

## NOTES ON LNRS (LOCAL NATURAL RECOVERY STRATEGY) POTENTIAL MEASURES WORKSHOP AND RELATED MATTERS

### Workshop held at Lenham Community Centre, May 23rd 2024.

The program aim is to produce, “A realistic and deliverable plan, linked to supporting mechanisms and finance.”

It was said that “Most potential measures should include reference to relevant habitats or species but the creation or enhancement of habitats may not be enough to deliver some priorities on their own.”

- Example 1:

Connect and enhance existing ancient and native woodland to improve ecological connectivity, increase the abundance of the Duke of Burgundy butterfly and increase carbon sequestration. The potential measure would be to create woodlands and restore semi natural woodland, favouring natural colonisation of woodland boundaries, hedgerows and along watercourses.

- Example 2:

Improve species abundance and biodiversity in urban areas. The potential measure would be to create urban meadows and ponds in newly developed areas and improve awareness and understanding of the need for more natural (“untidy”) space in urban areas.

Other potential measures might be to create more salt marsh and create new woodlands on steep slopes in water catchment areas.

The habitat focused priorities are seen as:

- Grassland and heathland
- Woodland and trees
- Freshwater and wetland
- Coastal and marine
- Farmland and urban.

A new mapping tool has been developed where anyone can put desired actions on a map. This will be running over the Summer.

<https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/getinvolved/map-your-priorities-for-nature>

Biodiversity net gain. Plan is to give extra ‘Brownie’ points in some areas. Areas of strategic significance. Need to work with emerging Local plans. There is a map of opportunity areas.

**There will be another series of workshops in September.**

### Discussion

Grasslands table. We agreed on the importance of hedges but who is to maintain them properly? I suggested repeated small cuts. But see Defra notice below:

Woodland table. I pointed out that new, “natural” woodland needs to be inoculated with soil and mud from ancient woodland. Even then it is unlikely to be able to incorporate all necessary species to make it truly natural because natural ecology is so complex.

A local parish councillor brought up the idea of having ditches as a wildlife corridor. But how to manage them so water still flows down them without destroying their ecology with machinery? (I have this dilemma myself on our own land. The only solution I can find involves getting in the ditch in waders and doing a lot of work by hand).

Ponds were deemed essential but the same parish councillor brought up the problem of their potentially being contaminated by pollution from road runoff.

Some parish councillors said they are putting motion sensors on their street lights in order to reduce light pollution at the same time as saving money.

Species are moving Northwards especially birds and bumblebees. There is a need to provide tunnels and remove barriers so species that cannot fly can also migrate

I was told that DEFRA has put out a notice that No Move May is now no mow anything until the end of July because of a crash in pollinator numbers. I thought this sounded unlikely so looked it up and found the notice below, which asks people to avoid mowing except where really necessary up to Mid July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bees-needs/bees-needs-campaign>

That same evening I received the following notice:

**“New hedgerow regulations**

“We are writing to let you know that new regulations have been approved for the management of hedgerows on agricultural land.

**“What the regulations mean for you**

“The new regulations require:

- a 2 metre buffer strip, measured from the centre of a hedgerow, where a green cover must be established and maintained
- no cultivation or application of pesticides or fertilisers within the 2-metre buffer strip
- a hedgerow cutting and trimming ban from 1 March to 31 August (inclusive)

The cutting and trimming ban will start immediately. This is to protect nesting birds up to the end of August 2024”.

Biotechnology Net Gain: At a wedding on Sunday, I found myself sitting in the middle of a group of small-scale developers so brought up the subject of biodiversity net gain.

They said that in order to meet requirements, it was necessary to either engage consultants, or use a piece of software owned by a Member of Parliament, Oliver Lewis CBE. The software is: <https://ukgbc.org/resources/the-joes-blooms-biodiversity-net-gain-tool>

I have not tried it because the minimal cost is £495 and was told by somebody who had used it, that the report it produced was rejected by the local authority it was submitted to. Apparently the software is still being developed.

**Tom Shelley May 27<sup>th</sup> 2024**