

# MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## 4 NOVEMBER 2022

### FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES UPDATE

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#### Recommendation

1. The Committee is recommended to:
  - a) Note the report; and
  - b) Raise and discuss any issues arising.

#### Background

2. Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme was launched in early July 2021. The programme forms part of the Agricultural Transition Plan (published on 30 November 2020), with funding available for all English National Parks and AONBs across 3 financial years, from 2021–2024.

#### Summary

3. Information on the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes>
4. Guidance for applicants, tailored to the Malvern Hills AONB, can be found at: <https://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Annex-F-Guidance-for-Applicants-211011.pdf>

#### Funding and Expenditure

5. In the first financial year of FiPL (2021–22), the Malvern Hills AONB was awarded, following reallocation, **£90,000.45**. The breakdown of this expenditure was as follows:
  - Project Grants: £72,265.53
  - Advice and Guidance: £15,425.08
  - Administration: £2,332.6
6. Total Spend for the period was £90,014.21 (an overspend of £13.76)
7. For the 2022–23 Financial Year, the grant amount awarded is **£236,538**. At present, the following amounts have been allocated and/or spent:
  - Project Grants: £144,758
  - Advice and Guidance, and Administration Combined: £31,030
8. Remaining available spend for the 2022/23 FY (to include Projects, Admin and A&G): **£60,750**

9. For the 2023 – 24 Financial Year, the expected grant amount is **£198,027**. At present, the following amounts have been allocated:
- Project Grants: £15,655
10. Remaining available spend for the 2023/24 FY (to include Projects, Admin and A&G): **£182,372**

### **Staffing and financing staff time**

11. Sash Warden is still in position as Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Officer, working on both Advice and Guidance, and Administration aspects of the scheme.

### **Grant assessment:**

12. In the 2021–22 FY, a total of 5 panel meetings were held, the first meeting of which was an introductory meeting.
13. So far, in the 2022–23 FY, three panel meetings have been held, with a fourth meeting planned to be held on 3 November 2022.
14. A total of 17 of the 22 FiPL projects have been approved by the Local Assessment Panel in the above panel meetings, with Paul Esrich as AONB Unit Manager approving 5 of the projects that were below the £5,000 panel threshold.

### **Inquiries**

15. There have been further inquiries with regards to FiPL. Some of the inquiries have unfortunately been a substantial distance outside of the AONB, or the interest has been more suited to other Schemes (i.e., Farming Transformation Fund). Since the last JAC Meeting there have been a further 12 enquiries, with 9 of these turning into FiPL Projects, either approved or being constructed.

### **Applications**

16. Between the expenditure in Year One, and allocations for Years Two and Three of FiPL, £232,679.85 has been put towards grant funding in the Malvern Hills AONB.
17. 12 projects were approved in Year One of FiPL, with 10 projects being approved so far in this 2022 – 23 FY.
18. Moving forwards there are 9 projects currently in the pipeline for either this current FY or to be spread over the 2023 – 2024 FY.

19. A breakdown of the Projects may be seen below in the table below.

## **2022–23 - Issues**

20. The extremely dry weather of the summer has meant a significant amount of watering has been required on trees that were planted as part of orchard projects in the winter of 2021-22. However, with thanks to Colwall Orchard Group, it is believed that only 2 of these trees were lost over the hot weather period.
21. There are at least two potential projects which involve building ponds; regrettably these projects have stalled due to issues relating to the complexity and time involved in securing planning permission. The AONB Unit is still looking to move forwards with these projects if possible
22. Project MH013 – The Brush Seed Harvester, has been a great success in the 2022 summer, harvesting 150+kg of Meadow seed from three sites in and around the Malvern Hills AONB. It is estimated that the market value of this seed is probably equivalent to the cost of the harvester. Two of the harvested sites were SSSIs and all the seed will go towards projects listed below in Table 1. With thanks to both the Worcestershire County Council Green Space Team, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, and Private Landowners for their help with the harvesting and storage of seed.

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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### Specific Contact Points for this report

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<b>Project Code</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Year 1 Spend</b>	<b>Year 2 Allocation</b>	<b>Year 3 Allocation</b>
MH001	Malvern Foothill Connections	Malvern Hills Trust (MHT)	23/09/2021	£11,321.80	/	/
MH002	Colwall Orchard Group Traditional Orchards for the Future Initiative (COG TOFI 2021/22)	Colwall Orchard Group (COG)	23/09/2021	£8,520.00	/	/
MH003	Colwall Orchard Group Improving equipment and facilities for people and nature	COG	23/09/2021	£12,760.46	£10,495.00	/
MH004	Regenerative Grazing, Suckley	Private	23/09/2021	£15,235.83	/	/
MH005	Orchard Restoration, Colwall	Private	23/09/2021	£3,960.00	/	/
MH006	Hope End Park Conservation Management Plan	MH AONB	23/09/2021	£8,794.00	£12,556.00	/
MH007	Restoration of the last remaining Donkey Shed, Malvern	MHT	09/12/2021	/	£14,456.00	/
MH008	Restoration of a traditional Orchard, Alfrick	Private	09/12/2021	/	£2,556.00	/
MH009	Species Rich Grassland Creation and Orchard Creation	Private	09/12/2021	£3,649.00	£3,138.40	/
MH010	Tup Paddock, Ledbury	Private	13/02/2022	/	£2,745.50	/
MH011	Conservation enhancement inc grassland and orchard, Upper Colwall (The Purlieu)	Private	31/03/2022	/	£14,307.4	/
MH012	Conservation enhancement inc grassland and orchard, Upper Colwall	Private	26/09/2022	/	£3,496	/
MH013	Brush Seed Harvester	MH AONB	02/02/2022	£8,087.44	/	/
MH014	COG TOFI 2022/23	COG	19/05/2022	/	£24,187.50	£1611.00
MH015	Orchard Restoration and expansion, Suckley	Private	19/05/2022	/	£15,596.00	/

MH017	Eastnor Estates Woodshed Improvement	Eastnor Estates	28/07/2022	/	£17,391.00	£10,932.92
MH018	Increasing local meadow biodiversity for education and as a local seed bank, Colwall	Private	16/08/2022	/	£1,820.00	£2,220.00
MH020	Meadow Restoration, Mathon	Private	26/0/92022	/	£800	£742.50
MH023	Pond and Orchard Creation, Storridge	Private	28/09/2022	/	£5899.50	/
MH024	Woodland management and Forest School, Malvern Wells (Still waiting for approval)	MHT	<i>(Presented to panel 28/09/2022)</i>	/	<i>£5,255 or £6,578 – Panel approved of project but require clarification on some quotes</i>	£149.50
MH026	Hedge Laying at Cherry Green	Private	06/10/2022	/	£1,817.6	/
MH028	Hedgerow (re)creation at Castlemorton	Private	07/10/2022	/	£2,392.50	/
Additional Delivery	Wildflower Seed to supplement Projects MH011, MH012 and MH020 + further items for MH013 Brush Seed Harvester and seed harvesting	Supplement to approved projects	Summer 2022	/	£1,976	/