



LAND & NATURE GROUP

Securing the recovery of nature in and around Charlbury
Enabling everyone to enjoy access to green spaces

Background

The UK continues to lose habitats and wildlife at a time when we also need to contribute urgently towards global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Aim

Develop and implement a **NATURE RECOVERY PLAN** based on local knowledge, data and engagement with landowners, land managers and residents, to expand, improve and connect wildlife-rich habitats and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from land use.

Approach

- Establish a baseline of species and habitats within the parishes of Charlbury, Fawler, Finstock & Cornbury
- Develop a Nature Recovery Plan across the four parishes
- Disseminate the results of the Nature Recovery Plan at a series of local meetings and more widely via reports, websites and social media
- Work closely with landowners and the local community to implement nature recovery opportunities for wildlife, carbon and flood mitigation

Priority Objectives

- Expand, Improve and Connect **WILDLIFE-RICH HABITATS**
 - e.g. Hedgerows, Woodland, Grassland, Verges
- Address pressures on species and habitats
- Focus on **EVENLODE CATCHMENT**
 - Water Quality, Pollution, Natural Flood Management
- Reduce **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** from land use
- Promote **WELLBEING** through access to nature

Three “E”s

- **ENGAGEMENT** with Residents, Landowners and Land Managers
 - **INSPIRE, EMPOWER AND INVOLVE**
- **EVIDENCE** create a baseline of species and habitats
 - **WHAT WE HAVE NOW**
- **EXECUTION** set priorities and create action plans

Activities to date

- Produced a prototype **CARBON MAP** at four sites in Charlbury (Southill Solar, Wigwell & the Millfield) demonstrating the importance of overgrown hedgerows and trees for carbon storage within the landscape
- Working with the **Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP)**, to set up an outreach **COMMUNITY RIVER PROJECT** which included the popular **River Tent at Charlbury Riverside Festival**. The project aims to raise awareness of the poor ecological quality of the River Evenlode and involve local residents in activities such as monitoring water quality and surveying riparian vegetation and habitats.



The River Tent at Riverside Festival, July 2022

- Developed proposals for changes to grass cutting within the town aimed at increasing wild flowers for the benefit of insects and other wildlife. This included the grass areas that the Town Council is responsible for and also areas currently managed by other agencies.



Pyramidal orchid flowering under walnut trees
alongside The Slade, Ticknell Piece

- Restoring the floodplain meadow flora in the Mill Field - small first phase begun by scarifying the area in the bend of the river at the far end of the field and spreading seed-rich hay from a donor site at Lower Swell.



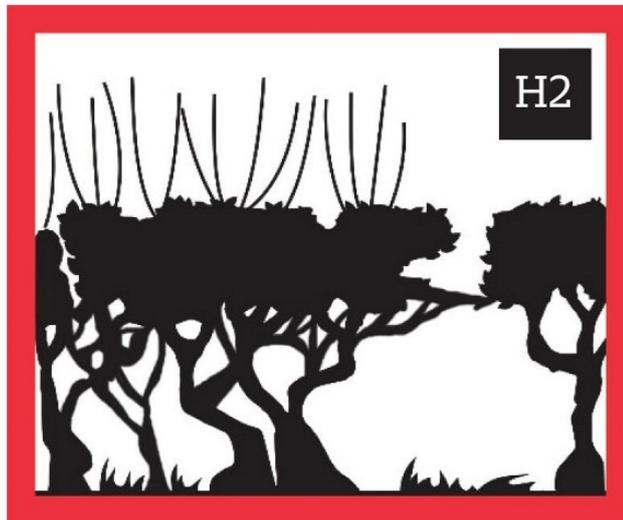
Drone shot of river meadowland restoration on the Millfield

- Contributed towards a community initiative of the **Wychwood Forest Trust (WFT)** and **Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP)** to construct the first of a series of analogue beaver dams in the Wigwell stream to enhance wetland habitats and biodiversity and mitigate flooding. This initiative is part of the Evenlode Smarter Catchment Plan.



Beaver Dam Analogue at Wigwell

- Organised two workshops on hedgerow surveying for volunteers. Started resurveying the hedgerows in the local parishes to assess the stage in the dynamic cycle of hedge management. Organising workshops for ongoing training of volunteers <https://hedgerowsurvey.ptes.org/hedge-structures>



- Held two public consultation meetings in Finstock about planting a community orchard, a flood mitigation scheme and restoring verges to limestone grassland.
- Liaising closely with the Oxfordshire Treescapes Project (<https://www.oxtrees.uk/>) to establish a baseline of habitats/species for the Nature recovery Plan across the four parishes of Charlbury, Fawler, Finstock and Cornbury

OXFORDSHIRE
TREESCAPE PROJECT