

How could farmers in your parish benefit from new grant scheme?

The Farming in Protected Landscapes grants programme is now open to farmers and land managers in this Parish and the wider Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is a new grants programme launched by Defra this year, running on a rolling basis until March 2024, and the Mendip Hills AONB Unit have been allocated around £470'000 to award to projects over the next few years.

Projects should produce tangible outcomes under one of the four following categories:

Nature recovery - projects that increase biodiversity, improve connectivity between important habitats, or improve the area of habitat managed for wildlife. Examples could include:

- Linking valuable habitats within the AONB by creating 'habitat corridors' such as drystone walls or mixed-species hedgerows
- Creating new and valuable wildlife habitat such as reptile hibernacula, or wildflower strips
- Restoring abandoned dew ponds.

Mitigation of the impacts of climate change - projects that sequester Carbon, or reduce the risk of flooding or drought. Examples could include:

- Clearance of blocked or overgrown swallets to improve water management
- Rewilding an area in increase the volume of carbon removed from the atmosphere by plants.

Improved public access or engagement - projects that engage the public in land management, or provide opportunities for new audiences to enjoy and understand the landscape. Examples could include:

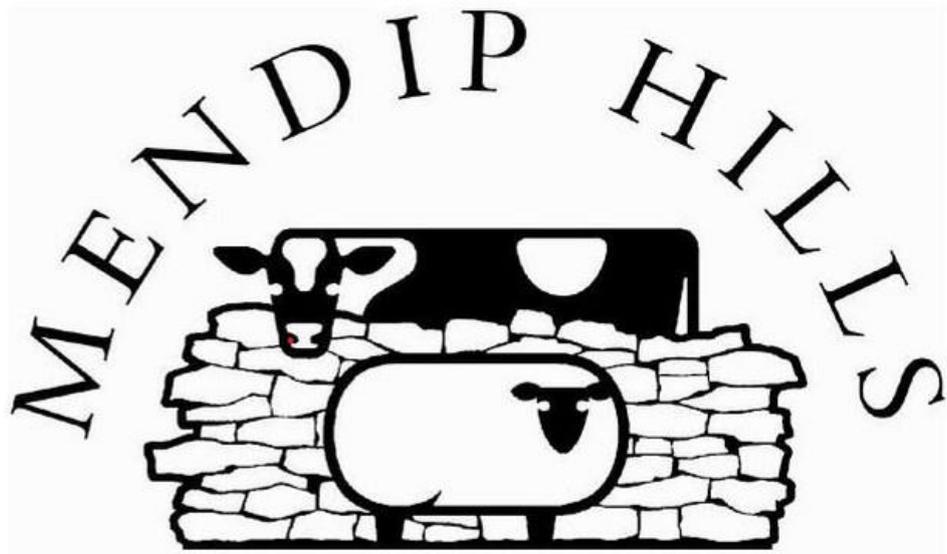
- Improving or establishing appropriate multi-user access paths across the landscape
- Providing facilities to host educational visits on a farm for children, school leavers, or adult learners to discover more about the landscape and farming.

Preservation of the distinctive history and culture of the area - projects that conserve or interpret historical structures and features, projects that enhance the character of the landscape. Examples could include:

- Conserving historic features and working with archaeologists/historians to deliver educational site visits for all ages and demographics.

This flexible grants programme is designed to empower farmers to help enhance the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and leave a legacy for the future, as well as supporting farms in the transition to delivering Public Goods under Defra's upcoming environmental land management scheme. The programme is not an agri-environment scheme, and is running alongside, not in competition with, existing schemes. Defra have been clear that interaction with this programme will not disadvantage later entry into ELMS, and in fact may help farmers begin to deliver on targets for nature, climate, and people, that will also stand the farm in good stead for future resilience.

With this programme, the Mendip Hills AONB Unit have funded a farming engagement officer to provide free advice and support to develop applications. For more information, and to find out how to apply, visit the Mendip Hills AONB website or speak to Megan Godley (farming engagement officer) on megan@mendiphillsaonb.org.uk



Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty