



End-of-scheme evaluation summary



This document was commissioned by Bathscape Landscape Partnership. It has been researched and written by Heritage Insider Ltd.

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Front cover photo: View across the Bathscape towards the city



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£493,255 worth of benefit across the city through volunteering
A partnership of **12 organisations** **25 interconnecting projects**

18 community organisations collaborating

6 voluntary groups supported to look after green spaces

2000 trees planted

14 archaeological site surveyed

Advice given to help **manage 230ha (50 sites) of woodland and 95 grassland sites (69 owners)** for people, heritage and wildlife

1020 volunteers giving around 3000 days to care for and share some of Bath's special places

17 new flower-rich meadows sown

43 students getting experience **in the workplace**

80 families in challenging circumstances supported

34 new walking trails exploring this landscape city

1208 family members got active in the landscape

2 primary schools helping **create educational resources**

1040 people trained in skills to help understand, care for and share Bath's special landscape

280 kits to help children explore nature **during lockdown**

3470 people exploring the city's landscape online

196 physical and mental wellbeing sessions

5107 citizen science wildlife observations

24,000+ people explored Bath's landscape at an event

4250 walkers, young and old taking part in **7 walking festivals**

1 World Heritage Site



Bathscape in numbers



Executive summary

The Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme has been an **ambitious and successful programme** that has helped transform how Bath and its surrounding landscape are understood, cared for and experienced.

Supported by funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and partners, the Scheme has brought together a wide range of organisations, communities and individuals to protect and celebrate the remarkable natural setting of the city.

Over the course of the Scheme, partners worked collaboratively across the hills, valleys and green spaces that frame Bath's historic centre. Together they delivered a **diverse programme of conservation, engagement, learning, wellbeing and access** initiatives designed to reconnect people with the landscape and ensure it is better managed for the future.

Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scheme not only met but, in many cases, exceeded its ambitious targets:

- More than 24,000 people participated in events and activities

- In excess of 1,000 volunteers contributed their time

- Significant improvements were made to habitats, heritage assets and access routes across the Bathscape.

The Scheme has delivered **tangible improvements to the landscape** itself. Woodland and grassland habitats have been restored and brought into better management, new flower-rich meadows have been created, important viewpoints have been researched and enhanced, and archaeological and

ecological surveys have strengthened understanding of the area's history, and its natural and cultural heritage.

Through advice, training and small grants, landowners, community groups and volunteers have gained the **skills, confidence and resources needed to care for the landscape** far into the future.

Just as importantly, Bathscape has strengthened the local network of organisations and individuals working for the city's heritage. The Scheme created conditions for collaboration between partners who had not previously worked closely together, fostering what stakeholders have described as a growing '*ecosystem of organisations focusing on the ecosystems of Bath*'.

Community groups, environmental charities, landowners, universities and local government have built new relationships, shared knowledge and developed joint approaches to managing and celebrating the landscape. This **strengthened ecology of organisations** will continue to support heritage and environmental work across the city in the years ahead and is an important part of the Scheme's legacy.

Bathscape has also demonstrated **the power of heritage and landscape as vehicles for wider social and environmental change**. By working with healthcare providers, community organisations and volunteers, the Scheme tested new delivery models for connecting people with nature to support well-being.

Initiatives such as Wellbeing Walks, outdoor activities and green social prescribing trials have helped a **diverse range of people** discover how the landscape can support their physical and mental health. The Scheme has also broadened access to the hills and green spaces surrounding the city through very popular walking festivals, new trails and outreach work with communities who have previously engaged less with the landscape.

Crucially, Bathscape has helped **reshape how the city's setting is understood and valued**. The programme has significantly increased recognition of Bathscape as both a place and a concept: the idea that the historic city and its surrounding landscape form a single, interconnected heritage.

Today the term 'Bathscape' is widely used by organisations and residents alike, and the importance of the green setting of Bath is now more clearly recognised within planning policy, the World Heritage Site Management Plan and other strategic documents.

The Scheme has helped to more firmly establish Bath as **a landscape city**, where the surrounding hills, valleys and green skyline are understood as integral to the city's identity, heritage and quality of life.

Alongside these achievements, the Scheme has generated **valuable learning**.

It has **tried new approaches** to partnership-working, community engagement, green health initiatives and landscape management at scale. These experiences have provided important lessons for future programmes both locally and nationally, demonstrating how heritage partnerships can deliver environmental improvements while also strengthening communities and improving well-being.

As the Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme draws to a close, its most important legacy lies not only in the habitats restored, paths improved and heritage sites better understood, but in the **lasting shift it has created in how Bath's landscape is valued and cared for**.

Bathscape has shown that the city's surrounding hills, valleys and green spaces are not simply a backdrop to the historic centre, but an **integral part of Bath's identity, well-being and future resilience**.

It has helped more people recognise, enjoy and care for the Bathscape, ensuring that the green setting of Bath continues to **enhance the World Heritage Site** and **enrich the lives** of those who live in and visit the city.

The concept of **Bathscape** – the inseparable relationship between the city and its landscape setting – is now firmly embedded in local thinking and policy.

Through strengthened partnerships, an active volunteer community, improved skills and knowledge, and a growing network of organisations and individuals committed to the landscape, the foundations have been laid for continued collaboration and stewardship.

This shared understanding, combined with the relationships and momentum created by the Scheme, provides a **powerful platform for future initiatives** that will continue to protect, celebrate and connect people with the landscape that makes Bath unique.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Bathscape

The 'Bathscape' describes the unique, inspiring landscape encompassing the City of Bath and providing its setting. The Bathscape is what makes Bath one of the most complete landscape cities, and a key reason for its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

It lies at the southern edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and its varied natural features include woodland, grasslands, river corridors, Common Land, parkland and green spaces, as well as the Georgian city of Bath itself.

During programme planning,¹ residents explained their connection to the landscape in a range of ways, for example:

'The green spaces around Bath are so important because they encircle the city in green - wherever you are in Bath you can see a green skyline. It's a constant backdrop and I think many of us take it for granted.'

'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 ten minute walk from my house. We have on occasions sheep grazing below Lansdown Crescent; there are not many cities where you would see that!'

'In truth I suppose it's not that special, but what's important is that it's ours, and it's close by, and it's easily accessible, and there is variety, and there's history, and it's lovely, so that's good enough for anyone.'

This rich landscape legacy is reflected in the breadth, number and quantity of landscape and building designations within the area.

However, this is not a landscape set in aspic, and a Landscape Character Assessment identified a number of threats and opportunities, including:

- Loss of skyline trees
- Intrusion of development
- A reduction in the extent and diversity of wildflower meadows
- Management issues relating to hedgerows and tree lines
- Loss of trees within the cityscape
- Perceived loss of tranquillity in rural areas
- Perceived disconnect between Bath residents and the landscape surrounding Bath.

¹ 2018

1.2 The Landscape Partnership

The Bathscape Partnership first met in 2013 and was formed to help coordinate and promote greater care and enjoyment of the landscape. Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council is the lead partner.

The Partnership developed the Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme ('Bathscape' or 'the Scheme') and successfully attracted £2.2 million of funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the World Heritage Enhancement Fund, Network Rail, Bath & North East Somerset Council and partner organisations.



Figure 1 Panorama of the Bathscape, with Bath city below

After a funded Development phase, the Scheme began delivery in October 2018 with the intention of promoting better management and use of the Bathscape – the beautiful natural landscape surrounding the historic city of Bath.

The partners' vision was:

'The Bathscape Scheme will 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**.

A greater number and wider range of people will **feel connected** to their local landscape and **inspired to explore** the outstanding built and natural environments, improving health and well-being.'

2. Methodology

2.1 Why evaluate?

Both monitoring and evaluation are part of The National Lottery Heritage Fund requirements. They can be used to help guide adjustments to the project plan during project delivery, demonstrate what the project delivered and what difference it has made, and to gather lessons learnt to inform future projects and programmes.

Evaluation is particularly important for this project due to the level of innovation and new partnership-work involved.

Specialist independent evaluators Heritage Insider Ltd were appointed to support the Scheme in planning and undertaking evaluation from the Development Stage.



2.2 What does the evaluation process seek to find out?

Heritage Insider worked with the programme team to develop an Evaluation Framework² to guide this work. This was later refined into a practical Delivery Plan.³

The following Key Evaluation Questions were formulated to help to frame the evaluation and guide the data collection and interpretation process:

Project delivery and outcomes

1. Have outputs and outcomes been achieved for each project? See **Sections 3.4 and 4**, and the suite of Impact Reports in **Appendix 2**
2. What have been the key facilitators and blockers for this work? See **Section 5**
3. To what extent has Bathscape been successful in connecting and inspiring more and a wider range of people in the heritage of this special landscape? Who in particular has benefitted? See the **Unlocking the landscape and Stories of the hills Impact Reports**
4. To what extent has an improvement in health and well-being been achieved? See the **Journeys to wellbeing Impact Report**
5. Which strategies have been most successful for engaging new audiences in the Bathscape Scheme and where is there work still to be done? See the **Unlocking the landscape Impact Report**
6. Is the heritage better managed following the project, and in what way? See the **Landscape and conservation Impact Report**

Project systems

7. Have project management systems been appropriate and effective? See the **Interim Evaluation Report and Section 3.2**
8. How effective has partnership-working been between the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) and wider partners, and what opportunities and challenges has this approach brought? What have the partner organisations learnt from the project? See the **Interim Evaluation Report and Section 3.3**

Project impacts, legacy and learning

9. Has the Scheme been able to build capacity and establish sustainable models of working, such as more joined-up volunteering across Bathscape? See the **suite of Impact Reports**

² 2018

³ 2019

10. What are the longer-term impacts of the Scheme likely to be and what is its legacy? See [Section 4.3](#)
11. What have the impacts been for the wider sector in the Bathscape and its environs (e.g. other conservation and NGO organisations locally, including the wider World Heritage sites) and what are the implications of this? See [Sections 4.3 and 5](#)

How was the evaluation undertaken?

A mosaic approach⁴ was used for this evaluation: combining several evaluation techniques. This has allowed triangulation⁵ of data to create a rounded view of the partnership's journey, progress against delivery to date (outputs) and what difference it is starting to make (outcomes and impact).

This approach also enables investigation into the extent to which the aims and objectives has been met, and the success of key project activities. Data collection methods are listed below:

1. Review of original project plans and documents
2. National Lottery Heritage Fund progress reports
3. A range of monitoring and evaluation data from projects, for example a volunteer survey, mini survey cards from family events and feedback forms from the walking festivals
4. Face-to-face opportunities to observe activities and meet partners and participants⁶

⁴ Utilising a variety of methods of evaluation to build up a picture of the Scheme

⁵ Triangulation is a technique which facilitates the validation of data with the use of multiple sources

⁶ Walking festival tree and feel good walks, Sept 2023; final conference, Oct 2025; thank-you event, Feb 2026

5. Frame analysis⁷ of public-facing communication materials on website, social media channels and news articles. This used Schwartz's values⁸ as a basis
6. Ethnographic field notes (a form of enriched observation) at priority events and activities⁹
7. Independent key informant telephone interviews with staff and external partners¹⁰
8. Group reflective practice at Project Learning Reviews¹¹
9. 'Recommendation and Validation' sessions to present and discuss draft findings¹².

The Bathscape Landscape Partnership team, partners and delivery organisations have collected the ongoing monitoring and formative evaluation data. Heritage Insider has used this information in combination with additional independent data collected by the consultants to create this high-level end-of-project report.

⁷ Undertaken by Heritage Insider Associate and *Framing Nature Toolkit* author and expert Ralph Underhill of Framing Matters, using findings from a number of sources, including the [Positive Communication Toolkit](#), the [Framing Nature Toolkit](#) and [Common Cause for Nature: A practical guide](#). All these resources use insights from social psychology and linguistics to understand how communication impacts people's willingness to act for other people and the environment

⁸ Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1): <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116>

⁹ Insect exhibition, June 2022; Connecting Families event, July 2022

¹⁰ N = 22

¹¹ 8 December 2020 and 23 January 2026

¹² Virtual session facilitated by Heritage Insider with Dan Merrett, Lucy Bartlett, Julia Kennaby, Seher Singh, Amy Coulthard, Caroline Kay, Andrew Grant, Richard White, Mark O'Sullivan, Mark Connelly and Jane Craven, 1 February 2021

Limitations

There are always factors that limit an evaluation process. Evaluators work to minimise the impact of these limitations and of bias on the evaluation process and findings. A few specific examples of limitations on the evaluation of the Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme are outlined below:

Evaluating capacity – Evaluation is not a ‘one size fits all’ process and takes time and resources. Landscape Partnerships¹³ never have enough resource to evaluate everything in depth, nor would this be desirable. Furthermore, this evaluation support package was commissioned nine years ago¹⁴ with no specific allowance for inflation.

An Evaluation Needs Assessment¹⁵ was undertaken to identify which projects within the Scheme were the highest priority for evaluation in more depth, based on the following factors:

- The importance of the project activity to achieving the Bathscape Scheme (see **Section 1** for the programme vision)
- Monetary value, including resource input
- Level of perceived ‘risk’ of all kinds
- The track record of that particular activity both within B&NES and the Bath area, and in the context of the sector
- The level of priority both internally (within B&NES and for Scheme partners) and externally (within local government, for example).

The following priority projects were identified:

2.1 Landscape on Prescription

¹³ Now referred to as Area-Based Schemes

¹⁴ 2017

¹⁵ Undertaken with the Bathscape Team in spring 2019.

2.6 Connecting Families with landscape

3.4 Easy access routes and photo/video trails

4.3 Community skills.



Figure 2 Family Fun days were among the activities where evaluation observation was undertaken

that the Bathscape team, partners and delivery organisations have differing levels of experience in this specialist field. Initial training in evaluation awareness and skills for partners was not taken. This resulted in varying extent, depth and quality of client-side data collected.

The short-term nature of the Scheme and its final evaluation – Many of the Scheme impacts lend themselves better to long-term study (especially those dealing with restoration or conservation of habitat and propensity to utilise green spaces by identified communities). Therefore, some of the effects of work carried out during the Scheme will not become apparent until after delivery ends.

Even as the extended Scheme draws to a close, activity and capital works for some outcomes commonly haven't yet come to fruition, for example heritage being in better condition or better managed.

The evaluation process endeavours to identify and demonstrate the beginnings of any long-term positive impacts on the landscape, especially within this summative evaluation.

3. Project delivery

3.1 Governance

Governance for the Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme was provided through a Partnership Board made up of representatives from a diverse range of key organisations with interests in the landscape surrounding Bath.

These included environmental organisations, heritage bodies, local government, higher education institutions and community representation.

Members comprised:

- Avon Wildlife Trust
- Bath & North East Somerset Council (lead partner)
- Bath Natural History Society (joined during delivery)
- Bath Preservation Trust
- Bath Spa University
- Cotswolds Conservation Board
- Federation of Bath Residents' Associations
- National Trust
- Nicolette Boater (originally representing Bath Forum but later co-opted onto the Board in her own right)
- University of Bath
- Visit Bath
- Wessex Water
- Woodland Trust

It was a large Board but, when it met, it functioned well and was chaired effectively by an independent chairperson.

The Board provided strategic oversight and acted as a forum for aligning organisational priorities and resources with the shared Bathscape vision. Stakeholders highlighted that bringing these partners together created a valuable strategic space which had not previously existed.

'We have the National Trust and the local water company and Bath Preservation Trust and key partners around the table, and I think we wouldn't perhaps have got those people together otherwise.' Stakeholder

Below the Board, a Steering Group was initially established to support programme delivery and coordination. An Advisory Group was also created early in the Scheme to provide additional expertise and 'critical friend' input.

Over time, these structures became less active, with advisory functions largely absorbed into the Board in order to streamline governance arrangements. This is in line with best practice: keeping governance structures to the simplest possible format that serves the function required.

While the Board provided effective strategic oversight, its operation evolved over time. Meetings were typically held twice a year, which some members felt limited opportunities for more iterative discussion, problem-solving and collective reflection.

Some Board members reflected that additional secretariat capacity and more frequent meetings might have enabled the Board to play a stronger role in workshopping challenges and supporting adaptive management during delivery, as well as being more active in legacy-planning.

Despite these constraints, stakeholders consistently highlighted the value of the governance model in providing a neutral and collaborative space for organisations and community voices to shape the programme.

'Fit-for-purpose landscape governance [...] bringing diverse expertise together to collaboratively ensure delivery.' Stakeholder

Importantly, governance arrangements also helped embed Bathscape principles within partner organisations and strategies, extending influence beyond the funded programme itself.

Looking ahead, partners identified continued partnership governance as a key legacy opportunity. Maintaining a light-touch forum or Partnership Board could help sustain relationships, coordinate future landscape initiatives and ensure that the shared vision for Bath's landscape setting continues beyond the lifetime of the Heritage Fund support.

3.2 Project management and resources

Bathscape was delivered through a combination of central programme management, partner delivery and funding contributions from multiple organisations.

The Scheme began delivery in 2018 and was originally scheduled to conclude in 2023. However, due to a combination of delivery delays and external factors – most notably the Covid-19 pandemic – the programme received a number of extensions with permission from its primary funder, The National Lottery Heritage Fund. This extended the delivery timetable to mid-2026, allowing additional time for projects to be completed and for intended outcomes to be realised.

The Scheme brought together investment from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and match contributions from partner organisations and other sources. Financial figures as of 31st March 2026 are presented in the table opposite, summarising headline income, income sources and total expenditure across the life of the Scheme.

Day-to-day management of the Scheme was undertaken by a small central Bathscape team hosted by Bath & North East Somerset Council. Across interviews and stakeholder feedback, the team were consistently praised for their professionalism, responsiveness and ability to build strong working relationships with partners, landowners and community organisations.

Project Costs	Planned	Actual*	Difference
Total Cost	£2,208,920	2,158,118	£50,802
NLHF Grant	£1,655,200	£1,614,568	£40,632
Local Authority (B&NES)	£245,000	£243,992	£1,008
National Trust	£10,000	£8,000	£2,000
Avon Wildlife Trust	£1,000	£1,000	0
Cotswold National Landscape**	£5,000	0	£5,000
WH Enhancement Fund	£7,500	£7,500	0
Woodland Trust	£25,000	£20,000	£5,000
University of Bath	£1,000	£1,000	0
Network Rail	£80,000	£71,973	£8027
Wessex Water	£20,000	£40,000	-£20,000
Other fundraising (unsecured)	£20,220	£11,085	£9,135
Non-cash contributions	£22,500	£22,500	0
Volunteer time***	£116,500	£116,500	0
TOTAL INCOME	£2,208,920	£2,158,118	£50,802

*Based on estimates 31st March 2026

** Offset with Cotswold Wardens volunteer time contributions

*** The equivalent of over £380,000 volunteer time was recorded, however costed time was capped at £116,500 in the bid

Their approachable style and commitment to supporting delivery partners were widely recognised as important enabling factors for the Scheme.

'We've been really well supported by the team – they're clear and easy to communicate with.' Stakeholder

Stakeholders also highlighted the team's practical support and their ability to connect people and organisations across the landscape.

'They've been a sounding board and helped connect people locally.' Stakeholder

In practice, the Bathscape team played a wide range of roles beyond formal programme management. These included brokering relationships between organisations, supporting delivery partners, engaging landowners, coordinating communications and helping resolve delivery challenges as they arose. Their networking abilities and deep knowledge of the local landscape were frequently cited as important assets in progressing the Scheme.

Several stakeholders also emphasised the enthusiasm, trust and collaborative ethos that the team brought to the partnership.

'You know they've got your back – they really trust their partners.'

'Their trust in partners has been really important – they've been inspirational to work with.' Stakeholder

Many commented on how supportive the programme staff team have been throughout.

'The team has always been really clear and supportive.' Stakeholder

Delivering change across a complex landscape required collaboration between organisations with different remits, landholdings and priorities. This central coordination role was therefore particularly important given the landscape-scale ambitions of Bathscape. The Bathscape team acted not only as programme managers but also as facilitators and connectors, helping align partners within the shared vision for the landscape.

'It's easy to get hold of them and they respond straight away.' Stakeholder

However, evaluation evidence suggests that the small size of the central team inevitably placed limits on the scale of activity that could be coordinated centrally. This was somewhat mitigated by the multiple extensions to the programme in light of early-programme delays.

The dedication, enthusiasm and effectiveness of staff were also widely recognised.

'Their energy and enthusiasm are infectious – it keeps everyone motivated.' Stakeholder

Capacity constraints meant that some areas – particularly communications, stakeholder networking and landowner engagement – could only be progressed to a certain extent. Several stakeholders noted that additional capacity in these areas may have unlocked further opportunities or accelerated progress in some aspects of delivery.

Despite these constraints, the evaluation indicates that the team enabled the Scheme to deliver significant impact. Their ability to maintain relationships,

support partners and keep projects moving forward was seen as critical to achieving the collaborative outcomes that Bathscape sought to deliver.

Alongside effective programme management, stakeholders also highlighted the Scheme's willingness to adapt and evolve over time.

Bathscape demonstrated elements of adaptive management, responding to learning from delivery, stakeholder feedback and changing circumstances to refine activities and approaches. This included adjusting delivery models, experimenting with different engagement approaches and building on emerging successes as projects progressed.

This flexibility helped ensure that the Scheme remained responsive to local opportunities and challenges, supporting both efficiency and relevance throughout the delivery period.

Like many programmes operating during the same period, Bathscape was significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Restrictions on travel, group activities and volunteering disrupted a number of planned projects and required partners to adapt delivery approaches.

The Bathscape team responded quickly by reviewing activities with partners, pausing or reconfiguring projects where necessary and exploring alternative approaches such as digital engagement and virtual activities.

While delays to some elements of delivery were unavoidable, the Scheme adapted where possible and secured extensions from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to ensure projects could be completed and intended outcomes achieved.



Figure 3 One of the Programme team helping to run a bird-box-making workshop at Springfield Park

Overall, the evaluation suggests that the Bathscape team played a vital enabling role in the delivery of the Scheme. While operating with limited central capacity, they successfully coordinated a complex partnership programme and supported partners to deliver a wide range of projects across the landscape.

‘They know the landscape and people – they’re brilliant at connecting you with the right contacts.’ Stakeholder

The team’s collaborative approach, professionalism and willingness to adapt were widely recognised by stakeholders as key strengths.

‘They helped us figure things out when projects hit a snag.’ Stakeholder

Importantly, the relationships, knowledge and partnership culture developed through this resourcing model are likely to continue to benefit the landscape beyond the life of the funded programme, contributing to the longer-term legacy of Bathscape.



Figure 4 Members of the dedicated team of CAN volunteers with members of the programme team at the final celebration and thank you event. Photo: Heritage Insider

3.3 Partnership-working

The Bathscape partnership came together through a shared recognition of the value of the landscape surrounding the city of Bath, the threats it faces if neglected and the opportunities it offers for improving the lives of residents and visitors.

In developing the Scheme's vision, partners identified common priorities including active landscape management, improved connections between people and place, inclusivity, collaboration and inspiring enjoyment of the landscape.

Addressing these priorities required a partnership approach that could bring together organisations with different expertise, responsibilities and connections to the landscape.

To deliver the Scheme, the core partnership was joined by a wide range of additional organisations and stakeholders. These included community organisations, conservation bodies, landowners, heritage groups and statutory agencies such as Bath City Farm, Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre, Historic England, Natural England, Bath & District Local RSPB Group, B&NES Local Access Forum and Bath & Counties Archaeological Society, among others.

This wider partnership network enabled Bathscape to draw on a wide spectrum of knowledge and skills while extending the reach of activities across the landscape.

At project delivery level, strong cross-sector collaboration emerged between the organisations and disciplines working together to care for and share the Bathscape.

Stakeholders consistently highlighted the value of the Scheme in bringing together organisations that had previously worked largely in isolation.

'They've done a good job bringing people together from all the different areas – people are now talking who hadn't spoken before.' Stakeholder

Some stakeholders reflected on how this had changed working relationships in practice.

'I have a working relationship with the City Farm now, which is a big change. We've also had people doing work on Wessex Water land that wasn't happening before.' Stakeholder

For many organisations, Bathscape created opportunities to build new professional networks and collaborate on shared challenges. Community organisations in particular noted the benefits of being connected to a wider partnership structure, which they felt has helped strengthen their resilience and sustainability.

'Being part of something bigger has been really useful for us as a community organisation. It helps us connect with other groups and makes us more sustainable in the future.' Stakeholder

The partnership model also created opportunities for organisations to share knowledge, resources and equipment. In some cases, this included joint

investment in tools or infrastructure to support landscape management activities.

These practical collaborations helped to build trust between organisations and created tangible benefits that are likely to continue beyond the lifetime of the Scheme.

Several stakeholders felt this has triggered a positive cultural shift within organisations, demonstrating the value of collaborative working and encouraging greater openness to a partnership approach.

'It's had a positive impact on the Council in terms of demonstrating how, through partnership, you can achieve bigger things.' Stakeholder

Within the local authority this shift was particularly visible in areas such as parks management, where collaboration with community groups and volunteers became more widely recognised as a valuable way to support both landscape management and public engagement.

Beyond organisational relationships, the partnership approach helped embed the importance of the landscape within wider strategic discussions about Bath's future. The Scheme contributed to strengthening recognition of the landscape setting of the city as an integral part of its World Heritage Site identity (see [Section 4.2](#)) and supported stronger links between environmental management, well-being and access to nature.

Bathscape also created new connections between organisations operating at different geographic scales. For example, closer working relationships

developed between partners involved in managing the wider Cotswolds National Landscape and those working within Bath itself.

One visible outcome has been the presence of a dedicated National Landscape Access and Volunteers Officer operating in and around Bath, helping to strengthen collaboration between organisations working across the landscape.

A further important strand of partnership-working involved engagement with landowners and land managers across the Bathscape. See [Section 4.11](#) for further discussion of this area of impact.

Importantly, while partnership-working already existed in Bath prior to the Scheme, Bathscape provided a clear framework, shared purpose and dedicated resourcing to enable collaborations to operate more effectively. The programme created a focal point around which organisations could align their activities, share expertise and pursue collective ambitions for the landscape.

This focused approach has helped strengthen connections between organisations across the city and surrounding landscape, creating new networks and reinforcing existing ones.

As a result, many stakeholders felt that partnership-working has become more embedded as a default way of addressing environmental and social challenges in Bath. The relationships, trust and collaborative practices developed through the Scheme are widely seen as an important part of its longer-term legacy.

Partnership-working has also enabled a much better awareness of opportunities, for example for the transfer of Bathampton Meadow to the National Trust.

Overall, the evaluation has found that partnership-working has been one of the defining strengths of the Bathscape Scheme. The programme successfully brought together a diverse range of organisations, communities and landowners around a shared vision for the landscape, enabling collaboration that would have been difficult to achieve through individual organisations acting alone.

By providing dedicated coordination, resources and a clear strategic framework, Bathscape has strengthened existing relationships, created new connections and demonstrated the practical value of partnership-based working. These strengthened networks and collaborative practices are likely to endure beyond the lifetime of the funded programme, providing a strong foundation for future landscape-scale initiatives in and around Bath.



Figure 5 Partners, stakeholders, volunteers and interested parties all came to a conference in the final year to share practice

3.4 What the project delivered

The Scheme comprised 25 interconnected projects under the four strands: Conserving and Restoring; the Therapeutic Landscape; Learning and Training; Access.

The shape of the Scheme remained broadly as it had been designed during Development phase, except for a few minor alterations. For example, the two projects focussed on children and young people in formal education (project numbers 2.2 and 4.5) were merged for administrative and operational purposes, and the Access projects have been brought into one package.

The table on the following page provides an overview of Scheme delivery against key output targets.



Figure 6 Diagram showing the original four strands of the Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Achievement against key output targets

Key to RAG rating: Good or excellent delivery: Met target, was very close to target or exceeded target; Moderate delivery: Some issues encountered and target not fully met; Low delivery: Major issues encountered and little delivery

	Target	Delivered	% against target	RAG rating	Notes
Improved woodland	80ha	230ha	289%	Good	The commissioned advisor calculated 303ha advised based on overall site mapping across 50 sites; however, 230ha is the area of actual woodland. Not all of the advice will have been acted upon. However, indications are that landowners have been very receptive, so while the full 230ha may be an overestimate, the true figure is certainly well over 200ha.
Grassland sites under better management	100	95 sites	95%	Good	This is the number of sites whose 69 owners have received management advice. Again, it is likely that not all advice has been acted upon as yet, but landowners have been very positive, so this is a reasonable estimate of the true total.
New flower-rich meadows	12	17	142%	Good	Plus 5 trial sites
Important viewpoints assessed and managed	30	21	70%	Moderate	28 assessments of viewpoints have been collated in the final Views and Vistas project report. Submissions were completed by trained volunteers. Although they were encouraged to adopt different sites, seven of the submissions came from duplicate sites, though the exact location or direction of the views varied. As anticipated, not all sites required physical works, or proposed works were not in the control of the Scheme; however, physical improvements were undertaken at 7 sites.
Archaeological sites surveyed	10	14	140%	Good	This is the number of sites surveyed and recorded by the Bath and Counties Archaeological Society volunteers using geophysical survey equipment purchased by Bathscape Example indicators from each project
New Friends groups established	5	6	120%	Good	6 groups were given substantial support by Bathscape over the lifetime of the project. There were 10 other established community groups that received lower levels of support.
People attending events and activities	3,800	24,000+	>630%	Good	The events programme was extremely successful, thanks to the dedication of staff, partners and volunteers, and also because in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, people were especially keen to get out and about again. It's probably also true that the initial estimates were overly conservative.

	Target	Delivered	% against target	RAG rating	Notes
New walking routes established	19	34	179%		24 of the 34 trails were directly produced by Bathscape and the other 10 are city tree-trails produced by the Bath Urban Treescape volunteer group that the Scheme helped to set up and provided continuing support to.
Schools piloting new materials	3	2	67%		The involvement of one of three schools fell away during lockdown
All schools to have access to outdoor learning materials	No numerical target	All materials available online			Learning materials are available via the Bathscape website but there is no specific promotional plan for these beyond the life of the project.
Volunteers	795	1,020	128%		Numbers are for individuals. However, it is likely that there is some undercounting here, e.g. partner organisations' volunteers' contribution to Scheme, volunteer Board member contribution to its governance, etc.
Volunteer days contributed	3,000+	2,906	97%		
Training opportunities delivered	600	1040	173%		

4. What difference did the Landscape Partnership Scheme make?

4.1 Delivering the intended outcomes

As the table in the previous section demonstrates, the Scheme was very successful in meeting its output targets, especially considering the difficulties it faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The External Evaluators have already created [four Impact Reports](#)¹⁶ which should be read alongside this report.

These provide a review of how the Scheme has achieved each of its intended outcomes and provides examples against each. This section of the report therefore just provides an introduction to each Impact Report.

4.1.1 Landscape and conservation

This Impact Report focusses on the work on habitat recreation and restoration undertaken in partnership with landowners and land managers.

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.

The Bathscape Scheme has provided capacity and focus for partners to work across the landscape surrounding the city (see [Section 3.3](#) for discussion of partnership-working).

The 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. The data collected is being used in planning to help to make informed decisions about, and to protect, the setting for the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Working with private landowners, farmers and community land managers was essential to achieving landscape-scale change, particularly in relation to habitat restoration and improved land-management practices.

Landowners involved in the Scheme described the value of being brought into a wider community of practice focussed on landscape stewardship.

'It was really good to meet other landowners and look at the wildflowers together. It's nice to be part of a community of like-minded people.'

Landowner

Some stakeholders were keen to share the importance and value of helping landowners recognise the ecological value of their land.

'Most people with priority grassland don't realise how valuable or rare it is – once they understand that, they want to look after it.'

'It's opened people's eyes to the wildlife value of their land.' Stakeholders

Over 150 sites received bespoke support, including targeted tree-planting, habitat creation, or restoration and provision of practical hands-on help.

‘Having someone come out and walk the land with us made a huge difference.’

‘The advice has been really practical – things we can actually implement on the ground.’
Landowners

The Scheme has also provided funding for infrastructure improvements or buying equipment to make community-owned sites easier to manage.

Bathscape’s technical advice to land managers helped to address the issue of good habitat no longer being managed and the opportunity for landowners to do more.

In several cases, Bathscape support enabled landowners or community groups to better manage areas of land that had previously received limited active management.

‘We have 37 acres, but most of our activities were focused on just two. The support we received has enabled us to manage the wider landholding rather than leaving it neglected.’ Landowner

‘Areas that had been unmanaged for years are now being actively looked after.’ Stakeholder

The combination of £80,000 in small grants and advisory support helped unlock landscape improvements and connect landowners to wider conservation initiatives.

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

Stakeholder

For some participants, this initial engagement acted as a gateway to deeper involvement in conservation activities and wider Scheme initiatives. Land-management advice and links to agricultural support schemes were valued by partners working with farmers and landowners.

For example, over 70 land managers (caring for a combined 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, and the council’s Land Manager Advisor.

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.

‘It’s helped us manage the land in a much more informed way.’

Landowner

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

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

'The guidance helped us prioritise what would make the biggest impact.'
Community groups

The Scheme also provided training and skills-development opportunities for a wide range of people involved in the care of Bath's green setting. By fostering traditional skills and understanding of contemporary land-management techniques, Bathscape has helped to strengthen capacity to care for these spaces.

'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 craftsperson

In total, over 380 land managers and volunteers across the Bathscape have benefitted from training in biodiversity, land management and archaeology.

The Scheme is leaving behind a bigger cohort of colleagues and partners, landowners, community groups and local residents who are enthused, better equipped and used to working together to care for it.

'There's now a shared sense that we're all helping look after the same landscape.' Volunteer



Figure 7 Meadow creation training for local land managers and community groups

4.1.2 Stories of the hills

This Impact Report introduces the work of the Bathscape Scheme in sharing the story of Bath's heritage landscape, connecting local people with the natural and historic environments through skills development, public events, podcasts, interpretation and the expertise of partners.

Outcomes achieved:

- People have learnt about heritage
- People have developed skills
- More and a wider range of people are engaged with heritage
- The local area is a better place to live, work and visit.

The Bathscape partnership grew from a shared recognition of Bath as a landscape city, the pressures it faces if neglected, and the opportunities it offers to improve the lives of residents and visitors. Research and consultation at the Development Stage found that while many people felt familiar with the area, they wanted to know more and welcomed opportunities to engage with its history and environment.

The Scheme provided a wide range of activities, including biodiversity-themed walks, wild food and archaeology experiences, practical conservation sessions and arts-based projects. These initiatives worked hand-in-hand with efforts to reduce barriers to accessing the green spaces surrounding the city.

'The green spaces around Bath are so important because they encircle the city in green – wherever you are in Bath you can see a green skyline. It's a constant backdrop and I think many of us take it for granted.'

Local resident

By fostering knowledge and skills, Bathscape has empowered participants to enjoy, share and care for the city's heritage and natural environment.

'I just wanted to thank you for organising such a fun and informative walk at Bath Meadow last week. I'm so excited to revisit it soon and see if I can identify a few species that were pointed out to us. I thought it was a lovely atmosphere and everyone was made to feel very welcome.' Participant

'On a sunny Tuesday afternoon[...], several of our clients were led around Snow Hill to see the range of trees it holds [...] It was lovely to notice a different aspect of Snow Hill and appreciate how many trees call it home [...] it too is a unique environment with a tour of its own.' Delivery partner

The Scheme has drawn on expertise from partners, community organisations, volunteers, educational institutions, land managers and local residents with lived experience.

By blending formal knowledge and local insight, Bathscape has created a vibrant programme that helps people understand, record and care for the city's landscape.

4.1.3 Journeys to well-being

The Bathscape Scheme explored the city's 2,000-year history as a centre for health and well-being, offering walks, family support and a variety of activities aimed at both the general public and disadvantaged audiences.

A range of approaches were trialled, including:

- Working directly with healthcare settings and professionals
- Tailoring programmes for referrals, from hands-on nature conservation to sociable Wellbeing Walks
- Providing resources for service-users to access independently
- Offering events and guides highlighting the health benefits of exercise, nature and social connection.

'Hello! I arrived in Britain on the 15th July 23. I would like to improve my mental health and join some activities – Photography group, Wellbeing Walks and Food for Thought – and have a kind of therapy to forget bad things.' Local resident

The programme actively addressed barriers to using nature to support well-being, enabling people to engage with the landscape at their own pace.

Strong partnerships with healthcare providers, Council teams and not-for-profit organisations brought essential expertise, audiences and resources to the Scheme, significantly enhancing what Bathscape could offer.

'Working with local community groups, Bath City Farm, specialist organisations like Bath MIND, GP surgeries and volunteers with lived

experience really helped us to shape our programme of activities to welcome a wider range of people.'

Programme staff member

Through these initiatives, the Scheme has created meaningful opportunities for people to improve their mental and physical health, build social connections and develop confidence in accessing Bath's green spaces.



Figure 8 Well being walk run by Rath Mind. Photo: Ruby

4.1.4 Unlocking the landscape

The Bathscape Scheme has worked to make the city's surrounding green spaces more accessible, engaging and inclusive.

Through walking festivals, waymarked routes, trail guides, and both led and self-led walks, the Scheme has connected residents and visitors to the wider landscape while interweaving interpretation of Bath's heritage, archaeology and natural environment.

Pre-project research highlighted the importance of being outdoors for local residents, second only to having fun. However, only half of residents in the city's most disadvantaged areas visited green spaces weekly or daily, with 40% of the overall population either infrequent users or non-users. The Scheme addressed this by providing opportunities tailored to different needs, interests and abilities.

'I don't exercise as a rule, and walking and learning at the same time is well worth it.'

'At the beginning I didn't think that I could do it, but I did, and this has helped me to have more confidence.' Participants

Guided and accompanied walks created supportive environments for people who might feel uncertain about exploring new spaces, giving them confidence, a sense of belonging and a safe space to connect with others.

'Felt accepted, supported, listened to and part of a group for a day.'

'I felt safe, informed and had a really fun time on each walk.' Participants

The Scheme's approach to audience development was deliberately landscape-scale, targeting communities with low engagement, schools and youth groups, further- and higher-education students, people with mobility needs and older adults.

While early engagement was challenging, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scheme made significant progress in the later stages, working in partnership with 12 core partners and 18 wider community, voluntary and statutory organisations.

These partnerships ensured that people from many walks of life felt welcome and supported, establishing trust and authenticity critical for reaching disadvantaged audiences.

'Wellbeing walks offer something people need – gentle, sociable walks with ad-hoc flexibility so people with complex issues or health conditions can just go along when ready and not need to book in advance. This allows more freedom to take action for themselves for their health and well-being [...] I love Bathscape's Wellbeing Walks.' Delivery partner

Through these initiatives, the Scheme has left a legacy of inclusive access to Bath's green spaces, improved understanding and enjoyment of the landscape and stronger connections between people, heritage and nature.

4.2 Recognising the Bathscape

During Scheme planning, consultation with existing users¹⁶ showed that they recognise and value the landscape, describing it using phrases such as:

Harmony between human influence and nature
A perfect frame for a perfect city
Works in harmony with the city
Enhancing the built environment to ensure a place exists to relax, appreciate nature and enjoy the beautiful surroundings
A chance to see man-made nesting within fantastic countryside
Space, peace, history
It's mine. A slice of green
Something magic about this place
Gives Bath its uniqueness
The joy of living in a city where just to raise one's eyes means a view of trees and countryside – refreshing, comforting and shielding
Space to breathe
No matter where I stand in the city, my view should always include green.

¹⁶ For example, Bath Preservation Trust staged a 'Buildings in the Landscape' exhibition at the Museum of Bath Architecture. As part of the exhibition, a noticeboard for comments on Post-its and a short questionnaire were provided to obtain people's views on the landscape around Bath. 69 people completed a questionnaire or recorded comments on the Post-it board. This was extended to nine further free public events around the area, including three targeting areas of multiple deprivation. 225 people gave their favourite view in the Bathscape.

However, the value many residents attached to the landscape surrounding the historic heart of the city was not reflected in how it was addressed – or rather, largely not addressed – in planning and policy documents. Many organisations simply did not see the encompassing greenspace as being central to the character of the place.

An important part of the partners' vision was for the Bathscape to be better recognised by organisations with responsibility for managing the area, as well as for a wider range of people to recognise and experience the opportunities it provides.

'The visibility of the project is crucial. I think by transforming a space and making it more interesting, making a place to sit is a great idea to get people talking about it more.' Stakeholder

Evidence indicates that those who participated in the Scheme experienced a change in how they perceived their local landscape and in how they used it.

'I'm having a more interactive experience with the landscape as a result of my engagement with the volunteering. I'm much more aware of the nooks and crannies of the hills and landscape of Bath and I share that with my family.' Stakeholder

Bathscape has generated huge brand recognition. The name 'Bathscape' has been used in a variety of official documents and even casually in conversation by local residents. It is now a recognised concept, encompassing both environmental and built heritage where only the built heritage was recognised before.

As a result of Bathscape, the importance of the greenspace surrounding the city has a much higher profile within the Council.

The Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme has generated huge brand recognition. The word 'Bathscape' is now a recognised concept, encompassing environmental and built heritage where only the built heritage was recognised before, and has been referenced in local plans, the World Heritage Site Management Plan and other documents. It is even dropped casually into conversation by residents. It is a tangible model of good practice to point to, and has been an exemplar project for other World Heritage Sites. Bathscape is now a concept encompassing both environmental and built heritage where only the built heritage was recognised before.

Stakeholders are very keen to ensure that landscape remains front and centre of Bath and North East Somerset Council's planning strategy – a 'golden thread' running through policies – and that landscape continues to be viewed as being as important as buildings for the City's heritage.

4.3 Leaving a legacy in the landscape

Although the Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme was a time-limited programme, its influence extends well beyond the period of funded delivery.

Through practical conservation work, improved access to the landscape, well-being activities, skills development and strong partnership-working, the Scheme has created a range of lasting benefits for the landscape surrounding Bath and the people and organisations connected to it.

The following themes summarise the main types of legacy the Scheme is leaving behind:

A better-managed and more resilient landscape

The Scheme has supported habitat restoration, improved land-management and practical conservation activity across the Bathscape, leaving behind a stronger ecological foundation for the future.

Example: Over 150 sites received bespoke support, including advice on habitat creation, tree planting and practical management, helping previously neglected areas to be actively cared for.

A stronger evidence-base for protecting the landscape

Research, surveys and mapping have improved understanding of Bath's natural and archaeological heritage, providing valuable evidence that will continue to inform planning and management decisions.

Example: Ecological records, habitat surveys and mapping of green heritage assets are now being used to help protect the landscape setting of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Improved access to the landscape

New walking routes, waymarking, interpretation and walking programmes have made the Bathscape easier to explore and more welcoming for a wider range of people.

Example: A programme of waymarked routes, accessible guides and walking festivals has created a lasting suite of self-led and guided walking opportunities across the landscape.

Lasting well-being benefits through connection with nature

By demonstrating the role that nature and green spaces can play in supporting health and well-being, the Scheme has helped establish models for linking outdoor activity with well-being support.

Example: Wellbeing Walks and partnerships with organisations such as Bath MIND, GP surgeries and community groups created supported opportunities for people to improve their mental health by spending time in nature.

Stronger partnerships and networks

The Scheme has strengthened collaboration between organisations working across the landscape, creating relationships and networks that continue beyond the programme.

Example: Environmental organisations, community groups, landowners, healthcare providers and local authority teams worked together for the duration of Bathscape to deliver activities and reach new audiences.

A more connected community of landscape stewards

Landowners, volunteers, community groups and organisations have been brought together through shared activities, training and peer learning,

creating a stronger community of practice around caring for the landscape.

Example: Landowners participating in habitat restoration and grassland advisory work described the value of connecting with peers and sharing knowledge about land stewardship.

Increased skills and capacity to care for green spaces

Training and hands-on learning opportunities have developed practical skills among volunteers, land managers and community groups, strengthening local capacity to care for the landscape.

Example: More than 380 people received training in areas such as biodiversity management, archaeology and traditional countryside skills, including scything.

More confident and engaged communities

The Scheme has supported local residents to explore, use and care for green spaces, helping to build confidence and a sense of belonging in the landscape.

Example: Guided walks and supported activities provided safe and welcoming opportunities for people who might otherwise feel unable to access green spaces independently.

Greater recognition of the Bathscape

The programme has raised the profile of the landscape surrounding Bath, helping organisations and residents to recognise its importance as part of the city's heritage and identity.

Example: The concept of 'Bathscape' is now referenced in planning documents, the World Heritage Site Management Plan and other strategies, reflecting stronger recognition of the landscape's importance.

A shared vision for the future of the landscape

By bringing together organisations and communities around a common purpose, the Scheme has helped embed the idea that the landscape surrounding Bath is a shared responsibility.

Example: Stakeholders highlighted the importance of maintaining the 'Bathscape' concept as a 'golden thread' within future planning and management of the city and its setting.

Taken together, these legacies demonstrate that Bathscape has helped shift how the landscape surrounding Bath is understood, managed and experienced.

The Scheme has improved habitats, strengthened partnerships, increased access to green spaces and helped more people connect with the landscape for their well-being, learning and recreation.

Perhaps most importantly, it has established the Bathscape as a recognised concept and collaborative framework for protecting and celebrating the city's green setting, providing a strong foundation for continued stewardship in the years ahead.

5. Successes, challenges and lessons learnt

The Bathscape Scheme was an ambitious landscape partnership programme delivered over several years and involving a wide range of organisations, communities and land managers. As with any complex, multi-partner initiative, the programme achieved significant successes while also encountering a number of challenges. Reflecting on both provides valuable insight for future landscape-scale initiatives in Bath and beyond.

Overall, stakeholders widely recognised the Scheme as a successful programme that strengthened collaboration, improved the management and accessibility of the landscape surrounding the city, and increased recognition of the importance of nature and green space to Bath's identity and well-being. At the same time, the experience of delivering the programme highlighted lessons relating to partnership governance, capacity, audience development and the external context in which such schemes operate.

5.1 Key Successes

Across its lifetime, the Bathscape Scheme delivered substantial environmental, social and organisational benefits. It strengthened the management and connectivity of habitats, increased access to and enjoyment of the landscape, supported well-being through nature-based activities, and fostered new partnerships and networks across organisations and communities.

Importantly, the Scheme also helped embed the concept of the 'Bathscape' as a recognised part of the city's identity, raising the profile of

the landscape within both policy and public discourse. Below are examples of Scheme strengths:

Landscape restoration and habitat management

The Scheme enabled significant improvements to habitats and land management across the landscape surrounding the city. Practical conservation activity on both public and private land strengthened ecological connectivity and enhanced 'green corridors' linking wildlife-rich areas around the urban edge.

Within the city itself, Bathscape also influenced the management of the urban treescape. Collaboration between the Council's Parks tree team and local communities helped embed biodiversity considerations into urban tree management.

'Wilder parks with less push back.' Stakeholder

Two areas of land were also transferred into NGO ownership as a result of the Scheme: **Bathampton Meadows**, acquired by the National Trust as its first 'green corridor' purchase, and **Charlcombe Fields** in the Charlcombe Valley. These acquisitions represent an important step towards securing long-term protection of key habitats within the Bathscape.

The Scheme also helped build stronger relationships with landowners and farmers, and improved awareness of the ecological value of the landscape surrounding the city.

Raising the profile of nature and the Bathscape

Bathscape has significantly raised the profile of nature, biodiversity and the landscape setting of Bath among decision-makers, partner organisations and local communities.

Stakeholders reported that environmental issues now have greater visibility within the city, contributing to Bath's reputation as a nature-rich place.

'The city feels greener.' Stakeholder

Community engagement activities and events have also strengthened public awareness of the importance of the landscape.

'Nature and the outdoors are seen as part of people's lives, particularly in the target groups.' Stakeholder

Importantly, the Scheme has also established the **'Bathscape' concept and brand** as a widely recognised way of describing the relationship between the city and its surrounding landscape.

Improved access and recognition of Bath as a walking destination

The Scheme significantly increased awareness and use of the green spaces surrounding Bath. Physical access improvements, guided walks and accessible walking guides helped encourage more people to explore the landscape.

The Bathscape walking festivals formed one of the most visible and successful elements of the programme and helped raise Bath's profile as a walking destination, for both residents and visitors.

Embedding nature in well-being activities

Supporting health and well-being through access to nature was a key objective of the Scheme. Activities such as Wellbeing Walks and events in the Walking Festival helped demonstrate the value of green spaces for both mental and physical health.

While it is too early to determine whether these initiatives have translated into measurable changes in long-term health indicators, stakeholders widely recognised the importance of embedding nature-based well-being activities within the city's broader health and community offer.

Developing volunteering and community capacity

Bathscape represented the first large-scale volunteering initiative focussed on the natural environment across Bath & North East Somerset. The programme supported volunteers to develop practical conservation skills alongside natural history and citizen science expertise.

Investment in training, equipment and infrastructure has strengthened the capacity of local organisations and volunteers to continue conservation activities beyond the lifetime of the Scheme.

Lasting benefits for partner organisations

Participation in the Scheme also generated significant organisational benefits for partner organisations, for example:

Bath Preservation Trust strengthened its relationship with the Council's environmental teams and increased its organisational focus on the natural environment alongside built heritage.

Bath Natural History Society reported improved field skills among members and recognised the gains in habitat-quality delivered through the Scheme.

The National Trust benefitted from the conditions created for the acquisition of the Bathampton 'green corridor' and from strengthened relationships with farmers and environmental organisations.

"The Scheme has moved us from working locally in isolation to long-lasting, embedded partnerships." Stakeholder

Bath & North East Somerset Council experienced improved collaboration between teams working on woodland management, habitat management and access issues.

Bath City Farm increased its profile and gained stronger partnerships and a more secure footing for its future activities.

5.2 Key Challenges

While the Scheme delivered significant successes, it also operated in a challenging external context.

Changes in national agricultural policy, the Covid-19 pandemic and organisational capacity pressures all influenced delivery. In addition, lessons emerged around governance arrangements, communications capacity and approaches to audience development.

Reflecting on these experiences provides useful insights for the design of future landscape-scale programmes. Below are examples of key challenges:

Programme development and resourcing

Developing the Bathscape Scheme required a substantial commitment of time and effort from partner organisations. The initial funding bid was unsuccessful and had to be revised and resubmitted, placing additional pressure on staff managing this work alongside existing responsibilities.

However, partners noted that the additional development time ultimately strengthened the programme design.

External policy and funding uncertainty

National policy changes associated with the UK's departure from the European Union created uncertainty for engagement with the farming community. Unclear and evolving agricultural support schemes made some landowners cautious about committing to long-term land management changes.

Despite this challenging context, the Scheme successfully built relationships with farmers and increased awareness of the ecological value of land surrounding the city.

Organisational capacity and staffing

The Scheme was delivered by a relatively small core team, which at times limited capacity in areas such as communications and engagement. Staff turnover within partner organisations also occasionally created continuity challenges.

These experiences highlight the importance of ensuring sufficient staffing capacity for communications and coordination within complex partnership programmes.

Governance and partnership working

Governance arrangements generally functioned well, but stakeholders identified opportunities for improvement. In particular, the six-monthly frequency of Board meetings sometimes made it difficult to maintain continuity and momentum.

It also generated a perception that Community representatives – who did not have the opportunity to talk regularly to other Board members in unrelated meetings in the way that formal organisational representatives did – were not as involved in evolving decisions as they were.

More frequent meetings are common in comparable partnership programmes and could help support stronger engagement and decision-making.

Covid-19 pandemic, see discussion in [Section 3.2](#)

5.3 Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

Stakeholders identified a number of lessons from the delivery of the Bathscape Scheme that may inform future initiatives.

Sustaining partnership-working

There is strong interest among partners in continuing collaboration beyond the funded programme, potentially through a continued partnership forum or periodic meetings.

One suggestion is to establish an **annual Bathscape forum** that would provide a low-resource mechanism for partners to share knowledge, maintain relationships and explore future collaboration opportunities.

Strengthening governance structures

Future programmes of this type may benefit from **more frequent governance meetings**, particularly where schemes involve multiple delivery partners and complex work programmes.

Ensuring adequate communications capacity

The relatively small core team limited capacity in some areas, particularly communications and outreach. Future programmes should consider allocating greater resources to communications in order to maximise engagement and visibility.

Continuing support for community nature initiatives

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of continuing to support community groups that wish to develop local nature projects or participate in landscape stewardship activities.

Maintaining the Bathscape brand and concept

The Bathscape identity and brand have become widely recognised and valued. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of maintaining the concept beyond the Heritage Fund phase of the programme, both within policy frameworks and through continued partnership activity.

Building on successful activity areas

There was strong support for continuing several elements of the programme, including:

- Walking festivals and community walking initiatives
- Wellbeing Walks and green social prescribing activities
- Ecological survey programmes and land-management advisory services
- Volunteering and community conservation activities.

Maintaining these initiatives will require ongoing organisational commitment and resourcing but represents an important opportunity to build on the foundations established by the Scheme.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 List of key informant telephone interviewees and interview frameworks

Appendix 2 The four Impact Reports which explore and evidence the Scheme outcomes.

- 1. The Landscape around us**
- 2. Stories of the hills**
- 3. Journeys to wellbeing**
- 4. Unlocking the landscape**

These are available on the Bathscape Landscape Partnership website at bathscape.co.uk – see [Bathscape Impact Reports](#).

Thank you to everyone who has generously given their time, pictures and thoughts to help conduct this evaluation