





# Farming in Protected Landscapes



-  Supports **NATURE** recovery
-  Mitigates the impacts of **CLIMATE** change
-  Opportunities for **PEOPLE** to enjoy, discover and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
-  Protects or improves the quality/character of the **PLACE**

## CASE STUDIES



Standhill Farm hedge planting

### Standhill Farm, Great Longstone



**Grant value: £120,574**




**Embracing tradition, diversification and partnership**

An exemplar of what can be achieved in landscape recovery, this ambitious FiPL project in the heart of the White Peak encompasses tradition, diversification and partnership working.

This dairy farm, run by Robert Thornhill, sought to deliver landscape and nature recovery while maintaining and developing its commercial business.

It is the lead in a collaborative agreement of five landowners, looking at factors such as the mineral and protein content in herbal ley forage with the aim of encouraging other farmers to trial this option.

#### The project included:

-  In-field and boundary tree and hedge planting and management of grass margins with the aim of mitigating for ash dieback
-  Reinforcing the historic field pattern
-  Diversifying the landscape, enhancing wildlife on the farm and – in the future – providing a diverse fodder beneficial to the health of dairy cows

It was ground-breaking by looking at new ways of delivering both high quality forage and more trees in the landscape, with effective business analysis and new ways of monitoring activities on the holding. It has encouraged community engagement with volunteers from the local village involved in tree and hedge planting.

Further plans include an acoustic and breeding bird baseline survey to allow successful measurement of the impact of FiPL and other projects on wildlife at the farm and the restoration of a traditional field barn, a characteristic element of the landscape which supports barn owls.

### Cheshire Wildlife Trust



**Grant value: £36,339**

**Working together for curlew and wader conservation**

This holistic, collaborative project for curlew and wader conservation is farmer-focused and targeted to 'wader hotspots' in the Cheshire and Staffordshire fringe area of the South West Peak.

It is co-ordinated and bankrolled by Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT), working in partnership with the South West Peak wader group to help improve the resilience of breeding curlew and other waders beyond previous focus areas.

A wider, co-ordinated approach was required to target and work with landowners, some of whom had not necessarily engaged with environmental schemes in the past. The project – steered by the South West Peak wader group - covers a wide range of activities, including advice and action on the ground, some of which would not be funded through other mechanisms.

The project builds on the legacy of the five-year Working for Waders initiative, funded through the South West Peak Landscape Partnership Project (Heritage Lottery Funding), which ended in 2022.



**In 2023/24, the project has included:**

- CWT working with 10 landowners
- Creation of 29 scrapes, reprofiling of two ponds and rewetting works to provide feeding opportunities close to wader breeding sites and cutting 9ha of rushes to improve habitat structure. Wetland creation/restoration also has carbon sequestration benefits
- Development of new wader plans including training of volunteer wader wardens to support farmers in the delivery of positive management on the ground, monitoring curlew territories and clutch activity
- Purchase of wildlife cameras to help monitor nest activity

The benefits of the foraging and nesting habitat created/restored are already being seen, with breeding curlew present on two of the sites where works have taken place. Further works are planned for next year.

The volunteer element (wader wardens) provides opportunities for members of the public to develop skills around nature and the farmed environment.

## Corker Walls Farm, Dungworth, Bradfield



**Total grant value: £7120**

**Improving soil health and habitat management for birds**

Two independent, yet related, projects have led to improved soil health, enhanced grassland management and greater support for wading birds in this nature-friendly farming business.

Corker Walls Farm is a family-run beef and sheep farm in the Ughill valley. It has areas of species rich grassland, wetlands and nesting wading birds. It supports a large population of breeding lapwings, curlew and other upland birds, including skylarks.

There are compaction issues in certain areas of the farm and, in order to manage selected fields effectively, farmer Trevor White was keen to aerate compacted fields using a tractor drawn aerator (pictured right).

His grant application, in partnership with another farmer, arose from a meeting of Bradfield Farmers group.

The aeration process benefits soil-water management, which contributes to climate change mitigation and nature diversity.



**The farmer reports:**

- Greater productivity with low fertiliser inputs
- Better growth of grass
- The land now copes better in dry and wet conditions – with improved drying in wet conditions and retention of moisture in dry weather. This means that the population of soil invertebrates is more stable and more accessible as a food to wading birds.

Wider benefits also include a reduction in flood risk and improved water quality. With less surface runoff, soil and sediment remain on the land, reducing the amount of potential pollutants getting into waterways.

Trevor White monitors lapwing and manages his land sensitively around the birds. With this in mind, he has received funding for a solar powered pumping system to improve management of pastures and stock - providing a water supply enabling compartmentalisation of fields to ensure bird breeding areas are appropriately grazed.

The project has resulted in better soil management and conditions and more effective stock management, sensitive to breeding lapwing and improve soil conditions.



# Ecton Copper Mine



**Total grant value: £145,000**

**Heritage preservation allows nature to flourish**

This multi-disciplinary project has achieved the conservation of the unique Ecton balance cone – allowing the wider, nationally important, Ecton Copper Mine site to be removed from the UK's Heritage at Risk register.

The Ecton Mine balance cone (pictured right) is a complex structure, both above and below ground. A scheduled monument, falling within two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ecton was once the deepest mine in England, using cutting edge 18th century technology to extract copper ore from depths of up to 300 metres below the River Manifold.

The balance cone housed a counterbalance to support some of the weight of the winding rope and reduce the load on the Boulton and Watt steam-powered winding engine which, in 1788, was only the sixth ever commissioned in the world.

Funding allowed a multi-disciplinary feasibility study to understand the structural integrity of the Ecton balance cone, its archaeological complexity and its importance for wildlife.

## Objectives achieved include:

- Conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset and increased knowledge to inform future conservation and educational activity
- A better understanding of relationships between cultural and natural landscapes
- Opportunities identified to provide better and greater habitat (bird nesting, invertebrates, reptile, bat) through restorative works to the cone, shaft and vegetation cover
- Enhancements to make the structure more resilient against increasingly intense weather



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New interpretation at the Geoff Cox Centre on Ecton Hill and at nearby Hulme End – at the start/finish of the Manifold track – will improve people's understanding of the history of lead and copper mining here and elsewhere in the Peak District.

For over 20 years, the interests of the Ecton Copper Mine have been overseen through the collaborative efforts of a partnership of several organisations, with landowner support.



Celebration event at Ecton Mine

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The partnership includes the Ecton Mine Educational Trust, Ecton Hill Field Studies Association, Peak District National Park Authority, Historic England, National Trust and Natural England.

## A NEW GENERATION LEARNS ABOUT FARMING



Pupils at Paradise Farm

### Lessons in farming

A programme of educational visits has been developed by Lis Boyle at Paradise Farm, specifically tailored to pupils' work at nearby Bradwell Primary School.

During their visits to the farm which are funded by FiPL, children learn about their local environment and the history of farming.

### Welcome to the farm

FiPI funding has allowed James Metcalfe to extend educational provision at Hardenclough Farm in Edale.

The farm already hosts school visits throughout the year but is now able to reach more people, including through its first Open Farm Sunday, in June 2023.



Open Farm Sunday

The new venture attracted bookings from 85 people who learned about life on the farm, its livestock, its sheep breeds, the importance of shearing and the value of wool. Visitors were encouraged to look around the farm and ask questions and watched a demonstration by Jess, the farm's working collie. They also enjoyed a hay meadow walk.

The farm now has its own Facebook page, which is regularly updated with farming activities.



### Permissive paths link rights of way

At Blaze Farm (pictured above), close to Wildboarclough, new permissive paths have been established to create long-sought after links between existing rights of way, enabling access through Heild Wood and amazing views north to Shutlingsloe.

The access is complemented by boards providing information on the habitats, species and features of interest.

## IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTS – WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

### Hay meadows and birds of prey

The fields at Round Meadow Barn are surrounded by species rich grassland, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Landowner Miranda Harris wanted to see this habitat extend into her hay meadows and to support lots of wildlife. FiPL helped her to work with the farmer next door by providing payments for green hay – containing wildflower seeds - to be brought onto the site.

Survey work shows the meadows are now becoming more diverse, with wildflowers establishing, including common spotted orchid. A kestrel box installed on a nearby tree, and funded through another FiPL initiative, was used in 2024 by a breeding pair, who raised five youngsters.



### Accessible path across farmland

Stiles and rails have been replaced with gates at five locations along a path from Townhead at Warslow to Stoneyfold Lane.

The path crosses hay meadows and grazing land belonging to two farms. The request for FiPL support came from Moorside Farm, Warlsow. There are now plans for upgrades to another footpath to make a circular walk.





## THREE YEARS OF DELIVERING FiPL


 **Over 329 projects approved...**

 **Over £3.2M in grant funding...**

**Additional  
£2.4M  
in 2024/25**

 **25 projects** that will prevent flood risk

 **47 ponds** created or restored


 **~22km** of new hedgerow planted

 **42 projects** for recovery of threatened species


 **8 built cultural heritage features** repaired/restored

 **16 new permissive paths/bridleways** (over 8km)

 **Over 630 farmers and land managers** engaged in the programme


 **8 farm clusters** created or supported

 **Over 560 volunteers** engaged in the programme


 **4 additional staff** providing farmers with local dedicated advice and guidance

## WHAT ARE PEAK DISTRICT FARMERS SAYING?

**Chloe Palmer, of Bradfield Farmers Group, says:**


 The Bradfield Farmers group, with over 40 farmer members, has been funded by FiPL for almost two years. FiPL funding has allowed us to grow the group to include a larger area and more members.

**Robert Thornhill, of Standhill Farm, says:**


 The FiPL funding allowed me to make positive changes which otherwise would not have been possible and I valued the opportunity to work with the Peak District team to bring about some important environmental benefits and habitats for wildlife.

## OBSERVATIONS FROM OUR FiPL TEAM

**Kirstie Burnet, FiPL Programme Admin Support, says:**

 The rewarding element of FiPL is that we have enabled farmers and landowners to create and improve wildlife habitats, help make farm businesses more sustainable and improve public opportunities to enjoy the countryside.

**Andrew Farmer, FiPL Engagement Officer, says:**

 It's fantastic that FiPL enables direct contact and engagement with real people on the ground to work on bespoke projects that work just outside the national schemes. It's also a great opportunity to signpost to other funding and organisations to achieve positive outcomes.