

## Wye Valley National Landscape Team - Work Programme 2024-2025 – Annual Report

Work Programme 2024-25 Objectives		National Landscape Team Achievements & Outcomes
Nature		
	<b><u>Nature Recovery &amp; Landscape connectivity</u></b>	
N1	· Develop AONB Nature Recovery Plan.	National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan developed to final draft stage.
N2	· Complete Species Action Plans (SAP) for Hedgehogs, River (Water Crowfoot), Woodland (Woodland Butterfly assemblage) and Grassland (Bumblebee assemblage) [+P4.2.3]	Hedgehog and Bumblebee assemblage action plans were completed and adopted by JAC. Butterfly SAP in final draft.
N3	· Manage control of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) particularly Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and American Skunk Cabbage through Wye Invasive Species Programme (WISP) [+P4.2.1]	<p>WISP was funded by Welsh Government's Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places grant on the Welsh side, and the Environment Agency's Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) on the English side. All INNS sites are logged on our Geographic Information System (GIS) to build an increasingly detailed picture of the extent of these species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 108 (out of a total of 200) sites of Japanese knotweed were treated using glyphosate, applied by either foliar spray or stem-injection (where feasible). Sites were treated by contractors Brooke Estate Management and Wye &amp; Usk Foundation. Based on the DAFOR scale of abundance, approximately 40% of sites had a reduced abundance of Japanese knotweed in comparison to the previous year (2023).</li> <li>• We hosted two days of community Himalayan balsam bashing at Brockweir and Redbrook to relieve access issues along two public footpaths (including the Wye Valley Walk).</li> <li>• Due to changes in staffing, we were unable to focus our efforts in managing American Skunk Cabbage; however, we did supply two large tarps to a private landowner in Brockweir to trial a method of starving the plants of light.</li> <li>• After being approached by Natural England for support, we co-ordinated Cherry laurel and Rhododendron clearance at Bigsweir Woods SSSI. Following site visits from two potential contractors the best approach was considered to be cutting and burning the material, followed by glyphosate stump treatment to prevent regrowth.</li> </ul>

N4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of Natural Flood Management (NFM), Green Infrastructure (GI) &amp; Riparian Trees initiatives working with local land owners, managers &amp; stakeholders [+P4.2.2]</li> </ul>	Wye Adapt to Climate Change? Project delivering Nature Based Solution advice with 32 farms visited and advised (advisory email or farm plan provided); advice includes NFM and wetland/pond creation [see C3 below]. NFM training day organised and run with 21 attendees including classroom session in the morning and practical leaky dam demonstration in the afternoon.
N5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise regular volunteer task days, including on partner sites and Reserves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 volunteer task days</li> <li>236 volunteers attended the task days = 1,180 volunteer hours</li> <li>3 training/ information days</li> </ul> <p>2 scything days, 2 days with Monmouthshire Meadows Group, 7 days hedge planting, 2 INNS days, 2 days drystone walling, 1 day habitat restoration.</p> <p>4 local volunteer Groups given continued support and guidance:- Cleddon &amp; Beacon Hill Cattle Checkers; Hedgehog First Responders Unit; The North Footpath Group and Ross Walkers are Welcome.</p>
N6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate and support landscape connectivity initiatives including Wyescapes and Severn Treescapes.</li> </ul>	WVNL Manager sits on Wyescapes Landscape Recovery Board. Team collaboration with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust to avoid duplication of work on farms funded through LEI near Goodrich.
N7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) bids for the National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross &amp; Goodrich with partners &amp; landowners</li> </ul>	3 LEI application submitted and approved by National Grid. Project funding totalling £792,335 offered. 1 project (Magnificent Meadows, Tremendous Trees, Wonderful Wetlands) started. 2 Hedgerow projects due to start summer 2025. Working with 15 landowners across all projects. Application for match funding submitted.
N8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives linked to the Special Qualities within and adjoining the AONB; eg Orchard initiative &amp; LR4, Bees for Development etc.</li> </ul>	<p>3 LEI projects developed [see N7 above].</p> <p>Nature Recovery projects in relation to Noble Chafer &amp; Hedgehogs in progress and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hedgehogs – Primary schools invited to be part of hedgehog project, raising awareness and monitoring populations.</li> <li>Noble Chafer – following FiPL funded project work, traditional orchard landowners continue to be engaged, and Noble Chafer nest boxes monitored. Noble Chafer Interpretation Panels installed in Jays Orchard, Fownhope. Noble Chafer leaflet produced</li> </ul> <p>Development Officer on Ffermio Bro Steering Group, developing Welsh programme on funding to deliver Nature Recovery based projects on farms. Monthly meetings held from September 2024.</p>

Climate		
	<b>Climate Emergency Action</b>	
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare &amp; implement Climate Action Plan from Carbon Neutral Designated Landscapes Organisation assessment &amp; Wales Designated Landscapes Carbon Footprint Programme</li> </ul>	Climate Action Plan initial draft developed for inclusion in 2026 NL Management Plan.
C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Peatland Restoration initiatives particularly at Cleddon Bog SSSI</li> </ul>	<p>Sapling control continued on Cleddon Bog, removing birch and willow saplings encroaching over bog and drying it out. One volunteer day and two days with a work parties were held in the winter. An estimated 1600 trunks of willow and birch were removed from the bog in 2024. <a href="#">2024 Dec Cleddon Bog Rep 8.pdf</a></p> <p>Conservation grazing continued, carried out by 8 native breed cattle for 5 months from May to September. This helped break up the Molinia grass to improve the habitat for bog flora and fauna. Anecdotally this is being effective. A cattle handling yoke was purchased and set up in the handling pen to facilitate TB testing and other livestock management tasks.</p>
C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver Wye Adapt to Climate Change Project, in partnership with Herefordshire &amp; Radnorshire Wildlife Trusts [+N4]</li> </ul>	<p>Herefordshire Wildlife Trust Programme Officer seconded to WVNLT Team. 32 farms &amp;/or small holders visited and written advice on Nature Based Solutions provided.</p> <p>Farm work delivered following advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 scrapes or ponds created</li> <li>- 95 metres of shelterbelt planted</li> <li>- 1 ha of species-rich grassland restored</li> <li>- 9 leaky dams and 3 bunds created</li> <li>- 470 metres of hedgerow planted or rejuvenated</li> <li>- 60 ha of grassland surveyed to assess potential for restoration to species-rich grassland</li> <li>- 1 ha of perry pear orchard planted</li> <li>- 530 metres of fencing installed to enable better grazing management and promote healthier grasslands.</li> </ul> <p>2 Climate Action Network meetings organised, attended by 28 &amp; 15 people respectively. NFM event delivered – 21 attendees [see N4 above]</p>
C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support local communities &amp; Village Halls with Decarbonisation advice &amp; signposting [+P4.4.1]</li> </ul>	4 Village halls had an energy audits in partnership Andrew David, SE Wales Energy Agency, funded through SLSP [see P5 below].
	<b>Undergrounding</b>	

C5	Continue working with National Grid & local communities to identify low-voltage power-lines within the AONB suitable for undergrounding, via South Wales and the West Midlands Protected Landscape Undergrounding groups	National Grid reinitiated steering group meetings in September 24. Development Officer attended 3x South Wales group meetings and 3x West Midlands meetings. South Wales: 4 schemes in development (2 awaiting steering group approval for delivery). West Midlands: 3 schemes in in development.
People / Outreach		
O1	<b>Wye Valley Walk</b>	
O1.1	· Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership	Hosted 2 WVV Partnership meetings.
O1.2	· Prepare for 50th Anniversary programme [P4.3.1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary feature in Country Walking Magazine December 24.</li> <li>• Programme of 50th Anniversary Guided Walks prepared with 12 guided walks covering all sections of WVV, from source to sea, between April and October 2025. Walk leaders trained and First Aid training for back markers.</li> <li>• Collaboration with The Outdoors Guide – web content and ‘Waterproofs and Wellies’ packs for schools on the Wye Valley Walk.</li> <li>• 5 sites for new Wye Valley Walk benches agreed.</li> <li>• Preparations &amp; invitations made for WVV 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary launch on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 at St Marys Church Ross-on-Wye.</li> </ul>
O1.3	· Maintain new website <a href="http://www.wyevalleywalk.org">www.wyevalleywalk.org</a>	Website development to reflect 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary
O1.4	· Manage on-line Passport scheme	300 + walkers signed up to passport scheme
O1.5	· Continue Piercefield Walk enhancements with Gwent Wildlife Trust, MCC PRoW and landowner[P4.3.1]	Gwent Wildlife Trust undertook tree safety & route enhancement work along path. MCC pursued options & liaison for path diversion and PRoW adoption. Significant landslip by The Alcove in July closed section of WVV and diversion negotiated with MCC, GWT, NRW & landowner.
O1.6	· Develop Pathcare / Friends of the Wye Valley Walk scheme of volunteers in liaison with PRoW teams....}	Proposal investigated but focused on supporting existing groups rather than establishment of new groups.
O1.7	· Audit & co-ordinate enhancement of way-marking, interpretation and route infrastructure....}	Ross Walkers are Welcome completed audit of south Herefordshire section Monmouthshire Pathcare wardens completed audit of Monmouthshire section
O1.8	· Collate route counter data & review options	MCC PRoW collated route counter data for Piercefield: average usage was 13,338 over year.

O1.9	· Complete review Cicerone Route Guide	All works and drafting completed and new guide book published ready for official launch on 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2025.
O1.10	· Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge and Redbrook Bridge.	Lydbrook Bridge was closed by Gloucestershire County Council in October 24 due to bats preventing repair works. The bridge is a critical crossing for the WVV and closure necessitate a substantial diversion for the route that WVN staff signposted, both on the ground and on-line, in collaboration with GCC & Herefordshire Council PROW teams.
O1.11	· Progress Wyesham riverbank revetment [+P4.3.1]	Turnover of Project Officer staff delayed progress. But further surveys and specifications were about to be commissioned in late November when a landslip took a new section of the WVV into the river. This necessitated a path closure, diversion and a reappraisal of the viability of the proposals with MCC PROW.
O2	<b><u>Removing Barriers &amp; Access for All</u></b>	[with DEFRA Access for all funding and Welsh Government SLSP as appropriate]
O2.1	· Review & republish 'Easy Access' walks	All-terrain wheelchair accessible routes audited in Haugh Woods and Chepstow Park Woods.
O2.2	· Develop Willow Walk for all terrain wheelchairs from Ross to Brampton Abbots.	Completion of a 7 mile circular barrier free route from Ross-on-Wye to Townsend Farm, Brampton Abbots. The route is suitable for all terrain wheelchairs and part of the walk was tested by 16 wheelchair users during the Off Road Wheelchair Weekend. New disabled parking space in Homs Road Car Park created and two wheelchair accessible bridges were installed over streams, having secured all permissions and consents. The installation of 3 access-for-all benches, 1 in Ross-on-Wye, 2 at Townsend Farm, were planned, along with a Willow Man sculpture, tactile discs on the bridges and a Willow Walk illustrated map.
O2.3	· Support 'Miles without Stiles' replacement of footpath stiles with kissing-gates by volunteers and local walking groups	48 stiles replaced with gates along WVV, Herefordshire Trail and local circular and bus walks. Delivered in partnership with Ross Walkers are Welcome, respective Parish Councils and Herefordshire Council PROW.
O2.4	Generation Green 2.	DEFRA funding, channelled through the National Landscapes Association, aimed to connect young people who live in areas of social disadvantage in England with nature in a protected landscape. Community Links Officer led on organisation and coordination of outputs:- 30 children visited Ballingham Court Farm, 60 children in residential visits to Biblins Campsite (1 overnight stay and 2 days of activities), 18 children visited Butterfly Park with Marches Family Network, 50 children took part in Day Activities at Biblins.
O3	<b><u>Overlooking the Wye legacy</u></b>	

O3.1	Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme	Overlooking the Wye (OLW) archives were used to inform the management of the landslip by The Alcove viewpoint Scheduled Monument, restored as part of OLW (see O1.5 above)
O3.2	· Continue Cleddon Falls & Wordsworth Walk enhancements with landowner(s)	Options were reviewed where the lower 2 bridges on the Permissive Path remained closed for safety reasons, and another landslip and flood further damaged this section.
O3.3	· Review & prepare new Walks leaflets	Drafts were prepared for Wordsworth Walk and Piercefield, but both delayed subject to resolution of the landslips (see O3.1 & O3.2 above)
O3.4	· Audit and repair &/or replace Overlooking the Wye infrastructure &/or design & install new as appropriate	Audit initiated. Proposal submitted to Swansea University for undergraduate project to complete audit but no students came forward to deliver project.
O3.5	· Enhance access from Tintern to Devil's Pulpit	Surfaced Wye Valley Greenway between Wireworks Bridge Tintern and Monks Way path, leading to Devil's Pulpit. Near Brockwier 45 meter section of Offa's Dyke Path, 1.2 meters wide, surfaced and enhanced with stabilised bank and french drain.
O4	<b><u>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory</u></b>	
O4.1	· Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological research and investigation into the landscape significance of the 8th century monument	WVNL Manager sat on Editorial Board of Offa's Dyke Journal: A Journal for Linear Monuments, Frontiers and Borderlands Research, but Volume 6 (for 2024–2025) delayed.
O4.2	· Participate in Collaboratory conferences, meetings and events	WVNL unable to attend the 1st June day conference 'Conflict, Collaboration and Early Medieval Frontiers' in Wrexham.
O4.3	· Support community based research and events.	No action locally.
O5	<b><u>Communications &amp; social media</u></b>	
O5.1	· Regular social media (SM) posts e.g. Facebook, Instagram and X (twitter)	Regular posts, averaging 2 per week, covering all aspects of WVNL work on all platforms.
O5.2	· On-going updating and revision of <a href="https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/">https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/</a> .	Website updated as required. Stakeholder Mapping review undertaken as preparation for development of new website.
O5.3	· Regular publication of on-line National Landscape Partnership newsletter 'Picturesque'	No publication due to other work pressures.

O5.4	· Revise and publish National Landscape Map & Guide	Draft publication worked on.
O6	<b>Outreach &amp; Promotion of the National Landscape through</b>	
O6.1	· Talks/presentations to local groups	Lower Wye Climate Action Network
O6.2	· Stands at relevant shows.	Monmouth Show. Herefordshire Wildlife Trust 'Apple Day' at Queenswood Park.
O6.3	· Promote, sponsor &/or lead guided walks, events, activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses in and around the AONB	3 Willow Weaving workshops, Ross-On-Wye 3 Day Off Road Wheelchair Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 40 participants join the taster session on Friday to try out 3 different off-road wheelchairs (Terrain Hopper, Mountain Trike &amp; Trumper).</li> <li>– 12 participants joined the 10 miles Whitestone ramble.</li> <li>– 16 participants joined the 3-mile ramble around Townsend Farm- part of the Willow Walk. Also taking in the accessible bird hide funded though WVNLC.</li> <li>– 48 of the participants came from outside of the NL.</li> </ul> Dark Skies Planetarium at Fownhope Village Hall – 80 attendees Dark Skies Biofluorescent Walks at Whitestone September 2024 (30 attendees) and February 2025 as part of Dark Skies Wales Week (60 attendees) Bat walk at Penallt Old Church (25 attendees) Ross Walkers are Welcome Walking Festival Sept 2024 Flower Patch Walk (22 attendees)
O6.4	· Support the Wye Valley River Festival CIC [+O9.8]	WVRF team use WVNLC Meeting Room usually weekly for Festival planning. Use of printing/stationary as required.
O7	<b>Youth Rangers</b>	
O7.1	· Review programme and further opportunities to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage	12 activities delivered for Young Adventurers youth programme. 130 young people engaged in activities. 60% of children engaged had SEN
O7.2	· Train new Leaders as required/appropriate	1 new volunteer recruited for Young Adventurers and trained in outdoor first aid, food hygiene, safeguarding and DBS checked. 1 existing volunteer DBS checked
O8	<b>Governance</b>	
O8.1	· Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group	3x TOWP meetings at WVNLC office & hybrid/online: February, June & October 3x JAC meetings at Forest of Dean District Council Offices: March, July & November 2x Steering Group at WVNLC office & hybrid/online: February & October

O8.2	· Organise National Landscape Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues in late September 2024	20 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 (32 Attendees) visited Kilforge Farm, Ballingham Court Farm, Ross Homs Road Car Park & Ross Riverside, focusing on projects supported through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and land management issues in the Herefordshire part of the National Landscape.
O8.3	· Run National Landscape Partnership Seminar/forum in winter/spring 2025	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 (28 Attendees) on Management Plan Review, at The Paddocks Hotel, Symonds Yat West.
O8.4	· Complete Good Governance Review	Task & Finish group established by JAC to review Co-opted Members and representatives on JAC. Met in December, with recommendations reported back to JAC in March.
O8.5	Team management, Team meetings, 1:1s & Staff reviews	WVNL Team Meetings bi-weekly. Site meeting monthly, Strategic meeting monthly, 1:1s held regularly (4-6weeks) and Staff reviews annually.
O9	<b><u>Local Partnerships &amp; Collaboration</u></b>	
	Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:	
O9.1	· Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire	1 meeting of LNP Nature Recovery group attended by Nature Recovery Officer. 2 meetings of Herefordshire LNP attended by Development Officer. DO and NRO presented Noble Chafer project on LNP site visit to traditional orchards in Much Marcle. Development Officer attended 2 meetings of Monmouthshire LNP.
O9.2	· Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Steering Group	WVNL Manager on LNRS Steering Group attending monthly meetings, also representing Malvern Hills National Landscape.
O9.3	· Wye Catchment Partnership (WCP) & WCP Steering Group	WVNL Manager on WCP Steering Group, attending bi-monthly meetings. Team members attend WCP as appropriate/able. WVNL Manager on WCP Chair Recruitment Task & Finish group and Interview Panel.
O9.4	· Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (NAC)	WVNL Manager attends bi-annual meetings.
O9.5	· Farm Herefordshire Steering Group	Development Officer attends, or FiPL Officer as appropriate.
O9.6	· Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, Cotswolds Plus Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), South East Wales Tourism Forum, Visit Monmouthshire and Visit Herefordshire	WVNL Manager attends Cotswolds Plus LVEP WVNL Manager & Information Officer receive papers form South East Wales Tourism Forum, Visit Monmouthshire and Visit Herefordshire and attend as appropriate.
O9.7	· Herefordshire Meadows , Monmouthshire Meadows and Parish Grassland Project	Collaboration with Herefordshire Meadows on development of LEI applications and subsequent project delivery. FiPL Officer attended Herefordshire Meadows annual forum.



		WACC Project working with Herefordshire Meadows to provide grassland surveys and advice on 2 landholdings.
O9.8	· Wye Valley River Festival CIC Advisory Board	WVNL Manager on board and regular liaison when WVRF team using WNVL office.
O9.9	· Gwent Green Grid Partnership	DO attended Monmouthshire Nature & Sustainable Food Celebration September 24. DO attended Gwent Green Grid mapping project consultation meetings.
O9.10	· Monmouthshire Local Access Forum	Project Officer attended to present Tracks & Trail Strategy & updates.
O9.11	· Monmouthshire Wye Valley Villages Delivery Group	WVNL Manager attends and reports/updates on projects, activities and River issues.
O9.12	HC Greener Footprints & Herefordshire Food Alliance	Minimal engagement
O9.13	· Support Town, Parish & Community Councils with advice & guidance as appropriate	Respond to enquiries and provide advice as/when requested.
O10	<b><u>National Collaboration</u></b>	
O10.1	· Support and engage with the National Landscapes Association (NLA) and attend appropriate seminars & events, including Lead Officers' Meeting, National Conference, Chairs' Conference & AGM.	WVNL had a stand at NLA event at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay in April 'Celebrating Wales' National Landscapes' that was attended by 2 Welsh Government (WG) Ministers. WVNL Manager attended NLA AGM & Chairs' Conference entitled 'Leading Landscapes 24: Shaping the future of National Landscapes'. 5 staff attended National Conference, 5th – 7th July 2024, at Harper Adams, Shropshire with theme 'Changing Landscapes: Changing Minds'. In August hosted meeting in Wye Valley between NLA Chair and WG Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs. WVNL Manager attended Lead Officers' Meeting, Birmingham in February.
O10.2	· Work with Welsh Government and Tirweddau Cymru Landscape Wales (National Designated Landscapes Partnership) and other stakeholders, including NRW & NLA	WVNL Manager attended Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW) Seminar in Bangor, 16th-17th May, on 'Decarbonising the Welsh Designated Landscapes and working with our communities to achieve Net Zero'. WVNL Manager appointed chair of TCLW in June 2024. Chaired regular TCLW meetings and also sat on Biodiversity Deep Dive Designated Landscapes Group.
O10.3	· Work with DEFRA, Natural England, NLA and others to progress the Action Plan for Protected Landscapes and the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23).	DEFRA officials maintained regular contact with National Landscape Lead Officers, both directly and through the National Landscape Association.
Place		

P1	<b><u>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026</u></b>	
P1.1	· Publicise and promote Wye Valley AONB Management Plan	Management Plan promoted and quoted in responses and advice highlighting the vision for the designation and the Special Qualities, as necessary.
P1.2	· Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan	Management Plan monitoring continued, identifying where the National Landscape Team has made reference and representation.
P1.3	· Commence review of the AONB Management Plan	In November JAC endorsed the programme for the review and publication of the AONB Management Plan 2026-2031. 19 <sup>th</sup> March one day in-person seminar focused on Management Plan Review.
P1.4	· Monitor use of Management Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries and by stakeholders	Reference to Management Plan continued to be made in all planning application and strategic planning representations. Generally reflective of national trends that saw a decline in planning applications in 2024 compared to 2023.
P2	<b><u>AONB Planning &amp; Development Control</u></b>	
P2.1	· Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents	SPO continued to oversee all applications within the WVNL and its setting and filtered those applications which require a formal review / site visit / representation. Representations made on 88 applications. Reduction to the previous year, possibly due in part to change in staffing of SPO post and two months over the summer with no SPO in post (new SPO since Sept 2024.) Consultation response provided for the MCC Replacement Local Plan (deposit stage).
P2.2	· Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB	SPO continued consistent monitoring, identifying and tracking applications where representation was made and followed through to subsequent decision-making and, where relevant, monitoring of conditions. 10 objections were made. Three of the planning applications objected to are undecided and 2 withdrawn. For those rejected by the LPA, harm to the National Landscape was generally cited as a reason for refusal in the officer's report, while for the two applications approved, either harm to landscape was not deemed to occur, or concerns covered by conditions. The SPO submitted representation to an appeal for the Forest and Wye Valley Campsite application (refused by FoDDC, P0308/23/FUL). This was dismissed based on harmful effects on the character and appearance of the area, including the National Landscape.
P2.3	· Engage in development and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NLA	The SPO continued to engage with NLA consultations and contributed as appropriate (e.g. Welsh Gov trees & woodland protection; England planning reforms, Land Use Framework). Continued engagement with NLA Planning & Placemaking Forum for National Landscape

		Planning Officers across England; South Protected Landscapes Planning Officers Group, and Wales Landscape Group.
P2.4	· Prepare, consult on and finalise Position Statements on Renewables and Dark Skies	Dark Skies and Light Pollution Position Statement published to National Landscape website and referred to in consultation responses. Renewables Position Statement in final draft.
P2.5	· Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members	Training delivered to HC staff summer 2024. Provided framework and template for delivering future sessions.
P2.6	· Monitor Planning support & activity jointly with Malvern Hills National Landscape Partnership.	SPO worked jointly between the Wye Valley National Landscape and Malvern Hills National Landscape working approx 2.5 days per week with each National Landscape, with flexibility to meet changing workload and demands for each Team.
P3	<b><u>Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme</u></b>	
P3.1	· Provide advice & guidance, as directed by DEFRA, to farmers and land managers to develop applications to help deliver bigger and better outcomes under the themes of Climate, Nature, People and Place.	55 enquiries resulting in 43 successful FiPL applications, delivering £767,585 project spend (including final year of multi year projects) in FY 24/25. List of successful FiPL project published on website: <a href="https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Approved-FiPL-projects-Wye-Valley-National-Landscape-2021-25.pdf">https://www.wyevalley-nl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Approved-FiPL-projects-Wye-Valley-National-Landscape-2021-25.pdf</a>
P3.2	· Service the Local Assessment Panel in determining applications and allocating funding.	6 LAP meetings held
P3.3	· Manage delegated grants (<£5k)	13 grants approved through delegated grants process
P3.4	· Administer grant payments and monitor and report to DEFRA	Monthly programme monitoring form submitted to DEFRA. Annual monitoring of outputs undertaken and submitted to DEFRA.
P3.5	· Review the AONB Farming Award and present to a notable project or land manager.	Not progress as priority on delivery of FiPL grants.
P4	<b><u>Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP)</u></b>	
P4.1	Deliver & manage scheme:	Turnover of WVNL staff hampered full delivery of some aspects of scheme.
P4.2	· Lower Wye Valley Nature Recovery Initiatives:	
P4.2.1	o Invasive non-native species (INNS) control	See N3 above.
P4.2.2	o Landscape Connectivity	100m hedgerow planted near Redbrook – 10 vols. 450m of hedgerow planted near St Arvans.

		<p>Lydart: 1ha meadow restoration, 200m of hedge laying &amp; fencing, 3 scrapes created, 95 m shelterbelt planted, 1ha perry pear orchard planted, 126m of fencing to allow better grazing management and promote healthier grasslands</p> <p>Trellech: 275m of hedge laying</p> <p>Tintern: 300m of fencing installed to protect new woodland from deer</p> <p>Mitchel Troy: 130 m of hedge rejuvenated (laid &amp; coppiced) and gapped up.</p>
P4.2.3	o Species Action Plans esp. Orchards project	<p>16 Orchard trees planted Lydart (1ha)</p> <p>Meadow restoration/grassland work contributed towards Bumblebee Species Action Plan (SAP). Hedge restoration and planting working towards hedgehog SAP. Woodland protection working towards Butterfly SAP.</p>
P4.3	· Lower Wye Valley Tourism & Access Improvements	
P4.3.1	o Wye Valley Walk enhancements: Wyesham, Piercefield & 50th anniversary programme	See O1 above
P4.3.2	o Lower Wye Track & Trails - Integrated Recreation Access Strategy	Tracks & Trails Strategy published. Steering Group established as sub-group of Monmouthshire Local Access Forum (LAF) and 3 meetings held, discussing project progress, public engagement, surveys, monitoring, signage and next steps.
P4.4	· Lower Wye Valley Village Halls	
P4.4.1	o Energy efficiency & Hub development	<p>4 halls received an Energy Audit from Andrew David, SE Wales Energy Agency.</p> <p>4 hall received grants to implements some of the energy saving recommendations set out in the audits.</p>
P4.5	Engagement in collaborative projects across multiple Designated Landscapes:-	
P4.5.1	o Wales Dark Skies	<p>Celebrated Wales Dark Skies Week, February half-term, with a programme of events and activities, co-ordinated locally by Information Officer (see O6.3 above): Planetarium at Fownhope Village Hall (80 attendees), Biofluorescent Walks at Whitestone (60 attendees) and Bat walk at Penallt Old Church.</p> <p>Undertook surveys of light pollution and funded retrofitting of lighting at Llandogo Village Hall and Trellech Primary School [saving an estimated 528 kg/CO2e]</p>
P4.5.2	o Education Resources Programme	<p>Bilingual digital resource 'Tirlun' developed through consultants and workshops with local schools. Tirlun aimed to provide high quality resources that focus for learning in and about Wales Designated Landscapes. Work led by the Learning Team from Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, see <a href="https://tirlun.wales/">https://tirlun.wales/</a></p> <p>WVNL Manager, as TCLW Chair, a key speaker at Tirlun launch in the Senedd 13th March.</p>

P5	<b><u>Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</u></b>	
P5.1	· Promotion of SDF to potential applicants	Little promotion required due to pipeline of projects and established knowledge of SDF.
P5.2	· Assist potential applicants with application process and project development	5 applicants have been assisted with project development and application process
P5.3	· Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating SDF funds.	All SDF funds we allocated
P5.4	· Service HC Management Board monitoring SDF as capital spend.	Monthly Project Boards attended by WVNLM Manager and Business Support Assistant with oversight by HC corporate accountants and project management staff.
P5.5	· Manage delegated grants and Landscape & Biodiversity Enhancement Grants (<£3k)	2 grants were delegated, 1 of which was a Landscape & Biodiversity Enhancement Grant
P5.6	· Training for SDF Assessment Panel members	WG drafted new SDF Guidance for 2025/26 with a focus on Nature Recovery and Climate Emergencies, necessitating a review of Panel members and selecting some replacements.
P5.7	· Administration of grant scheme and reporting to Welsh Government	Claims and Reports submitted to WG
P6	<b><u>Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF)</u></b>	
P6.1	· Promote Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with HCF to potential applicants	HCF fund was closed due allow Endowment Fund to accrue, so no activity took place.
P6.2	· Assist potential applicants with application process and project development	HCF fund closed so no activity took place.
P6.3	· Collate applications for the SDF Assessment Panel and liaise with HCF	HCF fund closed so no activity took place.
P6.4	· Service SDF Assessment Panel recommending allocations to HCF.	WG new draft SDF Guidance for 2025/26 has focus on Nature Recovery and Climate Emergencies, necessitating a review of HCF membership on SDF Panel.
P7	<b><u>Monitoring</u></b>	
P7.1	· Ongoing updating of the National Landscape GIS and State of the AONB data,	Data continues to be gathered and stored in preparation for reviewing State of the AONB Report and production of revised State of the National Landscape Report to accompany Management Plan.
P7.2	· Complete Phase 1 Habitat Survey mapping & digitising	Not progressed due to staff turnover and other priorities.

P7.3	· Use the Nature Recovery Network map, and review as appropriate	NRN map used in development and assessment of projects, including LEI, WACC and FiPL.
P7.4	· Investigate opportunities to update heritage, tourism and recreation monitoring.	Not progressed due to staff turnover and other priorities.
P7.5	· Undertake Fixed point photography across the National Landscape	Summer and winter fixed point photography carried out on 20 locations.
P8	<b><u>Funding and resources</u></b>	
P8.1	· Prepare grant bids and claims for NRW, Welsh Government and DEFRA, and other funding bodies as required.	All bids and funds claimed as necessary, although some claims delayed due to completing deadlines.
P8.2	· Continue pursuing funding and develop opportunities for external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects	Meetings held & workshops attended with National Lottery over Landscape Connections programme, and with NLA Nature Based Solutions team and Wye & Usk Transition Lab on blended / Green Finance opportunities.
P8.3	· Develop fundraising campaign for HCF Wye Valley National Landscape Fund	Not progressed.
P9	<b><u>Work placements</u></b>	
P9.1	Support the needs of student placements/group projects.	Hosted annual Worcester University Environmental Management and Sustainability undergraduate field visits at Redbrook. Hosted 6 week placement of Worcester University student, from Environmental Management and Sustainability course, who undertook a review of the published walks associated with the 65 & 69 bus routes.
P9.2	· Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities	Draft proposals developed but finalised.