

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE AND VIA ZOOM
ON FRIDAY 17 JULY 2026**

1. INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Those present were:

Cllr Georgina Allen	GA	South Hams District Council
Cllr John McKay	JMc	South Hams District Council
Cllr Louise Wainwright	LW	Devon County Council
Cllr Mick Cockerham	MC	Devon County Council
Kate Hind	KH	Devon County Council - OA
Cllr Christine Carter	CC	Torbay Council
Tracy Brooks	TB	Torbay Council - OA
Dave Shorten	DS	Environment Agency
Becky Hughes	BH	Natural England
Peter Sandover	Chair	Independent
Julian Gray	JG	South West Coast Path Association
Richard Stones	RSt	Representative: coast and marine
Jane Nichols	JN	Representative: community or voluntary groups
Leah Harris	LH	Representative: landowning and farming
Peter Hinchliffe	Vice chair	Representative: parish and town councils

National Landscape staff attending:

Roger English	NLM	Manager
Alex Scholefield	AS	Supporting SDNL with Nature Recovery work
Vanessa Gray		Office Manager (meeting assistance & notes)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Drew Powell	South Hams District Council - OA
Peter Hawking-Sach	Plymouth City Council
Matthew Odgers-Brown	Forestry Commission
Ross Simmonds	Historic England
Richard Snow	National Trust
Pete Moore	Representative: business community

Changes to membership:

The Chair welcomed new member Cllr Mick Cockerham (Devon County Council), replaces Cllr Jaqueline Fry.

2. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

No public statements.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No conflicts of interest declared.

4. MINUTES OF THE 13 MARCH 2026 PARTNERSHIP MEETING FOR APPROVAL & ANY MATTERS ARISING

4.1. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD 13 MARCH 2026

Proposed: Peter Hinchliffe (Vice chair)

Seconded: Dave Shorten

Resolved: No objections, the minutes were approved.

4.2. Progress on actions:

- i. Three years of funding for the access management programme is confirmed and the door remains open for new opportunities. Partnership members are encouraged to contact the NL Manager with anything worth exploring as an option.
- ii. Action lapsed: Matthew Odgers-Brown to ask the woodland officer to send details of the scheme via EWCO, where landowners are incentivised to establish woodland close to settlements and to provide site access, to Cllr Jaqueline Fry. No longer carried forward following change in DCC representation from Cllr Fry to Cllr Mick Cockerham.

ACTION 1 (NLM): Setup a meeting with Cllr Cockerham to act as both an induction and also a catchup on SDNL matters.

- iii. NL Manager confirmed the weevil release (floating pennywort) is due on 31 July; publicity campaign being prepared.

ACTION 2 (NLM): Ensure the weevil release (floating pennywort) publicity campaign is prepared following the 31 July release date, using materials provided by CABI.

- iv. NL Manager confirmed the farmer-friendly version of the Management Plan to assist with FiPL applications is now live on the South Devon National Landscape website¹ and thanked the FiPL panel for their assistance.
- v. Becky Hughes, Natural England, confirmed she will follow up with Alice regarding FiPL projects we are confident can be supported by wildlife rich habitat funding (**ACTION carried forward**).
- vi. Alice Wyness, SDNL Farm Engagement Officer to arrange a meeting with Councillor Wainwright to discuss crossovers between FiPL and the Blueprint for Rivers (**ACTION carried forward**).
- vii. NL Manager confirmed Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment scoping work for Management Plan is concluded but full assessments are pending - policy set still evolving.
- viii. Chair confirmed the Management Plan Q&A sessions for parishes are pending a confirmed Management Plan consultation date.
- ix. NL Manager confirmed 23 applications received for the vacant project officer post; five interviews scheduled for the following Thursday.

5. PARTNERSHIP CHAIR'S REPORT

Item 5 in the papers provided a summary of activity over the last few months undertaken on behalf of the National Landscape Partnership by Peter Sandover (Chair).

¹ [Farmer Friendly Summary Management Plan \[southdevon-nl.org.uk\]](https://southdevon-nl.org.uk)

Partnership members are recommended to note the report and are encouraged to provide brief reports where possible in advance of scheduled meetings to assist with the Partner updates agenda item.

- i. Chair noted that it had been a busy period and highlighted the proactive engagement work of the staff team and volunteers over the summer.

6 GOVERNMENT DECISION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DEVON

The Government has confirmed its Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposal for Devon, creating significant challenges for the South Devon National Landscape in terms of funding, planning, and partnership governance.

NL Manager presented slides on the LGR outcome for Devon announced a day prior. The proposal creates three expanded unitary authorities (Plymouth ~305,000, Torbay ~232,000, Exeter ~260,000) and a Devon Rural and Coastal authority (~455,000).

6.1 Geographic impact

- i. The western side of the National Landscape falls within expanded Plymouth, the middle within Devon Rural and Coastal, and to the eastern side an expanded Torbay with the Dart as the boundary to Devon Rural and Coastal. Key National Landscape parishes moving into Plymouth include Brixton, Ermington, Holbeton, Newton and Noss, Ugborough, Wembury, and Yealmpton. National Landscape parishes moving into Torbay include a part of Berry Pomeroy, Stoke Gabriel, and Kingswear.

6.2 Funding risk

- i. Plymouth currently contribute £1,000/year and Torbay £3,000/year. These small contributions are part of our total local authority funding that is critical to unlocking DEFRA's 75% core funding formula and associated programmes worth over £1 million. The transition to new unitary authorities creates significant uncertainty. Losing or disrupting future contributions risks collapsing the funding inverse pyramid.
- ii. The next Core Funding Group meeting is September and will focus on updating key documents including the Memorandum of Agreement and hosting agreement.

ACTION 3 (NLM): Prepare an updated Memorandum of Agreement and hosting agreement for the Core Funding Group meeting in September 2026;

- iii. Julian Gray (South West Coast Path Association) noted the National Trail has the same funding formula and suggested collective rather than separate conversations with Plymouth and Torbay.

ACTION 4 (NLM and JG): Explore opportunities to progress collective conversations on funding with Plymouth and Torbay.

- iv. Cllr Louise Wainwright (DCC) suggested being proactive in articulating the value of the National Landscape to incoming elected members who may not share existing partners' understanding. Also to recalculate the contributions that Plymouth and Torbay make with their increased areas. NL Manager: no funding formula at present; DEFRA have promised this to come, as part of the next spending review.

ACTION 5 (NLM): Develop a proposal and supporting logic for negotiations with expanded Plymouth and Torbay authorities, to be discussed at the Core Funding Group in September 2026.

- v. Chair noted the strong existing relationship with Torbay but flagged Plymouth as requiring significant proactive engagement given their limited prior involvement and small current contribution. NL Manager acknowledged that Plymouth's engagement has historically been limited and they do not have member representation on Partnership. Julian Gray noted opportunities through Plymouth's status as a Nature City, the Community Forest and the National Marine Park.

6.3 Disruption

- i. Local Plan and Management Plan Review Uncertainty
 - a. Local Plan reviews for South Hams/West Devon², Torbay³, and Plymouth⁴; all at different stages and will not be completed before LGR shadow authorities take over, creating a planning policy vacuum.
 - b. Concerns raised about local plan reviews being disrupted, increased housing pressure near the National Landscape, and misalignment between LGR and the government's own 30 by 30 and Protected Landscape commitments.
 - c. Chair: Management Plan review process to continue unaffected by LGR boundary changes. NL Manager confirmed the Management Plan is a plan for the place, not for the administering authorities.
- ii. Other
 - a. Officers and elected members across all affected councils face distraction and uncertainty about roles, responsibilities, and communication channels during the transition period, risking gaps in engagement with the National Landscape.
 - b. South Hams District Council is losing its climate change and biodiversity officer (Adam Williams), which will reduce council capacity for nature recovery work during a critical period.

6.4 Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- i. Becky Hughes raised concerns about how the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) implementation will function across Devon; will there be four authorities all implementing the same LNRS. The Devon Coast and Country authority has the most potential but also the most area to cover, and potentially overstretched administrative structure, for monitoring and reporting obligations.
- ii. Kate Hind reassured that Devon County Council are the responsible authority for the LNRS but already work very closely with Plymouth, Torbay and other local authorities. Transition is being managed and whoever becomes the responsible authority will be briefed. LNRS is embedded in all National Landscape Management Plans in Devon. Although Plymouth were not previously very engaged with Tamar Valley National Landscape, they are now.

6.5 Conclusion

- i. The NL Manager proposed channelling all questions and concerns through the Chair, Vice chair and himself in advance of an extraordinary meeting to be convened in September or October.

ACTION 6 (NLM): Schedule an extraordinary meeting of the Partnership, likely in September or October, dedicated to LGR implications for the National Landscape.

² [South Hams West Devon Local Plan Timetable \[southhams.gov.uk\]](https://southhams.gov.uk)

³ [Torbay Local Plan Stages \[torbay.gov.uk\]](https://torbay.gov.uk)

⁴ [Plymouth Local Plan Timetable \[Plymouth.gov.uk\]](https://plymouth.gov.uk)

- ii. It will be important to establish a clear principle that the Management Plan process continues unaffected by LGR boundary changes.

7 START BAY UPDATE

The National Landscape Manager presented an update; slides from Dan Field.

7.1 Details

- i. The Environment Agency has secured £19.8 million in principle for rock armour coastal defence from Torcross Point to an extended slipway. The scheme involves approximately 50,000 tonnes of rock, principally from Norway. The National Landscape has formally advised that this does not conserve or enhance natural beauty and is seeking a commitment to a Coastal Change Management Area and an exit strategy for that specific area over the long term.
- ii. Provided consents are achieved and the coastal defence scheme progresses, construction was originally planned for August but is likely to move to September for logistical and seasonal business reasons. Works will run 24 hours a day during tidal windows, using an offshore barge. Torcross car park will be out of action for the duration of works, though toilets will remain open and a fenced corridor for the Southwest Coast Path will be maintained.
- iii. Devon County Council has submitted a £20 million request into the Department for Transport Structures Fund for road reconstruction (not the associated coastal protection that will be required). Decision expected Autumn 2026; construction could begin, at the earliest, April 2028 if successful. Leaves two storm seasons of vulnerability.
- iv. The Slapton Line Partnership has broadened its scope to the wider Start Bay sediment cell. A coastal adaptation pilot funding bid of just over £1 million has been submitted, led by South Hams District Council as the Coastal Protection Authority, covering key adaptation activities: community infrastructure, beach access, car park resilience, relocation of the Monument at Slapton, and coastal adaptation planning.

7.2 Conclusion

- i. The entirety of Start Bay falls within the proposed Devon Coast and Country authority area.
- ii. Thanks extended to Lou Hoskin, Dan Field, Paul Rigby and the South Hams District Council team for their work on the coastal adaptation bid.

8 NATURE RECOVERY IN THE SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE – MOSAIC HABITATS AND 30 BY 30

Alex Scholefield, who is supporting the National Landscape team on nature recovery for the Management Plan, presented a detailed nature recovery framework for the National Landscape, covering priority habitats, species, 30 by 30 delivery, and a proposed ecological network approach.

8.1 Details

- i. Identified 21 priority habitats (diverse) and 71 priority species/assemblages in the National Landscape (needs to be narrowed down). More than half of priority habitats (57%) are declining in condition; only 19% are in moderate condition. Only 47.3% of SSSI features are in favourable condition, needs to go up to 80% by 2042. Three-quarters

- (71%) of priority species are in decline and only 10% of species in the SDNL populations are stable and recovering. Loss of arable plant sites, with five key species remaining, down from 23 to 5 within Alex's lifetime, example of rapid decline. Top tier includes Nature First (designated) sites across SDNL. Challenge is only 16 of 74 SSSI features have up to date condition assessments and working out where we need to target. Statutory Irreplaceable Habitats are also top tier, Nature First sites - includes ancient woodland ~750Ha, coastal sand dunes ~10Ha and lowland fens ~10Ha.
- ii. 30 by 30 Framework explained - three criteria (purpose, protection, management) must all be met. Currently only ~3% of the National Landscape on land qualifies for all three. DEFRA's potential layer shows 20.8%; the broader LNRS opportunity layer suggests up to 57% potential. Presented DEFRA's gold (meets criteria) / silver (potential to meet criteria) / bronze (delivering benefits for nature) tiering for 30 by 30 delivery, noting that most effort will focus on moving silver sites to gold.
 - iii. NL Manager noted that South Devon, alongside Blackdown Hills and Tamar Valley, has been proactively approached by DEFRA, as Protected Landscapes with a relatively low current opportunity percentage. Reaching the target would require all our land holders to agree, register their sites and take positive steps. Engagement with a large number of individual landowners, such as our area, is significantly more challenging than in areas having fewer landowners with larger landholdings.
 - iv. Julian (Southwest Coast Path Association) raised the point that the UK approach of field-by-field assessment is out of alignment with international advice, which recommends strengthening governance and powers of Protected Landscapes as a whole. Natural England's Landscape Advisory Panel has made this recommendation to DEFRA.
 - v. Alex went on to present a restoration assessment methodology incorporating designated sites, irreplaceable habitats, fragile habitats under 100 ha, grouped habitat mosaics, important invertebrate areas, riparian buffers, liminal habitats, river restoration opportunities (including temperate mangroves on the Dart), marine restoration (native oyster, seagrass), landownership clusters, other ecosystem services. River Dart landscape as a detailed example.
 - vi. Presented illustrative maps of potential nature recovery core areas across the National Landscape, 57% compared to DEFRA's 20.8%.
 - vii. Next steps: includes ground truthing through a combination of aerial imagery and ground surveys; Target easier wins first; continue close consultation with partners; look at all funding options.

ACTION 7 (AS): Proceed with ground truthing of potential nature recovery core areas through aerial imagery and on-the-ground surveys, in consultation with the NL Manager and Alice Wyness.

- viii. Chair suggested incorporating Neighbourhood Plan local Green Space designations as an additional data layer, citing Dartmouth as an example.
- ix. Leah Harris requested that the presentation be repeated for FIPL panel.

ACTION 8 (AS): Schedule a presentation for FIPL panel.

- x. Leah Harris raised concern about the complexity of funding landscape for landowners and the need for simplified, streamlined messaging.

Becky Hughes noted Cornwall Council/Cornwall National Landscape work on simplifying funding messaging for landowners, and North Devon Biosphere's similar initiative; offered to compile a list of relevant projects. Thinks that Matthew Odgers-Brown would also like to be involved in this conversation.

ACTION 9 (BH): Compile a list of projects and initiatives working on simplified funding messaging for landowners (including Cornwall Council/Cornwall National Landscape Lizard project and North Devon Biosphere initiative) and share with the Partnership.

- xi. Cllr Louise Wainwright suggested using Sustainable South Hams' map of parishes that have declared biodiversity and climate emergencies as an engagement tool; noted Bigbury Parish's own habitat survey as a model.
- xii. Julian Gray asked whether the land use framework (including 3A/3B agricultural land classification) is incorporated (it is); raised the importance of dynamic coastal species management in the context of COP15 updates on migratory species corridors and the Coastal Wild Belt.
- xiii. NL Manager linked Julian's point to the climate-smart adaptive management approach being developed with the Landscape Observatory.
- xiv. Becky Hughes highlighted that SSSI data gaps are a major challenge (only 16 of 74 SSSI features have up-to-date condition assessments) and that Natural England's monitoring resource constraints are unlikely to improve in the short term, impacting PLTOF targets 2 and 3. Suggested linking irreplaceable habitats to landscape character and sense of place of South Devon to strengthen the case.
- xv. NL Manager noted the emerging common monitoring standard for nature recovery activities; highlighted the South Devon Farmland Management Advisors Forum meeting as having already catalysed actions.
- xvi. The NL Manager confirmed Life on the Edge and beelines work is fully embedded in nature recovery work and announced Life on the Edge project won the DEFRA Bees Needs Champion Award⁵ in the communities category - the only National Landscape in England to receive this recognition. The award recognises the LotE project efforts in practical conservation, habitat restoration and protecting rare pollinators. LotE Project Manager Rob Skinner and LotE finance/admin attended RHS Wisley on 14 July to collect the award.

8.2 Conclusion

- i. The new Natural England Protected Sites officer will be in touch with National Landscape teams.
- ii. South Devon National Landscape's approach blends the Devon LNRS and Government 30by30, resulting in a Nature Friendly, Nature Rich, Nature First focus covering the entirety of the designated landscape. This maps across to the Bronze Silver Gold hierarchy adopted by 30by30 on land delivery plan.

⁵ [Bees Needs Champion Award press coverage \[kingsbridge-today.co.uk\]](#) & [National Landscapes coverage \[national-landscapes.org.uk\]](#)

9 NATIONAL TRUST NATURE RECOVERY ACTIVITY ACROSS SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

9.1 This agenda item was deferred as Richard Snow sent apologies.

9.2 Conclusion

- i. Item deferred to the November Partnership meeting.
- ii. **ACTION 10 (RS): Deliver a presentation on National Trust nature recovery activity across South Devon National Landscape at the November partnership meeting.**

10 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTATIONS AND PLANNING OFFICER REPORT

NL Manager provided an update on the planning officer arrangement and local plan reviews.

10.1 Details

- i. Avril McNamara (Cornwall National Landscape) has been working 1.5 days/week for South Devon National Landscape since April 2025. Avril has delivered transformational impact. All four local planning authorities plus the Marine Management Organisation have provided positive feedback on timeliness and quality of responses.
- ii. Given the unpredictable nature of DM planning consultations, where workload permits, Avril has also contributed to, for example, tree/woodland creation proposals, Neighbourhood Plan advice, Local Plan advice and appeal hearing appearances.
- iii. The current contract runs to end of March 2027. Cornwall National Landscape lead officer, Emma Browning Fitch, has moved on to National Trust West Cornwall; Abby Crosby (from the marine sector in Cornwall) is taking over the arrangement and has already been in contact to confirm continuation.
Becky Hughes (chat): Noted it is positive to have a marine champion like Abby Crosby in the National Landscapes family in the Southwest
- iv. Chair commended Avril's work and noted positive community engagement in planning responses.

10.2 Conclusion

- i. Planning officer arrangement with Cornwall Council to continue; transition to Abby Crosby underway.
- ii. Primary focus remains DM responses however the flexible approach employed to date, where time allows, to work on a wider range of consultations, continues.

11. LOCAL PLAN REVIEWS AND THE SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

11.1 Details

- i. NL Manager provided an overview of Local Plan review timetables for South Hams District Council⁶ (combined plan with West Devon), Torbay⁷, and Plymouth⁸. All are at different stages; scoping consultation requests have been received from both South Hams/West Devon and Plymouth in the past week.
- ii. Tracy Brooks (Torbay Council) updated the Partnership on Torbay Council's Local Plan situation - a ministerial letter from Matthew Pennycook (MHCLG) has been received

⁶ [South Hams District Council Plan timetable \[southhams.gov.uk\]](https://southhams.gov.uk)

⁷ [Torbay Plan timetable \[Torbay.gov.uk\]](https://torbay.gov.uk)

⁸ [Plymouth Plan timetable \[Plymouth.gov.uk\]](https://plymouth.gov.uk)

expressing dissatisfaction that the Regulation 18 consultation provides only 42% (400 dpa) of the government's standard method local housing need (940 dpa). Evidence base has been submitted to MHCLG; Officers trust that the evidence base supplied explains the constraints which Torbay faces (SDNL, SHSAC, Torbay and Lyme Bay marine SAC, etc). The Council intends to proceed to Regulation 19 consultation this summer, with a report⁹ to full Council on 23 July. The local plan must be submitted before end of December 2026.

- iii. Cllr John McKay (SHDC) observed the South Hams local plan process is underway but will not be completed before the shadow authority takes over; how this will play out is unclear.
- iv. NL Manager noted that the Southwest Marine Plan¹⁰ and relevant marine management documents¹¹ were recently reviewed and found sound, providing some stability amid wider planning uncertainty.

11.2 Conclusion

- i. LGR implications for local plan processes to be flagged as a key issue at the extraordinary meeting.
- ii. Torbay Council proceeding to Regulation 19 consultation subject to full Council decision on 23 July and no further MHCLG intervention.

12. SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

12.1 Details

- i. NL Manager: Team working hard on progressing. Challenges include available resource and obtaining a slot on the District Councils Executive Committee. The Management Plan is expected to go to South Hams District Council Executive in September, enabling consultation to proceed as rapidly as possible thereafter. Engagement process for Devon County Council being coordinated with Kate Hind; need same conversations with Tracy and the Torbay team as well as Plymouth City Council colleagues too.
- ii. Peter Sandover (Chair): Flagged that whatever happens with LGR boundary changes the Management Plan should not be affected. Process to follow and obtaining endorsement is very important.

12.2 Conclusion

- i. Management plan to go to South Hams District Council executive in September; consultation to follow.

13. PARTNER UPDATES

This item provides an opportunity for Partners to update Partnership on their contributions to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the South Devon National Landscape and delivering on area of outstanding natural beauty Management Plan priorities.

Partners are encouraged to provide written reports prior to the meeting and are requested to keep verbal reports reasonably brief, allowing more time for other items on the agenda.

13.1 Devon County Council, Kate Hind

⁹ [Local Plan report to Torbay Council \[Torbay.gov.uk\]](#)

¹⁰ [South West Marine Plans \[GOV uk\]](#)

¹¹ [South West Marine Plans documents \[GOV uk\]](#)

- i. Attended the National Landscapes Conference in Norwich; highlighted two key themes - the voice of young people and the voice of nature in partnership governance. No National Landscape in Devon has yet achieved meaningful representation of young people or nature in partnership governance structures; suggested the Partnership consider how to embed these voices.

Chair: Noted that engagement with young people is already embedded in the Management Plan consultation process.

ACTION 11 (KH): Continue working and share knowledge from work at North Devon and East Devon National Landscapes to engage young people and nature in partnership governance; building on conference discussions.

- ii. Becky Hughes (chat): Expressed interest in the nature-centric governance discussion and noted Natural England colleague Tom Johnstone ran workshops on this at the conference.
- iii. NL Manager: Confirmed that following the conference, Tom Johnstone has offered support for a Nature on Board/Nature in Partnership initiative for South Devon; Dart Harbour is already engaged in the putting nature first conversation.

13.2 South Hams District Council, Cllr John McKay

- i. Noted work on rights of nature with Sustainable South Hams; a motion to South Hams District Council is being considered.
- ii. Flagged the departure of climate change and biodiversity officer Adam Williams as a significant loss.

13.3 Torbay Council, Tracy Brooks

- i. Noted that studies on Berry Head to Sharkham component of the South Hams SAC - covering calcareous grassland and Greater Horseshoe Bats - contains valuable data to be shared with Alex Schofield and Becky Hughes.

ACTION 12 (TB): Share Berry Head to Sharkham SAC studies (calcareous grassland and Greater Horseshoe Bat) with Alex Schofield and Becky Hughes.

13.4 Environment Agency, Dave Shorten

- i. River Basin Management Plans are currently up for review. South Devon Catchment Partnership has fed into the Programme of Measures. The new Plans will be published towards the end of 2027.
- ii. Announced that the area has entered "prolonged dry weather status" - one of only three Environment Agency areas to do so - with water usage and abstraction restrictions now in focus.

13.5 Natural England, Becky Hughes

- i. Highlighted wildfires as a current major concern across coastal and heathland areas, with significant officer resource focused on wildfire risk management.

13.6 South West Coast Path Association, Julian Gray

- i. Share updated South West Coast Path Association impact report link with Partnership¹².

¹² [Impact report – South West Coast Path \[issuu.com\]](#)

- ii. Advancing the Coastal Wild Belt agenda following the formal handover of the King Charles III England Coast Path from Natural England to South West coastal trail partnership¹³.

13.7 Coast and marine sector representative, Richard Stones

- i. Phase 4 of salt marsh restoration is ongoing.
- ii. Close collaboration with Friends of the Dart, particularly on pollution incidents including a recent high-profile incident in Dartmouth.
- iii. Working with two companies for environmental and social impact assessment for cruise mooring reinstatement; tendering is underway.

13.8 Community or voluntary groups representative, Jane Nichols

- i. Sustainable South Hams has launched the five-year Rally for Nature campaign - a region wide initiative to amplify existing activities and reach a tipping point of behaviour change. Four pillars: Act for Nature, Speak for Nature, Network for Nature, Celebrate Nature. Conversations with South Hams District Council on the Speak for Nature pillar; wish to have same conversations with Torbay and other authorities. Would like a motion passed on the rights of nature. Initiatives include nature on the board advocacy, parish council guides [Creating a 30by30 Project (Transition town Totnes), Surveying Wildlife (ModWAG), Running a Wildlife Open Gardens Event (Buckfastleigh Action For Nature Group), Going Pesticide Free (Pesticide Free Devon)], young ambassadors programme, and a planned nature festival for next summer. Currently writing funding applications. Specific request for partners to engage on the rights of nature motion for South Hams, targeted for September. Happy to share young ambassadors, especially if the ambassadors can be paid.

ACTION 13 (JN): Explore partnership with the National Landscape on the planned nature festival for summer 2027.

- ii. Becky Hughes (Chat): Link to newspaper article on giving nature a say¹⁴.

13.9 Landowning and farming representative, Leah Harris

- i. Highlighted two volunteer-led water quality and nature recovery projects - Erme and Yealm water catchments. WATER¹⁵ project on Erme and Yealm is part of Yealm Estuary to Moor YEM¹⁶.
- ii. Raised concern about blanket Government advice through SFI schemes directing landowners towards interventions (tree planting, leaky dams) that may not be appropriate for specific locations and questioned where the overarching targeted knowledge is coming from.

NL Manager: Acknowledged the concern and noted the complexity of coordinating multiple specialist advisors. Highlighted how important the South Devon Farm and Land Management Advisors Forum was as a vehicle for more targeted guidance. This has been rebooted as a 'Farm Advisors and Land Managers' group with the most recent meeting held in May.

Becky Hughes: Acknowledged Catchment Sensitive Farming resourcing constraints; Natural England's CSF officer capacity is severely constrained and unlikely to improve,

¹³ [Coastal Wildbelt \[linktr.ee\]](https://linktr.ee)

¹⁴ [Giving nature a say: why Scottish marine scientists appointed the ocean to their board \[guardian.com\]](https://www.guardian.com)

¹⁵ [WATER project on Erme \[ermeriver.org\]](https://ermeriver.org)

¹⁶ [Yealm Estuary to Moor YEM \[org\]](https://yealm.org)

limiting the ability to provide targeted advice to farmers and landowners. Expressed hope that NE CSF expertise will be cascaded out through FIPL projects, FIPL panel and farmer clusters.

13.10 Parish and town councils representative, Peter Hinchliffe (Vice Chair)

- i. Two parish councils raised wind farm questions - (1) the National Landscape's view on a small scale community wind farm development within the National Landscape, and (2) the view on a commercial wind farm on the boundary but outside the National Landscape.

NL Manager: Responded key test is impact on natural beauty; the complexity of our landscape, series of features within it and the scale means it is a challenging area in general to place anything tall with moving parts without impacts. The renewable energy position statement¹⁷, currently under review, is the present position and suggests what thresholds might be. The National Landscape has examples of up to 35 metre turbines in place at present; a 45 metre turbine at Marley Head near Rattery is the tallest in South Hams at present. We would wish to see all alternative options exhausted and as any proposal would constitute major development it would require also looking at opportunities outside the National Landscape. Offered to discuss further outside the meeting.

- ii. Peter Hinchliffe (Vice Chair): Raised an increasing problem with dog fouling on the Coast Path and National Trust properties; Kate Hind offered a discussion outside the meeting on the Devon Loves Dogs¹⁸ initiative.

12 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MATTERS

The NL Manager and Julian Gray provided feedback on the National Landscapes Association Conference held in Norwich (four days, including travel).

12.1 Details

- i. Julian Gray: Conference theme was "Vitality" — future-looking, with keynotes on managing change, embedding young people in decision-making, and nature-centric governance. Noted site visits proceeded during amber heat alerts and flagged as a risk management issue to be raised with the National Landscapes Association for future risk management. Observed strong cohesion within the National Landscape family; the National Landscapes Association was seen as custodians for individual National Landscapes rather than a body in its own right. Wide range of stakeholders attended, including National Lottery Heritage Fund representatives.
- ii. NL Manager: Noted that outgoing chair Philip Hygate is in the process of stepping down (after 14 years); Jim Dixon will take over as new chair at the next AGM. Jim Dixon was panel member of the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes and former CEO of Peak District National Park Authority.
- iii. Next year's conference will be held at Stranmillis University College Belfast, 6–8 July. The National Landscapes Association includes English, Welsh, and Northern Ireland National Landscapes. The latter still designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and run by a combination of charities brought together with the support of Landscapes

¹⁷ [Renewable Energy Position Statement \[southdevon-nl.org.uk\]](https://southdevon-nl.org.uk/renewable-energy-position-statement)

¹⁸ [Devon Loves Dogs \[.co.uk\]](https://www.devonlovesdogs.co.uk)

Northern Ireland. Attendance open to Partnership members; budget support available for those unable to fund their place.

12.2 Conclusion

- i. Partners interested in attending the Belfast conference in July next year encouraged to contact the NL Manager.

13 FUTURE MEETINGS

- Extraordinary meeting to be convened September / October dedicated to LGR; date tbc
- Scheduled Partnership meeting 27 November at 10am

MEETING CLOSED

These minutes remain as draft until approved at the next meeting of the South Devon National Landscape Partnership.