

# Brit Catchment Restoration Project

Transformative change for nature in the Brit catchment

## A Landscape Recovery proposal



**Landscape Recovery** is a new scheme under Defra's Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS). It aims to deliver a wide variety of environmental and social outcomes using public and private funds to support farmers and landowners in making space for wildlife alongside producing food.

We have a vision of a Brit catchment alive with wildlife, in grasslands, woodlands and wetlands, with thriving and sustainable local food production, and more opportunities for jobs and education. Landscape Recovery offers an opportunity to achieve this by bringing together farmers and landowners to create a long-term, landscape-scale project that rewards you for making the area a better place to live and work.

For a Brit catchment restoration project to be meaningful in addressing species loss and restoring a more natural hydrological system we need to collaborate. West Dorset Wilding would like to take the lead in making these connections and bidding for Landscape Recovery funding with you, and on your behalf. In many cases, payments could be higher than the proceeds from current schemes and farming practices, and it could represent a guaranteed income stream for 20 years or more. In addition, funds are available for related capital works.

Additional benefits for you would include being part of a positive network of local farmers and landowners, and gaining support in accessing government funding to implement changes that bolster farm viability in the new world of agricultural transition. Additional benefits for the Brit catchment would include improved water quality in the rivers, reduced flooding, increased carbon capture, and more public engagement with nature.

The initial application is for two years of development funding from Defra. There is **no obligation** for long-term sign up now - your only commitment would be to map out what land you have that might be suitable for this project and to agree to talk more at the landowner-led project development stage.

**The deadline is mid-September so we look forward to talking to you soon**

For more details go to <https://westdorsetwilding.org/brit> or [brit@westdorsetwilding.org](mailto:brit@westdorsetwilding.org)

West Dorset Wilding is a registered charity number 1196964

West Dorset Wilding is a charity established in 2021 by local landowners and farmers which aims to make more space for nature in West Dorset, amidst, and in harmony with, our productive farmed landscape. Because we are a charity we work for wider public benefit, not personal or corporate gain.

In order to submit a viable bid, we are looking to identify a minimum of 500 hectares of connected land throughout the Brit catchment for inclusion in the scheme (just over 4% of the catchment area). The target area includes the sub catchments of the upper and lower Brit, Symene, Mangerton Brook and Asker. The bid is focused on the riparian (riverside) strip, adjacent land connected to the floodplain, and existing species rich habitats.

Areas earmarked through the scheme will have plans put in place to change their land use over time, becoming more wildlife rich and addressing the UK's net zero targets. This might include creating a mosaic of *riparian wetlands*, *scrubby wood pastures*, *naturally regenerating or planted woodland*, *species-rich grasslands*, *arable reversion*, and *low-input regenerative agriculture*. **Connectivity** between the identified land areas will be critical.

We can also earmark existing species rich areas, including protected sites, and particularly those that have problems with invasive non-native species. These important habitats are already being looked after by many farmers and landowners within the Brit catchment - we need to connect them to create a catchment for nature in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.



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Transformative change for nature in the Brit catchment

A Landscape Recovery proposal. FAQs:

## Q. What is Landscape Recovery (LR)?

A. This is a new scheme under the Governments Post-brexite Environmental Land Management Schemes, ELMS. This, along with the Sustainable Farming incentive and a revised Countryside Stewardship will replace the existing BPS and other subsidy schemes. The new schemes are all focused on public money for public benefit (in terms of nature, biodiversity, carbon, reduced flooding etc). The difference with LR is that you can apply for funds for 20+ years, and you are contributing to a wider package of benefits for nature over a wider area.

## Q. If I sign up at this stage, am I committed to the project?

A. No, the only commitment is to talk to us at the next stage if we get development funding.

## Q. I have land which is not adjacent to a river, can it be included?

A. Yes, as we would look to find land that links you to your nearest water course.

## Q. Can this project pay for capital works?

A. Yes, LR will allow capital funding.

## Q. What if I have an existing Countryside Stewardship agreement?

A. If we are successful with LR you can either keep your existing CS funding and move to LR when your CS ends for the rest of the LR period, or move at the start of the LR project.

## Q. Can this project include areas of productive agriculture?

A. Yes, but only if following regenerative principles and meeting certain conditions. Please talk to us about this.

## Q. What if I am outside of the catchment?

A. Please talk to us, but at the moment we are working using a catchment approach and may not be able to include your land at this stage.

## Q. Who is West Dorset Wilding?

A. West Dorset Wilding is a small local charity committed to nature recovery in West Dorset, founded by local farmers and landowners. We believe in the potential for the Brit catchment, and wider West Dorset, to become a flourishing example of ecosystem restoration and local food production, working together for the benefit of people and nature.

**Map:** Wider Brit catchment project area, including sub-catchments: Upper and lower Brit, Symene, Asker and Mangerton Brook.

