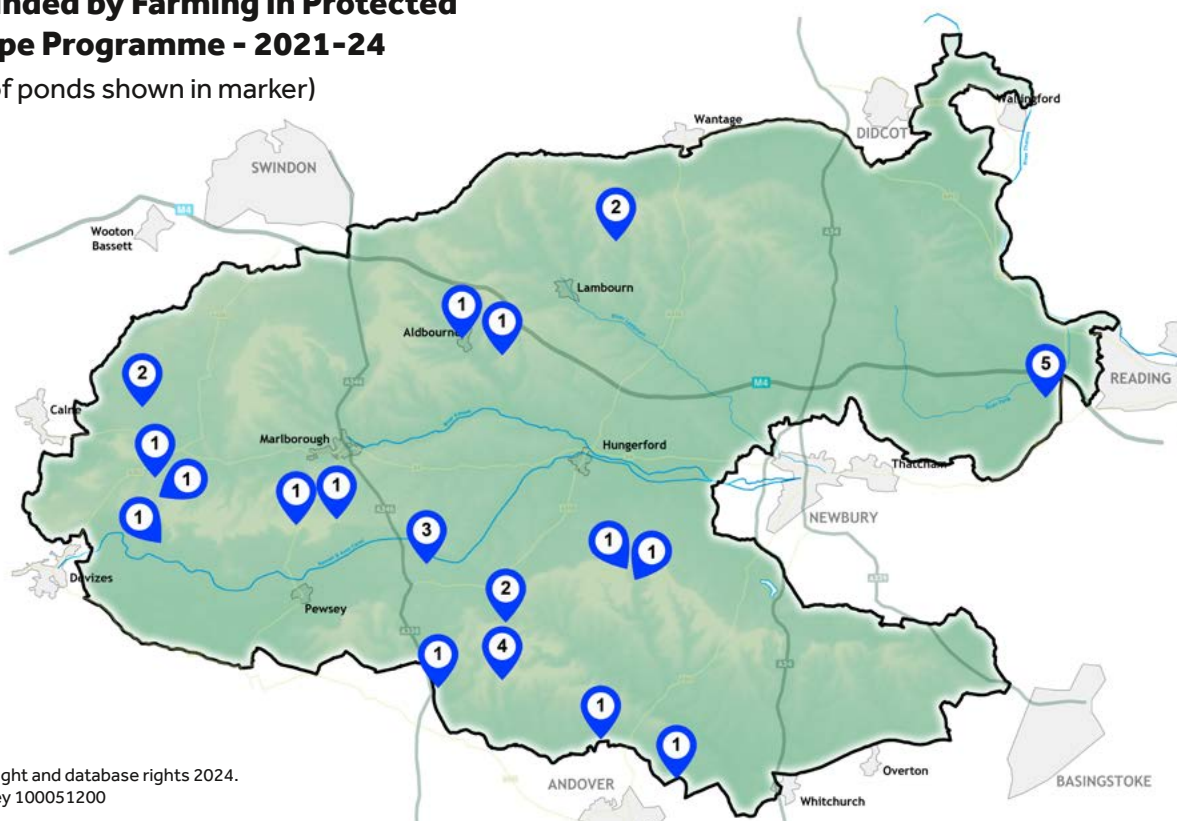


Ponds

The North Wessex Downs, famous for its chalk landscape and streams, is also a naturally dry area, with many historic dew ponds no longer holding water, and streams which have been historically straightened and contained. Over the first four years of FiPL we have supported the creation or restoration of over 30 ponds and dew ponds across the area. Ponds support a diversity of wildlife, from invertebrates and amphibians, to birds and mammals in an increasingly unpredictable climate. Ponds are also a fantastic way to engage visitors, and farmers are able to showcase ponds during school and other visits to talk about wildlife and habitats. Many individual farms have been supported, **Pewsey Downs Farmer Group** were successful in a bid for five new or restored ponds across their area and **Englefield Estate** also added multiple ponds to their land.

Ponds funded by Farming in Protected Landscape Programme - 2021-24

(Number of ponds shown in marker)



Wetlands and Rivers

Several wetland creation projects have also been supported through FiPL, in collaboration with our long-standing partner, **Action for the River Kennet** (ARK). FiPL funded new wetland habitats at **Ogbourne Maizey** and planting up for a wetland creation project at **Wilton**, both of which will provide new and valuable habitats for a range of species. We've also supported river restoration projects on the **Kennet and Pang** to improve light levels and a fish pass creation scheme to allow species to migrate up river. Wetlands are a hugely important part of the landscape, providing diverse habitats as well as helping to reduce flood risk as they slow the passage of water through the landscape.



Heathland

We have been privileged to support a large heathland restoration project at **Bucklebury Common**, near Newbury, which had suffered from neglect for many years. FiPL support was provided to set up a new Commoners Association and also funded a Heath Management Plan, which in turn led to further FiPL funding for implementation. This involved the removal of encroaching birch trees and allowing heathland plants, such as heather and heathland birds and other species, such as nightjar, woodlarks and even adders, to thrive. This work led to successful bids for additional funding from other sources, allowing further rejuvenation of the heathland and wood pasture, putting grazing management schemes in place and opening it up further to visitors.





Scrub removal at Hippenscombe
© Jemima Sellwood

Grasslands

The North Wessex Downs is famous for its rolling chalk grasslands, rich in flowers and insect life, but much of it has been lost to arable over the last hundred or so years. Our Management Plan and Nature Recovery Plan both cite the need to maintain and extend chalk grasslands across the area. To deliver on this the FiPL programme has supported multiple projects for arable reversion, scrub removal and grazing management.

The FiPL team have supported five applications to **restore species rich grassland**, totalling nearly 35 hectares. All of the farms had previously undertaken survey work as part of a farmer-led group, to establish where species rich grassland restoration would be best suited, with each individual farm undertaking soil sampling and surveying existing flora.

All the farms that were approved by the LAP for FiPL funding also underwent a full EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening and were approved by Natural England. Species mixes were site specific and in most cases introduced yellow rattle. As all the projects were undertaken in 2024, we have yet to evaluate the results, but look forward to seeing over 30 hectares of restored species rich grassland in the North Wessex Downs.

Without proper ongoing management grasslands can be overtaken by scrub and will lose their diversity. We have supported scrub removal projects at **Hippenscombe** and **Fyfield Down** to restore significant areas of chalk grassland and allow effective ongoing management, often by livestock grazing.



Sussex cattle wearing collars ©Katharine Cook

We have also awarded four grants for **fenceless grazing** in the area - where GPS guided collars are used to control where the animals can graze. DEFRA have specific criteria for FiPL funding for such collars: they can only be used on native breed cattle, of a certain age and where the grazing will benefit nature conservation and biodiversity. The farmer is also asked to show a grazing management plan.

One applicant received funding for their native breed pedigree Sussex cattle to protect a watercourse (SSSI) and enhance biodiversity on a scheduled monument. The collars enabled grazing where a fence would have been visually intrusive and impractical.

Before/After at Home Farm



Species

The North Wessex Downs and its chalk landscape is home to a unique set of species, creating some of the iconic habitats that make our landscape so precious – calcareous grasslands, woodlands, chalk streams and arable habitats. Some of these species have struggled in recent decades as a result of climate change, farming practices, and changing land use.

Here at FiPL we've been privileged to be able to support a number of projects that work directly with specific species; surveying, protecting and increasing the numbers of some of these most at-risk species, including many red-list species. We have supported farm bird projects, including **lapwings**, **tree sparrows**, and **Great Bustards**,



Dung Beetles – Simon Smart

invertebrates including **dung beetles** and the **Large Blue butterfly**, and plants such as **juniper**, **elm**, and **black poplar**. We even worked with a large estate on a limited release of beavers – the first in the area for 400 years.



Beavers at Ewhurst Park

Juniper- Plantlife

In 2022 we supported a project with **Plantlife International** to increase the spread of juniper in the North Wessex Downs. Plantlife had identified two sites in the area, where there were scattered remnant juniper bushes, but the numbers had been declining for many years. Following on from test trials they developed a process of scraping back the soil to the chalk bedrock and reseeding with cleaned seeds from the same site. Over six hectares of grassland on SSSIs in the South-East and North-West of the North Wessex Downs were reseeded, hopefully reinvigorating the species and ultimately prevent it from dying out in the area.



Juniper scrape, Beacon Hill ©Plantlife

Lapwings- Project Peewit

Working with ornithologists from **Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Office**, we have funded an intensive survey of lapwings across Wiltshire, a species on the Red List which has declined significantly in recent years. Detailed observations of lapwing presence, habitat type and predator presence (eg corvids and other birds of prey such as red kites and buzzards) were undertaken by trained volunteers. The work has estimated a population of 100-150 lapwing pairs in Wiltshire, higher than feared which was encouraging, but still lower than even 10 years ago. Future work on site creation and habitat improvements and protection, as well as further monitoring will continue to help safeguard these beautiful and iconic birds.



Lapwing ©Barry Stalker

Large Blue Butterfly

FiPL funding enabled an experimental re-introduction of the **Large Blue butterfly** (*Phengaris arion*) onto a site in Wiltshire, where they hadn't been seen for over 150 years. This was an intensive project, led by **Natural England**, with multiple agencies involved, needed to gain appropriate permissions for collection and release, and provide the necessary expertise. The Large Blue has a highly specific lifecycle requiring both thyme and marjoram plants at different stages of its larval development, as well as a final stage which involves adoption by the red ant (*Myrmica sabuleti*). This stage was released in Summer 2024 and we wait to hear how it has fared.



Large Blue ©Sarah Meredith

Dormice

This project illustrated the reach and power of our Farmer Groups. The **Test Valley Dormouse Project**, a local charity hosted by FWAG, has been running for several years and FiPL funding allowed them to extend their dormouse and hedgerow surveys into two new areas – the Southern Streams Group area and the Wessex Conservation area. 60 sites across these groups were chosen and dormice monitoring stations were established in hedgerows. Small tunnels and non-harmful ink (see photo) were used to capture dormouse footprints to evidence dormice activity. The landowner was then informed and given advice on how to improve their hedges for dormice. Although focusing on one species, improving hedgerows and connectivity supports a whole range of species that rely on these habitats and hopefully will enhance biodiversity generally across the farm group areas.



Dormouse Survey, Debbie Miller



Wessex and Combes Group

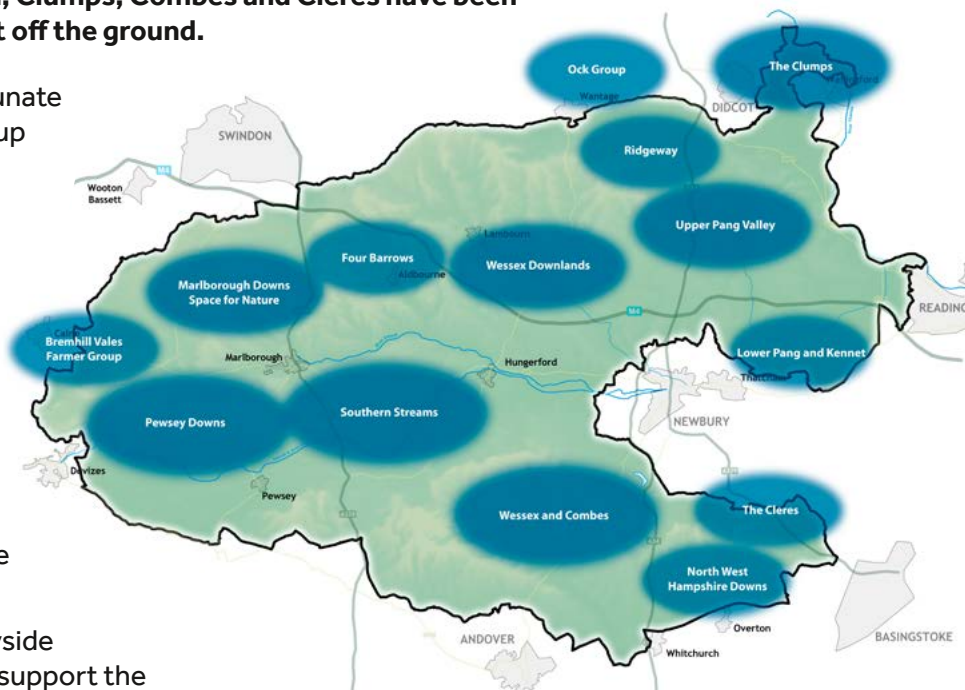
Farmer-led Groups

There are currently 14 farmer led groups (sometimes called Farm Clusters) in and on the border of the North Wessex Downs, supported by 12 facilitators and covering 265 farms and 91,000 Hectares. The groups range in size, some are as small as five farms working together and others over 30 members. Each group has its own set of priorities, decided on by the farmers, in the area. Since FiPL started four new groups; Wessex Conservation, Clumps, Combes and Cleres have been supported by the FiPL Office to get off the ground.

The North Wessex Downs was fortunate to have the first ever farmer led group 'Space for Nature' created in the Marlborough Downs by Dr Jemma Batten, which has provided a blueprint for the creation of other groups. At the NWD FiPL themed Annual Forum in 2024 she described being a facilitator like being a bus driver, the role of the facilitator is to get the passengers (the farmers) where they want to go, it is down to the farmers to decide what route to take and what the destination is.

Some of the groups gained Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Funding to support the facilitator and group events, however some groups didn't get funding or started after facilitation funding had ended in 2024, which meant that FiPL support was needed to help bring the groups together. The new groups that were set up using FiPL are continuing to thrive, with farmers working together to make an impact on the landscape.

Up until June 2025 FiPL have supported almost **40 group projects**. Projects have varied significantly from group to group and focus on what collectively the farmers feel is most important to them. The projects have ranged between capital works, farming equipment, support for public access and education, ponds and surveys of species, such as birds and chalk downland.



The North Wessex Downs has also supported group facilitators to encourage collaboration between groups. All the facilitators meet with the FiPL Officers quarterly to share information, hear about funding opportunities and share ideas. The two FiPL Officers are often invited by facilitators to join group meetings, where they will talk about project opportunities and meet the farmers, giving the farmers the opportunity to discuss any individual ideas they may have.

The farmer led groups and the excellent facilitators have been a vital component in allowing FiPL to be effective in supporting a variety of projects, from small single farm projects to large landscape scale projects.

Composting and Reducing Inputs

Nutrient management is a key concern for farmers - whether they're purchasing synthetic inputs or recycling nutrients from livestock waste produced on their own farms. We've supported farmers in various ways to help them make the most of the nutrients available to them on farm. Incorporating compost into the soil helps improve its structure, boosts nutrients and carbon levels, and enhances its water-holding capacity - reducing runoff and supporting long-term soil health. Promoting nutrient management supports good agricultural practices and sustainable soil management.

In 2024 we funded a **composter** for the Pewsey Downs Farmer Group and a further composting machine for four farmers in the Southern Streams group. These machines effectively mulch and mix FYM (farm yard manure) with other organic matter, such as woodchip, straw or shavings to smaller particles, allowing them to be broken down more easily - creating a workable compost. The applications were supported by Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers, who also provided training on the benefits and methodology for composting.



Muckspreader at Beedon Farm ©Katharine Cook

In 2023, FiPL funded a set of **tree shears** to aid a farmer's bokashi composting – a form of anaerobic composting that minimises nutrient loss. The tree shears not only helped him create the woodchip needed for his composting, they also assisted in improving hedgerow habitat for Dormice.

One of our most innovative projects was for the installation of an **automotive spray system** (Purex) of beneficial microbes in a free range chicken shed. The project uses 'good' bacteria to help dry the chicken manure, enhance the welfare of the chickens and improve air quality. With drier manure coming out of the shed the farmer was also able to increase his storage capacity and reduce the risk of nutrient leaching into the nearby River Kennet.



Composting at Horton

Education

Public and Schools

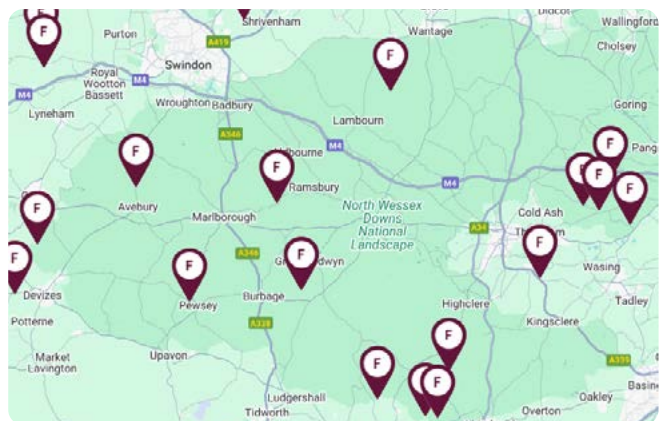
The FiPL theme of People is about improving access to our beautiful landscape, and enhancing the public understanding of its special nature. Under this theme we have been delighted to support farmers to increase and improve their offerings to schools and other groups. We have provided capital items to enable visits, such as toilets, classrooms and trailers. These are essential to allow longer visits and visits year round when the weather means they can't be outside all day. We've also funded 4 trailers in the area, enabling visitors to be taken safely around the farm to enjoy the countryside and see a farm in action. **Lucy Tyler**, near Calne, received funding for both a trailer and classroom and other resources and now has strong connections with local schools.

We've also worked with our partner organisation

LEAF (Linking Education and Farming) to provide courses for farmers in hosting schools. Over two days LEAF staff worked with 17 farmers creating lessons tailored to their farm and the national curriculum, learning how to host safely on their farm and giving them the confidence to reach out to schools to develop visits. Schools from both inside and outside the North Wessex Downs will be able to experience farms in action, learning about the countryside and where food comes from. Getting more people from diverse backgrounds into the protected landscape is a key goal of FiPL.



Education Blshop Challoner School



Countryside Classroom Map of Trained Farmers



Trailer at Kingsplay

Farmers

Farmers themselves have also benefited from workshops and speakers that we have brought to the area, to address various farming and landscape specific issues, providing information on more nature friendly farming techniques. Over the last four years we have provided; a two day in depth course on **soil health**, courses for landowners on horse **paddock management**, and workshops on **chalk downlands and pest management**. We also supported a whole day event at a **biodynamic farm** at Yatesbury, introducing the system to a new audience in the area

We've also hosted workshops focussing on **deer management** and **sustainable shooting**, activities that can have a significant impact on the landscape. Deer numbers are becoming an increasing problem and an issue that we have been addressing in a number of ways. We held a public event at Great Bedwyn, introducing deer in the landscape and also a workshop run by the British Deer Society for stalkers and land managers. The event focused on biodiversity impact assessments, management plans and invited open discussions about the issue of deer numbers in the landscape.

On a more practical level we also provided support for a **hedgelaying event** in the area, where Young Farmers came for a days training in various hedgelaying techniques.



Hedgelaying training @Rob West



BDS at Gt Bedwyn

On a larger scale, in 2023 we partnered with **Pasture for Life** alongside our neighbouring National Landscapes of the **Chilterns** and **Cotswolds**. This was a joint venture, replicated in other areas across England, to provide mentorship, training and advice on grazing and the environment. The **Pasture and Profit in Protected Landscapes** programme provided support for one-to-one mentoring and a range of in person and online training event for farmers who want to move towards more sustainable, and profitable grazing. Over 46 farmers (mostly cattle and sheep) joined the programme from the NWD and learnt how to reduce their artificial inputs, improve the productivity of their pastures, improve biodiversity and increase the farm's financial and environmental resilience. And produce healthy and delicious produce!



Diversification and Food

Farms are increasingly looking at ways to improve their sustainability by adding value to their own products, selling on-farm, or creating brand new income streams. We have been excited to be able to help a number of farms to add such ventures to their businesses. One FiPL project supported a young farmer to develop his **mushroom growing** and processing business, selling locally and online. We've also supported a Wiltshire sheep farmer to develop a **cheese production facility** located right next to the milking parlour. This allows the cheese producers to use milk directly from the parlour, with no need for a cooling stage.



Although not a farmer, Charlie Hancock saw an increasing problem in the countryside, with our large number of native deer, who are damaging natural habitats and farm resources. With some FiPL funding we have supported Charlie to start a new venison charcuterie business (**Game Changer Charcuterie**), developing new products to increase the value of venison. The Community Interest Company runs training courses on using venison, for both young catering students and others interested in the use of venison.



Venison curing at the Game Changer Charcuterie

Walkeridge Farm



We've also supported farms into non-farming projects.

- Support for **Walkeridge Farm** near Watership Down, to develop their on-farm glamping business (Nick and Gemma Christian), converting an old shepherds hut into a luxury holiday home with stunning views and a hot tub!



- **Rachel Hammond**, at Sheepdrove Farm, received a small grant to run courses on developing market gardens as a business
- Support for **Ewhurst Estate** market garden where they are rewilding the land and producing food sustainably for the local community.
- Community market garden at **Shalbourne Community Growers**, providing volunteering opportunities for the local community and gardening sessions for local schools.



Shalbourne Community Growers

Great Cotmarsh Farm

One of our largest awards was made in 2024 to **James and Katie Allen**, of Great Cotmarsh Farm, a mixed organic farm in North Wiltshire. They applied for over £250,000 towards the creation of a brand new organic vegetable based **tannery**, to revive the dying craft of local tanning and provide an outlet for otherwise wasted (mostly cattle) hides. FiPL supported the building, and they have obtained funding for the tanning equipment from other sources and donations. Alongside the tannery they also requested funding for a **classroom** where they bring college students to learn about sustainable, ethical and environmentally conscious fashion. They also welcome local school groups onto the farm to learn about farming, the environment and nature.

As the North Wessex Downs' largest ever application, it was expected it would face rigorous scrutiny. The Panel discussed the importance of rural heritage crafts, the declining leather industry and the impacts of UK hides going to landfill. They also acknowledged the educational benefit for the wide audiences that the education centre and tannery would give and numerous letters of support gave the panel confidence the facilities would be used by others. Intervention rates were discussed and considered at length and it was agreed that they were appropriate relative to risk, potential profit and benefit to the local landscape.



James Allen – Great Cotmarsh Tannery

History and Heritage

Under the FiPL theme of Place, we have been able to support a small number of projects working with historic buildings and sites in the area, taking some sites off the at-risk register and saving them for future generations. In 2024 there was also additional DEFRA funding offered for Historic Buildings Restoration projects which we took advantage of.

Our earliest heritage project was with **Burghclere Barn** near Newbury where we provided partial support towards the restoration of this medieval Grade I listed barn, to enable it to be taken off the at-risk register. Working closely with Heritage England, as much of the original timber as possible was retained and conservation structural engineers supervised a highly complex project to replace roof timbers where needed.



Burghclere Barn

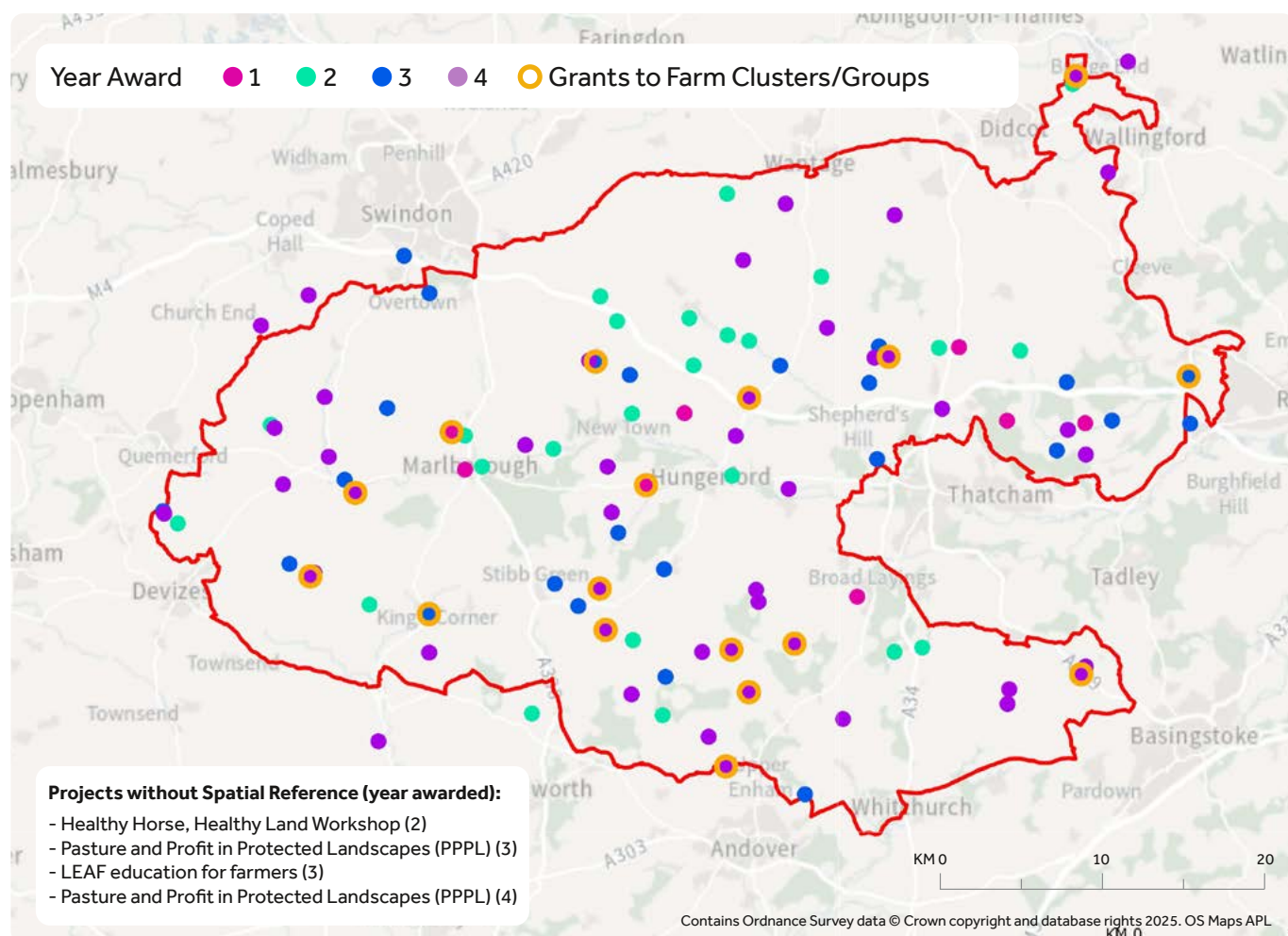
We have also supported rethatching of **Rushall Black Barn**, and retiling of **Cholsey Barn** using the additional funds, enabling unique buildings to be protected for future generations.

On a smaller scale, we helped a local farm commemorate its role in the Second World War, by funding information signs for visitors, explaining how their farm was used for **D Day parachute landing practice**. Photos of Winston Churchill and hundreds of parachutists were used to signpost a new circular route around the farm, incorporating new permissive access footpaths. The walk was included in our annual **North Wessex Downs Walking Festival** with tickets selling out fast and requiring a repeat event!



North Wessex Downs is famous for its prehistoric sites and often these need careful management to preserve them for future generations. In 2024 we provided funding for No-Fence™ digital GPS collars to allow Temple Farm to undertake conservation grazing over **Fyfield Down**. They used native breed cattle to ensure that scrub and trees don't smother the sarsen stones. A similar project at **Fosbury Hill Fort** on Knolls Down, a scheduled monument, has allowed careful conservation grazing of this iron age hill fort.

Grant locations 2021 - 2025



Further Information

[North Wessex Downs Website](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk)

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

[North Wessex Downs Management Plan](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/)

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/

[North Wessex Downs Farmer Groups](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/farming/farmer-led-groups/)

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/farming/farmer-led-groups/

[North Wessex Downs Nature Recovery Plan](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/NWD-AONB-Nature-Recovery-Plan-Version-1-Sept23.pdf)

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/NWD-AONB-Nature-Recovery-Plan-Version-1-Sept23.pdf

[North Wessex Downs Annual Forum](https://www.youtube.com/@northwessexdowns-nl)

www.youtube.com/@northwessexdowns-nl

[Action for the River Kennet \(ARK\)](http://www.kennetandpang.org)

www.kennetandpang.org

[Linking Environment and Farming \(LEAF\)](http://www.leaf.eco)

www.leaf.eco

[Pasture for Life](http://www.pastureforlife.org/)

www.pastureforlife.org/

[Plantlife International](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)

www.plantlife.org.uk

[Farming, Wildlife Advisory Group, SouthEast](http://www.fwagsoutheast.co.uk)

www.fwagsoutheast.co.uk

[BBOWT \(Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust\)](http://www.bbowl.org.uk)

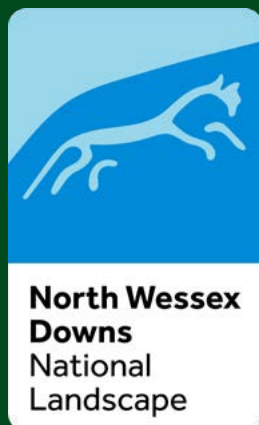
www.bbowl.org.uk

[WWT \(Wiltshire Wildlife Trust\)](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org)

www.wiltshirewildlife.org

[BDS \(British Deer Society\)](http://www.bds.org.uk)

www.bds.org.uk



northwessexdowns.org.uk



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