

Partnership Meeting - Minutes

Wednesday 28th January 2026

10.00-12.30

Hybrid - Caddsdow Business Centre,
Bideford and on Teams



**North Devon
Coast
National
Landscape**

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Attendees – 13 voting members In person Eirene Williams (Chair) Richard Prowse (Vice-Chair, Tarka Country Trust) Lewis Andrews (Community Rep.) Dave Brain (Environment Agency) Kate Hind (Devon County Council) Helen Smith (Torridge District Council) Liesje Birchenough (Coastwise North Devon) Andy Bell (North Devon Biosphere Reserve) Paul Green (Community Rep.) Linda Blanchard (North Devon Archaeological Society) Kevin Cook (North Devon World Surf Reserve) Claire Moodie (Earth Action North Devon) Justin Seedhouse (National Trust) Jonathan Fairhurst (National Trust) Brian Butler (National Farmers' Union) Online Becky Hughes (Natural England) Dominic Elson (Exmoor National Park)	NL Team Joe Newberry (National Landscape Manager) (JN) Laura Carolan (People and Place Officer) (LC) Chrissie Ingle (National Landscape Officer) (CI) Jemima Western (Farming and Land Management Officer) (JW) Jess Giblett (Finding Nature's Footprints Project Coordinator) (JG) Apologies Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson (North Devon Council) Cllr. Stephen Harding (Torridge District Council) Charlotte Russell (Historic England) John Rous (The Country Land and Business Association) Mel Austen (North Devon Biosphere Reserve) Ian Crawford (Taw and Torridge Estuary Forum) Matthew Odgers-Brown (Forestry Commission) Rob Joules (National Trust) Jane Young (Community Rep.) Rose Roberts (Community Rep.)
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2. Minutes of Meeting October 2025 - Chair

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record. Two outstanding actions were carried forward and are addressed on the agenda: (a) review of workshop outputs to shape the Landscape Connections Lottery EOI; (b) Executive discussion of partnership review actions.

3. National Landscape Manager's Report - JN

a. Staffing: Chrissie Ingle now in post; Laura's role retitled to People & Place Officer recognising expanded role in Community, Access for All and Sustainable Development Fund delivery; continued use of FWAG for FIPL delivery support this financial year.

b i. Planning: April–December data reviewed. "In Favour" is a combination of applications that are refused or withdrawn (where NL recommends refusal) or undergo significant amendments following our consultation. Concern was noted over approval of isolated self-build dwelling near Georgeham. (Lewis Andrews) requested case examples of where "seek to further the purpose" had been applied. Helen Smith noted no obvious cases in Torridge

ACTION: JN to follow up with NDC for clarification on the decision.

ACTION: JN to seek additional "seek to further the purpose" cases from the National Landscape Association.

			North Devon	Torridge	Total
April-Dec 25	Consultation	Consultations	93	28	121
		Responses	43	15	58
		Objections	18	2	20
	Outcomes	In Favour	12	0	12
		Against	5	0	5
	Outcomes carried forward	In Favour	10	1	11
		Against	4	1	5

Project delivery allocation (project breakdown in Annex A of the Manager's Report):

Externally Funded Projects			
	Allocated	Committed	%
Sustainable Development Fund	£20,000.00	£18,870.29	94
Access For All	£63,008.00	£57,445.67	91
Farming in Protected Landscapes	£144,515.00	£141,535.47	98
Capital Uplift - 30by30	£139,324.00	£122,607.40	88
Total	£366,847.00	£340,458.83	93

b ii. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL): 14 projects approved in-year; ~98% of project budget allocated. Strong delivery across nature and climate with some people & place projects.

Access for All: ~91% allocated, including benches/rest stops, kissing gates, support to "Access for All" charity providing beach wheelchairs, the Wave Project - adaptive surf kit, and Earth Action North Devon Vehicle to assist in engagement.

Sustainable Development Fund (SDF): ~94% allocated though some delivery risk noted for spend by 31st March deadline

b iii. Nature's Calling arts commission: [Nature Calling – North Devon Coast](#). "This Place Calls to Me" delivered by Red Herring/Rose Young French & photographer Olga Vynnyk; exhibition in Barnstaple Library with images now available on our website and to be used in future comms.

b iv. Management Plan Review & Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Full management plan draft issued to Natural England (NE); SEA scoping shared with NE, Historic England (HE) & Environment Agency (EA) (5-week consultation). Timeline: SEA completion by middle of May; adoption by NDC/TDC/DCC through July. The current management plan will remain on our website alongside a joint statement (signed by NL, DCC, TDC, NDC & NE) recognising the current plan's policies as "fit-for-purpose" until adoption of the reviewed plan.

4. FiPL Extension and promotion - JW

Jemima Western introduced; confirmed a multi-year Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) extension with project funding (capital and revenue) through to March 2029. The programme has catalysed ~1,000 ha of habitat restoration/creation to-date (mapping ongoing with 24 projects still to be mapped). Three-year certainty enables larger, phased, multi-season projects and a balanced portfolio across Nature, Climate, People, and Place. FiPL Panel thanked for continued service.

(Brian Butler) Panel considerations: Avoid over-reliance on repeat applicants; strengthen outreach to new land managers while judging applications on merit.

(Linda Blanchard) Historic environment: Opportunity to align place-based works with Protected Landscapes Target & Outcomes Framework (e.g., reducing items on Heritage at Risk register). Consider co-funding approaches and public access benefits.

(Domnic Elson) Historic environment: Caution must be applied when funding heritage assets where public money is used to fund a private asset. Careful consideration of intervention rates is required.

Farm visits: Proposal for partnership site visit to a FiPL project, possibly North Hole Farm Classroom (space permitting).

5. Partnership Review - CI

a. Partnership members were presented the proposed actions with regards to some of the partnership review recommendations and the following proposals were supported by the partnership:

- Review to identify who our underrepresented audiences are and how we engage with them.
- Suitable EDI training for staff and partners (driven by review)
- NL team to attend 4 Parish Council meetings a year and feedback to the partnership (review capacity for greater Parish Council engagement).
 - Engage with Parish Clerks as first point of call
 - Helen to facilitate NL attendance at TDC PC meeting
- Changing reporting framework with a request sent out to partners 1-month in advance to be included in the manager's report to be circulated 2-weeks in advance.
- Establish task and finish groups for management plan themes and areas of work.
- Identify opportunities for a wider range of stakeholder engagement to align with key NL events

ACTION: Team to action the above proposals

- b. Members participated in a short workshop focused on their experience of induction of partnership members and what might be desirable.

Key discussions/**actions** - full summary to be circulated

- Clarify member types and expectations: (i) Statutory bodies; (ii) organisations (iii) Community representatives.
- Create a private shared resource space (e.g., Teams/SharePoint or website intranet) holding live documents, project updates, draft policies, and member profiles.
- Produce a layered designations explainer (National Landscape, National Park, Biosphere, SSSI/SAC/MCZ) and a glossary of acronyms.
- Streamline meeting reporting: pre-meeting updates collated into Manager's Report; focus meeting time on discussion and task-and-finish groups.
- Parish engagement: Plan for proactive attendance at parish meetings and area advisory committees; start by engaging parish clerks; explore joint opportunities with TDC/NDC.

6. Due to time restrictions the second part of the partnership review workshop was cut short.

ACTION: CI to gather additional information on partnership communication, roles and additional members via email.

7. **Biosphere Cores and Buffers – Andy Bell**

Andy Bell outlined the 10-year periodic review to UNESCO (submission target Sept 2026 via Defra). Proposal to recognise additional core areas (using existing SAC/SSSI sites) with buffers including the National Landscape where appropriate, improving local relevance and highlighting areas for funding. The new 10-year Biosphere strategy has greater alignment with 30x30, LNRS for nature recovery. Although not a requirement, the Biosphere is seeking landowner support for recognition of the cores.

Braunton Burrows is the current single core of the Biosphere reserve. There are 5 additional core areas proposed, one of which is within the National Landscape, the Clovelly / Bucks Mills Western Oak Woodlands.

The proposal is to recognise the whole of the AONB designation as the buffer zone for the Clovelly/Bucks Mills core under the Biosphere Framework. The partnership was not asked to vote on the decision at this point but will be when the proposal is ready.

(Brian Butler) Expressed concerns of the duplication of designations at the cores and buffers resulting in inefficient use of teams and resources. Additional concern of one designation absorbing the other. Becky Hughes identified there was no risk of the NL being absorbed due to its higher statutory status.

(Dominic Elson) Identified the potential for public confusion from layering of designations alongside lack of clarity from Defra.

(Lewis Andrews) Sought clarification on the impact on planning. Andy Bell explained that currently the Biosphere holds no statutory weight in planning and this won't change that or lead to new statutory designations.

8. Partner Updates

National Trust: Grassland project concluded however ongoing donor site use and site management will become business as usual; Riverlands extended ~2 years with the funding secured; This winter there is active tree planting near Ilfracombe and future temperate rainforest trials.

North Devon World Surfing Reserve (WSR): Ongoing engagement with Flotation Energy regarding White Cross cable landfall to ensure best-practice in line with planning consent conditions; collaboration with Biosphere on water quality monitoring and potential citizen science; MP Ian Roome engagement planned to with a trip to Portugal WSR to review funding set up.

Torrridge District Council: Torrridge/North Devon Joint Local Plan project initiation updated; aiming to commence plan-making June 2026 and reach first gateway October 2026 with updated guidance on placemaking; funding bid to support development (~£120k per council).

Exmoor National Park: Continued work towards updated design guides and policies including lighting guides with respect to landscape and wildlife. Will share with the NDCNL partnership once prepared.

Tarka Country Trust: 4 of 5 community grants awarded this year.

Earth Action North Devon: planning shared demographic mapping and joint campaigns; Meeting attended with a wide range of local engagement organisations to ensure joined up delivery; Adult Ocean Explorer programme underway, earning from the school based programme and has had fantastic impact; NL-funded 9-seater vehicle for community use; Day of action 31st Jan – collaboration of multiple partners to deliver over 20 beach and PRoW cleaning events on the same day; Surf Film Festival planned 22nd August 2026 back up date 18th and 19th September.

North Devon Archaeological Society: “[Digging Deeper: Celebrating the work of volunteers in North Devon's archaeology](#)” held at Barnstaple Museum with great turn out (awaiting the numbers).

Devon County Council: Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (DLNRS) draft complete and moving to cabinet for adoption; Following restructuring of Environmental Sustainability Group they are appointing a new Local Nature Partnership (LNP) Manager internally who will take on management of the LNP and DLNRS.

Coastwise North Devon: Spring talks ongoing; summer citizen science planned, including marine mammal surveys with Braunton Countryside Centre; Details can be found here: [Welcome to Coastwise North Devon - Coastwise North Devon](#)

Environment Agency: Programme of measures under Water Framework Directive is being reviewed at water-body level (previously regional catchments); The Catchment Partnerships to feed intelligence Apr–Sep before wider consultation from Sep.

9. Any Other Business

- a. Visitor Levy Consultation - This consultation seeks views on the design of a new Mayoral power to create visitor levies on overnight stays in England. 18th Feb deadline nationally. NLA collaborative response. Please contact the team for more information.
- b. [Visitor levy in England - GOV.UK](#)
- c. Landscape Connections bid – input from last partnership informed priority setting for actions in project plan – this was presented to Heritage Lottery team who recommended a more focussed approach, A workshop with partners will be completed with an aim to submit and EOI by early March

ACTION: JN will put an additional call out for input to a national consultation response.

10. **Date of next meeting** - Proposed 20th May and 23rd September. Locations TBC