

## Wildflowers for Wildlife

The Wildflowers for Wildlife Project is a new addition to the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme. We wish to support landowners and communities to develop areas for wildflowers, whether this is a wildflower patch at a village hall or creation of a new meadow.

Wildflowers for Wildlife projects involve creating or restoring an area for wildflowers to grow. There are several ways to go about developing a Wildflowers for Wildlife project, and the scale and location of your project will inform which type of funding you may be eligible. Creating a wildflower area is not a simple process. There are many steps, each dependant on various conditions and it can take several years for the wildflowers to establish.

All projects require initial soil testing, this is because all wildflowers have a range of environmental limits. If soil nutrients are too high, pH is drastically different between the donor and recipient sites or site wetness is significantly different, this may affect the germination and spread of the plants. Soil testing is also useful to inform which wildflowers seed to sow.

Ground preparation is an important step, and the method will vary depending on the scale and location of your project. Bare ground is needed, which can be achieved with a plough or harrow. Sowing then occurs in late summer/early autumn. Vegetation growth should be restricted in the first year to reduce any competition for germinating seeds. Either livestock can be put into the field to eat the grasses if they are getting high, or an extra cut can be undertaken before the first spring. Neither grazing nor cutting should be undertaken if this will cause ground problems, for example, in wet fields prone to livestock poaching or compaction.

### Funding Options

The Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) programme has been created by Defra and it forms part of the Government's Agricultural Transition Plan. It provides funds to allow farmers and land managers to work with Protected Landscape organisations (National Park Authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty teams) to provide benefits for nature, climate, people and places. It is important that your project targets at least one of the 4 themes of the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme as well as the Quantock Hills Management Plan. This is a good option if you are within the Quantock Hills AONB and are aiming to create a larger wildflower area, such as a large meadow. Similarly, if you have a large scale project you may be eligible to enter Countryside Stewardship.

Get in touch with the Quantock Hills AONB Landscape Project Officer Katie Read, on [katie.read@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:katie.read@somerset.gov.uk) or by calling 07977 412249. She can arrange a site visit to discuss and advise on your project ideas.

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Grant Fund is available for smaller projects that aim to restore or create benefit to wildlife whilst also offering public benefit, available to you if your project is within the Quantock Hills AONB, or in one of the surrounding parishes. This would be a good option for community projects, for example, a wildlife area at a village hall. Individuals are able to apply but must be able to evidence public good, just as proximity to a right of way.

For more information and guidance on QLPS grants, please contact QLPS Wildlife Officer, Jem Gibson at [jem.gibson@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jem.gibson@somerset.gov.uk). He can arrange a site visit to discuss and advise on your project ideas.

