

PROPOSALS FOR A BLACK DOWN AND BURRINGTON HAM ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION PROJECT

MENDIP HILLS AONB

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Rural Environment Practice

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1. INTRODUCTION

The spectacular landscape scenery of Black Down and Burrington Ham make it one of the most treasured areas within the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Today more people than ever use Black Down and Burrington Ham and this is having a damaging impact on this beautiful and remote landscape. As well as being unsightly, eroded paths are difficult to walk on and present difficulties for horseriders and cyclists. Eroded paths are also damaging archaeological features and wildlife habitats; this is a growing concern given that large parts of the area are designated as a Scheduled Monument and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Burrington Combe is one of the main sites of geological interest in the AONB. The Rock of Ages, Goatchurch cave and Aveline's Hole are popular sites and the area is frequented by cavers and outdoor pursuits groups. Erosion problems have also been compounded more recently by an increase in the illegal use of off-road vehicles in some areas.

Although the Mendip Hills have been shaped and formed over millions of years this is a surprisingly fragile landscape that has to be managed sensitively so that future generations can continue to enjoy its many qualities.

The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit has now begun to examine how to prevent further erosion of the sensitive Black Down and Burrington Ham landscape whilst ensuring the area can remain a popular outdoor destination through careful path restoration and management, signing and interpretation.

1.1 Purpose of the Report

Rural Environment Practice (REP) has been instructed by the Mendip Hills AONB Unit to scope potential project proposals for Black Down and Burrington Ham Commons that will: -

- Provide sustainable access and management for a wide variety of users
- Design and implement physical access improvements (surfacing, drainage, and signage)
- Involve the local community, all users and those with a management role
- Communicate information on current and future management activities
- Interpret the historic and cultural history and natural importance of the site
- Secure funding to devise and implement the above

2. BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

2.1 Location of the Project

The project area is formed by the Burrington Commons which extend for approximately 400 hectares and include Black Down and Burrington Ham, which are dissected by the carboniferous limestone exposures of Burrington Combe.

Plan 1 shows the boundary of the project area (see Appendix 1).

Black Down, Burrington Ham and Burrington Combe are the most extensive area of upland landscape in the Mendip Hills. They possess an open, wild and remote character and this is very attractive to people wishing to experience outdoor activities such as walking, horseriding and off-road cycling. The location of the area, some 15 miles to the south of the City of Bristol (with a population of over 420,000), means that it is easily accessible to a growing number of people.

2.2 Land ownership

The history of the Burrington Commons is described elsewhere and not repeated in detail here. The commons passed via auctions in 1895 and 1909 to Lord Winterstoke who ensured that the rights for Commoners, Stinholders and Conservators were codified and set down in the Commons Regulation (Burrington) Provisional Order Confirmation Act of 1911. The Commoners, known as 'Stinholders' were allocated rights in proportion to the number of 'stints' they held, and the stinholders were managed by the Conservators, representing the landowner, Church and parish council. The Burrington Conservators still defend Commoners rights today and take an active role in the management of the area. The ownership of the commons passed from Lord Winterstoke to the Wills family, who continue to own the land.

2.3 Access Rights

Free and open public access was conferred by the 1911 Act subject to the Bye-Laws of 1915 which were revised in 1982. The commons are now designated as Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Walkers have the right to roam under this legislation. An extensive network of Public Rights of Way cross the commons, as do a number of informal or desire line paths. Horseriders and cyclists only have access rights along designated bridleways and do not possess legal entitlement for wider access.

2.4 Management Structure

The Black Down Advisory Group (BDAG) was established in 2009, its aim is to consider all of the issues currently effecting Black Down and Burrington Ham and take management decisions. The group includes the landowner, Mendip Hills AONB Unit, Burrington Conservators, Natural England, English Heritage and local authorities.

2.5 Description of the Project Area

The Burrington Commons are a unique relic of the great open Mendip landscape (an eruption of geology into the North Somerset plains) that once characterised the wider landscape. It can be considered to be a heritage landscape and is an area of considerable geological, archaeological, ecological, aesthetic and cultural importance. Spectacular views are afforded across North Somerset and the Mendip Hills from various points in the area. In simplified terms, the area can broadly be considered to consist of three distinct parts: -

2.5.1 Black Down

An open area of heathland dominated by heather, moorland grasses, bilberry, gorse and bracken situated on Old Red Sandstone. The higher areas are dominated by a mosaic of often marshy purple moor grass dominated grassland and dwarf shrub heathland, whilst the northern slopes are dominated by bracken. It includes Beacon Batch, at 325m, the highest point in the Mendip Hills. Around 50% of Black Down is designated as a Scheduled Monument due to the presence of Iron Age barrows and the remains of a World War II decoy. The area is also designated as a County Wildlife Site.

2.5.2 Burrington Combe

A limestone gorge which contains the busy B3134. The Combe consists of calcareous grassland, woodland, scrub and thin and stoney soils with areas of exposed rock and scree. The Combe contains a number of small car parks, toilet facilities, the Burrington Inn and a new bike shop. The Combe is the main access point for vistors to the area and is popular with outdoor activity groups who make use of the caving and abseiling opportunities.

Burrington Combe also includes Aveline's Hole, an important Early Mesolithic (C.9000BC) cemetary site in which between 50 and 100 skeletons were found. This cave is gated with access only by arrangement with Bristol Spelaeological Society. The Combe also includes the Rock of Ages – There is a legend that Augustus Montague Toplady was inspired to write the hymn *Rock of Ages* while sheltering under a rock in the Combe during a thunderstorm in the late 18th century. The rock was subsequently named after the hymn and bears a plaque relating the story.

2.5.3 Burrington Ham

Located on an area of carboniferous limestone this is an area of scrub, woodland and grassland habitats. The grasslands tend to be calcareous on the rock outcrop at the top of the Ham and at various locations along the edge of the Combe and an interesting mosaic of more acidic and neutral grassland habitats exist elsewhere. Significant scrub clearance has taken place over recent years and this has restored the traditional open character of the area that existed up until the 1950s. Burrington Ham includes the remains of a hillfort. There are other localised earthworks including pillow mounds, stock pens and spoil tips.

2.5.4 The Wider Area

Visitors to Black Down and Burrington Ham are attracted to the area because they form part of a wider upland landscape that also includes Rowberrow Warren, Dolebury Warren and Mendip Lodge Woods.

Rowberrow Warren is leased by the Forestry Commission and consists of mainly commercial coniferous plantations that were planted in the 1940s and onwards. Under the terms of the Forestry Commission lease there are no rights of access for the public other than along established public rights of way.

Dolebury Warren is owned by the National Trust and leased to Avon Wildlife Trust who manage the land; it is a SSSI and includes the remains of an imposing Iron Age hillfort. The area is designated as Open Access land under the CRoW Act 2000 and it includes a bridleway and public footpaths. The Woodland Trust manage areas of woodland on the northern slopes of Dolebury Warren.

Mendip Lodge Woods is owned by the Wills Estate and there is no public access here except along public rights of way.

2.6 Heritage Importance

Site designations as to the area listed below:

Scheduled Monuments & Sites & Monuments Record

- World War II bombing decoy complex, anti-aircraft obstructions and Beacon
- Batch round barrow cemetery on Black Down
- Bowl barrow 300m north east of Tynning's Farm
- Aveline's Hole, Burrington Coombe.
- Burrington Ham Hillfort and associated earthworks

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- Burrington Combe SSSI: Unimproved calcareous grassland, scrub and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, together with geological interest.

Sites of Nature Conservation Interest /County Wildlife Sites

- Burrington Combe and Fullers Hay Site of Nature Conservation Interest - Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland with mixed plantation and scrub.
- Lower Ellick Wood Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- Black Down County Wildlife Site: - Identified by Somerset Wildlife Trust as being of wildlife importance, complementing the network of national designated areas.

The whole project site area is with the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.7 Access to Black Down and Burrington Ham

Plan 1 (Appendix 1) shows the principal access points to Black Down and Burrington Ham, along with public rights of way and informal / desire line paths (Public rights of way in green, desire line paths in purple).

Open Access Land: Walkers have the right to roam in all areas designated as open access land. Under the CROW Act 2000 the public can walk freely on designated areas of mountain, moor, heath, downland and registered common land without having to stick to paths.

Limestone Link: This is a 36 mile route that connects the Mendip Hills to the Cotswolds at Cold Aston in South Gloucestershire. The route is shown on Ordnance Survey Explorer maps and it passes through Black Down along a bridleway.

Bridleways: An extensive network of bridleways can be found on Black Down, radiating out from the main access points (the Link Road, Ellick House, Wireless Station entrance, Tynings Farm entrance, Rowberrow Warren and Bath Road entrance). There are two bridleways traversing parts of Burrington Ham. There are certain stretches of bridleway on Black Down that do not follow the definitive line, or do not exist on the ground.

Public Footpaths: A public footpath crosses Burrington Ham from the upper car park at Ellick House to the the B3134 just to the south of the car park / toilet area. On the definitive map the line of this footpath is shown as descending the steep side of the Combe, however it does not exist on the ground.

Informal / Desire Line Paths: An extensive network of informal or desire line paths exist on both Black Down and Burrington Ham. These include the one kilometer long path from Beacon Batch to the Tumuli and the paths alongside West and East Twin Brooks. Although these paths are legally only accessible to walkers they are widely accessed by off-road cyclists and horseriders.

The B3134: This is a busy road that runs through Burrington Combe and provides access to the area. There are cattle grids at the lower and upper ends of the Combe and recently an illuminated sign has been installed at a bend near the top of the Combe. This sign illuminates if drivers approach above the speed limit warning them to slow down. There have been a number of serious traffic accidents in the Combe and there are widespread concerns about traffic safety.

The road crossing at Ellick House is a particular concern where walkers, cyclists and horseriders are forced to brave the traffic in order to cross between Black Down and Burrington Ham. The crossing becomes more dangerous at peak times when vehicles are parked on the roadside by Ellick House.

2.8 Local Facilities

Car Parks: Within Burrington Combe there are small informal car parks situated in the quarry next to the public toilets and at the top of the Combe near Ellick House. These can only accommodate limited numbers of cars and the surfaces of the car parks are rough and unkempt to avoid promoting greater use. At peak periods these car parks quickly overflow and cars park along the Combe, often in precarious positions both on the road and upon the roadside verges.

Toilet Facilities: A small toilet block is located in the car park close to the Burrington Inn, this is in poor condition and does not include provision for people with disabilities. The toilets are owned and maintained by North Somerset Council. The Mendip Hills AONB has drawn up plans to replace the facilities however has been unsuccessful in attracting funding and there are longer term uncertainties over local authority maintenance budgets.

The Burrington Inn: The Burrington Inn is a popular café/pub and a destination in its own right for many visitors.

Retail Area: Immediately to the north of the Burrington Inn there is a retail area, formerly operating as a garden centre. A new bike shop has opened (Bad Ass Bikes) and this services the needs of the many cyclists that visit the area. The remainder of the retail area is likely to re-open as a garden centre and there are plans for new buildings and toilet facilities.

2.9 Signage and Waymarking

Public rights of way and bridlepaths are signed by a variety of posts and waymarkers; however some routes are not signed at all. A confusion of different styles has developed over many years, including many varieties of standard county waymarking disc, promoted route waymarkers (eg. Limestone Link), stand alone project waymarkers (Mendip Pub Trail), and no coherent system of signing to clearly show the status of the different routes.

2.10 Interpretation and Promotion

2.10.1 Interpretation Panels

There is an interpretation panel on the wall of the Burrington Inn describing the geological development of the area and this is in relatively good condition. This was designed and installed by English Nature (now Natural England).

There is a plinth for an interpretation panel in the upper car park, however the panel is missing.

No other panels are located within the project area.

2.10.2 Walking Books / Guides

A wide variety of walks books and guides suggest routes in the area, these often link to surrounding areas such as Dolebury Warren and Charterhouse.

2.10.3 Long-Distance Promoted Routes

The Limestone Link is a 36-mile (58 km) long-distance footpath from the Mendips to the Cotswolds. The Mendip Hills section of the Limestone Link is promoted via a leaflet produced by the Mendip Hills AONB Unit and it is available as a download on their website.

The West Mendip Way runs close to the south of Black Down and through Rowberrow Warren and on to Cheddar Gorge.

2.10.4 Cycling Information and Guides

The Mendip Hills AONB Unit produced two leaflets that promoted cycling in the area, these were: -

- The Fat Tyre Trail
- Black Down & Rowberrow Warren – Mountain Bike Trail Guide

These publications have now been withdrawn by the Mendip Hills AONB Unit having identified errors i.e promotion of informal / desire line paths where there are no legal access rights for cyclists and because of concerns that they

have led to over-promotion of the area to off-road cyclists leading to increased erosion of paths.

Although both publications have been withdrawn they are still widely available on web sites, the PDF having been circulated by cyclists..

There are a number of websites that promote cycling in the wider area, including Black Down.

2.10.5 Active Mendip

Active Mendip is an organisation that supports a range of outdoor activities in the Mendips and is formed from a group of individuals, businesses and organisations. It states that its common theme is direct involvement or support of outdoor pursuits in the Mendips and that they are committed to utilising the Mendip Hills in a sustainable way. The organisation is a registered Community Interest Company (No. 6370791), and its stated aims are to trade and raise funds from grants and put something back into the Mendip Hills.

Their website lists businesses, organisations and other resources for people wishing to undertake outdoor activities in the Mendip Hills.

2.10.6 Large Scale Events

A number of organised events utilise the Black Down Area including: -

CLIC24: This is an annual charity endurance ride over 24 hours around a 10 mile loop that raises significant funds for children with cancer and leukaemia. The event takes place in May. The route is along a mixture of open moorland bridleways on Black Down and woodland tracks in Rowberrow Warren. Around 500 riders take part in the event

The Cheddar Challenge: The Cheddar Challenge is an 80km route that in the past has gone across Black Down. This year's event is planned for 16th May (the weekend following the CLIC24 event), however at time of writing the route has not been published and the Mendip Hills AONB Unit has asked the organisers to ensure that only bridleways are used for the event.

Other organised events take place on Black Down and Burrington Ham, including events related to horseriding, walking and running. Many of these are fundraising events and in addition scout groups and other groups supporting young people use the area for Duke of Edinburgh activities.

2.11 Background Reports

2.11.1 Burrington Ham and Black Down Landscape Survey and Restoration Plan. Nicholas Pearson Associates 1995.

This report was commissioned by the Wills Family Estate with the support of the Countryside Commission as part of a Countryside Stewardship scheme to conserve and enhance the landscape of the area, along with its wildlife and archaeological interest. Countryside Stewardship has now been superseded by a Higher Level Stewardship agreement between the landowner and Natural England.

The Nicholas Pearson report included a comprehensive assessment of the ecology, cultural heritage, archaeology, and geomorphology and included management objectives and proposals to restore a landscape that had suffered from scrub encroachment due to the cessation of grazing on Black Down and Burrington Ham. As a result of the report and support through Countryside Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship the commons have now been fenced and grazing reintroduced using Exmoor ponies, Devon red cattle and goats. There has also been a planned programme of scrub control and bracken cutting over recent years and this has restored the more traditional open character of the landscape, Particularly on Burrington Ham and within the Combe. This programme is on-going.

The report also considered issues relating to public access, including the busy B3134, car parking, public conveniences, the management of cave entrances and pressures on the land relating to 'mixed traffic' on the public bridleways and its impact on erosion and flora and fauna. The report recognised the need to improve bridleways to make them more able to withstand the increased levels of 'traffic' and suggested some options for improvement. The report recommended that increased levels of public access should not be encouraged and to focus on the improved presentation and quality of the site for public visitors seeking quiet informal recreation. The report also recommended minor improvements to parking areas, and improvements to access points and interpretation consistent with the character of the common as one of the last 'wilderness' areas in the Mendip Hills. Countryside Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship have not put any resources into improving access and interpretation; this work is being taken forward by the recommendations of this report.

2.11.2 Black Down, Mendip Hills AONB Baseline Footpath Erosion Study and Monitoring Methodology. SLR March 2009

This report was prepared by SLR Consulting Ltd for the Mendip Hills AONB Unit in response to the serious footpath erosion and path widening that has taken place on Black Down, with its consequent damage to archaeological and ecological features. The report adapted techniques from Repairing Upland Path Erosion, A Best Practice Guide (1996) to conduct a baseline survey of eight pre-selected areas on sections on two bridleways (AX10/59 and AX10/60) and on two informal paths (wireless station entrance to Beacon Batch and the path from Beacon Batch along the line of the WWII decoy tumps). The report graded paths according to erosion severity and awarded total erosion damage assessment scores to identify sections of path into low,

medium and high priority to identify where preventative and proactive work was required to prevent and repair erosion.

The report also suggested a methodology for a footpath erosion monitoring scheme. This will be implemented once measures have been taken to tackle the erosion problem.

The report was limited in scope in that it only assessed a small number of paths on Black Down and it was not within its remit to set out recommendations for the maintenance and repair of the footpaths concerned. However, its purpose was also to establish an erosion monitoring system and a training scheme for volunteers.

The report recommended further essential work to be carried out in relation to footpath erosion. These were: --

- Instruct a detailed assessment of the hydrological aspects of the area in relation to footpath erosion, in order to fully understand the footpath erosion process on Black Down and to adequately inform future recommendations for footpath repair and maintenance.
- Instruct an up-to-date and detailed assessment of the archaeological aspects of the area. This would include highlighting any incipient erosion to monuments, in order to adequately assess and protect their physical condition and to fully inform future recommendations for footpath repair and maintenance, as well as vegetation and livestock management. It is important to involve English Heritage in any discussions concerning future footpath works and management strategies on routes passing on or close to Scheduled Monuments on Black Down.
- Commence as soon as possible the monitoring of footpath erosion by well-trained volunteers, according to the methodology of choice.
- Conduct an historic assessment of footpath erosion, to include the analysis of historic aerial photographs (available at Somerset HER), in order to provide evidence prior to the collection of volunteer survey data of exponentially increasing erosion on Black Down over time.

There has been progress in implementing these recommendations. English Heritage has produced a brief to produce an archaeological management plan for Black Down and consultants will be appointed to undertake the work. The Black Down Advisory Group has been set up to take the work forward and REP has been appointed to develop the recommendations in this report and secure funding.

2.12 Visitor Numbers Data

In January 2006, the Mendip Hills AONB Unit installed counters at two locations on Black Down to provide data on how many walkers, cyclists and

horseriders are using the area. The counters are installed at the Ellick House and Forest Gate entrances.

Unfortunately the data recorded by the counters has proved unreliable. Between 2006 and 2008 there were periods when counters did not function, whilst data collected between 2008 and July 2009 is unreliable as the database was corrupted. It is therefore difficult to draw meaningful conclusion from the data and compare trends between the three user categories.

2.13 Vehicle Barriers and Path Watch Scheme

The Mendip Hills AONB Unit has recently taken a number of measures to prevent illegal off-road vehicles from accessing Black Down and Burrington Ham. This includes the installation of metal access barriers and stone boulders at key points. Hopefully this will have helped to address the problem; access by illegal vehicles will be monitored and further actions taken as necessary. The Mendip Hills AONB will also continue to liaise with the Police through the Path Watch scheme.

3. CONSULTATION – IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES AND PROJECT NEEDS

3.1 Project Consultation

A consultation exercise was undertaken in February and March 2010 to clearly identify the issues affecting the area, consider potential solutions and establish the need and scope for a sustainable access project. The consultation considered the following: -

- What are the main issues currently affecting the area in respect of access and interpretation?
- Is there support for measures to address erosion, even if this resulted in temporary closure of paths?
- What do people think about current signing and interpretation provision, and how this can be improved? How can we provide better information about the history and natural importance of the site?
- How can we provide sustainable access to the area for walkers, off-road cyclists and horseriders in ways that do not damage its wildlife and archaeological interest?
- How can we involve the local community and user groups in decisions about the area?
- What is the role and involvement of key partners, and possible working arrangements?

The aims, method, contacts, feedback and results of the consultation are fully described in a separate report entitled *'Black Down and Burrington Ham Project Consultation: Establishing the Need & Project Development'* (March 2010).

3.2 Issues and Project Needs

People and organisations who took part in the consultation exercise recognised the growing pressures on Black Down and Burrington Ham as a result of increased visitor numbers. There was a high degree of support for projects that will repair and reduce erosion, promote sustainable access, improve public knowledge and understanding and involve user groups in the care and sympathetic management of the area. Analysis of the feedback from the meetings with key contacts and questionnaires revealed a number of overarching concerns, issues and project needs that should be built into a future project for the area. These are summarised below under the headings of 'heritage conservation', 'access and management', 'information and understanding', 'safe and accessible' and 'sustainable and inclusive'.

3.2.1 Heritage Conservation

Black Down and Burrington Ham is relic of a landscape that used to cover wider areas of the Mendip Hills. It is a heritage landscape of considerable geological, archaeological, ecological, aesthetic and cultural importance and it is suffering from the demands placed on it by the growing number of recreational users.

Project Needs: -

- There is an urgent need to protect archaeological features, biodiversity and landscape from the impact of visitor numbers (*a brief for an archaeological management plan has already been prepared by English Heritage*)

3.2.2 Access and Management

There is overwhelming concern for the impact that recreational users are having on this sensitive landscape. The combined increase in mountain bike use, walkers and horseriders, and illegal 4x4 vehicles has resulted in erosion scars, deteriorating bridleways and paths, damage to archaeology, and conflicts between different users. There is a need for a clear solution to access and management issues affecting the area.

Project Needs: -

- It should be recognised in planning and mitigation works that Beacon Batch (highest point) will always be a focal point for visitors
- There is a need for active involvement amongst different user groups in the long term care and management of the heritage
- An urgent need exists to repair and restore badly eroded paths that have become scars on the landscape, damaging heritage and biodiversity values
- Drainage needs to be improved in some areas to manage the impacts of water erosion
- Illegal access by off-road vehicles must be prevented (*this is currently being addressed by the Mendip Hills AONB Unit through the installation of vehicle barriers, stone boulders and liaison with Path Watch*)
- There is a need to carefully control or prevent large-scale events which are not compatible with the sustainable use of the area
- There is a need to provide appropriate signing and information that clearly set out people's access rights and their responsibilities
- Temporary closures of paths are required to allow for repair and restoration works, provided there are suitable alternative routes
- There is a need for wider access to Rowberrow Warren and other routes for off-road cyclists and horseriders, to relieve pressure on Black Down

- Police need to be a key partner in helping address illegal use by 4x4 vehicles, and 4x4 vehicles and motorbikes should be excluded from the site

3.2.3 Information and Understanding

There is currently little provision of interpretation and information. Waymarking is poor and confusing in places. The lack of proper information for visitors has amplified instances of inappropriate site use and contributed to subsequent path erosion. There is a need for a coherent vision for the area, with clear information on how different users can access the area and their respective responsibilities. The need for engaging users, together with opportunities for learning and participation should be a particular requirement.

Project Needs: -

- There is a need for coherent signing and waymarking to make people aware of where they are entitled to go and their responsibilities. This needs to be firm and friendly with clear instructions on what users can and cannot do
- There is a need for signing to include a map of the area showing bridleways and footpaths, located at the main access points
- There is a need to engage site users in a range of learning, interpretation and participation projects

3.2.4 Safe and Accessible

The increasing number of visitors and users of the area, together with increasing vehicle numbers and speeds has amplified concerns regarding safe access. Growing demand for parking has become problematic at busy times with associated safety concerns for walkers/riders crossing the road. There is no controlled crossing point over the B3134. Potential conflict between users (cyclists/horseriders/walkers) is a growing concern expressed by many.

Project Needs: -

- There is a need for safe access from car parks to Black Down and Burrington Ham and a need for a safe crossing of the B3134 near Ellick House
- There is a need for a code of conduct for recreational users with everyone aware of their respective rights and responsibilities
- There is a need for the area to be accessible for emergency vehicles at all times

3.2.5 Sustainable and Inclusive

Any vision must address the long term sustainable management of the area, and be inclusive of local communities, user groups and wider visitors to the area.

Project Needs: -

- There is a need for a clear vision for the sustainable use and management of the area
- There is a need to engage all user groups (walkers, cyclists and horseriders) in initiatives to achieve sustainable access, and to 'put something back'
- There is a need for improved toilet facilities with disabled facilities

4. ASSESSMENT OF BEST PRACTICE: UPLAND PATH AND LANDSCAPE EROSION PROJECTS

A number of high profile projects have been successfully delivered nationally over recent years that address similar issues to those faced at Black Down and Burrington Ham. As part of the scoping work to develop this report research has been undertaken to tap into their experience and examine good practice and techniques for erosion repair and restoration. We have also looked at how the initiatives have developed volunteering and training opportunities and audience participation and learning related projects. Two examples of good practice are set out below: -

4.1 Fix the Fells – Lake District National Park Authority

Fix the Fells is a £2.9m partnership project led by the Lake District National Park Authority with the National Trust and Natural England, running from 2007 until 2011. The project uses skilled footpath repair teams and volunteers, using both traditional and cutting edge techniques, to maintain and repair the Lake District's upland footpaths.

The project aims are:-

- To undertake audience development designed to encourage greater understanding of and support for access to the fells by both existing users and identified target audiences
- Provide training and development for all staff, volunteers and contractors involved in the project
- Continue repairing seriously eroded landscapes and associated paths resulting from access coupled with the effects of the Lake District Climate
- Increasingly concentrate on transferring the practical work away from the larger projects, towards smaller, pre-emptive type works

The Fix the Fells project follows on from an initial project entitled the Lake District Upland Landscape Restoration Project 2001-2006. This involved the same partners as Fix the Fells, and secured £1.4m Heritage Lottery Funding as part of the initial £2.6m project. Although AONB's do not have access to the same levels of match funding as National Parks, the success of the scheme does demonstrate that a scaled down model could be appropriate for Black Down and Burrington Ham.

The Fix the Fells project is currently developing a further application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to continue their work. Further details can be found on their website <http://www.fixthefells.co.uk>

4.2 Moors for the Future Partnership - Peak District National Park Authority

Moors for the Future is a partnership project to restore large parts of the internationally important Peak District moors, led by the Peak District National Park Authority. The Peak District moors are internationally important for heather, blanket bog and rush pasture, and are especially vulnerable to the smallest changes in pollution, use and damage. They are the most visited moorlands in the world.

In 2002 the project received £3.136m funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the aims of the programme has been to: -

- Raise awareness of why the moors are special and encourage responsible use and care of the landscape
- Restore and conserve important recreational and natural moorland resources
- Develop expertise on how to protect and manage the moors sustainably
- Restore 3.5 square kilometres of the worst fire damaged areas. Due to the remoteness of the area much of this work is carried out with the use of helicopters
- Restore 19km of badly eroded moorland paths
- Agree a new moorland code of conduct. / Implement new education programmes

The project includes a range of learning, discovery and interpretation elements. Further details can be found on their website at <http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/mftf/main/Home.htm>

Both of the above projects have addressed similar problems to those faced at Black Down and Burrington Ham, and there are other examples around the country. It will be important to learn from and include best practice from these projects at Black Down and Burrington Ham and it is encouraging that the Heritage Lottery Fund has supported projects of this type.

5. A VISITOR PAYBACK SCHEME FOR THE MENDIP HILLS AONB

An option to help secure external funding for the sustainable management of Black Down and Burrington Ham is to ask recreational users to 'put something back' through a visitor payback scheme. It is unlikely that such a scheme could be solely focussed on Black Down and Burrington Ham and that it would have to operate throughout the Mendip Hills. Visitor Payback is the process of asking visitors to a destination or attraction to voluntarily support conservation projects by donating a very small amount via their bill or fees.

A report on the value of Tourism to the Mendip Hills AONB (South West Tourism Research Dept. Nov 2005) estimated the following figures: -

- 89,350 trips by staying visitors
- 342,000 staying visitor nights
- £15,901,000 spend by staying visitors
- 3,279,900 day visits
- £29,599,200 spend by day visitors
- £713,000 other tourism related spend
- 781 jobs related to tourism spending
- £177.96 average spend per staying trip
- £46.49 average spend per night
- £9.02 average spend per day visit

If every staying visitor donated £1.00 per trip and day visitors contributed 1% of the value of their spend then potentially £385,342 could be raised annually for conservation projects in the Mendip Hills AONB. It would however, be difficult to achieve this and there are many factors to consider when assessing the viability of a visitor payback scheme for the Mendip Hills AONB. Visitor payback schemes have been operating in other parts of the UK for some time and two case studies are presented below: -

5.1 Case Study 1: The Tourism and Conservation Partnership

The Tourism and Conservation (T&C) Partnership was set up in 1993 in the Lake District to link businesses with conservation projects. It now operates Cumbria wide. It aims to create a sustainable Cumbria through 'visitor payback' and the encouragement of sustainable environmental practices within the tourism sector. It operates as a partnership between the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust, the Cumbria Tourist Board and the local development agency.

To date the T&C Partnership has raised over £1.5m for conservation through its Visitor Payback and currently raises around £200,000 per annum for conservation. It works by recruiting tourism related businesses to become members of the Partnership and the businesses become the mechanism for gaining funds via visitor payback.

The T & C Partnership operates several levels of membership from associate to corporate and membership costs from £50 right up to £10,000 per annum dependant on size of business and number of visitors/customers. There are currently 250 business members consisting of hotels, guest houses, caravan parks, holiday cottage companies, design companies, transport companies and retailers. Partnership membership includes businesses at the heart of the tourist industry and the outdoor and adventure sector.

Membership fees of around £100,000 per annum fund the core running costs of the Partnership which employs five staff. The members of the partnership use a variety of visitor payback mechanisms; these include: -

- **Opt Out:** This is the most successful mechanism - businesses, typically hotels, add a small amount (usually £1) to the customer's bill, and the customer then has the option to 'opt out' of this payment, by crossing it off or un-ticking the box.
- **Opt In:** This is a less successful mechanism as customers have to spend time thinking about whether to voluntarily make a donation when they are paying their bill.
- **Match Funding:** Some member businesses 'match fund' the monies raised by opt out.
- **Donations:** Money is raised through collection boxes although these do not bring in large amounts. More recently the Partnership has started giving hotels donation envelopes which they put in guests rooms with their welcome pack. This initiative is thought to be working well.
- **Sponsored products :** Some organisations have identified a product they can sell where either all or part of the revenue is passed on to the Partnership. For example a distributor of fairtrade tea and coffee, market red squirrel coffee, and 50% of the profits from the sales are given to the Partnership.

5.2 Case Study 2: Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Connect Scheme

Connect is the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB visitor payback scheme and currently it has 57 members. Connect businesses collect donations from their customers which are used to fund conservation projects within the AONB area. The Connect scheme was launched in 2001 and over £40,000 has been raised which has funded more than 50 conservation, access and awareness projects in the AONB. The Connect funding is currently being used to provide £500 grants to parishes, schools and communities within the AONB.

The scheme operates by collecting donations and by members adding a small, optional surcharge to customers bills. The AONB has used SDF to administer the scheme employing a consultant to work 3 days per week. This has cost around £15,000 p.a and the AONB is now developing a full-time fund raiser post who will take this work on. The Connect scheme is raising around

£10,000 per annum, so it is currently costing more to administer than it is generating.

5.3 The Viability of a Visitor Payback Scheme for the Mendip Hills AONB

The two case studies present examples of visitor payback schemes at different ends of a spectrum. The Lake District's Tourism and Conservation Partnership is operating in a National Park that has a strong identity at a national and international level; it has a staff of 5 people and generates £200,000 p.a. for conservation projects. This is a substantial sum, but a relatively small amount if one considers that 15 million people visit the area annually. The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB has a much weaker sense of identity and its Connect Scheme raises £10,000 p.a., which is less than its administration costs.

Both schemes, however, produce a range of 'intangible benefits' in addition to the purely monetary. Foremost amongst these are that they promote sustainable tourism and the idea that the landscape is not for free. They spread the message that tourism can have a detrimental impact on the environment and that visitors should put something back.

It is certainly worth investigating whether a visitor payback scheme is a viable option for the Mendip Hills AONB. Work should be undertaken with the business and tourism sectors in the area to develop a business case for a visitor payback scheme, including (if it is viable) what form and structure it should take.

6. PROJECT FUNDING

6.1 Review of Options for Project Funding

There is a wide range of funding bodies and organisations that would potentially support capital and revenue costs for projects at Black Down and Burrington Ham. The table in Appendix 3 provides a summary of current funding opportunities including funding criteria and an indication of potential grant value. It should be noted that the grants offered by these funding bodies change frequently and it will be necessary to regularly monitor the changing grants environment and keep an eye out for new grants and funding sources.

This review of options for project funding was undertaken between January and March 2010.

It is recommended that funding applications to the following organisations should be considered.

6.2 Heritage Lottery Fund - Heritage Grants (£50,000 and over)

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 'Heritage Grant' funding stream offers the greatest potential for supporting an access and interpretation project at Black Down and Burrington Ham.

A Heritage Grant application has the potential to provide a significant source of funding for a project, with help for capital costs, support for associated heritage and community projects, and the employment of a project officer to deliver project outputs over a 3 – 5 year period.

A Heritage Grant application must fulfil all key HLF criteria and corporate policy aims. To meet with HLF criteria, the application will need to make robust links to the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area. The project will need to ensure that everyone can learn about, have access to and enjoy the heritage of Black Down and Burrington Ham.

Informal discussions were held with HLF in March 2010 to discuss funding opportunities. The following advice was provided:-

- HLF would be highly unlikely to support a project with a contribution above £500,000 unless it will was an exceptionally high quality application. A project value of £200,000 - £300,000 would have more chance of success
- A Phase 1 application will need to have broad costs in place, including an estimate of capital costs for footpath restoration works
- Following a Phase 1 application there is the opportunity for Development Grant funding to support officer / consultant costs to develop the Phase 2 stage. Applicants will need to make the case and clearly identify what needs to be done and the costs

- HLF will support an element of funding for capital works, but will want to see people centred elements taking centre stage. There is a need to balance capital elements and revenue elements in a way that will gain their support
- HLF will require a management and maintenance plan for any proposed capital works
- The application will need to demonstrate what is distinctive about the heritage of the area, and how it meets the wider aims and objectives of the HLF in respect of people, places, landscape, habitat and species etc
- Private ownership – HLF can now be more flexible about what can be accepted, and have produced a new Biodiversity Guidance advice note to advise applicants. HLF need to be sure that there is no financial gain for the landowner and that the gain is for the public, biodiversity and heritage
- HLF has not funded many biodiversity projects recently, so it would be a good idea to emphasise this angle in any application. Include species & habitats in relevant Biodiversity Action Plans
- Partnership funding will need to be identified, including contributions towards capital elements
- HLF tend to get fewer applications in the first quarter of the year – more come in towards the end of the financial year

A review of HLF projects reveals that a number of high profile Heritage Grant applications have secured funding for the restoration of eroded heritage landscapes in association with participatory, learning and sustainable access projects.

6.3 The Heritage Lottery Fund: Your Heritage Grants (£5000 - £50,000)

The 'Your Heritage' programme offers grants between £3000 and £50,000 for projects that relate to the local, regional or national heritage of the UK. Applications are particularly welcome that help people to learn about, look after and celebrate heritage in a fun and enjoyable way.

'Your Heritage' project applications need to focus on learning, conservation and participation, and must help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage. Projects should also achieve on one of the following:

- conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy
- help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage

The 'Your Heritage' grant is a rolling programme with no deadlines for applications. HLF indicate a 10 week turn around for applicants.

At the informal meeting with the HLF in March the option of applying for a 'Your Heritage' grant was considered. This would involve applying training volunteers to survey paths and assess erosion damage using the techniques

developed in the Lake District. Learning and participatory projects would also be included and it might involve trial footpath repair techniques as well as engagement of local communities and recreational user groups. With a potential project value of £25,000 the outputs of such a project would then be developed into a larger Heritage Grant application.

After consideration of this option it was felt that it would be better to go for a larger project from the outset and deal with path restoration works as part of a Development Grant phase of a Heritage Grant application. Applying for a 'Your Heritage' grant would almost certainly delay any perceived progress on the ground.

6.4 Somerset Local Action for Rural Communities Scheme: Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action Group

Local Action for Rural Communities is part of the Rural Development Programme for England, a European funded programme running from 2009 to 2013. This European investment is about improving the quality of life in rural areas and promoting diversification of the rural economy.

In Somerset there are three Local Action Schemes. The Levels & Moors Local Action Group area includes the parish of Cheddar and comes up to the boundary with Black Down. The Levels & Moors Local Action Group has been successful in securing £1.8m of funding through to 2013. The programme is being delivered through a Local Action Group (LAG) made up of individuals from the community, public and private sectors, working with a wide range of community partners. Six key themes have been identified as the priorities for the Levels and Moors area within the Local Action Programme. These are:

- Local Governance - making sure that what happens in the Levels & Moors is what communities and residents want
- Environment - ensuring that all projects have environmental protection and conservation at heart & supporting environmental projects
- Small Business and Social Enterprise Development and Support - To make the best of and support businesses for the future
- Local Produce Sectors - recognising and boosting local food, drink, crafts and arts
- Sustainable Tourism - to develop projects that encourage tourism to positively benefit the area and respecting the environment and character of the Levels & Moors
- Minimising Impact - making the best of the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' principles and also to reduce car journeys and reliance

Whilst initial consultation shows that the Black Down / Burrington Ham project area is just outside the Levels & Moors Local Action Group area, some project elements may attract Levels and Moors funding. For example proposals for a Visitor Payback Scheme that covers the wider Mendip Hills area would include part of the Levels and Moors project area, and would very much meet project criteria for sustainable tourism.

It is recommended that further consultation with Levels & Moors Local Action Group be undertaken in respect of potential funding for a Visitor Payback Scheme.

6.5 BIG Lottery Fund - Reaching Communities: England

The Reaching Communities: England grant is open to registered charities, voluntary or community groups, statutory body, (including schools), charitable or not-for-profit companies. The aim of the programme is to fund projects which help meet the Big Lottery Fund's (BLF) mission 'to bring real improvements to communities, and to lives of people most in need'. Projects are assessed against the BLF's strategic themes and outcomes with the emphasis on communities developing projects that respond to their needs and issues. Projects can meet any of the following four outcomes:

- People having better chances in life, including being able to get better access to training and development to improve their life skills
- Strong communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems
- Improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy
- Healthier and more active people and communities

Projects can be funded for up to five years. No additional source of cash income is required however applicants should demonstrate evidence of commitment to projects and sustainability. In recent years the Reaching Communities source of funding has generally been heavily over subscribed and is very competitive; however in response to the recent economic downturn application eligibility has been widened. Grants of more than £10,000 and up to £500,000 are available, including a maximum of £200,000 for capital grants within the Parks funding stream.

If approaches to other National Lottery grant providers (eg. HLF) prove unsuccessful, it is recommended a pre- application enquiry is submitted to the Big Lottery Big Advice line using the contact details: E-mail: enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk or tel 0845 4 10 20 30.

6.6 The BIG Lottery Fund: People's Millions

The People's Millions is a £15 million partnership programme between the Big Lottery Fund and ITV and was launched in June 2005. Grants of up to £50,000 are made to projects throughout the UK which benefit local environments. Projects must help transform the local environment and make communities a better place to live. People's Millions is open to voluntary or community groups, local authorities, schools, health bodies and social enterprises. It will fund projects that improve communities by improving its environment, including buildings, amenities, public and green spaces and the

natural environment. Priority is given to local environment projects that get more people involved in their local community, and help people in the community who are most in need.

The grant application window re-opened on 10th March 2010, with the deadline for applications being 14th May 2010. Selection will take place by series of TV votes towards the end of November 2010. The application process (TV exposure) is a good way of raising the profile of the project however it is competitive and no guarantee of making it through to secure final funding. Peoples Millions is a potential source of funding for smaller stand alone project element that could be delivered by a local parish council or voluntary group as part of wider overall proposals for Black Down and Burrington Ham.

6.7 Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)

ALSF aims to reduce the environmental impacts of the extraction of aggregates and to deliver benefits to areas subject to these impacts. The objectives of the Fund support the delivery of DEFRA's goals of tackling the causes and consequences of climate change and securing a healthy natural environment. DEFRA is responsible for programme management of the ALSF in England. Funding is allocated to projects which meet ALSF objectives through nine national delivery partners and eighteen local authorities (including North Somerset Council and Somerset County Council), and targets the following key objectives:

Objective 1: Quarries - To reduce the environmental footprint of quarries and to take advantage of the opportunities they offer.

Objective 2: Marine - To reduce the environmental footprint of marine extraction.

Objective 3: Resource Use - To deliver more sustainable use of aggregates.

Objective 4: Transport - To reduce the environmental footprint of the transport of aggregates.

Objective 5: Communities - To deliver benefits to communities affected by extraction.

Objective 1: Quarries (National) – Natural England

Natural England's ALSF grant scheme aims to support projects that reduce the effects of aggregate extraction on local communities and the natural environment. Natural England support projects which target the reduction of the impact of extracting aggregates by:

- improving access to land from which aggregates have been extracted;
- improving such sites and the surrounding areas;
- addressing the effects of extraction on biodiversity and geo conservation.

Projects should involve and deliver benefits for one or more of the following themes:

- Landscape and Nature Conservation
- Access and Informal Recreation
- Health and Well-being
- Education and Understanding
- Evidence Gathering

ALSF application criteria has evolved over recent years and now includes historic 'legacy' extraction sites.

Natural England's ALSF (2009-2011) grant scheme is currently closed. There may be further opportunities to apply for limited funding in 2010/11; details will be published on the Natural England website when available. Although the future of ALSF is uncertain beyond 2010/11, opportunities to apply for funding through Natural England should be monitored closely. Evidence of historic extraction in the Burrington area, combined with current extraction within close proximity, and the movement of aggregates lorries make the area a strong contender for ALSF funding.

Objective 1: Quarries (National) – English Heritage

English Heritage's ALSF grant scheme aims to support projects that reduce the effects of aggregate extraction based on the following four areas:

- Identification and characterisation of the historic environment in areas of extraction.
- Research and development of new techniques to locate hidden historic environment assets in aggregates landscapes.
- Conservation and repair of vulnerable historic assets directly impacted by existing / historic aggregates extraction.
- Recording, analysis and publication of nationally significant archaeological remains discovered during aggregates extraction.

English Heritage's ALSF grant scheme runs up to the end of 2010/11, with funding beyond 2010/11 uncertain. Evidence of historic extraction in the Burrington area, combined with current extraction within close proximity, and the movement of aggregates lorries make the area a possible contender for English Heritage ALSF funding that should at least be investigated.

Objective 5: Communities (Regional) – North Somerset Council / Somerset County Council

Objective Five ALSF funding is delivered by 18 Local Authorities as identified by DEFRA, supporting projects of demonstrable public benefit in areas within the country that suffer environmental impacts of aggregates extraction. It aims to compensate local communities for the impact of past and present aggregates extraction. Those areas which have suffered the worst effects can apply for grants.

Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council are both Objective 5 delivery partners. Funding levels available vary between each authority. To qualify applicants must be able to show that extraction of aggregates subject to the tax has had an adverse impact on their area. They also need to show that their project will benefit the local community.

Somerset County Council has now confirmed that it will not be offering ALSF Community Grants for 2010/11.

North Somerset Council has indicated it would be willing to use its ALSF allocation to support a project application, up to a maximum grant of £5000. New applications are welcome from May 2010.

6.8 English Heritage: Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes

English Heritage can offer grants for the repair and conservation of some of England's most significant historic buildings, monuments and designed landscapes. Grants are primarily offered for urgent repairs or other work required within two years preventing loss or damage to important architectural, archaeological or landscape features.

To qualify for a grant projects would need to be related to:

- a building listed at grade I or II*;
- a scheduled monument;
- a designed landscape that is included in our Register of Parks and Gardens at grade I or II*.

Applications must meet EH regional priorities, financial need must be demonstrated and the proposed work need to be urgent with the need to be undertaken within two years.

Black Down is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and it is on the 'Heritage at Risk' register. Early consultation should be undertaken with English Heritage to determine the funding opportunities available.

6.9 Mendip Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

The Mendip Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) supports projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It aims to develop and test new methods of achieving a more sustainable way of life in this area of great beauty and diversity, providing grants to organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals who wish to explore and develop practical projects that enhance, conserve and develop the environment, economy and way of life.

Achieving sustainable development requires working towards four main goals at the same time:

- Social progress which meets the needs of everyone
- Effective protection of the environment
- Ensuring a diverse and prosperous rural economy
- Careful use of natural resources

Individual projects can place particular emphasis on any one of these four goals. Ideally, they should seek to make progress on all of them, but must demonstrate no negative impact on any.

The Mendip Hills AONB has indicated that an element of match funding for a potential Heritage Lottery bid is possible from its SDF, the deadlines for applications are 12th May , 7th July, 25th August and 27th October but grants are awarded on first come first served basis.

6.10 Somerset County Council / North Somerset Council

Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council are key partners in the project. With the current climate of budgetary constraints both Councils may not be in a position to make significant funding contributions to a project however opportunities remain to provide in-kind specialist officer support and guidance. This will be important to other funders (such as HLF) to demonstrate the breadth of local support for the project – See also Objective 5 ALSF contributions above.

6.11 Smaller Grants / Project Funding Contributions

There are a range of smaller grant schemes which can be used to help fund community, arts, natural environment and heritage based projects. These grants could be a valuable source of match funding for capital and community based projects and should be examined fully. Options include:

6.12 Awards For All

Awards for All England is supported by the Arts Council England, the Big Lottery Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England. It is responsible for the award of grants up to £10,000 for people to take part in art, sport, heritage and community activities, and projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community. Awards for All specifically targets not-for-profit groups, schools, local health bodies or parish and town councils.

Awards for All is a potential source of funding for smaller stand alone project elements that could be delivered by a local parish council or voluntary group as part of wider overall project proposals for Black Down and Burrington Ham.

For example, a community focused interpretation and / or learning project, or a specific community project to raise awareness of the historic / natural heritage of the area and its importance within the Mendip Hills AONB.

Awards for All cannot be used as match funding for other Lottery grants.

6.13 Wessex Water Watermark Award

This grant scheme was launched by Wessex Water in 1993 to help fund environmental projects in the Wessex Water region. It enables groups, schools, councils and other organisations to apply for financial help when carrying out projects throughout the region. Organised by the WW Conservation Foundation, grants from £100 to £1,500 are awarded quarterly.

A Watermark Gold award worth £2,500 is made to one special project which has been singled out by judges from applications made each quarter.

6.14 Parish / Town Councils

No contact has been made with local parish councils with regard to funding provision. Parish councils will not be in a position to make significant funding contributions, however small donations (i.e. £50) are sufficient to demonstrate support and are viewed favourably by funders such as HLF.

6.15 The Mendip Society

The Mendip Society (registered charity) is a group of like-minded people who come together in the interests of conserving and enhancing the Mendip Hills. The Mendip Society provides small grants to local initiatives which benefit the Mendip Hills through the Mendip Heritage Fund, with grants up to £1000 available. www.mendipsociety.org.uk

6.16 Active Mendip

Active Mendip (see section 2.10.5) raise subscriptions from individuals, businesses and organisations and may be in a position to contribute to projects that seek to conserve and secure sustainable access to the Mendip Hills.

7. PROJECT AIMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Project Aims for a Black Down and Burrington Ham Access Management and Interpretation Project

This scoping report has been developed by consulting with a wide range of people and organisations to identify issues and project needs. It has also examined similar initiatives elsewhere in the country and assessed potential funding opportunities. As a result of this work a number of project aims have been developed for a Black Down and Burrington Ham Access Management and Interpretation Project.; these are: -

- To help protect the landscape, biodiversity and archaeological features of Black Down and Burrington Ham.
- To encourage greater understanding of the heritage values and support for sustainable access to Black Down and Burrington Ham by existing recreational users, local communities and identified target audiences.
- To repair and restore heavily eroded paths and landscape scars resulting from increased numbers using the area for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- To engage all user groups (walkers, cyclists and horseriders) in initiatives to achieve sustainable and well managed access and to 'put something back'.
- To effectively communicate information on current and future management activities, including responsible use of the area by different user groups, and to involve the local community and user groups in learning and interpretation projects regarding the heritage.
- To provide training and development for volunteers and staff involved in the project.
- To ensure that the area is promoted to various groups in a responsible and sustainable way, with coherent and co-ordinated information regarding walking, off-road cycling, and horse riding through events and activities, leaflets, web information and signing.

7.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been designed to achieve the project aims set out above.

Recommendation 1: Develop a clear vision for the sustainable use and management of Black Down and Burrington Ham and engage with the local community and recreational user groups to achieve sustainable access and to 'put something back'.

Numbers of recreational users have increased over recent years and it is clear that this has had a detrimental impact on the landscape, biodiversity and archaeology. The key to achieving sustainable access in the area is to effectively engage with the local community and recreational user groups and fully include them within volunteering programmes to monitor and restore eroded paths and promote sustainable and responsible use of the area. The Mendip Hills AONB Unit should establish a Black Down and Burrington Ham User Group with representatives from the local community and walking, cycling and horse riding groups. This group should take an active part in initiatives to promote sustainable access, volunteering and learning and interpretation projects. A representative from the User Group should attend Black Down Advisory Group meetings so that the views of recreational users can be represented in management decisions.

Due to resource constraints within the AONB Unit an externally funded project officer will be required to help co-ordinate a Black Down and Burrington Ham User Group as part of a wider access management and interpretation project. The User Group should aim to be self-sustaining in the long term and able to function without project officer support once the wider project has been completed (i.e after 3-5 years).

**Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to set up user group
HLF Project Officer (when in post) to co-ordinate**

Recommendation 2: Establish the Black Down Advisory Group as the principal management mechanism for implementing an access management and interpretation project.

The Black Down Advisory group was established in 2009 and includes the landowner (Sir David Wills), Burrington Conservators, Natural England, English Heritage, AONB Unit, and local authorities. It is the ideal mechanism to steer an access management and interpretation project, however it should be expanded to include a representative from the recreational user group, once this has been established.

Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit

Recommendation 3: Assess priorities, agree appropriate techniques and develop a fully costed programme for the repair and restoration of paths on Black Down and Burrington Ham

The consultation exercise revealed an urgent need to repair and restore paths on Black Down and Burrington Ham and support for the temporary closures of paths where alternative routes are provided. A well thought out phased programme for the repair and restoration of paths is required along with full costings for inclusion in external funding bids. The following actions are required to achieve this: -

Phase 1 – Assess Priorities

- Commission an Archaeological Management Plan of the World War II bombing decoy complex, anti-aircraft obstructions and Beacon Batch Round Barrow Cemetery (see recommendation 5 below)
- A full survey to identify the extent and nature of footpath erosion is required, extending the techniques used in the SLR Footpath Erosion Study to cover all paths
- Identification and assessment of the options for repairing paths, using best practice guidance, for example refer to 'Repairing Upland Path Erosion. A Best Practice Guide' 1996

Phase 2: Agree appropriate techniques

- Agree appropriate techniques for repairing paths and improving drainage and consult with English Heritage, Natural England, Sir David Wills, Burrington Conservators and recreational user groups
- Agree a phased programme of temporary path closures to allow paths time to recover. These would be on a voluntary basis with appropriate information provided on site
- Consider a trial period for different path restoration techniques
- Consider the need for the permanent closure of desire lines and paths where recreational use is causing irreparable damage to archaeological features
- Consider / agree the need for path diversions

Phase 3: Develop fully costed programme of repair / restoration works

- Assess costs and draw up a work programme / timetable
- Apply for HLF Development Grant to fund this work as part of a Heritage Grant application (see recommendation 14 below).

**Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate
HLF Development Grant to enable delivery**

Recommendation 4: Implement an effective programme to monitor path erosion and recreational user numbers.

Accurate information on recreational user numbers and path erosion will be key to ensuring the sustainable management of Black Down and Burrington Ham. This information will be vital for monitoring whether works to repair and restore paths have been successful and to assess whether numbers of users are reducing, increasing or remaining static. This information will inform future management decisions and provide valuable evidence for funding bids.

The data collected on user numbers over recent years by automatic counters has not been reliable or robust enough to draw meaningful conclusions. In future counters need to be checked on a regular basis and batteries replaced to ensure viable data can be collected. Consideration should also be given to the provision of additional counters, for example at the Link Road entrance.

Counter data should also be supplemented by user surveys to find out more detailed information about recreational users, including their patterns of use and opinions. User surveys should be undertaken to inform planning work, develop funding bids and monitor changing patterns of use.

The SLR Footpath Erosion Study suggested a methodology for a footpath erosion monitoring scheme. Implementation of the monitoring scheme could fall within the remit of an externally funded project officer, using volunteers to undertake the monitoring work.

**Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate
HLF Project Officer (when in post) to co-ordinate**

Recommendation 5: Commission an Archaeological Management Plan of the WWII bombing decoy complex, ant-aircraft obstructions and Beacon Batch Round Barrow Cemetery.

The Scheduled Monument on Black Down is currently on the 'Heritage at Risk' register. English Heritage is commissioning an archaeological management plan to identify current management issues and suggest a prioritised program of action. The recommendations of this report should be built into the proposals for an access management and interpretation project.

Delivery: English Heritage / Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate

Recommendation 6: Prevent access to Black Down and Burrington Ham by illegal off-road vehicles.

The Mendips AONB Unit has recently installed vehicle barriers and stone boulders at key points to prevent access to illegal off road vehicles which have caused significant damage, particularly at Black Down. The success of these barriers should be monitored. The Police will continue to be a key partner in preventing illegal access by these vehicles through the Path Watch scheme and Path Watch notices in the area should be replaced on a regular basis.

Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit Project Officer

Recommendation 7: Carefully control or prevent large-scale events which are not compatible with the sustainable use of the area.

A number of large-scale organised events utilise the Black Down area including CLIC 24 and the Cheddar Challenge. There are widespread concerns that events such as these are not compatible with the sustainable management of the area. The Black Down Advisory Group should carefully assess the impact of large-scale events. As part of this process it should clarify the position for arranging / gaining permission for such events in the future, and should consider the provision for written guidance for event organisers. If events do go ahead provision should be made for financial contributions towards the conservation management of Black Down and Burrington Ham and the longer term involvement of event participants in volunteer programmes.

Delivery: Black Down Advisory Group / Mendip Hills AONB Unit

Recommendation 8: Investigate opportunities to secure sustainably managed access rights for cyclists and horseriders to the adjacent area of Rowberrow Warren and other routes leading into the area.

The growing numbers of recreational users (particularly off-road cyclists) has increased path erosion and widening on Black Down contributing to the development of landscape scars and damage to archaeological features. The adjacent area of Rowberrow Warren, with its metalled forest tracks, is more suited to accommodate off road cyclists and horseriders and greater access here could help relieve the pressure on Black Down. There may be opportunities for the Forestry Commission to re-negotiate the terms of its lease on the land and secure greater access rights for cyclists and horseriders. There may also be opportunities to secure external funding to help pay for greater access rights. The Mendip Hills AONB Unit should work closely with the Forestry Commission to negotiate greater access rights and prepare bids for external funding where required.

Investigations should also be undertaken to ascertain whether access for cyclists and horseriders can be secured along certain routes (Luvers Lane, Leaze Lane) that link into Black Down and Burrington Ham. This will allow cyclists and horseriders to move safely out of the area, and relieve pressure on the bridleway network on Black Down and Burrington Ham.

Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit Project Officer

Recommendation 9: Undertake consultations with the Highway Authority to explore how to improve safety along the B3134.

Concerns over visitor safety along the busy B3134 were a re-occurring theme in the consultation. Discussions should therefore be held with the Highway Authority to review options for improving safety, particularly at crossing points. Ideas raised during the consultation included: -

- Management and control of parking, eg. creation of bunds or use of stone boulders to control parking and verge erosion
- Improvement of the road crossing and path by Ellick House
- Management of car parks
- Role of Voluntary Rangers to help manage access

Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit Project Officer

Recommendation 10: Support North Somerset Council to investigate options for the upgrade of toilet facilities in Burrington Combe.

The existing toilet block at Burrington Combe is maintained North Somerset Council. Currently it is the only toilet facility serving the Black Down and Burrington Ham area. It is not within the remit of this scoping exercise to consider detailed options for the public toilets at Burrington Combe, however there is strong public support to upgrade these and provide disabled facilities. Plans have been drawn up by the AONB Unit for new facilities however a funding bid to Aggregates levy was unsuccessful. Options for an upgrade or replacement of the current building should continue to be investigated through dialogue with North Somerset Council.

Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit Project Officer

Recommendation 11: Develop a Signage and Interpretation Plan for Black Down and Burrington Ham.

The consultation work undertaken to develop this report revealed that existing signing and interpretation is poor and that there is a need to 'wipe the slate clean' and look at the whole area in a co-ordinated and focussed way. A comprehensive signing and interpretation plan should therefore be developed, covering Black Down, Burrington Ham and Burrington Combe. The process should involve discussions with adjacent landholders such as The National Trust, Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust to ensure a co-ordinated approach in the wider area.

The plan should provide a framework for the signage and interpretation of the area and include: -

- A co-ordinated approach to site information and interpretation
- An understanding of site users / who are the audience?
- An audit of current signing and interpretation
- Detailed consultation with the local community and recreational users through user surveys
- Identification of key themes for interpretation; for example landscape / heritage and culture / biodiversity

- A comprehensive plan for signing, including locations, type of signs and content. Consider the provision of maps at main entrances with clear information and instructions on access rights and responsible use
- Consideration of the forms of interpretation required (panels, leaflets, guided walks, web sites?). Consider provision of information prior to visit, on arrival and during visit. Consider needs of different recreational users
- Provision of notice boards to provide information on project initiatives and site conditions that can be updated as/when required
- For each element of interpretation a set of guidelines that define its purpose, location(s), appropriate level/type of information and accessibility criteria – sufficient to cost up and include in an external funding bid

It may be possible to fund the production of the Signing and Interpretation plan with a Development Grant as part of a Heritage Grant application (see recommendation 14). The costs of implementing the work would then be worked into a Phase 2 application.

It is envisaged that the recommendations of the Signing and Interpretation Plan would be implemented using external funding, co-ordinated by a dedicated project officer. The detailed interpretative media should be developed as part of wider learning and participation projects under the guidance of a project officer.

**Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate
HLF Development Grant to enable delivery**

Recommendation 12: Develop a code of conduct for users of Black Down and Burrington Ham

The consultation revealed that many visitors to the area were unaware of their access rights and responsibilities. An important element of promoting sustainable access is to develop a code of conduct. This should be clear and concise and inform all visitors of their legal entitlements and obligations. There are existing codes of conduct in other parts of the UK that can be used as a template. A code should be drafted in consultation with recreational user groups and agreed with the Black Down Advisory Group. The code should be publicised on signing and interpretative media. Development of a code of conduct could be delivered as a quick win project – see recommendation 15 below.

Delivery: Black Down Advisory Group / Mendip Hills AONB Unit

Recommendation 13: Develop a program of learning and participation projects that will engage local communities and recreational user groups in the appreciation, conservation and care of Black Down and Burrington Ham.

A program of learning and participation projects should be developed to engage local communities, schools, recreational users and other target groups in activities that raise awareness of the heritage and biodiversity values of the area and the importance of sympathetic management. Projects should address the key themes developed in the Signing and Interpretation Plan (see recommendation 11) and may include topics such as:-

- Landscape
- Archaeological features
- Cultural history / famous people
- Biodiversity and geology
- Health and wellbeing through fitness and activity

Projects should use innovative and interesting methods to engage with different groups and develop skills and understanding. A full programme of learning and participation projects will need to be developed in consultation with local communities, recreational user groups and other target beneficiaries. These projects will need to be scoped, planned and fully costed for inclusion in external funding bids. It is envisaged that the projects would be co-ordinated and implemented by a dedicated project officer.

The Heritage Lottery Fund provides guidance on how to develop an ‘Activities Plan’. This is a step by step process to develop heritage learning and participation activities and it involves looking at the current situation (organisation, audience and activities), planning how to involve people and developing an action plan.

It may be possible to fund the production of the Activities Plan with a Development Grant as part of a Heritage Grant application (see recommendation 14 below). The costs of implementing the learning and participation projects would then be worked into a Phase 2 application.

The Heritage Lottery Fund will also wish to see training and volunteering opportunities fully integrated into the Activities Plan and there may be opportunities to work with schools, agricultural colleges and higher education establishments to develop these elements.

**Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate
HLF Development Grant to enable development of
‘Activities Plan’
HLF Heritage Grant to enable project delivery**

Recommendation 14: Submit a Heritage Lottery Fund ‘Heritage’ Grant application to fund proposals for Black Down and Burrington Ham Access Management and Interpretation Project

An application for a Heritage Grant should be made to support the costs of an access management and interpretation project This grant has the potential to provide a significant source of funding for the project, with help for capital

costs, support for associated heritage, audience development and community projects, and the employment of a project officer to deliver all project outputs over a 3 – 5 year period.

A Pre-application has been submitted to HLF who have responded by stating the project would be a priority for support, subject to a number of conditions.

A Stage 1 Heritage Grant application should now be developed with the aim of applying for a Development Grant to pay for the costs of working up the Stage 2 application and to help fund the following work: -

- A study to assess priorities, agree appropriate techniques and develop a fully costed programme for the repair and restoration of paths on Black Down and Burrington Ham
- A management and Maintenance Plan for the restored paths
- A Signing and Interpretation Plan
- An Activities Plan for learning and participation projects.

The outputs from these studies and plan should then be used to develop the Stage 2 application.

It will be important to secure match funding for a Heritage Grant Application from other sources; these include: -

- Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund: Objective 1 delivery partners – Natural England and English Heritage
- English Heritage
- Somerset Local Action for Rural Communities Scheme: Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action Group
- Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund: Objective 5 delivery partners – North Somerset Council
- Mendip Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund and other small scale grants
- Natural England – Open Access Management Grant funding through Environmental Stewardship

The Mendip Hills AONB Unit should continue to monitor existing and potential funding sources, and work with local communities and groups to identify and implement smaller projects as opportunities arise. It should hold early discussions with North Somerset Council regarding the feasibility of submitting a bid for Aggregates Levy Sustainability Funding.

It is expected that new funding opportunities will come forward as the project develops, and there could be opportunities to secure smaller grant awards and deliver stand alone 'quick win' projects.

**Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate
HLF Development Grant to enable project development**

Recommendation 15: To investigate opportunities to implement ‘Quick Win’ stand alone project(s) whilst the development of the Heritage Grant application moves forward.

The preparation, submission and assessment of a Heritage Grant application will take some time. The need for local people and visitors to see momentum and action on the ground was a clear message from the consultation. The Mendips Hills AONB has already implemented a program of installing vehicle barriers to help prevent illegal off road vehicles. This action has gained local support, and reflects the need for the local community and visitors to see action on the ground. The identification and implementation of other ‘Quick Win’ projects whilst wider HLF application work is taking place should be considered. Actions could include:

- Development of an access information and events page for Black Down and Burrington Ham for the Mendip Hills AONB web site.
- Develop a code of conduct for visitors and users of Black Down and Burrington Ham.
- Monitoring of actions to address illegal 4x4 use, renewal of Path Watch notices.
- Provision of interim public rights of way signage where required.
- Clarification of paths status and definitive lines on the ground.
- Clarification of the position for arranging / gaining permission for large scale public events, including written guidance for event organisers.

Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate

Recommendation 16: Investigate the viability of setting up a Visitor Payback Scheme for the Mendip Hills AONB

The Mendip Hills AONB Unit should investigate whether a Visitor Payback Scheme is a viable option working with the business and tourism sectors in the area and develop a business case. The Lake District’s Tourism and Conservation Partnership has been established for many years and offers consultancy services at a daily rate of £500 plus expenses. A presentation and workshop led by the Lake District’s Tourism and Conservation Partnership (see section 5.3 above) would be an ideal method for gathering people from the relevant sectors and exploring the viability of this option in further detail.

The Somerset Local Action for Rural Communities Scheme is a possible source of funding to support a study of the business case for a Visitor Payback scheme, and if viable, initial set up and administration costs. Further consultation will be required with the Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action Group Project Officer to examine opportunities.

Delivery: Mendip Hills AONB Unit to co-ordinate

TASK	2010				2011				2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
Subject award of Development grant funding from HLF, prepare a Management and Maintenance Plan for restored paths.					C	C	C																	
Subject award of Development grant funding from HLF, develop a Signing and Interpretation Plan for BD&BH.					C	C	C																	
Subject award of Development grant funding from HLF, prepare an Activities Plan for learning and participation projects for BD&BH.					C	C	C																	
Mendip Hills AONB to monitor existing/potential match funding sources. Apply/secure match funding as part of HLF project development work.		A	A	A	A	A	A																	
Following completion of project development works, subject to agreement of HLF, develop Phase 2 Heritage Grant application and submit to HLF.									A															
Best estimate start date for proposed HLF BD&BH Access and Interpretation Project. Project duration of minimum 3 years (Seek 5 year maximum).													D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Recommendation 15: Investigate opportunities to implement 'Quick Win' stand alone project(s).		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A														
Recommendation 16: Investigate the viability of setting up a Visitor Payback Scheme for the Mendip Hills AONB		A	A	A																				

Who will deliver?

A - Mendip Hills AONB Unit
C - HLF Development Grant to delivery

B – Black Down Advisory Group
D – HLF Project Officer

9. SUMMARY

It is imperative that the fragile landscapes of Black Down and Burrington Ham are managed sensitively so that future generations can continue to enjoy their many qualities. To ensure this happens it is necessary to set out a clear programme for the sustainable use and management of the area and work with the landowner, conservators, local community and recreational user groups to achieve sustainable access and to 'put something back'. The recommendations set out in this report provide this framework, along with the opportunity to attract significant funding to restore eroded paths, encourage greater public understanding of the heritage, communicate information on current and future activities and provide coherent and co-ordinated information for walkers, off-road cyclists and horseriders.

The consultation work undertaken to develop this scoping report has developed and strengthened links with various organisations and access groups and revealed a tremendous enthusiasm to positively engage with an Access Management and Interpretation Project for the area. The potential for delivering projects in partnership with such organisations, communities and recreational users will greatly strengthen the chances of obtaining external funding.

The preparation, submission and assessment of external funding applications will take time. For example, it is likely to be around 18 months before a HLF project can be up and running. In the meantime the need for action to be seen on the ground by local people and visitors is important and there are opportunities to implement small scale 'quick win' projects.

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Map of Project Area

Appendix 2: Grant Funding Table

Background Documents / Reference web pages

Burrington Ham and Black Down Landscape Survey and Restoration Plan. Nicholas Pearson Associates (1995)

Black Down, Mendip Hills AONB Baseline Footpath Erosion Study and Monitoring Methodolgy. SLR March (2009)

Black Down Advisory Group: Minutes from meetings (various) to date. Supplied by Mendip Hills AONB Unit.

Somerset County Council Historic Environment Record – Somerset County Council Web pages:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/irj/public/services/directory/service?rid=/wpccontent/Sites/SCC/Web%20Pages/Services/Services/Community/Somerset%20Historic%20Environment%20Record>

Heritage Lottery Fund: Heritage Grants web pages:

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/heritagegrants.aspx>

Mendip Hills AONB Web Pages: Sustainable Development Fund:

<http://www.mendiphills.org.uk/sdf.php>

Natural England Web Pages – Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (First Objective)

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/funding/alsf.aspx>

Big Lottery Fund Web Pages: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

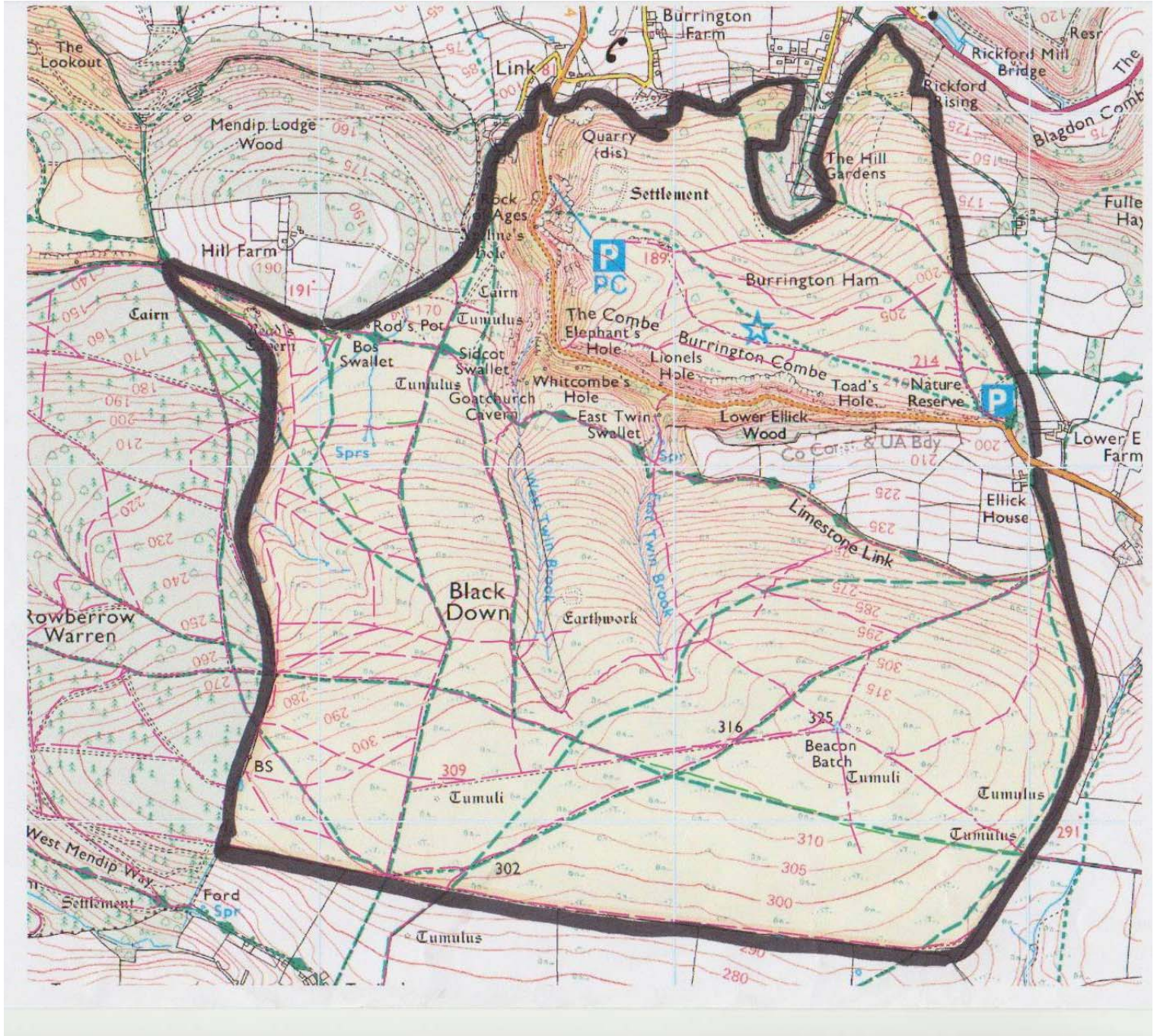
Fix the Fells Project: <http://www.fixthefells.co.uk/>

APPENDIX 1

Map of Project Area

Plan 1: Project Area : Black Down & Burrington Ham

Public Rights of Way - Green
Informal Paths - Purple



APPENDIX 3

Grant Funding Summary Table

SUMMARY OF GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BURRINGTON HAM AND BLACK DOWN PROJECT AREA - MENDIP HILLS AONB

Funding Body & Grant Name	Who Can Apply	Nature Of Projects	Award Criteria	General	Grant Value	Contact Details
<p>The National Lottery</p> <p>Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <p>Heritage Grants</p> <p>£50,000 and over</p>	<p>Open to all, however applicants must be a not-for-profit organisation.</p>	<p>Usually larger scale applications that address nature conservation, historic building restoration, museum collections, and objects or sites relating to the UK's industrial, transport or maritime history.</p> <p>Projects might include nature conservation, historic buildings, museum collections, archive collections, spoken history records, cultural traditions, and objects and sites</p>	<p>To receive a grant projects must help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage</p> <p>Project should also do either or both of the following:</p> <p>Conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;</p> <p>Help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage.</p> <p>Projects that make a significant contribution to National, Regional and Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets, and may involve some conservation and capital works on private land, may be eligible as part of a partnership application.</p>	<p>All applications go through a two stage process. The application form is a living document. Phase 2 applications are developed by updating and adding to the information provided at Phase 1.</p> <p>Development grants are available to help applicants with the cost of planning and developing their project up to a second-round application. If seeking a development grant, applicants should tell HLF about the proposal when submitting Phase 1 application.</p> <p>The deadline for sending in Phase 2 applications is two years from initial decision.</p> <p>Projects should not last more than five years.</p>	<p>£50,000 and over.</p> <p>HLF require at least 10% partnership funding for grant requests below £1 million, increasing to 25% partnership funding for grant requests above £1 million.</p> <p>Applicants will need to demonstrate a clear need, including financial need, for the development work.</p> <p>Grants of over £50,000 and under £1million determined by Country and Regional Committees who meet four times a year.</p>	<p>020 7591 6042</p> <p>Enquiries@hlf.org.uk</p> <p>www.hlf.org.uk</p> <p>7 Holbein Place, London SW1W 8NR</p> <p>Regional offices:</p> <p>Trinity Court Southernhay East Exeter EX1 1PG</p> <p>Te: 01392 223950 southwest@hlf.org.uk</p>
<p>The National Lottery</p> <p>Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <p>Your Heritage Grants</p> <p>£5000 - £50,000</p>	<p>Priority given to not-for-profit organisations (Small groups, local authorities etc).</p> <p>Must have a constitution and a bank account.</p>	<p>Funding for projects that relate to the local, regional or national heritage of the UK (except the Channel Islands and Isle of Man).</p> <p>Funding for Heritage related projects, Heritage includes many things and places that have been, and can be, passed on from one generation to another. These range from historic buildings, public parks, and community to environment and museums.</p> <p>Projects might include nature conservation, historic buildings, museum collections, archive collections, spoken history records, cultural traditions, and objects and sites.</p>	<p>To receive a grant projects must help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage</p> <p>Project should also do either or both of the following:</p> <p>conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;</p> <p>help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage.</p> <p>HLF welcome applications that help people to learn about, look after and celebrate heritage in a fun and enjoyable way.</p>	<p>Project may involve repairs to buildings or other heritage items, conservation work on land, buying heritage items, land or buildings. Projects may also actively engage people in heritage activities.</p> <p>Private owners can apply under this programme for projects which create activities for the public to learn about and take part in heritage. They cannot apply for a grant for capital or conservation work to private property.</p> <p>Primarily support three year projects, though up to five years in some circumstances.</p>	<p>£3,000 - 50,000 only.</p> <p>Maximum project value of £100,000.</p> <p>No minimum requirement, for match funding, however contribution will be required. Cash and in-kind.</p>	<p>Trinity Court Southernhay East Exeter EX1 1PG</p> <p>Tel: 01392 223950 southwest@hlf.org.uk</p>

<p>BIG Lottery Fund</p> <p>Reaching Communities: England</p> <p>£10,000 to £500,000</p>	<p>Registered charities, voluntary or community groups, statutory body, (including schools), charitable or not-for-profit companies, social enterprise – a business that is chiefly run for social objectives</p>	<p>Reaching Communities will help those most in need, especially people or groups who are hard to reach.</p> <p>Big Lottery want communities to be involved at the heart of the projects awarded funding.</p>	<p>Grant focus on: People having better chances in life, because they are able to get training and skills</p> <p>Stronger communities, with people working together to tackle their problems.</p> <p>Improved environments, which more people are able to enjoy. Healthier and more active people and communities.</p>	<p>Able to fund projects for up to five years.</p> <p>No additional source of cash income required however other contributions show evidence of commitment to projects and sustainability.</p> <p>Over subscribed application fund – very competitive!</p>	<p>Grants of more than £10,000 and up to £500,000, including a maximum of £50,000 for capital grants.</p> <p>Maximum overall project size of £750,000, and a maximum of £200,000 for the total capital element within a project.</p>	<p>opteam@biglotteryfund.org.uk</p> <p>Outline Proposal Team, Big Lottery Fund, 8th Floor, Edmund House, 12 - 22 Newhall Street, Birmingham. B3 3NL</p>
<p>BIG Lottery Fund</p> <p>People's Millions</p> <p>Up to £50,000</p>	<p>Voluntary or community groups, local authorities, schools, health bodies and social enterprises.</p>	<p>The People's Millions is a £15 million partnership programme between the Big Lottery Fund and ITV. It was launched in June 2005.</p> <p>Grants made to projects throughout the UK which will benefit local environments.</p> <p>Projects must help transform the local environment and make communities a better place to live.</p>	<p>PM will fund projects that improve communities by improving its environment, including buildings, amenities, public and green spaces and the natural environment.</p> <p>Priority to local environment projects that:</p> <p>Get more people involved in their local community, and</p> <p>Help people in the community who are most in need.</p>	<p>Grant window currently closed.</p> <p>Will re-open on 10th March 2010, organisations will be able to apply for grants of up to £50,000 for local projects across the UK that will help communities to transform, use or enjoy local environments.</p> <p>Regional selection will take place by series of TV votes will take place towards the end of the year.</p>	<p>Grants up to £50,000</p> <p>Equivalent of reality TV grant funding, raises expectations in communities.</p> <p>Good opportunity in popular area.</p>	<p>Big Lottery Fund, 8th Floor, Edmund House, 12 - 22 Newhall Street, Birmingham. B3 3NL</p> <p>www.peoplesmillions.org.uk</p>
<p>Sport England (South West)</p> <p>Innovation Fund Rural Communities Sustainable Facilities</p> <p>£10,000 - £500,000</p>	<p>Voluntary clubs and associations; National Governing Bodies of sport recognised by Sport England; Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and other public bodies; Schools, colleges and universities;</p> <p>Charitable trusts, playing field associations, youth and uniformed organisations, community and other organizations;</p> <p>Commercial organisations and professional sports clubs, but only if the project is not primarily for personal or shareholders' gain.</p>	<p>Sport England funds projects that help people get involved in sport and physical activity. This includes developing programmes and initiatives to increase levels of participation in sport and physical activity.</p> <p>Funding streams support both capital and revenue projects, including projects that are a mixture of both; however each region has their own priorities for funding which should be referred to prior to making an application.</p> <p>Need to consult with local regional contact. Some funding streams now closed.</p>	<p>Projects should address regional criteria requirements – see South West Regional Investment Strategy.</p> <p>Projects should demonstrate secured partnership funding in place when applications made.</p> <p>Applications should be supported by the County Sports Partnership. Jason Lyons is South West contact for indication of whether it is worth following this route.</p>	<p>Demand far outstrips the availability of funds and competition is fierce.</p> <p>Unlikely to be the primary or major funder of large, costly projects</p> <p>Worth exploring as potential funder, however HLF may not support match funding from another lottery source.</p>	<p>Funding includes:</p> <p>Innovation Fund Rural Communities Sustainable Facilities</p> <p>Minimum £10,000. No maximum.</p> <p>Typical grants in the region of £50,000 to £500,000</p> <p>Focus on funding revenue projects more than capital, although will fund capital</p>	<p>Sport England South West, Ashlands House, Crewkerne, Somerset. TA18 7QL</p> <p>01460 73491</p> <p>jasonlyons@sportengland.org</p> <p>01460 270410</p> <p>www.sportengland.org</p>

<p>Somerset Local Action for Rural Communities Scheme</p> <p>Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action Group</p>	<p>Designed to help rural communities, businesses and the environment. Voluntary, public and private organisations or businesses may apply for Local Action support, providing that their project fits within one or more of the six local objectives and hits one or a number of the targets set by the Levels & Moors Local Action Group.</p>	<p>Projects should be distinctive, innovative, involve wide partnership working, represent good value for money and leave a lasting positive legacy for the Somerset Levels & Moors. Projects should meet one of 6 Local Themes covered by the Levels & Moors Programme to be considered.</p> <p>Local Action grants can be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and publicity • Training and seminars • Walking, cycling and alternative transport • Labour costs and consultancy • Setting up new networks / co-ops • Feasibility studies and local research • Equipment • Small scale use of renewable technologies • Improving access to local services <p>Local Action grants Cannot be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current activities (all projects should be new) • Putting the competition 'out of business' • Meeting statutory or legislative requirements 	<p>6 key themes show the priorities for the area within the Local Action Programme. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Governance • Environment • Small Business and Social Enterprise • Development and Support • Local Produce Sectors • Sustainable Tourism • Minimising Impact 	<p>Defined project area, projects need to be within area to qualify.</p> <p>If outside the project area, applicants must prove that the communities and individuals within the Levels and Moors would be the primary beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Main project grants: Lower limit of £1,000 available, but no upper limit. Most projects will be between £1,000 and £40,000. Cash match funding required.</p> <p>Small business grants are available from £1000 to £5000, up to a maximum of 50% and a total project cost of £15,000.</p>	<p>Contact project officer: Dominie Dunbrook:</p> <p>01458 257463 DDunbrook@somerset.gov.uk</p>
<p>Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund</p> <p>Objective1 :</p> <p>Quarries - To reduce the environmental footprint of quarries and to take advantage of the opportunities they offer.</p> <p>Natural England</p>	<p>Anyone can apply but normally partnerships with lead players e.g. local authorities, AONBs, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB</p>	<p>Aim: Reduction of the impact of extracting aggregates by:</p> <p>Improving access to land from which aggregates have been extracted;</p> <p>Improving such sites and the surrounding areas;</p> <p>Addressing the effects of extraction on biodiversity and geoconservation.</p>	<p>Funds open to projects that encourage community involvement in areas that are, or have been, affected by aggregates extraction. Refer to any of partnership bodies for specific criteria.</p> <p>Has become increasingly competitive over recent years. Applicants must demonstrate how projects address the impacts of aggregates extraction.</p>	<p>The two-year ALSF pilot project is now closed to new applications.</p> <p>Natural England launch latest round of applications in March 2009. Application window now closed.</p> <p>There may be a further opportunity to apply for funding in FY10/11, details will be published by NE when available.</p>	<p>No set amount.</p> <p>Generally at least 75% funding awarded, 25% partnership required though can change on grant by grant basis.</p> <p>Aim should be to reduce 75% grant contribution if possible.</p>	<p>http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/funding/alsf.aspx</p> <p>ALSF Grants Management Team Natural England 3rd Floor Bridgewater House Whitworth Street Manchester M1 6LT</p>

		A wide range of projects are applicable that deliver such outputs as Community, recreation, habitat restoration, and species recovery (Natural England applications), and improvement of historic landscape (English Heritage applications).				Tel: 0300 0601808
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund Objective1 : Quarries - To reduce the environmental footprint of quarries and to take advantage of the opportunities they offer. English Heritage	Anyone can apply but normally partnerships / specialist bodies with specific project input.	Aims: Repairing and conserving features of demonstrated historic and archaeological importance. Conserving unexpected finds that would not otherwise be protected under the planning system. Archaeological research.	Award criteria: Identification and characterisation of the historic environment in key existing or potential areas of terrestrial extraction. Research and development of practical new techniques to locate hidden historic environment assets in aggregates landscapes Conservation and repair of vulnerable historic assets directly impacted by aggregates extraction Emergency funding for the recording, analysis and publication of nationally significant archaeological remains discovered during aggregates extraction.	The scheme will run until 15th March 2011 at which point any outstanding projects will be closed and final payments retained. Recommend speak to English Heritage ALSF officer to discuss any potential funding opportunities.	No set amount. See award criteria. Generally at least 75% funding awarded, 25% partnership required though can change on grant by grant basis.	English Heritage kath.buxton@english-heritage.org.uk 020 7973 3108
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund Objective 5: Communities - To deliver benefits to communities affected by extraction. Administered through Somerset County Council & North Somerset Council	Projects should demonstrate a link to existing/historic aggregates extraction.	Projects that remove threats caused by current extraction to monuments/sites/structures, to biodiversity, to geology and to amenity. Projects that aim to put land adversely affected by aggregates extraction into community use. Projects that reduce threats and impacts caused by aggregates extraction or transport on local highways, footpaths, general amenity and quality of life.	Generally 3 conditions must be satisfied for a project to be eligible: The community or communities where the project will take place is or has been affected by aggregates extraction or transport; The proposed project will bring benefit to the community; The project is located in Somerset / North Somerset.	Awaiting confirmation of funding award for 2010/11 from DEFRA. Potential LA savings may reduce overall sum available. Somerset County Council will not be awarding grants in 2010/11 confirmed as of 01/03/2010 Position unsure for North Somerset County as of 02/10.	No set amount. Awards ranging from £200 – £50,000 in Somerset. Awards up to £30,000 in North Somerset.	Somerset SALSF: Susan Hughes shughes@somerset.gov.uk 01823 358104 North Somerset: Gareth Withers Position: Environment Group Manager Phone:01275 888528 Email: gareth.withers@north-somerset.gov.uk

		<p>The building and maintenance of community facilities such as playgrounds, sports facilities and village halls.</p> <p>Community biodiversity projects, including management and interpretation of sites.</p> <p>Projects that promote a better understanding of quarrying in local communities.</p> <p>Proposals to mitigate the fragmentation of communities due to aggregates extraction and transport.</p>				
<p>Mendip Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</p>	<p>Public, private, voluntary sector, individuals, businesses or community groups. Individuals or businesses can only be beneficiaries where the project shows a clear benefit to the wider community.</p> <p>Applicants don't have to live / work within the AONB to apply.</p>	<p>SDF supports projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the AONB. It aims to develop and test new methods of achieving a more sustainable way of life.</p> <p>SDF provides grants to organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals who wish to explore and develop practical projects that enhance, conserve and develop the environment, economy and way of life.</p>	<p>SDF identifies four main goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social progress which meets the needs of everyone • Effective protection of the environment • Ensuring a diverse and prosperous rural economy • Careful use of natural resources <p>Individual projects can place particular emphasis on any one of these four goals.</p>	<p>SDF runs annually. Applications welcome.</p> <p>SDF will fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% to local authority and business projects • 75% for not-for-profit and voluntary sector projects • 100% in exceptional cases 	<p>Not set, but mainly smaller scale projects, with one or two single larger grant awards.</p>	<p>Mendip Hills AONB Unit Charterhouse Centre Blagdon, Bristol BS40 7XR</p> <p>01761 462338</p> <p>mendiphills@somerset.gov.uk</p>
<p>Landfill Tax Credit Scheme ENTRUST</p>	<p>A wide range of organisations.</p> <p>Eg: Biffa, Hanson, Virador etc</p>	<p>Projects that involve reclaiming land, that reduce or prevent pollution on land, that provide or maintain public amenities or parks within 10 miles of a landfill site, that restore or repair buildings for religious worship, or of architectural or historical interest within 10 miles of a landfill site.</p> <p>Will also fund the cost of administrative, financial or other similar services, supplied to enrolled environmental bodies.</p>	<p>Organisations must be registered as an 'EB' (Environmental Body).</p> <p>Must be non-profit distributing. Don't have to be a charity, but any surplus made must be used to further organisation's objects.</p> <p>Organisation must not be controlled - directly or indirectly - by a local authority or a landfill operator registered for landfill tax.</p> <p>Landfill tax credits are allocated at the discretion of the donor Landfill operator. ENTRUST does not allocate grants or have the power</p>	<p>The LTCS was designed to help mitigate the effects of landfill upon local communities. Landfill site operators can donate up to 6.5 per cent of their landfill tax liability to environmental projects in their area, in return for a 90 per cent tax credit.</p> <p>The South West of England Environment Trust (SWEET-UK) provides services to all those operating under the LTCS. MUP currently outside LTCS funding.</p>	<p>No set amount - depends on landfill operator</p> <p>E.g. Hanson - £4000 to £25,000. Biffaward has made much higher grant allocations.</p> <p>Some projects must be within 10 miles of a landfill site. Visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk and look under 'What's in Your Backyard?' which can be found in the 'Your Environment' section.</p> <p>SWEET confirmed no landfill tax currently credits available for</p>	<p>0161 972 0044</p> <p>www.ltcs.org.uk</p> <p>Entrust, Acre House, 2 Town Square, Sale, Cheshire. M33 7WZ</p>

			to compel a Landfill Operator to fund a particular project.		project area.	
Environment Grants Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	Registered charity OR properly constituted organisation	Grant focuses on four primary areas of interest - the cultural life of the UK, education and learning, the natural environment and enabling disadvantaged people to participate more fully in society. Does not fund capital costs and equipment. Could be opportunity for research project element?	Criteria is quite restrictive. Prioritises grants for work that: Addresses a significant gap in provision Develops or strengthens good practice Challenges convention or takes a risk in order to address a difficult issue Tests out new ideas or practices Takes an enterprising approach to achieving its aims Sets out to influence policy or change behaviour more widely.	Grants towards project and core costs. These include running costs such as staff salaries and overheads	No maximum grant size Commits £25 million annually to grant awards Average 2008 grant size £64,505	020 7297 4700 info@esmeefairbairn.org.uk www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, 11 Park Place London. SW1A 1LP Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 020 7812 3700. 9AG.