

# A Guide to Parish Nature Recovery

## Summary of the PNRP guide

- A Parish Nature Recovery Plan (PNRP) sets out how your community can help boost nature in your local area and make a real difference, contributing to a new vision for Rockingham Forest.
- The Guide will help you and your community develop a Parish Nature Recovery Plan, which has both long term aspirations and short-term objectives for realistic success.
- The Guide will be useful whether you are starting out or whether you already have a Neighbourhood Plan, as it has a wide range of information to suit all levels.
- In addition to the Guide, the Building the Links for Rockingham Forest Project will provide support to develop your Plans from the project partners, including Nene Rivers Trust, North Northamptonshire Council, the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs & Northants, and Natural England.
- For clarification, although the word "Parish" is used throughout the Guide, this does not need to be applied rigidly as your plan could apply to a smaller or larger area where you and your community want to work together to restore nature.

Below are the key steps in developing a Parish Nature Recovery Plan

## Step 1 - Start to map what you know about your parish/area and build a Biodiversity Base Map

You will need to map what is already known in your parish. You may already have a map but if not, then the Guide can direct you to a wealth of information on how to create a map using a variety of available different mapping systems.

In addition, you will find a wealth of online records and maps freely available that may be useful to you by helping to determine land ownership and use, wildlife recorded, environmental schemes, etc.

At this stage too don't forget to get outside and carry out some field surveys and remember to think creatively. Have you included for instance your roadside verges, hedgerows, grasslands, meadows, rivers, streams, ditches, and community spaces such as churchyards and schools, farmland as well as woodlands, etc.?

Once you have done your initial research, this information can be used to build a Biodiversity Base map. This is an annotated representation of some of the key habitats, species, land use and ownership within your parish/area.

Pages 6-8 of the Guide

## Step 2 – Recruit volunteers.

You will need to reach out into your community and gather a group of people who have enthusiasm and/or skills to help develop the Plan. These "green" champions, the Planning Group, will collectively bring much to the plan. Remember also to explore existing groups in your parish/area that could help, they often have a plethora of local knowledge. What about local Friends-of groups, environmental groups, litter wombles, school nature clubs, etc?

Pages 9-10 of the Guide

### Step 3 – Communicate with the Parish/local community.

You will need to engage and have good communications with the local community and key groups to develop the Plan. The Guide provides plenty of ideas on how to engage with your community and make sure they are involved and informed about the process throughout.

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### Step 4 – Start to prepare your nature recovery by mapping and describing different areas of nature recovery.

To do this you will need to consider and identify:

- **core areas** - with the highest wildlife value;
- **restoration areas** - where species and habitats can be restored;
- **corridors and stepping stones** - that allow movement and interaction;
- **buffer zones** - that protect richer areas from the pressures of human influence;
- **sustainable-use areas** - areas of greater human influence and resource use.

You will also need to consider the possibility of creating **new nature areas and features**. This way of thinking will help you develop a joined-up system of nature-rich places in your local area that could be part of your plan to create bigger, better, and joined up spaces for nature.

The Guide can provide you with details as to how to identify each one of these types of areas and how best to manage them. It also provides a host of ideas about what to consider from small to large scale ideas.

Once you have identified all or some of the above areas they should be marked on respective layers of your Nature Recovery Map.

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### Step 5 – Write the Parish Nature Recovery Plan.

You will need now to clearly set out your objectives/aims for nature recovery now you know what you could potentially do. These should be as detailed as possible. The Plan should also include your Nature Recovery map, showing the different layers of opportunity.

Importantly, you will need to consider how and when your plan will be implemented. This will depend on your resources, both human and financial. The Plan should include a time frame and having a yearly schedule will give the Plan momentum.

Once the Plan is written make sure you keep the community informed and allow for feedback. Once agreed the final Plan should be published.

Pages 22-23

### Step 6 – Gather resources to put the Plan into action.

You will need to consider necessary resources – including volunteers, time, and funding. The Guide provides advice on local funding opportunities including the Building the Links for Rockingham Forest Community Grant Scheme. Funding opportunities here may be helpful in kick starting your Plan and getting your community involved from the start.

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## Step 7 – Monitor and record the landscape and nature.

This is where you leave your desk behind and get into nature to survey the local fields, etc. and to monitor wildlife. This presents a great opportunity for local people to get involved either as an experienced recorder or by developing their new skills. Local training and workshops are available. Also do you have some budding photographers in your community who could take photos/ videos to record the landscape and nature? Or could the monitoring and recording become part of a “Citizen Science” project? Both are often very effective ways of engaging the local community and building support for a Parish Nature Recovery Plan.

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### And finally

The steps set out above are not designed to be prescriptive, but rather as a useful tool to help you and your community develop and implement a sustainable Nature Recovery Plan in your area that both you, your community and future generations will appreciate.

For more support and guidance please contact  
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