



# The landscape around us

Caring for Bath's green setting





City and country are more closely connected in Bath than perhaps any other British city.

**The Bathscape partnership was born from a shared recognition of Bath's value as a landscape city, the threats it faces if neglected and the opportunities it affords for improving the lives of residents and visitors.**

Fewer and less diverse local wildflower meadows, a high proportion of unmanaged woodlands, and hedgerows and treelines which required attention were just some of the issues identified by partners.

Partners identified common themes such as an aspiration for active management, connection, inclusivity, partnership and encouraging inspiration and enjoyment.

Conserving and restoring Bath's landscape setting has been a major strand of work for Bathscape aiming that:

- The green setting is cared for with more land managed, understood and in better condition, involving a greater number of people taking action to enhance our local heritage
- The Bathscape area is recognised and valued as a notable landscape, with landowners, managers, farmers and communities working in partnership and understanding the collective benefits they can achieve.

This Pathways to Impact report gives a flavour of what has happened as a result.

**The rural landscape is very visible and encroaches on the edge of the City and is within our reach; I can be in the countryside within a 10-minute walk from my house. We have on occasions sheep grazing below Lansdown Crescent; there are not many cities where you would see that!**

Local resident

Cover Image: Marbled White butterfly.

Top left: Surveying one of the sites previously seeded with wildflowers.

Opposite page: The Royal Crescent ha-ha was seeded by Bath & North East Somerset Council Parks department using a Bathscape-sourced Yellow rattle-rich brush harvested wildflower seed.



Bathscape has [ ] really elevated recognition of the importance of the green setting to the city, as part of the World Heritage Site inscription, and I think proof of this is in the prominence of discussion of the green setting as part of the current local plan consultation.

Bathscape partner

## This city-wide effort has led to:

During planning stages, a Landscape Character Assessment was developed which set out the area's landscape values and has provided a foundation for making decisions.

Bathscape partners used this as a basis to develop and implement a suite of projects; supporting land managers to improve the management of vitally important habitats and landscape features through advice, skills development and training, developing a deeper understanding of landscape, ecology, archaeology and history, making more use of existing resources and grant support.

**4** delivery partners

Advice given to **200ha woodland**  
and **100ha grassland**

**10**  
community  
groups

**14** areas of  
**meadow seeded**  
and **5 trial plots**  
**established**

**20** views  
**assessed**  
for their landscape value

**11**  
archaeological  
sites surveyed

**6 new friends groups**  
supported to help **manage**  
**Bath's green setting**

**381** biodiversity and  
land management  
training opportunities

**£80k**  
in small grants

# Key ingredients

Caring for Bath's green setting has had the following key ingredients at its heart:

## 1 Support for Land managers

**Bathscape's technical advice to Land managers addressed the issue of good habitat dropping out of management and the opportunity of owners wanting to do more.**

For example, over 70 land managers (and 100ha grassland) benefitted from a species-rich grassland advisory service delivered in partnership with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group south-west and Avon Wildlife Trust. This has ranged from giving on-site advice and botanical surveys, to writing management plans and producing full farm applications for agri-environment funding.

Advice is paired with £80k of small grants including fencing of fields to allow reinstatement of vital grazing, signage, tree planting and protection, pond creation and access improvement works.

**Thank you so much on behalf of everyone... This funding has come at a critical time when there is very little alternative funding available.**

Local charity

## 2 Developing conservation skills

**Over 380 land managers and volunteers across the Bathscape have benefitted from biodiversity, land management and archaeology training.** This has covered subjects from dry stone walling and pruning fruit trees to charcoal burning, wildflower identification and surveying, and understanding ash dieback.

**From this project we've had a lot of interest in countryside skills and scything. It's silent and gives you a hands-on experience where you're totally involved in the process, and ...exercise as well...**

Traditional rural craftspeople

## 3 Mobilising more people

**Bathscape has supported local communities to care for their green spaces through support for groups and volunteering.**

The regular Community Action for Nature volunteers have undertaken 208 conservation tasks from tree planting and mulching to building bug hotels, maintaining steps and restoring ponds.

**I've volunteered for many organisations now and Bathscape are right at the top.**

Volunteer



## **Spotlight:** Pollinators make a beeline for Twerton

**Over 97% of the UK's species-rich grassland has been lost in less than a century and it now covers just 1% of land. Bathscape has focussed efforts on increasing biodiversity in local grasslands to support and expand these precious habitats.**

Unless they are adjacent to wildflower-rich sites, some sites will have lost their wildflower seed bank – and with it, their ability to fully self-regenerate into a species-rich grassland so restoration methods are needed.

Plug plants can also be added to further diversify sites.

With this in mind, Bathscape purchased a brush harvester which can be drawn across a meadow to knock the grass and wildflower seed into a hopper.

Bathscape volunteers have worked alongside the National Trust team to collect seed annually from donor sites. After sieving, volunteers gather in autumn to spread the resulting seed onto recipient sites.

This seed was used alongside sowing commercial but local seed from St. Catherine's Valley by Bath & North East Somerset Council Parks Department at Innox Park in Twerton. Prior to this, the Park was all close-mown amenity grass.

Meadow restoration is not an overnight job with new and improved meadows often taking many years to come to fruition. However, with the right care these vital habitats will provide havens for both wildlife and people for years to come.

The initial signs at Innox Park are encouraging. Two patches of wildflower rich grassland are now established with 35 plant species found (Bath Natural History Society) and it is already proving to be a fantastic resource for pollinators such as bees and hoverflies.



**Using the seed harvester to collect the seeds and then being contacted by the community and organising sites that will receive the seeds has been great. A lot of the volunteers have seen the process full circle of harvesting and now that we're seeding which has allowed them to see the full picture and feel the difference.**

National Trust

**Before Twerton expanded to the point when these fields were no longer viable as farmland, the slopes were rich in wild flowers. Without grazing the first things to appear were brambles, shrubs and tree seedlings, along with large patches of perennial weeds.**

**The tougher grasses form a 'thatch' at ground level, which enriches the soil and stops other species from germinating.**

Bathscape team member

## **Spotlight:** Helping woodlands to thrive

### **The Forest of Avon Trust undertook an initial study of woodlands across the Bathscape.**

This particularly highlighted the importance of ancient woodland to the east of the city in the Limpley Stoke Valley, near Warleigh.

With the woodland there under multiple ownerships, the Trust was commissioned by Bathscape to work with the individual owners to agree woodland management plans, alongside providing wrap-around training and support.

Nine different compartment owners within the valley woodland were advised.

As a result, six of them have gone on to produce full Forestry Commission approved woodland management plans; helping to bring co-ordinated management across the area.

The Bathscape small grant scheme has been able to add further value to this work by supporting the creation of a pond in the woodland. Alongside works to diversify the structure and species of trees, the new pond will support greater biodiversity in the woodland and be a valuable source of water for wildlife.



|| ... the Woodland Advisory Service that we provide is totally free, funded by the Bathscape Project. Which means I'm able to come out and visit your woods and answer any site-specific questions you may have, as well as talk through the management plan drawn up. ||

Bathscape partner

Above: Volunteers planting trees. Top right: Training in recognising and managing Ash dieback disease.

# Bathscape's thriving heritage and green spaces

**The Bathscape scheme has provided capacity and focus for partners to work across the Bath bowl of seven hills which cradles the city.**

It has reached a vibrant mix of well over 150 sites from Smallcombe Nuttery and Corston Orchard to Pennyquick Park and Southcot Burial Ground.

The Bathscape scheme has helped to collect more and richer records of natural and archaeological heritage, and to map and research landscape assets such as views and green heritage sites.

This new data has expanded our shared understanding of Bath's heritage and ability to share its stories. Furthermore, the data is being used in planning to help to make informed decisions about, and to protect, the setting for the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Sites have received bespoke support to meet their needs. For some this has been targeted tree planting, habitat creation or restoration or provision of practical hands-on help.

Whilst for others help has taken the form of funding for infrastructure improvements to make them easier to manage or buying equipment. Many sites have been surveyed, provided with advice and management plans, and connected with peers to share ways of working, ideas and challenges.

As a result, the Bathscape scheme is leaving a solid legacy of a more diverse, better managed green setting for the city. In turn, this has contributed towards bigger, better and more joined-up spaces for wildlife and realising the benefits of the city's heritage.

But perhaps more importantly, the Bathscape scheme leaves a bigger cohort of colleagues and partners, landowners, community groups and local residents who are enthused, better equipped and more joined-up to care for it.



|| Can I stress the valuable help that Jenny and Tim provided... Between them they provided a very clear plan for our cutting regime as well as looking at the woodland. In response, we are proceeding with cutting and raking ASAP. A really useful morning. ||

Community conservation group

I think I can say on behalf of both of us, the help you have given us from the very start was absolutely pivotal. Having Bathscape in at the beginning gave us loads more confidence about the track we were taking.

Community conservation group



# Outcomes achieved



**Heritage is better identified and recorded**



**Heritage is in better condition**



**Heritage is better managed**



**People have developed skills**



**Negative environmental impacts have been reduced**

Top left: Learning the art of dry stone walling.

Bottom: Participants learning how to create a meadow.

Opposite: One of Bathscape's Grassland Advisors at Barrow Castle.



|| **[Bathscape's] visit to Bannerdown... was extremely helpful. Jon's knowledge, expertise and advice significantly changed our perspective and approach towards management of the Bannerdown "Wild Wood".** ||

Commoners Association

|| **I joined Bathscape in January 2020 and my first volunteering session took place at Twerton Roundhill where I learnt the techniques of traditional hedge laying. Since, I have coppiced Hazel, planted countless whips and trees in numerous parks around Bath, gathered wildflower seeds, cleared invasive species, scythed grass, learnt the rudiments of plant identification and the 'correct' techniques for pruning fruit trees.** ||

Community Action for Nature Volunteer

|| **The Friends are mostly locals. I have no background in farming and used to be a teacher.** ||

Community conservation group

|| **Quite often we're restoring an old hedge that's been neglected and has become derelict and lots of gaps have opened up.** ||

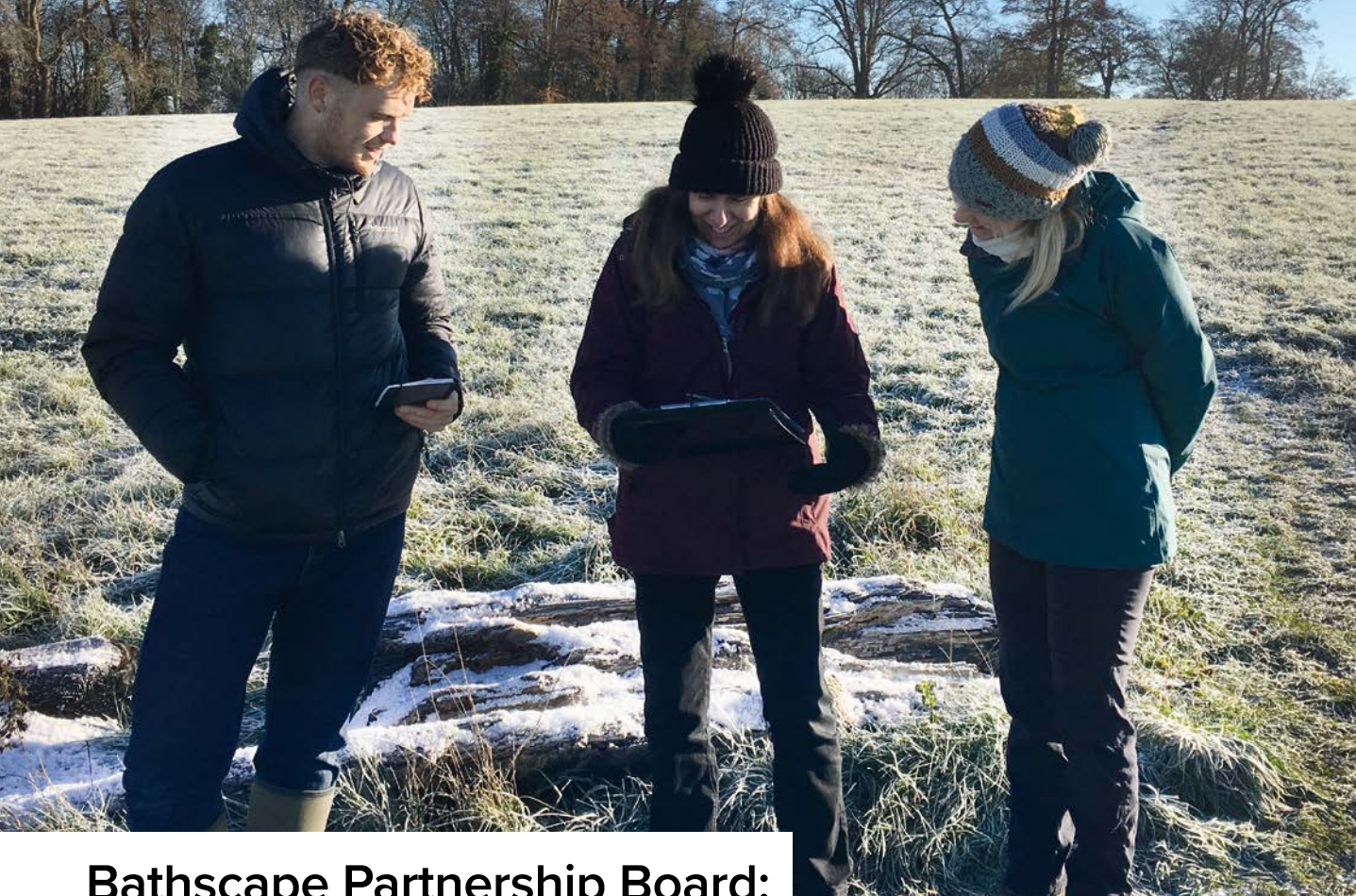
Traditional rural craftsperson





...our project with our meadows is still on-going and we had the best showing of cowslips in our far field this year. We would love a visit from the grassland advisor and any spare wildflower seeds for sowing.

Land owner



## The Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the partnership has delivered 25 interconnected projects and brought together partners around a shared vision to ensure Bath and its setting are better recognised, managed and experienced as a landscape city, with the surrounding hills and valleys enhancing the World Heritage Site and actively enjoyed by all.

*This Pathways to Impact report has been created by external evaluators, Heritage Insider, as part of the Bathscape end-of-Scheme evaluation. It has been built from mixed-methods evidence independently reviewed and synthesized.*

*Verbatim quotes have been used throughout this document in order to include stakeholders' own voices.*

*For authenticity, the spelling and grammar of these have not been corrected. [ ] denotes a deletion. ... denotes a partial quote.*

## Bathscape Partnership Board:

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

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PRESERVATION  
TRUST



[www.bathscape.co.uk](http://www.bathscape.co.uk)

Top: Woodland Advisor at Carrs Wood.

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