

# **Avon Wildlife Trust – Living Landscapes Grassland Project**

## **Project Aim**

The aim of the project is to affect change in the management of lowland meadows, calcareous grassland, and other associated priority habitats to increase biodiversity. We want to see a landscape richer in wildlife, where our activities are more integrated with the needs of wildlife and we benefit from greater contact with nature.

There will be a measurable increase in the amount of land in positive management for nature conservation, an increase in the amount of priority habitat and new links created between valuable habitat areas. This will provide the conditions needed for wildlife in general and for a number of UK BAP species to thrive.

## **Project Objectives**

1. Ensure the current extent of priority grassland habitat is accurately mapped.
2. Identify and audit their management condition.
3. Ensure appropriate long-term management prescriptions are in place to benefit their wildlife interest.
4. Identify and target land that can be restored to priority habitat status.
5. Establish long-term links between priority habitats and other sites of nature conservation importance.
6. Increase knowledge and understanding of wildlife within the farming community and pride in local biodiversity.
7. Encourage appropriate use and enjoyment of the countryside.
8. Monitor changes in habitats.

## **Mechanisms**

The project will employ the equivalent of 2 full-time staff over 5 years. They will work closely with local farmers, other landowners, the 4 Unitary Authorities and Statutory Agencies to influence the decision making and management processes required to achieve results.

The main mechanisms for project delivery will be:

- Collaboration between projects working in the area to ensure a common proactive approach to biodiversity work and to provide added value.
- The provision of practical support and advice to landowners and assistance with farm management plans and grant applications.
- The creation of examples of good practice to provide training opportunities and highlight what can be achieved.
- A training programme for land managers and volunteers in the skills and techniques required for effective management of species rich grasslands and associated habitats.
- The establishment and co-ordination of a Grazing Animals Project to facilitate a sustainable means of managing species-rich grassland.
- The establishment of a new seed harvesting initiative to facilitate restoration work.

It is envisaged that by year 3 a complimentary project will run alongside this one to look at the marketing of local, sustainably produced (food and non-food) products. Economic viability is vital to maintaining biodiversity gains in the wider countryside.