

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

Involving people with the unique heritage in one of England's Finest Landscapes





Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme (WFR LPS), supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, commenced delivery at the start of 2009 and was completed in late 2012.

Because of the scale, complexity and diverse achievements of the Weald Forest Ridge LPS, the decision has been made to report its achievements and successes through two linked reports:

- this **Evaluation Report** and
- a complementary **Monitoring Report**.

The Monitoring Report is a factual write-up of what was delivered within the Scheme, how, and by whom. It provides quantitative outputs for the 31 individual projects that made up the LP Scheme, as well as the cumulative outputs at an overall Scheme level.

The Evaluation Report is a more appraisal-based consideration of the Scheme's many successes and its diverse outcomes achieved. It incorporates challenges faced, lessons learnt and benefits derived.

Both reports are downloadable on-line at
www.highweald.org/wealdforestridge

Simon Aguss
Weald Forest Ridge Scheme Manager



Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Board members, Delivery Partners, and wider Scheme stakeholders and beneficiaries who have contributed to this evaluation: through interviews, conversations, feedback and event evaluation forms.

I would particularly like to thank Trish Tiltman, who has worked with Delivery Partners to analyse event evaluations, and Vicky Lawrence, who has conducted the evaluative interviews and guided the production of this Evaluation Report.

Simon Aguss
Weald Forest Ridge Scheme Manager

All photographs in the Report are © High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit, or © Vivienne Blakey (www.vivienneblakey.com), unless otherwise stated.

All maps in the Report are reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

East Sussex County Council – 100019601 (2012)
West Sussex County Council – 100018485 (2012)
Kent County Council – 100019238 (2012)

Foreword

The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme has now come to the end of its delivery period. As the Partnership Board, we have been privileged to play a small part in the rediscovery, conservation and enhancement of the unique history, character and wildlife of this beautiful place. Our role has been to steer and guide this innovative Scheme to completion: to oversee dedication, enthusiasm and hard work deliver huge heritage-related benefits both for people, and for the Weald Forest Ridge.

Statistics are easy to quote, and this is done in the Scheme's Monitoring Report. But the Scheme's success is about much, much more than numbers.

One great strength has been its partnership working: between Delivery Partners, other public and voluntary sector organisations, local people, volunteers, land managers, funders and the Scheme's Management Team. We have seen, through our attendance at the annual Partnership Forums, how bringing people together fosters the sharing of aims and their integration into mutually beneficial heritage delivery.

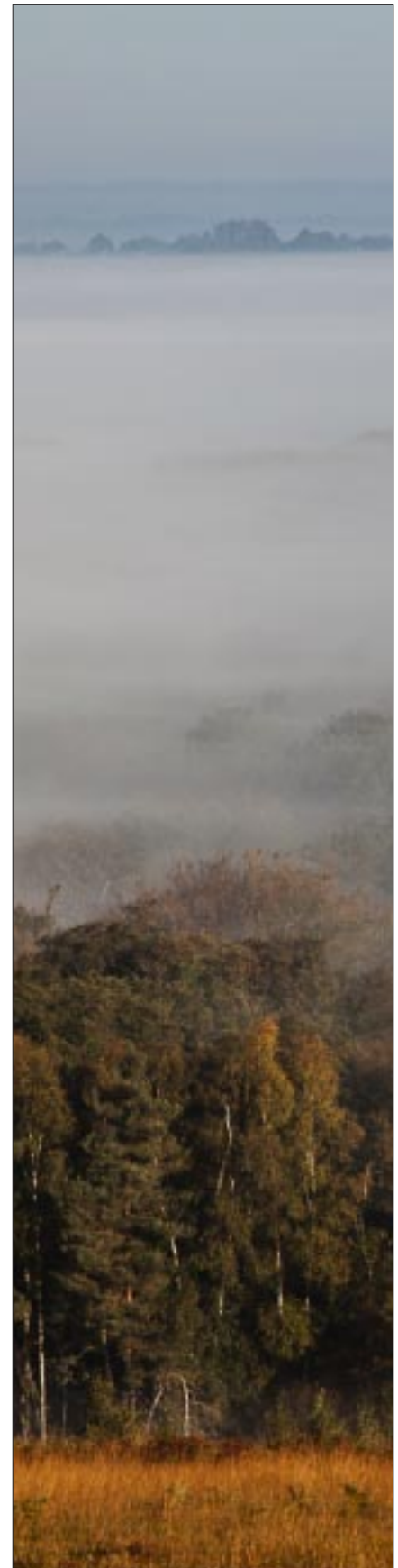
The area's heritage has also benefited considerably. Archaeology and the historic environment has been a major driving force behind the Scheme: drawing communities together to find out more about "their" landscape heritage, and leaving a legacy of LiDAR and toolkits to enable future exploration and discovery.

And perhaps most importantly, there are people who have been inspired and enthused to continue to learn about, participate in, and help conserve their local heritage in the Weald Forest Ridge.

For achieving all of this, everyone involved in delivering the Weald Forest Ridge LPS deserves congratulations and a huge thank you. Please read on for the full picture of the Scheme's impacts, benefits and lessons learnt.

<i>Alan Betts</i>	<i>Forestry Commission</i>
<i>Andy Robertson</i>	<i>(formerly) East Sussex County Council</i>
<i>James Seymour</i>	<i>Natural England</i>
<i>Jason Lavender</i>	<i>High Weald AONB Unit</i>
<i>Paul Roberts</i>	<i>English Heritage</i>
<i>Rowena Moore</i>	<i>Community representative</i> <i>(and latterly local councillor)</i>
<i>Sarah King</i>	<i>Wealden District Council</i>
<i>Sean Ashworth</i>	<i>Environment Agency</i>

The Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Board





Contents

Foreword	5
Executive Summary	9
1 Context	
1.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund	13
1.2 Landscape Partnership Schemes	13
1.3 Evaluation of Landscape Partnership Schemes	13
2 The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme	
2.1 Scheme Background and Aims	15
2.2 Scheme Delivery Mechanisms	17
2.3 Context to the WFR LPS Evaluation Report	18
2.4 Evaluation Report Structure	19
3 Evaluation Approach and Methodology	
3.1 WFR LPS Approach to Evaluation	20
3.2 Ongoing Evaluation Through Scheme Delivery	21
3.3 Targeted Partnership Evaluation	21
3.4 2012 Evaluation Consultancy	22
3.5 Production of this Report	22
4 The Synthesis of a Landscape Partnership	
4.1 The Initial Impetus	23
4.2 Two Key Drivers for the Landscape-Scale Approach	24
4.3 Motivations for Engagement with the Developing Scheme	26
4.4 Project Selection for the WFR LPS	29
KEY FINDINGS – Creating a Landscape Partnership	30
5 The WFR Scheme Delivery Model	
5.1 Delivery Partners	31
5.2 The Partnership Board	33
5.3 Fostering Partnership Working	37
5.4 An Intermediary to the HLF	44
5.5 A “Fit for Purpose” Scheme Management Team?	45
KEY FINDINGS – The Scheme Delivery Model	47
6 Impacts and Benefits for Heritage	
6.1 Archaeology and the Historic Environment	48
6.2 Biodiversity and Access	52
6.3 Heritage Interpretation	53
KEY FINDINGS – Heritage: Impacts and Benefits	55
7 Impacts and Benefits for People	
7.1 Celebration and Learning	56
7.2 The Outcomes from Learning Activities	59
7.3 Schools Educational Delivery	60
7.4 Volunteering	64
7.5 Heritage Skills	68
7.6 Scheme-wide Community Engagement?	69
KEY FINDINGS – People and Communities: Impacts and Benefits	71

continued

8	Impacts and Benefits for Organisations and Partnerships	
	8.1 Working Together	72
	8.2 Organisational Learning	73
	8.3 Enabling New Opportunities	74
	8.4 Complementarity with Other HLF Funding	77
	8.5 Multiple Benefits, and at a Landscape Scale	78
	8.6 Stronger Legacy Relationships and Enduring Partnerships	80
	8.7 It Wouldn't Have Happened Without the WFR LPS!	84
	KEY FINDINGS – Organisations and Partnerships: Impacts and Benefits	85
9	Challenges for Heritage, People and Organisations	
	9.1 The Scheme Area and Scheme Name	85
	9.2 Scheme-wide Communications	87
	9.3 Too Long a Scheme, Too Short a Scheme?	89
	9.4 Personnel and Organisational Continuity	91
	9.5 The WFR Partnership Board	92
	9.6 Procedures and protocols – an onerous burden for some?	94
	9.7 Balancing the Finances	96
	KEY FINDINGS – Challenges for the Scheme	100
10	Legacies and Lessons Learnt	
	10.1 Enhanced Heritage	101
	10.2 Enhanced Access to Heritage	102
	10.3 Engaged Communities	104
	10.4 A Stronger Partnership	105
	10.5 The Whole Greater than the Sum of the Parts?	106
	Case Studies	
	1. The Benefits of the Scheme's Proactive Approach to Partnership Working	40
	2. The Role of Archaeology to Unite Owners in a Multiple Ownership Woodland	50
	3. The Benefits of Heritage Engagement for Behaviourally Challenged School Children	63
	4. Establishing Sustainable, Community-led Conservation Volunteering	66
	Appendices	
	1. WFR LPS Delivery Programmes, Partners and Projects	108
	2. A typical Project Event Monitoring and Evaluation Form	110
	3. Typical Semi-structured Interview Questions for Evaluation Interviews, January 2012	112
	4. Semi-structured Interviews Undertaken, and Interviewees, February to May 2012	113
	5. WFR Partnership Board – Membership and Memorandum of Agreement	114

Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme Evaluation Report Executive Summary

Scheme Context and Aims

The 328km² Weald Forest Ridge lies in the north and west of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), in South-East England. It is the highest ridge of the AONB and its landscape character is defined by the remnants of four medieval hunting forests spread along its length: the most well-known being Ashdown Forest. 325,000 people live within the Ridge and its eight neighbouring towns: Horsham, Crawley, Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Crowborough, Uckfield, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.

Under the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Scheme programme, the £2.7million Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme (WFR LPS) commenced delivery in early 2009 and was completed in late 2012. The Scheme aimed to enable its audiences – both within the Ridge and in the eight neighbouring towns – to reconnect with their local landscape; more easily access and enjoy the Ridge; understand its unique natural, cultural and built heritage; take part in caring for it; and leave a legacy for future generations. The High Weald AONB Unit was the Scheme's Lead Partner and the Unit led a broad partnership of delivery organisations and wider stakeholders to deliver the Scheme.

This Evaluation Report considers the outcomes, challenges and successes of the Scheme, and should be read in conjunction with its sister Monitoring Report, which details the actual delivery work undertaken.

Evaluative Approach

This Report evaluates the Scheme as a whole – rather than at a detailed individual project level – and uses illustrations and views from Delivery Partners, key stakeholders, projects and the Scheme Management Team.

The broad objectives of the WFR LPS evaluative approach were:

- To construct a narrative for the WFR LP Scheme.
- To test the oft quoted value of the landscape partnership approach – “that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.
- To evaluate successes, legacies, impacts and benefits.
- To identify challenges and lessons learnt from the Scheme's delivery.

These objectives were met by a largely self-led approach to evaluation by the Scheme Management Team: with objectivity provided by consultant input at key stages and in Report production. Evaluation feedback was obtained primarily through:

- 20 semi-structured interviews conducted by the consultant with key individuals, or groups of individuals, central to the WFR LP Scheme.
- Discussion and analysis amongst partners at annual Partnership Forums.
- Combined monitoring and evaluation questionnaires to Scheme beneficiaries at numerous activities and events.

Scheme Synthesis and Delivery

The High Weald AONB Unit was perfectly placed to be the Scheme's Lead Partner: with its strategic focus on research, information dissemination and a partnership approach to achieving landscape conservation and change. The Scheme's 20 Delivery Partners ranged from environmental charities – such as the RSPB and Woodland Trust; through public bodies like the Forestry Commission and local authorities; to community organisations. Individual projects varied widely in financial value: from under £500 to almost £500,000.

Partner organisations saw the great potential of the Scheme's landscape scale approach in terms of the benefits it offered: including the delivery of landscape improvements; obtaining funding for priority projects; widening geographic focus or target audiences; and partnership working. There were, however, perhaps inevitable differences between organisations in their subsequent approach to the Scheme and to delivery.

Two main themes provided the focus for landscape collaboration across the WFR LP Scheme. These were, firstly, the four medieval forests of the Ridge; and, secondly, a Scheme-wide approach to archaeology and the wider historic environment. Both themes provided a rich source of inspiration for heritage engagement.

A Partnership Board oversaw Scheme delivery. Its membership centred on representation from four Government agencies, alongside that from the High Weald AONB Unit. This core membership worked very well; shaping the Board's dynamic, and allowing good discussion and decision making. Other Board members were a Delivery Partner, a community representative, a local authority economic development officer and a representative from the Accountable Body. Each of these positions raised its own particular issues during delivery.

A Scheme Management Team based within the High Weald AONB Unit had the essential role of fostering and engendering good partnership working, particularly across the Delivery Partners. To try to achieve this, the Team focused on event organisation, partner support and communication: as part of an underlying philosophy to support and serve the partnership. The Scheme Management Team also acted as the conduit for Scheme communication with the HLF. Despite this intermediary role of the Team, the HLF Monitor still met well over half the 20 Delivery Partners in the course of monitoring visits.

A further key role for the Scheme Management Team was to deliver strong, high quality, adaptable management that met the needs of both the HLF and the Scheme stakeholders. It was largely felt these needs were fulfilled, and contributed greatly to the Scheme's undoubted success.

Scheme Impacts and Benefits

There were a huge range of benefits and impacts for heritage, for people and for organisations from the Scheme's delivery. These were achieved at a landscape scale, a project scale and from bringing different organisations together under a landscape and heritage umbrella. Headline impacts and benefits included:

- There was considerable public learning benefit within the Scheme. This primarily focused on activities and events – often with numerous partners involved – to enable communities to celebrate, engage with, and learn about the unique heritage and management of the Weald Forest Ridge. Site-based theatrical trails proved especially successful at delivering learning within a fun-focused activity.
- There was overwhelmingly positive feedback about the schools' projects undertaken within the WFR LPS. The Forest School approach employed in one project was particularly successful, especially in engaging children from challenging backgrounds.
- There was an important interface with two other HLF-supported projects that geographically overlapped with the Weald Forest Ridge. A key reason for the overall success of the Scheme's schools' work was the joint working with one of these: the High Weald Heroes programme.
- LiDAR (an aerial laser survey technique that accurately maps ground surfaces beneath vegetation canopies) proved a fantastic tool to engage local communities with their local landscape heritage, as well as delivering a much wider understanding of the archaeology and the historic landscape of the Weald Forest Ridge.
- The WFR LPS delivered considerable biodiversity benefits, focused on improving heathland and ancient woodland habitats on key publicly accessible sites.
- The majority of sites undergoing biodiversity or access enhancements also developed some form of heritage interpretation: including art, drama, film, leaflets and site panels. Many Delivery Partners, as well as the general public, learnt a considerable amount about the area's natural and cultural heritage through this interpretive focus.
- Almost without exception, engagement with volunteers exceeded Scheme and project targets, and there were considerable benefits accrued from and for the volunteers. Key achievements included the establishment of four self-sustaining conservation volunteer groups, and the strengthening of a regional woodland archaeology legacy organisation.
- Public, volunteer and partner training helped deliver physical outputs and had other clear and lasting benefits, both to the people taking part and also to the landscapes that they worked in.
- The Scheme Management Team's proactive approach to partnerships enabled many organisations to grow and develop, with many recognising that future projects and joint working will evolve from the new relationships built through the Scheme.
- The Team's proactive management role also enabled the targeting of some outputs, at the project level, to areas and communities that might not otherwise have had the same opportunities to fully engage with the WFR LPS.

Scheme Challenges

Inevitably for something so large and complex, there were many challenges faced within the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme. These included:

- For a variety of reasons, the Scheme had a long Development Phase, with some inevitable organisational and personnel changes amongst the Delivery Partners. This meant there was some lack of continuity of thought between development and implementation, as well as poor intra-organisation communication.
- There were a range of financial and monitoring challenges. For example, some Partners found the claim procedures or match funding requirements onerous.
- The majority of volunteers who engaged with the Scheme engaged with individual projects and sites, rather than the wider Scheme. Additionally, broader community engagement was stronger at a project level, compared to a Scheme level.
- The geographic area that the Scheme covered was larger than the average LPS. This presented some problems in terms of promotion and community engagement at Scheme and Partnership Board levels.
- The need for grant-aided support to enable suitably skilled and knowledgeable existing staff to work on project delivery was an issue for several Delivery Partners and, in some cases, affected their ability to fully engage with the Scheme.

Scheme Legacies and Lessons Learnt

There are numerous quantifiable legacies from the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme: including biodiversity and access improvements and the delivery of interpretation resources on many sites. The Scheme also enabled enhanced access to heritage for the public, for community groups, for volunteers and for organisations: through a range of mechanisms such as events, activities, theatre, volunteering and training. Local people, site visitors, school children, site managers, and residents of the Ridge and its eight neighbouring towns all learnt more about the Weald Forest Ridge's natural and cultural heritage.

Two specific historic environment legacies of note are:

- The three archaeological toolkits produced within the Historic Environment Awareness Project. These are already being recognised at regional and national levels as exemplars of best practice.
- The strengthening of the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum, which is providing a focus for discussion, research and information sharing to continue into this central theme of the WFR LPS.

A key finding of this Evaluation Report is that a strong partnership existed at the heart of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme, and this became noticeably stronger through the Scheme delivery process. The High Weald AONB Unit played a pivotal role in leading the partnership, whilst the Partners delivered a range of positive outcomes and demonstrated high levels of skill and commitment.

The enduring achievements of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme include the numerous connections that have been created or strengthened between organisations, communities and individuals; and between people, heritage and landscape. There is very real proof that the Weald Forest Ridge LPS has contributed significantly to the heritage, people and organisations of the Scheme area, as well as the wider High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1 Context

1.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) seeks to make a lasting difference for heritage and people, in the areas of conservation, participation and learning. Using money raised through the National Lottery, the HLF gives grants to sustain and transform Britain's heritage. This heritage is seen as very diverse: from museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, the natural environment and cultural traditions.

1.2 Landscape Partnership Schemes

A Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) is an HLF grant programme targeted at areas of countryside that have a distinctive landscape character, and are recognised and valued by local people. Individual schemes are expected to be led by a partnership made up of regional, national and local organisations with an interest in the area, together with community groups and members of the community.

At the time that initial development of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme (WFR LPS) commenced, in 2004, the HLF's priorities for support under the LP programme were schemes that provided long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for rural areas by:

- conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic character of the landscape;
- conserving and celebrating the cultural associations and activities of the landscape area;
- encouraging more people to access, learn about, become involved in and make decisions on their landscape heritage; and
- improving understanding of local craft and other skills by providing training opportunities.

Delivery of an LPS is based around a portfolio of projects, fitted into themed programmes, which conserve the landscape heritage of the designated area. The delivery is led by a partnership of organisations, normally with a Lead Partner, and steering and advice is given by a Partnership Board.

1.3 Evaluation of Landscape Partnership Schemes

Following the conclusion of initial LP Schemes (and their earlier incarnations as Area Partnerships), the HLF started a process in 2009 of improving the quality of LPS evaluations. They realised that, because Landscape Partnership Schemes are a diverse and complex collection of projects and activities that often sit alongside other interventions, their evaluation can be difficult.



The HLF have provided good practice website guidance on evaluation (see www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/goodpractice/Documents/Evaluation_Good-practice_guidance_pdf). This, primarily, sees evaluation as having two purposes: to prove, and to improve. Additionally, in 2010, the HLF commissioned an Evaluation of the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnerships Programme (CEPAR, University of London Birkbeck: 2011) to assess how evaluation can be improved, and to give enhanced guidance to Schemes that were yet to achieve their Stage 2 pass.

As the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme was already in its second delivery year in 2010, as much as possible of the CEPAR guidance has been considered in producing this Report, whilst accepting that these timescales preclude every recommendation being incorporated.



2 The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

2.1 Scheme Background and Aims

The Weald Forest Ridge LPS area is located in the northern and western quarter of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (HW AONB). The area covers 328km² across parts of three counties: East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent.



Fig. 1 The boundaries of the High Weald AONB and Weald Forest Ridge.

After a lengthy initial planning phase, the Scheme achieved an HLF Stage 1 Pass in 2007 and a Stage 2 Pass in September 2008. Its three year delivery period commenced in early 2009, and production of its completion Monitoring and Evaluation Reports was achieved in late 2012.

In the Stage 2 Landscape Strategy, the **Vision** for the WFR LPS was stated as:

In 10 years, the Weald Forest Ridge will be an area where both local people and visitors experience a strong sense of place. The area's rich natural and cultural heritage will be valued in its own right and as an asset that supports peoples' economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

It will be a place that has enriched its natural beauty through conserving its distinctive features, and is able to offer a variety of habitats, wildlife, cultural heritage and activities that are accessible to residents, people living in neighbouring towns, and visitors. It will be a welcoming place that enhances peoples' quality of life through their participation and celebration of its unique landscape and culture.

continued





Above all, it will be a treasured place where local people, working alongside specialist organisations, have the knowledge and skills to enjoy and care for the Weald Forest Ridge, in a way that brings long-term benefits to all.

Its four **Strategic Aims** were:

1. To encourage more people to get involved in caring for the Weald Forest Ridge's unique landscape heritage.
2. To conserve and enhance the distinctive natural and built features that make the Weald Forest Ridge a special place.
3. To provide opportunities for people to learn about, access, celebrate and benefit from the Weald Forest Ridge's landscape heritage.
4. To give people the knowledge and skills to protect the Weald Forest Ridge landscape for future generations to enjoy.

These aims defined the Scheme's four **Delivery Programmes**:

Landscape Scale Connectivity (Programme 1)

Conserving the Weald Forest Ridge's natural features, including its semi-natural habitats and geology, and enhancing access to, and knowledge of, these features.

Archaeology and Special Features (Programme 2)

Understanding and protecting the distinctive features that give the Weald Forest Ridge its historic character, in particular its landscape archaeology and medieval forests.

Learning & Celebrating Heritage (Programme 3)

Celebrating the Weald Forest Ridge's cultural, built, and industrial heritage; through enhanced orientation, activities and events aimed at local residents, visitors, and people from the neighbouring urban towns, including schools.

Reconnecting People & Place (Programme 4)

Reconnecting people with their landscapes, by offering advice and training opportunities to landowners, crafts people and volunteers to help conserve and care for the Weald Forest Ridge.

These four Delivery Programmes were underpinned by a fifth, **Scheme Management programme**: a cross-cutting programme ensuring the effective promotion and delivery of the entire WFR LPS.

A comprehensive suite of 23 objectives were derived from the four Strategic Aims and five Programmes.

2.2 Scheme Delivery Mechanisms

The **Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership** consisted of people and organisations representing national, regional and local interests. This was co-ordinated by the **High Weald AONB Unit** (HWU), acting as **Lead Partner** for the LPS. **East Sussex County Council**, as the host for the HWU, acted as the **Accountable Body** to the HLF.

The **Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Board** consisted of up to nine people, who steered and advised on the delivery of the LPS and how the LP Fund was managed.

The Scheme Management programme employed a dedicated **Weald Forest Ridge Core Team** of 2.8FTE posts: a Scheme Manager, a Scheme Officer, and an Administrator. This Team was responsible for the day-to-day management of the WFR LPS.

In total, **31 projects** were delivered between 2009 and 2012 across the four Delivery Programmes: ranging in value from under £500 to almost £500,000. Each project was delivered by a designated **Delivery Partner**; who had full responsibility for programming, match funding, procurement and spend to agreed budgets, whilst reporting to, and being co-ordinated by, the WFR Scheme Management Team.

20 different Delivery Partners delivered these 31 projects: ranging from local authorities, statutory agencies, and national and regional charities; through to small businesses and community organisations. Each Delivery Partner was contractually bound to the WFR LPS through a **Partner Agreement**, and each project had an approved **Project Proposal, Budget and Plan**, which defined what was to be delivered, when, and at what cost.

The Delivery Partners and their projects are fully named in **Appendix 1**. The full value of these projects was £2.275million. The Scheme Management costs were around an additional £500,000, bringing total Scheme spend to approximately £2.78million: with HLF grant support of just over £1.65million.

This Delivery Partner approach to LPS delivery is certainly not unique in LP Schemes. But what makes the WFR LPS stand out is that almost all Scheme activity was delivered through this mechanism. This has delivered both advantages and disadvantages, which will be explored in this Scheme Evaluation.

A fuller description of the WFR LPS delivery is given in the complementary **Monitoring Report**.





2.3 Context to the WFR LPS Evaluation Report

The 2011 CEPAR LPS Evaluation report to the HLF (see Section 1) gives guidance to what an LPS Final Report might include. The assumption is that just one report will be produced at the end of the Scheme.

However, the WFR Partnership Board decided, on the recommendation of the Scheme Manager, that two reports would be produced for the WFR LPS: this **Evaluation Report** and a complementary **Monitoring Report**. Simplistically, the former would appraise Scheme outcomes, benefits and impacts, and the latter Scheme outputs. The decision reflected what was felt to be the considerable range and diversity of heritage activity undertaken within the LPS. It was considered that just one report would either not reflect this whole range of work, or would be so large as to be unwieldy and unread.

Consequently, the Scheme's **Monitoring Report** includes illustrated write-ups of each project – in terms of delivery activity, key heritage and people outputs, and legacy arrangements. There is additional description of Scheme Management work undertaken, plus a Scheme financial summary. Readers of this Evaluation Report are referred to the Monitoring Report for this information.

Summary Scheme outputs were collated using the HLF LPS Output Data Return Forms, supplied to LP's in 2010 through the CEPAR work. Whilst these outputs are the domain of the Monitoring Report, the headline indicators (from Section 9 of the Monitoring Report) are repeated here to give a representation of the wide-ranging outputs of the WFR LPS.

- Over **14,500 pupils and teaching staff** from **89 primary schools** involved with project work.
- **750 children and adults** from secondary schools, colleges, universities and home school groups also involved with project work.
- **98.5ha of BAP heathland** habitat restored or conserved.
- **113.5ha of BAP lowland** ancient woodland conserved.
- **995 volunteers** contributed **5,563 volunteer days** of work to the Scheme, with a value of around **£300,000**.
- **43 community groups** and **1,050 members** worked with.
- **289 open days**, festivals, participation/learning events and an exhibition staged, with over **15,900 attendees**.
- **55 talks** and presentation given, with **2,381 attendees**.
- LiDAR survey undertaken over **whole 328km²** of the Weald Forest Ridge area.
- **957 trainees** from the volunteer and professional sectors undertook over **1,950 training days** within the Scheme.
- **16 work placements** undertook over **1,050 placement days** within the Scheme.
- **910ha** of open access land improved.
- Almost **21km of routeways** created or improved, including **3.8km of paths** accessible for disabled people.
- **9 heritage** or nature trails created, totalling over **36.5km**.
- **Over 70 leaflets**, guides, films, archives and interpretation boards created.

2.4 Evaluation Report Structure

This Evaluation Report will hence move on, in Section 3, to a consideration of the evaluation methodology used. The subsequent Sections 4 to 8 form the bulk of the Report and have summarised Key Findings at the ends of each section. Section 4 considers the impetus and procedures that brought the Landscape Partnership Scheme together, whilst Section 5 evaluates the effectiveness of the model used to deliver the Scheme. Sections 6, 7 and 8 then consider the impacts and benefits of the Scheme: for heritage; for people; and for organisations and partnerships, respectively. Section 9 then considers the many challenges faced in the Scheme, whilst Section 10 concludes with consideration of the Scheme legacies and lessons learnt.





3 Evaluation Approach and Methodology

3.1 WFR LPS Approach to Evaluation

It was important to the WFR Scheme Management Team that evaluation was given due regard in Scheme delivery, so that a meaningful appraisal could be undertaken. There was a desire to identify such elements as key successes, challenges and lessons learnt: for the benefit of the HLF, the High Weald AONB Unit, Scheme partners, and a wider LP audience. This was not necessarily an HLF requirement from the Stage 2 approval, but something that the Lead Partner felt was appropriate to do.

Consequently, a range of evaluative techniques were implemented, from 2009 through to 2012, and are described in the remainder of Section 3. On reflection, the evaluation undertaken has provided far more material than could realistically be incorporated into this Report. It is suggested that this reflects the level of detail built into the WFR LPS, and which the Scheme Management approach of a Core Team and Delivery Partners enabled.

The broad objectives of the WFR LPS evaluative approach were:

- To construct a narrative for the WFR LP Scheme.
- To test the oft quoted value of the landscape partnership approach – “that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.
- To evaluate successes, legacies, impacts and benefits.
- To identify challenges and lessons learnt from the Scheme’s delivery.

These objectives have been met by a largely self-led approach to evaluation by the Scheme Management Team. Objectivity has been provided by the appointment of an evaluation consultant: to conduct interviews and guide production of this Evaluation Report (see Section 3.4). Both the WFR Partnership Board and HLF Monitor endorsed this self-led approach – which was felt to be more appropriate to the Scheme than a solely external evaluation, conducted necessarily over a short period of time in 2012.

The Neroche LPS evaluation (Forest Research, 2011, *Enabling Positive Change: Evaluation of the Neroche Landscape Partnership Scheme*) makes a very useful distinction between “actors” and “beneficiaries”. “Actors” are those who were actively involved in the design, decision-making, management and delivery of the LP Scheme. “Beneficiaries” are those individuals or groups who took part in the various activities and events, or made use of the various facilities delivered as part of the LPS. Of course, there is a grey middle area with any attempt at clear cut distinctions – many actors, such as Delivery Partners for example, derived considerable benefit from the WFR LPS. But this broad-brush approach of two distinct groups will be used within this Report.

3.2 Ongoing Evaluation Through Scheme Delivery

From 2009 onwards, as each of the 31 delivery projects commenced, the Scheme Management Team worked with Delivery Partners to identify ways in which ongoing evaluation could be conducted. This normally took the form of combined **monitoring and evaluation questionnaires**, distributed to attendees at project activities. A typical form is given in **Appendix 2**. The Scheme Management Team tended to assist Partners by collecting and collating questionnaire responses: allowing spreadsheet analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

In mid-2010, a productive working relationship developed with a Community Engagement Manager from one of the Scheme's stakeholder local authorities. This Manager used **gap analysis** extensively as an evaluation tool – whereby the difference between how important particular subjects are to someone are compared to how satisfied they are with the resultant outcomes. Consequently, gap analysis was introduced to evaluate some of the later project events in the Scheme – particularly the site-specific theatrical productions undertaken within the Living History Activities project. At this time, improvements to the High Weald website enabled the gap analysis questionnaires to be sent out to activity attendees as an email link, and responses could be automatically downloaded to a spreadsheet, to allow quantitative assessment of numerical responses. More qualitative data was also checked and key themes identified.

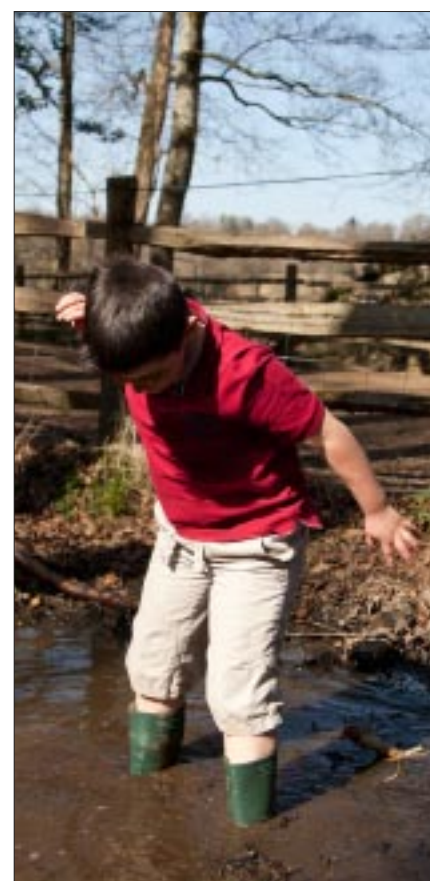
A further key element of this ongoing evaluation was the collection of **quotes and soundbites** from both “actors” and “beneficiaries”. Many of these are used in this Report. Additionally, **visitor count equipment** was established at eight publicly accessible greenspace sites within the WFR: seven of which were the subject of biodiversity and/or access enhancements funded through the WFR LPS. The equipment was monitored for increasing or decreasing visitor number trends.

In response to a dedicated Partnership session on evaluation (see 3.4, below), the Scheme Manager produced **evaluation plans** for all 31 delivery projects, in conjunction with the Delivery Partners. Predominantly, these quantified evaluative techniques already being carried out by the partners. But, in some instances, new techniques were identified, such as partner site-based visitor interviews. Results were analysed by the partners and key findings supplied to the WFR Scheme Manager.

3.3 Targeted Partnership Evaluation

Part of the Scheme Management Team's role involved staging **annual Partnership Forums**: bringing together actors and some of the key beneficiary stakeholders in co-ordinated days of updates, learning, evaluation and review. Evaluative feedback was obtained from attendees at these Forums.

The October 2010 Forum had a focus on Scheme and project evaluation. Richard Clarke of CEPAR/University of London (the lead consultant for the HLF's 2010 review of LP evaluation) attended and





co-delivered a session on evaluation techniques. Break-out workshops then focused at the programme level within the WFR Scheme; with partners able to appraise and incorporate appropriate evaluation techniques into their project plans.

3.4 Evaluation Consultancy 2012

With most project delivery reaching its conclusion at the start of 2012, a **freelance consultant** was appointed by the WFR Scheme Manager to **assist, guide and mentor** the production of this Scheme Evaluation Report. The consultant – Vicky Lawrence of Land Stewards (www.landstewards.org.uk) – specialises in facilitating the community stake in land management and has extensive knowledge of the WFR area and many of the key Scheme stakeholders.

The initial task for Vicky was to draft a suite of questions for **semi-structured interviews** with key individuals, or groups of individuals, central to the WFR LP Scheme. These questions were adapted slightly for specific interviewees, but the main framework questions are given in **Appendix 3**. They focus on initial involvement in the Scheme; benefits; the partnership approach; problems and the future.

Once the questions were agreed, Vicky Lawrence conducted a total of **20 interviews** between February and May 2012. These were:

- 14 interviews involving 25 individuals from Delivery Partners, who represented 19 of the Scheme's 31 projects (including two interviews that covered Scheme-wide issues as well).
- Three key volunteers from three different projects.
- Three further interviews with the WFR Partnership Board, the High Weald AONB Education Officer, and the WFR Scheme Manager and Administrator.

A full list of interviews and interviewees is given in **Appendix 4**. The WFR Scheme Manager "sat in" on the first interview conducted by Vicky, primarily to ensure the process worked and that interviewees were willing to engage in the discursive process. All interviews were written up and every interviewee agreed to their quotes and soundbites being used in this Evaluation Report, on the understanding they would not be attributed to named individuals, but solely to a group – such as a WFR Delivery Partner.

3.5 Production of this Report

An iterative approach to the Report's production was taken by the WFR Scheme Manager and the freelance consultant. Vicky Lawrence drafted the main framework for discussion and agreement, and sorted the information from the semi-structured interviews to fit the contents. The Scheme Manager then drafted the Report in stages, with each draft appraised and commented on by the consultant: ensuring objectivity was maintained in a production process that could have had the potential to creep towards subjectivity.

4 | The Synthesis of a Landscape Partnership

A good starting point for any evaluation is considering what triggered the development of the scheme: where did the initial impetus come from; what was this impetus, and what were the motivations for engagement – at both the organisational and individual level?

4.1 The Initial Impetus

Whilst delivery commenced in early 2009, the Weald Forest Ridge LPS had a long gestation period, dating back to 2004.

The High Weald AONB Unit initially conceived the potential of a landscape-scale, partnership-led scheme for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Unit were the obvious Lead Partner.

“The concept of landscape partnerships meshes beautifully with AONB objectives.”

High Weald AONB Co-Director

The HWU identified the Scheme area based on a wide range of factors:

- landscape character
- biodiversity
- historic environment
- cultural heritage
- proximity to neighbouring urban towns.
- geology
- important habitats
- value as a recreational resource
- significance to local people

This led to the 328km² Weald Forest Ridge area being defined. It is a complex historic landscape, with interacting layers of geology, archaeology, habitats and settlements. Its distinctive features include:

- remnants of four former hunting forests (now recognisable as Ashdown, Broadwater, St Leonard’s and Tilgate)
- a medieval landscape of small irregular fields interspersed with isolated farmsteads
- sandstone rock outcrops
- ancient gill woodland
- ridge-top settlements, and
- distinctive zones of heathland.

The Weald Forest Ridge is a designation-rich landscape and **Table 1** identifies the main heritage designations.

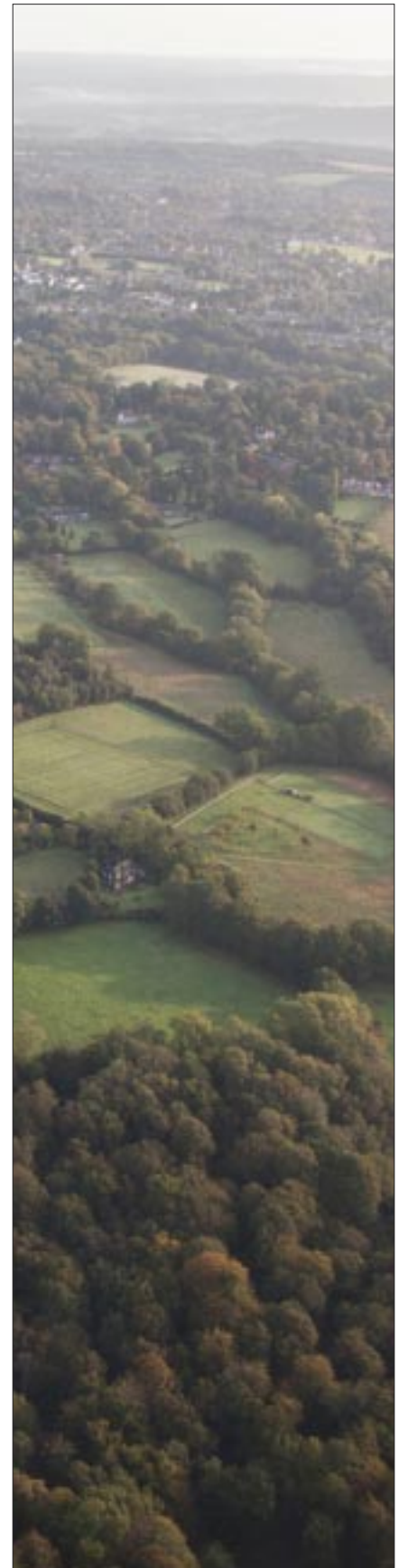




Table 1 Designations within the Weald Forest Ridge

Designation	No. of sites	Area (km ²)	Coverage
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	1	321	98%
Special Protection Area (SPA)	1	32	10%
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	1	27	8% ⁱ
Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)	23	n/a	n/a
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	22	41	13%
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	3	2	0.5%
Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)	48	28	8.5%
Nationally Important Historic Parks & Gardens	16	n/a	n/a
Locally Important Historic Parks & Gardens	8	n/a	n/a
Listed Buildings Grade I	9	n/a	n/a
Listed Buildings Grade II*	30	n/a	n/a
Listed Buildings Grade II	553	n/a	n/a

Historically, the WFR area was known as the “Forest Ridge”, although this term fell out of use in the second half of the 20th century. Fascinatingly, this Ridge was named and identified in the 1940’s Hobhouse Report (from the National Parks Committee (England and Wales)) as a “Proposed Conservation Area” – the forerunner of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation. The Forest Ridge area is nowadays included in the High Weald AONB, but obviously Hobhouse did not consider the rest of the current AONB as worthy of designation! This illustrates an interesting conundrum that ran throughout Scheme delivery: how to badge and promote a “sub-area” of a wider AONB, when many audiences clearly do not understand the AONB designation and area in the first place.

The main landscape character feature that distinguishes the WFR within the wider High Weald AONB is the remnants its four medieval hunting forests, which now cover 3,100ha (9.5% of the total WFR LPS area).

4.2 Two Key Drivers for the Landscape-Scale Approach

Taking a broad perspective, two main subjects provided the focus for the WFR’s landscape-scale approach, embodied in all LPs.

Firstly, the four **medieval forests** became a central theme of the WFR LPS. The remnants of all four Forests were the focus of individual projects, led by the various site owners: the Forestry Commission, RSPB and Conservators of Ashdown Forest. Importantly, the Forests also introduced a strong cultural heritage element to the Scheme, through a 17th century epic poem that symbolised the four Forests as the “Maidens of the Weald”.

This symbolism led the Scheme launch activities in 2009: with engagement opportunities for schools and local communities to create four “Giant Maidens”, representing each of the four Forests. The Maidens became the focus of a fiery, night-time celebration in October 2009

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

attended by 500 people and, at the conclusion of the Scheme in 2012, all four Maidens were placed with schools or visitor centres near to their home Forests.

But the Maidens theme also permeated various projects, enabling the project delivery organisations to even more tangibly embrace the WFR LPS. For example:

- Interpretation at Broadwater Warren, and St Leonards and Ashdown Forests all focused, to some extent, on the medieval hunting forest theme and allowed an exploration of wider cultural heritage.
- The Maidens inspired the creation of a sculpture trail at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods, Horsham.
- One of the “living history activities” delivered by The Company built the myth of the St Leonard’s dragon into a captivating, family-focused, site-specific play.

Additionally, the Maidens directly inspired the 2010 Forward celebration at Ashdown Forest, led by the Scheme Management Team.

The second driver was a **Scheme-wide approach to archaeology and the wider historic environment**. As the East Sussex County Archaeologist identified, much of the archaeological investigation of Sussex has previously focused on the South Downs and the coast. The High Weald (which is largely the Weald Forest Ridge in Sussex) has historically been relatively neglected. This is due, in large part, to the actual landscape character of the WFR.

The Weald Forest Ridge is a heavily wooded landscape: 40% overall woodland cover, with over half of this classified as ancient woodland. This ancient woodland would typically assist the survival of archaeological features – such as boundary banks, sawpits, iron workings and charcoal platforms – as the forest floor has not been cultivated and features destroyed, as with arable land. Even secondary woodland encroaching onto formerly open sites will help preserve features.

But this woodland cover actually makes investigating archaeology – both “of the wood” and “in the wood” – very difficult. Aerial photography will not reveal features preserved on the woodland floor, and even traditional surveying is difficult if the undergrowth is thick. It is here that modern technology has provided the WFR LPS with a way of investigating the area’s woodland archaeology.

LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) is a highly sensitive, laser survey technique that can produce map-style models of the land surface: to hopefully reveal unseen earthworks and other archaeological features. Undertaking a LiDAR survey of the whole WFR area became a key output of the Historic Environment Awareness (HEA) Project within the Scheme.

“The idea of being able to do a LIDAR survey was costly and still quite new when the (HEA) project idea was being developed. It needed a Scheme of the WFR’s scale to afford it.”

Delivery Partner





Importantly, the LiDAR was a major catalyst to engage people with archaeology.

“There was a wide scope for us to carry out a lot of our work in making archaeology and history more accessible to a wider audience.”

Delivery Partner

But LiDAR wasn't just about engaging communities. It also captivated Delivery Partners: with the potential for them both to find out more about the history and heritage of their sites, and to have a powerful interpretation tool. Of the Scheme's 30 other projects, a staggering 18 of them engaged in some way with the LiDAR survey.

The LiDAR, within the broader HEA Project, hence provided a key motivator for engagement at a Scheme-wide level for those organisations delivering projects with the WFR LPS.

“The project brought the possibility of working with a range of partners in heritage management.”

“So, in sum, it was about the LIDAR: it was a possibility to put some focus on the High Weald, it would mean we were able to get involved with other partners ... and we were also keen on working with communities.”

Delivery Partners

4.3 Motivations for Engagement with the Developing Scheme

The Stage 1 Access and Audience Development Plan was pivotal in the WFR LP Scheme's development. It identified audience motivators and barriers to accessing the WFR; gaps in access to heritage, priorities for activities, and improvements to enhance access; and lastly recommended that the Weald Forest Ridge Partnership should focus on:

- enhancing the visitor experience
- raising awareness and understanding through education and interpretation, and
- making the link between people (including those who do not use the countryside) and key sites to reveal the 'specialness' of the Weald Forest Ridge, which in turn will encourage people to visit and use it.

As such, the Plan set parameters against which potential project ideas could be appraised, and the project selection process led on from this. With hindsight, all the project work undertaken during Scheme delivery fitted very well into these three focus points.

There was a very wide range of motivators for organisations to become Delivery Partners within the WFR LPS (given an acceptance that they were able to develop and deliver projects that would fulfil Scheme aims).

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

Site management organisations saw potential, if their own improvement aspirations fitted with the broad Scheme aims.

“The organisation was taking on a new site and project, and what they were aiming to do was very much in line with the Scheme – restoring heathlands and conserving woodlands.”

“I asked for help with a site. It was a pine plantation in the 1970s and so was completely covered in dense pine trees. I knew there was heathland on the site and wanted to restore it.”

“It was a very muddy path, it was impassable and needed surfacing. We could match the funding with our conservation work.”

Delivery Partners

Similarly, other partners saw cohesion between their areas of work and both Scheme aims and the potential for partnership working.

“We’re interested in site-specific theatre in rural areas – about history, culture and belonging. It was ideal for us to become involved in the Scheme.”

“The WFR gave me an opportunity to enhance the visitor centre and all the (other) ways in which we as an organisation had an interface with visitors – whether school children, visitors or those wanting walks. My first and main interest was getting the exhibition space up to scratch. I reappraised this at Stage 2. My thinking refined and I started to think more widely about interpretation and education. We needed education led by people who knew about the National Curriculum.”

“I could see that it would be a brilliant way of filling a gap. I have been involved for some years in funded training aimed at people in work. The beauty of this was that you only had to live in the WFR area so it brought a lot more people in. For example, I had been working with the Ashdown Forest for many years and knew they had a lot of people who buy wood concessions and have commoners’ rights. The rangers had to allow them access but had no right to get them to satisfy H&S regulations, which was a weird anomaly. So they were able to promote the chainsaw training courses to them – I and they could see the H&S need.”

Delivery Partners

For some partners, engagement enabled them to also consider widening their geographical and organisational remit.





“We were able to broaden our work to a wider geographical area.”

“We had the opportunity to make ourselves more visible – for example at Buchan Country Park.”

Delivery Partners

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most consistent reason for joining the Scheme was the opportunity to access funding for priority projects.

“It was a means to invest in infrastructure that we simply didn’t have the resources for – access and habitat improvements, rhododendron clearance. It’s meant a huge amount has been done.”

“We look at every opportunity as the majority of our work is grant funded.”

“It was an opportunity to get funding for a community education project which needs external funding to be deliverable. It was a funding driven decision to take part.”

“It was an opportunity to get funding for work we’d identified as needing doing.”

“It was a way of getting more funding for the work and to raise its profile. Before the Scheme funding, neither organisation had the capacity or budget to give it the focus it deserved.”

“Money was an important factor. It was a huge contribution just at the right time.”

“Because there was money available and it fitted with our project!”

Delivery Partners

Obviously, in the current economic climate, organisations need to ensure they can deliver services whilst ensuring their financial viability. They will hence try to take advantage of funding opportunities that are available to them. The projects delivered in the WFR LPS were already identified priorities for each partner, and the LP Scheme gave them the opportunity to be delivered. Many of the Scheme Delivery Partners would not have drawn in the equivalent funding if they were not part of the Partnership Scheme: either they lacked the skills or confidence to apply direct to the HLF; or their proposals were stronger as part of a partnership approach. The Scheme Management challenge was to make the sum of all the projects greater than their individual parts and, without a doubt, the Delivery Partner model used by the WFR LPS allowed several organisations to deliver heritage benefit, who would otherwise not have done so.

4.4 Project Selection for the WFR LPS

The project selection process, at both Stage 1 and Stage 2, has been previously fully explained in the Stage 2 Landscape Strategy. It will hence not be repeated here. However, the Stage 2 Implementation Plan raised an issue with several projects which had not been satisfactorily addressed (or even identified?) at Stage 1. This issue took much of the first year of Scheme delivery to fully resolve and created some tensions between the HWU and HLF, which required some time to fully resolve.

Some Delivery Partners (including ESAMP, the Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP), and Esus Forestry – Training) operate to business models whereby their central staff are not fully-funded from core funds. Instead, the staff are funded through charging their time to project delivery, based on hour- or day-rates. In effect, they operate like a consultancy – despite the fact that ESAMP and KHWP are public sector-based organisations with limited core support. After much liaison, the HLF agreed to fund this staff time, but only to a limit of £10,000 for each project.

The issue then became one of defining a project. In short, it became evident that LP Schemes would be better placed proposing more, smaller projects, rather than fewer, larger, multi-objective ones: as the HLF would be able to support more staff costs. It appeared that this issue of staff cost recovery may have been treated differently at different times in different HLF regions.

Whilst eventually satisfactorily resolved in the WFR LPS, staff cost recovery is an issue that will presumably keep recurring for the HLF, especially given the tougher financial constraints that all organisations currently work within. It is especially an issue with semi-autonomous organisations in the public sector. Greater flexibility and a deeper understanding of this issue may be needed from the HLF to ensure the widest range of Delivery Partners can take part in an LPS.

On a related theme, one charity sector Delivery Partner was precluded from seeking full cost recovery for central management costs, because there was insufficient time at Stage 2 to appraise this fully. Instead, an alternative fix was applied which, because it wasn't fully understood, caused further issues.



Key findings – Creating a Landscape Partnership

- **The Weald Forest Ridge** is a complex heritage landscape perfectly suited to a landscape partnership approach: with its four ancient medieval hunting forests providing the central theme for the Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- **The landscape-scale approach** to archaeology and the wider historic environment was fundamental to the Scheme's success. Within this, the LiDAR survey of the whole Scheme area was a major factor in engaging communities with archaeology. It also enabled Delivery Partners to learn more about their sites and became a powerful interpretation tool.
- **Where existing organisational priorities** fitted with the aims of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme, access to funding was the most consistent reason for organisations joining the Partnership.
- **Many of the Scheme's Delivery Partners** would not have drawn in equivalent funding if they were not part of the Scheme: either they lacked the skills or confidence to apply direct to the HLF or their proposals were stronger as part of a partnership approach.
- **Staff cost recovery** was an issue for several organisations trying to take on a delivery role in the Scheme. It became evident that organisations proposing a few, smaller projects – rather than single, multi-objective ones – could more readily take on a delivery role in the Scheme, as the HLF would support greater overall staff costs in these situations.



5 | The WFR Scheme Delivery Model

It could be argued there are almost as many ways to deliver a Landscape Partnership Scheme as there are Schemes in the U.K. This Section explores the model used in the WFR LPS: one of a central Partnership Board and Scheme Management Team, and with all project work achieved through partner organisations.

The WFR LPS used a particular approach that fitted with the structure and working ethos of the Lead Partner – the High Weald AONB Unit. Unlike some AONB Teams, the High Weald’s Team focuses on research, information dissemination and a partnership approach to achieving landscape conservation and change: it does not undertake a countryside management role. This shaped the delivery mechanisms used in the WFR LPS, with many benefits and some disbenefits.

5.1 Delivery Partners

The delivery of the Scheme’s 31 projects was achieved through 20 Delivery Partners: organisations that had full responsibility for programming, match funding, procurement and spend to deliver particular outputs to agreed budgets – whilst reporting to, and being co-ordinated by, the WFR Scheme Management Team. The Partners ranged from environmental charities – such as the RSPB and Woodland Trust; through public bodies like the Forestry Commission and local authorities; to community organisations. Individual projects also varied enormously in financial value: from under £500 to almost £500,000.

The selection of Delivery Partners was effected through the project selection process in the Scheme’s Stage 1 and Stage 2 bid development (see Section 4). This process invariably focused on the projects, but with hindsight could have focused more on the partners as well.

“What makes an ideal partner is a combination of having the right skills in the organisation: firstly to be able to work in partnership and secondly to deliver the project. Not all partners met this ideal definition.”

Scheme Management Team

Perhaps, inevitably, there were significant differences in the ability of different organisations to fully embrace the Delivery Partner role. The Lead Partner saw organisational and cultural reasons for this.

“It’s about having the desire and organisational culture to work in partnership. It’s about being able to sign up to what’s on offer and to run with it. Delivery Partners had to be prepared to make their role in the Scheme work.”

“It’s about having a ‘can-do’ attitude and a positive approach.”

Scheme Management Team





“A few organisations seemed to only look at the Scheme in terms of what they could get out of it and they just did the bare minimum.”

“Some organisations didn’t have the mind-set to see the benefits.”

Scheme Management Team

These perceptions of cultural difference to the strength, or otherwise, of Delivery Partners were also identified by some of the Partners themselves.

“Not that there were problems, but it was a learning curve for the Lead Partner and us to work together. One for us to work in a big group where we didn’t have complete control and had to work with spreadsheets, and one for them working with an organisation that works artistically, creatively and organically, rather than prescriptively.”

“Our organisation has a very task-based approach and is a risk averse organisation. If organisations are prepared to take risks then there can be huge benefits.”

Delivery Partners

Another Partner put the cultural approach rather more prosaically.

“I have the feeling that some partners just get their heads down and get on with things!”

Delivery Partner

Additionally, successful project delivery was very dependent on individual members of staff and how they functioned and communicated within their organisation.

“It’s a mind-set for people to be able to think beyond their organisational boundaries – to do things which might be outside the job remit. Some cultures stop this happening and some are able to support it, but supporting it will bring greater benefits.”

Scheme Management Team

“I have only been to one of the meetings (Partnership Forums) and didn’t mingle as much as I could’ve. I haven’t exploited the Scheme as much as I could’ve.”

Delivery Partner

In terms of defining the ideal Delivery Partner, there was not, unfortunately, a particular type of organisation that automatically promoted itself to this role.

“There doesn’t seem to be any consistency in the type of organisation which is able to be a good Delivery Partner. One local authority was able to be, but another just couldn’t look outside their own box.”

Scheme Management Team

However, without a doubt, those Partners that were open, communicative, and prepared to invest time and effort over and above the bare minimum to deliver their outputs both contributed more to, and gained more from, involvement in the Partnership Scheme.

5.2 The Partnership Board

A Partnership Board is an HLF requirement of an LP Scheme. At the time of the WFR LPS application, a Board was defined as consisting of people “who have the authority from (partner) organisations to advise on the way an LP Scheme is delivered and the LP Fund is managed. The applicant organisation, as future grantee, will usually name the Chairperson of the LP Board.” (HLF, 2004, “Landscape Partnerships: Guidance for Applicants”).

The WFR Partnership Board initially met in the Stage 1 process and was refined in Stage 2, when a Memorandum of Agreement was established. This Agreement and the Board’s membership through the Delivery Phase of the WFR LPS are given in **Appendix 5**. The Board agreed it was most appropriate to meet three times a year during delivery, with the frequency reduced as the Scheme neared completion. Meetings were co-ordinated and minuted by the Scheme Management Team.

Board membership centred on representation from four Government agencies: English Heritage, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and Natural England. (Just one of these was a Delivery Partner, although the Board Member from this organisation had no direct involvement in this delivery.) The organisational motivations from these agencies for taking on a Board Member role were very diverse.

“We were not a body contributing funding at the start of the Scheme and so it was quite different for us to help steer a project like this without having a vested interest. In other HLF projects we have been critical, due to being a key funder. We were, however, providing project funding ... and there were dual benefits in understanding the links between (our funding) and the WFR.”

“It was a coincidence of two things: an opportunity and a shared aspiration for a landscape approach. We aspire to this approach and were interested in the drawing together of different environmental and cultural interests within a landscape. We normally wouldn’t be on the board of an LP as we are not set up to do this and don’t have the capacity for strategic input on schemes, but we were able to create the capacity in this instance.”

WFR Board Members





“We grew the Board to involve this member as they offered funding towards the Scheme. They got involved as they liked what we were doing and wanted to contribute to the Scheme management costs.”

“Finding synergies was the most important thing that I could contribute. Facilitating links and synergies in order to deliver the overarching aims.”

WFR Board Members

For the Lead Partner, this core membership was very effective. Additionally, the members fed back to their organisations at a regional, and in one case a national, level. This was important for the visibility of the WFR LPS, and this level of communication into four national agencies could not have been achieved by the Scheme Management Team alone.

Others members of the WFR Board consisted of a Delivery Partner, a community representative, a local authority economic development officer, and a representative from the Accountable Body. Each position raised some particular issues and these are considered in Section 9.5.

The Board’s membership obviously shaped its dynamic. It allowed good discussion and it was clear the particular membership of the WFR Board worked well.

“We’ve many shared links so it hasn’t been difficult. It might have been different if a different set of people were involved.”

“We sometimes haven’t necessarily agreed, but have had very useful and frank discussions.”

WFR Board Members

The Memorandum of Agreement shaped the Board’s remit well, and it was felt its objectives were met. But, interestingly, the Board had difficulty in defining exactly what its role was, and what it contributed to the Scheme.

“Did the Board have a role? Should there be a Board which is only there to deal with crunch issues? It probably means it doesn’t know very much about the Scheme.”

WFR Board Member

Nevertheless, the Board did identify roles for itself and felt it had a beneficial impact.

“The Board has given support, guidance and/or a clear steer.”

“We’ve mitigated risks.”

“We’ve made linkages to things outside the Scheme.”

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“We’ve used our influence to keep things rolling.”

“The Board acted as a checking mechanism for the big financial risks in the Scheme.”

“We’ve been a control mechanism. People can get anxious in projects if a steering group like this doesn’t exist.”

“It was a supportive sounding board, which is important in any organisation.”

“We were not there as policemen but as advisors or simply listeners: to help the Scheme forward.”

“It’s like an insurance policy.”

“We would only have stepped in if something really went wrong.”

WFR Board Members

This view of the Board’s operation was endorsed by the Lead Partner.

“It’s been really useful to have a sounding board – it gives confidence to the Scheme managers.”

High Weald AONB Unit

“They were a brilliant sounding board.”

“There were some issues with a certain project and the Board was able to give balance and perspective.”

Scheme Management Team

However, some Board members did question the “depth” of their roles, and clearly understood that the time they could realistically contribute impacted on their Board roles, leading to a relatively superficial involvement in the Scheme.

“The Board functioned quite well but was very little more than a rubber stamping exercise. The HW AONB Unit and Scheme Management Team came with proposals which the Board rubber stamped.”

“It is very difficult to have infrequent Board meetings and have the same grasp of the detail which the HWU and Scheme Management Team had.”

“There is a fine balance between the detail and the bigger picture and when a group meets infrequently problems can arise in between. I didn’t have the time to go through all the detail and I didn’t see our function as an audit committee. I didn’t have the time to spot issues. We’ve been totally reliant on ... (the Scheme Manager) ... to present the information and the problems.”

WFR Board Members



© Same Sky



© RSPB

Interestingly, the discipline of having regular Board meetings introduced a monitoring and review process into Scheme management that had not originally been envisaged.

“For the Scheme, it’s been good practice to tease out the issues and present them clearly three times a year.”

“Another strength of the Board was that it forced me to monitor and review regularly as we had fixed board meetings. It meant I had to produce papers showing the financial position and the issues. It was a good exercise to present an overview: it brought a discipline which might otherwise have been lacking.”

“It gave a ‘correctness’ to managing the Scheme.”

Scheme Management Team

The relationship between the Board and the HLF was sometimes an issue for the Board – especially in terms of HLF expectations. Whilst the Board understood that they were set up as an HLF requirement, they struggled to understand the exact relationship – a view also expressed by the Lead Partner.

“We haven’t had a context of how other boards for landscape partnership schemes are working.”

“What did HLF want – did they want us to take responsibility? The current system wouldn’t work in this way, we’d need a financial manager on the Board as well.”

“I’m surprised that the HLF Monitor and the Board never linked up, despite an invitation to the Monitor. We assume the lack of link-up was probably to do with Monitor time allocation by the HLF.”

WFR Board Members

“I’m not quite sure our Board was what the HLF intended, but its unclear and there’s been no physical link between the two, apart from one Board member attending one Monitor visit on his own volition.”

Scheme Management Team

As with the HLF, the physical links between the Board and Delivery Partners were not always ideal. Board members were invited to annual Partnership Forums, but time commitments and busy workloads meant there was only occasional attendance from some members (although their organisations were normally represented by other staff). This did not, however, lead to any issues.

5.3 Fostering Partnership Working

A dynamic, engaged and confident partnership is necessary for the success of any LP Scheme. With the 20 diverse Delivery Partners within the WFR LPS, it was one of the essential roles of the Scheme Management Team to foster and engender good partnership working, particularly given the differences in ability of different organisations to fully embrace the Delivery Partner role, as explored in Section 5.1. The Scheme Management Team focused on event organisation, partner support and communication to try to achieve optimal partnership working, as part of an underlying philosophy to help and serve the partnership.

“The Scheme Manager always encouraged partnerships and relationships.”

“We have almost worked as matchmakers. We had an umbrella view – only the Scheme Management Team could possibly have that view. We could see the potential synergies and help make links. We’d put people in touch with each other: sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn’t.”

Scheme Management Team

“We set our stall out early on to have an annual Forum where we would run with the current issues in the Scheme and try to have a two-way dialogue – by giving information on the Scheme, giving an update, then having workshops. The topics were appropriate to where we were in the Scheme. We were trying to create a learning environment.”

“A strength for me has been that we got all the projects talking to each other. This is part of the legacy really.”

Scheme Management Team

Essential to success was hence the work carried out in the Scheme’s Development Phase. This focused around two, day-long Partnership Forums staged a few months apart in 2007/2008. The Forums included workshop sessions exploring key procedural areas: such as project management, the partner claims process, and Scheme communications and branding. These were undoubtedly helpful, although some partners felt the long timescales from the workshops to starting actual project delivery (at least 15 months), meant the effectiveness of the workshops was reduced.

One of these Development Phase Forums held a workshop session based on “speed dating”: partners being given a maximum of five minutes to hold conversations with each other to explore potential project overlaps and areas of joint working. Whilst possibly a little contrived, this Forum activity was memorable, as well as seemingly successful.

“The Scheme staff held events which effectively forced people to meet each other. There was one event early on which was like speed dating, which was very useful.”

Delivery Partner





The Partnership Forums in the Delivery Phase were annual events. They consisted of indoor morning sessions and afternoon group activities or site visits. Feedback from attendees at these Forums was almost always overwhelmingly positive.

“Just a quickie to say how much I enjoyed (and learnt) from today – from what I picked up others did the same; excellently (inspirationally) organised, many thanks.”

Delivery Partner

Whilst it is difficult to quantify the success of these Forums for building the Partnership, one perceptive observation by a Scheme Management Team member hopefully captured this.

“The change was really obvious to me at the last Forum (September 2011). Everybody automatically found someone to talk to and there was no-one standing on their own, whereas previously there wasn’t that ease.”

Scheme Management Team

Whilst the Forums were, in effect, one of the communication mechanisms used to foster partnership working, the challenge was to find the best overall ways of communicating with partners individually and collectively. It was readily understood that one size did not fit all and there was the inevitable issue of email versus phone.

“I’m a great one for picking up the phone and speaking to people. Emails are great for some things but you can nurture better relationships by picking up the phone. I have always tried to nurture a culture where people feel that they can ring up. I’ve tried to develop an approachable environment, an open door environment.”

“I have cringed at some of the long emails I’ve sent out on a Friday afternoon! Ideally all of these were phone calls, but it’s just not possible sometimes with 20 Delivery Partners to contact.”

Scheme Management Team

The support given to Delivery Partners by the Scheme Management Team was another communication mechanism that helped foster partnership working.

“Partners have needed advice, guidance and general support. They’ve needed a sounding board and systems. We have tried to simplify HLF processes for them.”

“We have always tried to enable Partners to get the maximum benefit from the Scheme.”

Scheme Management Team

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

The Scheme Management Team made processes easier for Delivery Partners, and most of them were very glad to have this support. Some Partners, perhaps inevitably, needed more support than others, although they were normally not made aware of this additional support they were receiving.

“We have hand-held at times, and done everything for some Partners. They don’t always know we’ve done this, but we’ve just got on and done it.”

Scheme Management Team

This helping of Delivery Partners was able to take some of them beyond their comfort zones. It also built some organisations up so that they will be better able to deliver other projects in the future, or to see further opportunities.

During an evaluative workshop at the 2011 Partnership Forum, several partners recognised the partnership working benefits that accrued from the proactive Scheme Management approach.

“Questions, issues, problems, etc, have mainly been resolved quickly by the Scheme Management Team and the HLF.”

“This central management of the Scheme by the HWU-based team allows partners’ specialist skills to be best utilised and developed.”

“Using the “Delivery Partner” model for the Scheme – with a central Scheme Management Team – allows partners to get on with the delivery that they do best, and not be bogged down in the more administrative side of the Scheme.”

Delivery Partners

A **Case Study** of additional project delivery in late 2011 demonstrates the value of the proactive Scheme Management approach to partnership working.



Case Study 1

The Benefits of the Scheme's Proactive Approach to Partnership Working

Despite being in the final year of Scheme delivery, the Scheme Management Team enabled the construction of a Mesolithic-style shelter at West Sussex County Council's Buchan Country Park in late 2011/early 2012.

This arose through Buchan CP reviewing the use of its small Visitor Centre and investigating the potential for taking its education provision outside of the indoor classroom. The Park management had already seen a similar shelter, supported through the WFR LPS, that was constructed at the Ashdown Forest Centre in 2010 by ESAMP (the East Sussex Archaeology and Museums Partnership). They thought a similar shelter would fulfil their needs and an approach was made to the WFR Scheme Manager to see if there was any potential of assistance through the LP Scheme.

The Scheme was able to offer limited funding, but most importantly facilitated discussions between ESAMP, West Sussex CC, and also Gatwick Greenspace Partnership (GGP). These discussions focused on provision of match funding from WSCC, in-kind materials from GGP, volunteer support from ESAMP, and how ESAMP could incorporate the shelter as an additional output to one of its projects.

From initial concept, it took just four months to start site construction. This construction phase was also built into the finale schools' and celebratory events for the Forest Schools project in February 2012, leading to even greater Scheme benefit.



“It was quite late in the Scheme but we were able to set up a mechanism for the Shelter to happen, in terms of the funding, the volunteers, the organisations and so on. Within a month from WSCC saying they wanted it, we had built a mechanism that could deliver the £12,000 resource. It's a great example of our proactive approach to partnership working and it would not have happened otherwise.”

Scheme Management Team

“... (The Scheme Manager) totally understands partnership working and can put two and two together to make six.”

Delivery Partner involved in Shelter construction at Buchan Country Park

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

However, not every approach to fostering partnership working was effective. The Stage 2 Implementation Plan proposed the setting up of six “Working sub-groups” in the Delivery Phase. These were to consist of Delivery Partners, facilitated by the Scheme Management Team, and would focus on specific delivery areas, such as habitat enhancements or community and schools engagement. They would enable skills sharing, resource allocation and peer guidance between projects and partners.

Two or three group meetings were held in 2009, but it was soon evident that Partners were unable and unwilling to commit the necessary time to them; as they were not delivering sufficient benefits, over and above their commitment to Partnership Forums. No further Working Sub-Groups were staged after this, but it is not felt that partnership working suffered as a result.

An indicator of success for engendering partnership working within the Scheme could be the partnerships developed between projects. Each project summary within the delivery-focused Monitoring Report lists the partnerships made in that project. Many of these were between different projects and Delivery Partners, and **Fig.2** portrays these partnerships graphically.

Undoubtedly, the way the WFR LP Scheme was devised, the way the Scheme Management Team worked with a scheme-wide overview, and the way the partners wanted to work in partnership were all factors in the successful partnership working achieved.

“A strength for me has been that we got all the projects talking to each other and working together. This is part of the legacy really.”

Scheme Management Team

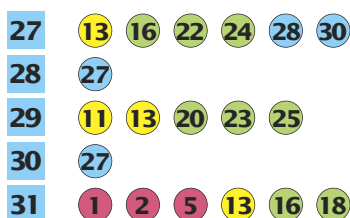
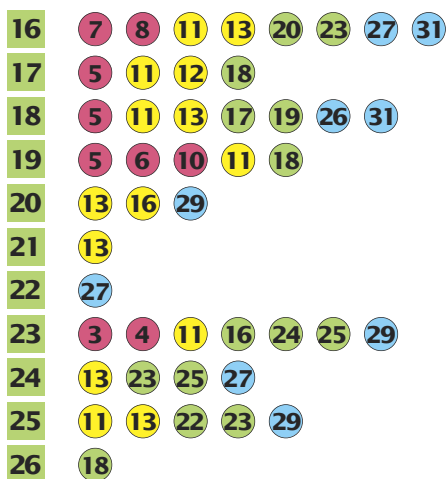
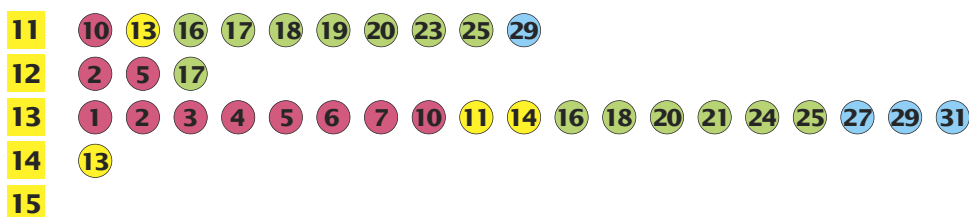
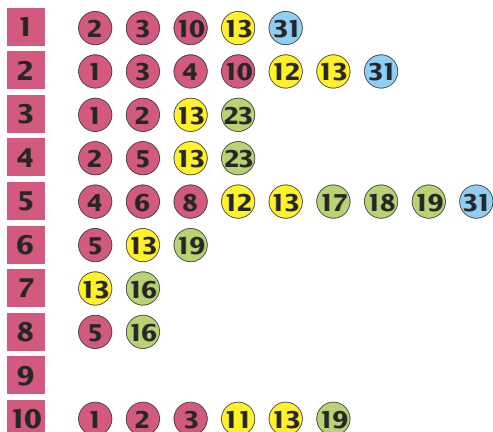


Fig.2 Working Partnerships between Weald Forest Ridge LPS Projects

Note: Almost all projects had other partnerships with non-Delivery Partners

Landscape Scale Connectivity (Programme 1)		Delivery Partner
1	Forest Footsteps across the Ridge: Sheffield Forest	Forestry Commission
2	Forest Footsteps across the Ridge: St Leonards Forest	Forestry Commission
3	Forest Footsteps across the Ridge: Tilgate Forest	Forestry Commission
4	Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods restoration	Horsham District Council
5	Broadwater Warren restoration	RSPB
6	Eridge Rocks habitat enhancements	Sussex Wildlife Trust
7	Old Lodge habitat enhancements	Sussex Wildlife Trust
8	Kingstanding habitat enhancements	Sussex Police
9	Pathways to natural heritage: Weir Wood LNR	East Sussex County Council
10	Pathways to Tudor heritage: Birchden Woods	Forestry Commission
Archaeology & Special Features (Programme 2)		
11	Archaeological awareness activities	ESAMP
12	Living history activities	The Company
13	Historic environment awareness	East Sussex County Council
14	Heritage Advisory Visits	High Weald AONB Unit
15	Highbrook Smokery restoration	Highbrook Village Hall Committee
Learning & Celebrating Heritage (Programme 3)		
16	Discovering the magic of Ashdown Forest	Conservators of Ashdown Forest
17	Family safaris	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
18	Developing the community at Hargate Forest	Woodland Trust
19	Family Fun – parent and toddler	KHWP
20	Young peoples’ heritage project	ESAMP
21	Open Your Eyes to the Weald Forest Ridge	High Weald AONB Unit
22	The Weald Wood Kits Project	High Weald AONB Unit
23	Forest Schools’ focus for the Weald Forest Ridge	Gatwick Greenspace Partnership
24	Educational resources at Ashdown Forest	Conservators of Ashdown Forest
25	Schools’ archaeological activities	ESAMP
26	Dragon Tails (or Tales of Dragons and Woodland Wyrms!)	Root and Branch Theatre Company
Reconnecting People & Place (Programme 4)		
27	Working woodlands in the Weald Forest Ridge	Esus Forestry & Woodlands Ltd
28	Local distinctiveness and buildings heritage	Weald & Downland Open Air Museum
29	Archaeological training placements	ESAMP
30	Sustaining farming and landscape	Plumpton Agricultural College
31	Inspiring People, Improving Places	BTCV

Projects worked with in partnership





5.4 An Intermediary to the HLF

One role for a Scheme Management Team in an LPS is to act as the conduit for Scheme communication with the HLF.

Where decisions were needed from the HLF, a Prince II Issues Log system was used with the HLF Monitor; which clearly communicated the issue and decision being sought from the HLF. Additionally, logs for project issues were drafted in conjunction with the Delivery Partner, so there was transparency to partners. More generally, the Scheme Management Team translated Scheme reporting and claim procedures into more simplified approaches to Partners.

Both sides saw the benefits of this approach.

“By having the Scheme Management Team, the HLF has a single point of contact with the Scheme, which makes relationship development easier.”

“Using the “Delivery Partner” model for the Scheme – with a central Scheme Management Team – allows partners to get on with the delivery that they do best, and not be bogged down in the more administrative side of the Scheme.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

“The HLF are sometimes seen as quite difficult to deal with. Some organisations are put off by how complex the grants can be. It’s good to be able to be an intermediary.”

“One role has been helping partners and keeping them away from the sharp end of the HLF stuff: keeping them focused on delivery. We could take some of the “pain” from accessing the funding.”

Scheme Management Team

Despite this Core Team intermediary role, the HLF Monitor met well over half the 20 Delivery Partners in the course of his monitoring visits, so there was still a good interface between the HLF and Partners.

There were just a very few instances where Delivery Partners sought direct contact with the HLF: invariably where there were project issues that needed resolving. They were Partners who were also delivering other HLF projects directly, so the intermediary role of the Scheme Management Team was seen as a barrier to communication. In one instance, the HLF Monitor acted as the intermediary to the HLF, and in all instances the issues were resolved satisfactorily for all parties.

5.5 A “Fit for Purpose” Scheme Management Team?

To paraphrase an old adage, behind every good LP Scheme there needs to be good scheme management. By using the Delivery Partner model explored elsewhere in this Section, the High Weald AONB Unit, as Lead Partner, set itself up to deliver strong, high quality, adaptable management that met the needs of both the HLF and the Scheme stakeholders.

In general, the stakeholders felt these needs were fulfilled, and contributed to the Scheme’s apparent success.

“It’s been a relationship of trust and respect.”

“We’ve had so much more help and support when we’ve needed it than in other projects we’ve been involved in.”

“I have nothing but praise for the management.”

“The Core Team couldn’t have been better.”

“The Scheme Management Team get a 10 out of 10 triple star rating. They’ve been absolutely fantastic in their work and support on claims, budget management and finance.”

Delivery Partners

“The Board support has been done excellently.”

Partnership Board Member

Quantifying exactly what made good scheme management in the WFR LPS was not easy. The Scheme Management Team saw themselves fulfilling a wide range of roles and duties.

“Juggler and fixer”

“An open ear”

“Attention to detail”

“Playing to strengths”

“We’ve listened carefully”

“Knowing what the level of responsibility should be”

“Not being frightened to change the way we do things”

“Learning from difficult times and experiences”

“Financial management and project management, of course!”

Scheme Management Team

“Two-way, open communication”

“An enabler”

“Being adaptable”

“A can-do approach”

“We’ve always been there to help”

One area which did prove difficult for the Scheme Management Team (in reality the Scheme Manager) was finalising all the project detail for the Stage 2 submission, and ensuring that what was submitted was subsequently deliverable.



In the WFR LPS's first delivery year, some major project issues arose. One was a consequence of a proposed Delivery Partner ceasing trading, and combined with the loss of three projects because of the existing staff costs issue (see Section 4.4) there was a temporary, but large, financial issue with the Scheme. But the majority of the project issues were due to "misunderstandings" over eligible costs and match funding at Stage 2. For example, issues arose with the BTCV-led NVQ training, and whether it was new or existing delivery. Additionally, the Conservators of Ashdown Forest identified significant sums of match funding for one of their projects, but these turned out to be sums attributable to non-WFR work, or in-kind staff time contributions with no actual financial value (and which were hence ineligible as match). Almost £100,000 of spend had to be trimmed from this Conservators' project because of these issues and, for a time, this severely restricted its deliverability.

Without the intervention of the High Weald AONB Unit, and their introduction of replacement projects to the Scheme, there could have been, at worst, a financially unviable LPS as a result of all these problems inherent in the Stage 2 application. In part, the problems arose as a consequence of the HLF requirement to openly recruit a Scheme Manager at either Stage 1 to Stage 2, or Stage 2 to Delivery phases. The HWU recruited (in hindsight correctly) at Stage 1 to Stage 2. But a consequence was the new Development Phase Manager had just eight months to submit the Stage 2 application and, inevitably in these short timescales, it was not possible to fully understand every project nuance. With the changes in LPS bid submission protocols under HLF Strategic Plans 3 and 4, this will hopefully no longer be an issue.



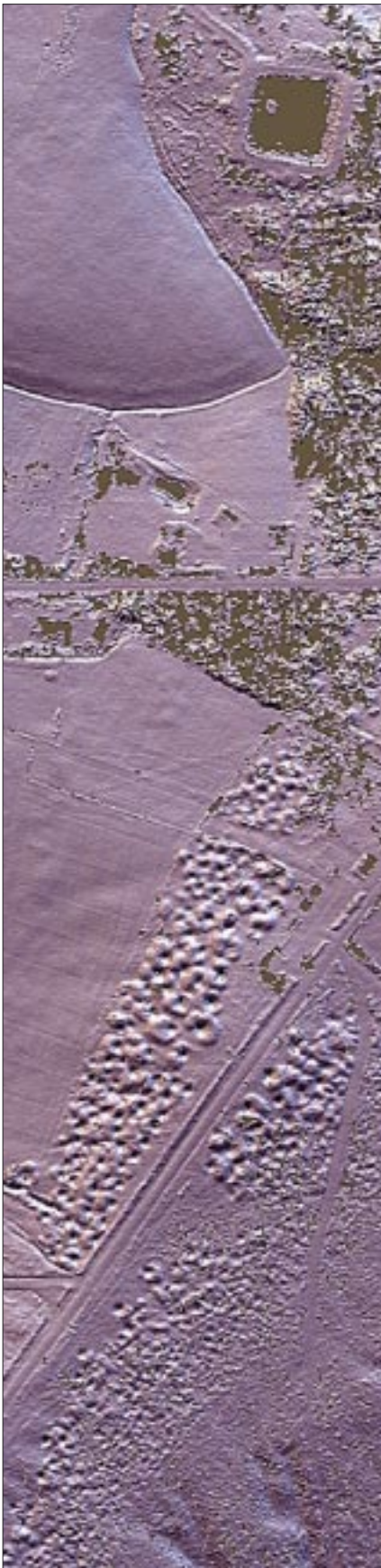
© Weald & Downland Open Air Museum

Key findings – The Scheme Delivery Model

- **The Scheme** had a well-functioning Partnership Board, with majority membership consisting of senior and strategic professionals from government agencies and the local authority sector. These Board members played a beneficial role in taking learning from the Scheme into their organisations; creating synergies and partnerships across the landscape; giving support and guidance; and ensuring control mechanisms were in place for Scheme delivery.
- **The relationship** between the Board and the Heritage Lottery Fund was sometimes an issue for the Board. Whilst understanding they were established as an HLF requirement, the Board was unclear of their exact relationship to the HLF and felt they most contributed to the Scheme as a sounding board for development and delivery.
- **The Delivery Partners** who derived the widest benefits from their involvement with the Weald Forest Ridge LPS were those who could both work in partnership as well as best deliver their project(s).
- **A key factor** in the development of the beneficial partnerships and relationships developed across the Scheme was the proactive work of the Scheme Management Team. The Team's ongoing support to Delivery Partners throughout the Scheme also enabled the Partners to focus on Scheme delivery – where their skills and knowledge were best utilised.
- **The main issues** for the Scheme Management Team focused around their intermediary role between Delivery Partners and the HLF; the short timescales and steep learning curve of the Stage 2 Development process; the loss of four key projects at the start of Scheme delivery; and the inability to establish the proposed, subject-focused working groups during Scheme delivery.
- **Both Delivery Partners and the Partnership Board** recognised that the Scheme Management Team contributed considerably to the Scheme's success.

Key findings





6 Impacts and Benefits for Heritage

The following three Sections – 6, 7 and 8 – assess the impacts and benefits of the WFR LPS: for heritage, for people and for organisations. The complementary Scheme Monitoring Report addresses the quantitative, output-driven element of these, so this Evaluation Report focuses on the more qualitative feedback obtained and seeks to identify the differences the Scheme has made.

Inevitably, there will be some evaluation overlap with the Monitoring Report. Additionally, it is impossible to totally separate heritage, people and organisations into three separate categories when considering impacts and benefits. However, it has been attempted to minimise the overlaps between the various areas in this Evaluation Report.

6.1 Archaeology and the Historic Environment

Section 4.2 explained how archaeology and the historic environment were planned as one of the two main themes to pull individual projects together into a coherent LP Scheme. One major component of this archaeology theme was the undertaking of a LiDAR survey.

The LiDAR survey results are publicly available online (www.highweald.org/look-after/archaeology/lidar-images.html), uploaded to all three County HER's (Historic Environment Records), and have been provided to many site managers in the Scheme area. But delivery of the survey was not without its problems: due to tight seasonal and weather windows; delays caused by Air Traffic Control at Gatwick Airport; and poor contractor performance. As a result, the survey had to be flown in two tranches (March 2009 and February 2010), rather than one. This meant delayed survey results for half the Scheme area and knock-on programme delays for several projects using the results.

These delays, however, were inconsequential when the beneficial impacts of the LiDAR are considered. It was having something dynamic, exciting, "cutting-edge" – and also openly available to communities – that really benefited the Scheme.

“LiDAR has been a fantastic tool for community engagement, generating much enthusiasm, as it reveals previously-hidden archaeology – a process with parallels to the excitement of excavation.”

Delivery Partner

“People have been endlessly fascinated by LIDAR, especially if they are near where it's been flown. They will go and look at humps and bumps and use LIDAR to see if it's anything.”

Volunteer

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“The usefulness of LiDAR has been well demonstrated in the Scheme: to open landscapes as well as wooded ones.”

“LiDAR ... has been important for informing perceptions of what is important as archaeological assets.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

Unlike some of the other LPSs that have flown LiDAR, the WFR survey was not designed just to enable follow-up site investigations within the LP Scheme. Instead, it was promoted as a tool available to both professionals and community groups; for them to carry out their own survey work and to supply subsequent results to the HERs. To enable this community-led process, three online archaeological toolkits were developed by the HEA Project, in consultation with community groups. This generated Survey (using LiDAR), Identification and Research Toolkits. They were initially designed for use in the WFR, but it soon became apparent they could be applied to a wider geographic area. Through a Partnership Board Member and the HLF Monitor, they were supplied to the New Forest National Park and two Kent-based HLF projects by the end of 2011. By the end of 2012, they were being recognised nationally as exemplars of best practice.

“The products that we’ve developed are relevant to a much wider area than the WFR and are being used in the area and elsewhere – in Yorkshire by the National Trust and nationally by the Woodland Trust, for example.”

HEA Project Delivery Partner

Scheme partners have clearly seen the wider benefits that the LiDAR and archaeology focus has delivered.

“It has been geographically quite exciting, from an archaeological point of view – with new heritage sites, new foci and new resources.”

“The archaeological community has benefitted, across all three counties. The archaeology network across the counties has been reinforced by the programme. It has increased our fluidity and forced us to work together more.”

“The biggest (Scheme) benefit is definitely the benefit to the archaeology of this area.”

Delivery Partners

One issue that can affect large blocks of ancient woodland – both in the High Weald and nationally – is their fragmentation through the “woodlotting” process. Their heritage assets are often overlooked in this division. Individual owners of small plots (e.g. typically 20 four to six hectare plots in an 100ha woodland) lose any concept of the wider historical significance of what they own. The HEA Project worked closely with the owners of one such woodland – Waste Wood near Hadlow Down – in an innovative approach to addressing this issue, which is considered in **Case Study 2**.



Case Study 2

The Role of Archaeology to Unite Owners in a Multiple Ownership Woodland

Following its woodlotting by woodlands.co.uk in the mid 2000s, 19 different owners owned the 90ha Waste Wood, on the southern boundary of the WFR area. Motivations for ownership were very diverse: from coppice extraction, recreation, and as a playground for local grand-children; through to a training site for working dogs.

An initial approach through the Small Woodlands Owners Group identified that some owners were interested in finding out more about their compartments' archaeology. Using LiDAR for the whole of Waste Wood, and testing the HEA Project's developing Survey and Identification Toolkits, archaeological survey days were hence organised by the HEA Project Officer and a local volunteer. Adjacent plot owners worked with each other, and in total 13 survey days were undertaken to survey the whole 19 compartments.

A single HER entry for the Wood was created, recording the 151 features identified in the surveys. These included charcoal platforms, sawpits, woodbanks, agricultural cultivation terraces, ancient holloways/trackways, and at least three bloomery sites – evidence of earlier iron working in the area. Prior to the survey, none of these features had been identified or recorded.

The survey was not, however, the end of the interest in Waste Wood's archaeology. It was the trigger for further work initiated by the owners themselves. For example, the bloomery sites were investigated through resistivity and magnetometry surveys; and the Wood became the focus of a dissertation study by one owner into how small woodland owners use their woods.

Papers were presented on the Waste Wood work at the 2012 Sussex Archaeological Symposium, as well as the HEA Project's Wooded Landscapes Conference in February 2011.

From the WFR LPS lead and the site surveys, a strong community group has become established and will continue into the future.

“The wood owners who'd bought woods separately now have a community group of their own.”

Volunteer involved with Waste Wood



Case Study 2 contd



The enduring legacy is that all the Waste Wood owners are now aware of the archaeology within each of their plots and its wider context, and appreciate that it needs to be cared for and managed as a whole. This has been summed up eloquently by one of the owners.

“We are really pleased to have had the opportunity to be part of this project.... It has given us the chance to understand our woods much better and to think about them in a way we may not have done before. Owning a small wood is great fun but most of the time you are thinking about your own small plot – how to manage it, what you might plant, how to encourage different sorts of wildlife etc.

What this project has helped to do is to widen that focus and think about our own woods in a wider context. The archaeology revealed a history of an industry that is now almost forgotten – of charcoal-burning, processing timber by hand, iron-making as well as ancient field systems, and is real living history.

Quite apart from the benefits to ourselves by getting to know our neighbouring wood-owners, we can now recognise and respect our archaeological features – indeed, we feel quite proud of them! We now feel like a real community... This means that we feel proud of Waste Wood and its archaeological features and we would have no hesitation in encouraging other groups to explore and survey their own woods and help to protect this precious heritage. The owners are now a lively community, who meet regularly to discuss management of Waste Wood as a whole.”

An Owner within Waste Wood

The Waste Wood process of engaging diverse owners through site archaeology is now seen as a model that can be applied in other divided woodland blocks.

Sustainability and legacy for the Scheme’s archaeological work is considered in detail in Section 7.4, in respect of the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum.



6.2 Biodiversity and Access

Spread across a range of 11 sites throughout the WFR area, the LPS delivered considerable biodiversity and access benefits, including:

- over 200ha of Biodiversity Action Plan habitat conserved or restored – mainly heathland or ancient woodland, and
- over 55km of routeways or self-guided trails created or improved.

The Scheme included an enhancement site of regional significance – the RSPB’s Broadwater Warren nature reserve near Tunbridge Wells: which over a ten year timescale to 2020 is carrying out the largest heathland restoration project in South-East England. This scale has helped with profile-raising, and associated publicity and promotion work saw the Warren’s visitor numbers rise by around 60% during the Scheme’s three-year timescale. The magnitude of this increase was not anticipated and presented some unforeseen biodiversity and access issues for the RSPB. Increased visitor numbers were also seen at other biodiversity and access enhancement sites – reflecting a raise in their profiles locally.

“We could never have guessed how high the visitor numbers would get. I don’t have exact figures, but the numbers have rocketed from very occasional visitors, mainly locals – you’d see 1-2 on site at a time – to maybe 200+ people on a good day, as you’d see maybe 20-30 people at a time.”

“At (project site name) we’ve redone the trails and interpretation and the visitor numbers have increased”

Delivery Partners

Delivery Partners readily saw the immediate benefits that delivering site habitat and access enhancements could provide.

“... getting rid of the rhododendron (ponticum) has had a huge impact. The site looks so much better now it’s gone.”

“Without the fencing going in, there would have been no grazing, essential for our heathland management.”

“Without the boardwalks going in there would be less visitors and more disturbance on site.”

Delivery Partners

And the legacy element of physical site works was readily recognised throughout the partnership.

“It’s been great leaving things in place, tangible things that people can see.”

Delivery Partner

“It has created permanent legacies: the work on the ground in particular, like the new forest trails and accessible sites.”

Partnership Board member

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

But the partnership working ethos of the wider Scheme meant that Delivery Partners did not just work with a “silo mentality” on their own sites.

“Ours has been a very site-based project, but it widens our vision of the site when we’re working with the context of the other organisations and projects.”

“It put the whole project into context, e.g. by linking the restoration plans with the wider landscape and its history.”

Delivery Partners

“The Scheme has encouraged a multi-disciplinary approach, for example connecting nature conservation with cultural heritage and drama. This cross-over is important: enabling the sharing of legacy resources and outputs across different organisations in the public, private and voluntary/charity sectors.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

This broader partnership working is essential for a successful LP and it would seem that the WFR LPS has adequately achieved this.

6.3 Heritage Interpretation

All except two of the sites undergoing biodiversity or access enhancements in the Scheme (as 6.2, above) also undertook some form of heritage interpretation. Combining these nine sites with a further 13 LPS projects that also incorporated interpretation in its broadest sense (i.e. events and activities, as well as boards and leaflets) showed that there was considerable provision for people to learn about, access, celebrate and benefit from the WFR’s landscape heritage. Purely in terms of outputs, there were over 70 leaflets, guides, films, archives and interpretation boards created; and almost 350 events and talks staged, with over 18,000 attendees.

The quality of many of these interpretive outputs was assessed as very high by beneficiaries. A film on the archaeology of Ashdown Forest was lauded by all who saw it for clearly and succinctly presenting a very complex subject. Attendees at one of the Living History Activity site-specific plays ranked their satisfaction at over 4.5 (i.e. 90%) using a one to five scoring system. And a staggering 98% of attendees at Forest School public bushcraft sessions ranked their overall experience (and the knowledge of the leader) as very good.

Particularly with “hard” outputs, such as site leaflets and interpretation boards, the WFR Scheme Management Team worked with many Delivery Partners to try to take interpretation beyond a purely factual experience of the present. On several sites, archaeology and cultural heritage were leading themes for interpretation. For example, the RSPB at Broadwater Warren developed a self-guided Site History Trail. Whilst this identified





features such as a rifle range and decoy pond, it also invited visitors to imagine themselves, for example, as soldiers undertaking firing practice. At two of the four Forestry Commission sites within the Scheme, tactile chainsaw sculptures helped interpret to young children the key stories explained on accompanying interpretation panels, such as the area's Tudor iron industry and the myth of the St Leonard's dragon.

“We've been able to get across the cultural history of the sites to inform visitors.”

Delivery Partner

At one end of the interpretation spectrum, two projects used drama and theatre to interpret heritage. This was eye-opening for the breadth of information that could be conveyed and the emotions that could be invoked.

“It wasn't understood the role that theatre could play in informing through entertainment. The first time the HWU staff came to see a site-based play, they were bowled over as they saw how it brought an environment to life and it involved everyone.”

Delivery Partner

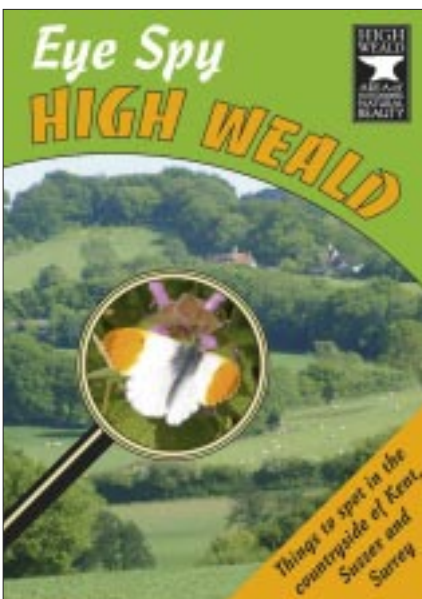
(Section 7 further explores the learning potential of theatre for countryside visitors.)

This Scheme-wide approach to heritage interpretation has shaped the Scheme's final output – the “Enjoy and Explore” legacy leaflet. Using high-quality visuals to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, this weaves the leading heritage messages from the Scheme around a diverse range of publicly accessible sites in the WFR area.

In at least two instances, the high quality of WFR interpretation outputs has already led to legacy projects or arrangements. Firstly, the “Eye Spy High Weald” guide – produced in the Open Your Eyes project and loosely based on the childhood I-Spy books – has been taken on by the publishers, Michelin, as the 50th title in their re-launch of the I-Spy brand. Secondly, the Friends group on Ashdown Forest has already commissioned a second interpretation film, based on the success of the WFR-funded first.

“The (Ashdown Forest) archaeology film was great. The Friends (of Ashdown Forest) were so impressed they are already supporting a film about the flora and fauna of the Forest.”

Conservators of Ashdown Forest



Key findings – Heritage: Impacts and Benefits

- **LiDAR was a fantastic tool** to engage local communities and gave people a wider understanding of archaeology and the historic landscape of the Weald Forest Ridge.
- **The three online archaeological toolkits** developed in consultation within the Scheme by the Historic Environment Awareness Project have been recognised nationally as exemplars of best practice.
- **Using and studying** the extant archaeology of “woodlotted” ancient woodland blocks can be a powerful tool to engage the diverse owners of these divided woodlands, as shown by the Scheme’s work with the 19 present-day owners of the 90ha Waste Wood, on the edge of the WFR.
- **The WFR LPS delivered** considerable biodiversity benefits, focusing on heathland and ancient woodland habitats on key publicly accessible sites across the Weald Forest Ridge. Most of these sites also undertook access improvements.
- **There were considerable increases** in visitor numbers on some of these enhancement sites – much higher than anticipated.
- **The majority of sites** undergoing biodiversity or access enhancements in the Scheme also undertook some form of heritage interpretation; often of high quality and including art, drama, film, leaflets and site panels.
- **The Scheme’s underlying partnership** working ethos enabled a multi-disciplinary approach to heritage: taking the Delivery Partners of site-based projects beyond their boundaries, to connect with more culture-based heritage and to share resources across organisations and sectors.

Key findings



© Horsham District Council



7 Impacts and Benefits for People and Communities

This Section almost entirely considers Scheme “beneficiaries”, i.e. the communities, local residents, site visitors, school children and volunteers that became involved in some way with the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme.

7.1 Celebration and Learning

Using activities and events to enable communities to celebrate, become engaged in, and learn about the unique heritage of the Weald Forest Ridge was a key element of the Scheme. But the huge volume of work undertaken in this area – with almost 350 events and talks, and over 17,000 attendees – means it is impossible to have a broad spectrum evaluation of all of this activity in this Report. Instead, there will be a focus on a few key areas which achieved particularly notable impact.

Several times during Scheme delivery, either Delivery Partners or the Scheme Management Team staged public events that had numerous Partners/projects represented. Examples included AshFest, and finale events for the Hargate Forest and Forest Schools projects. The range of enjoyable, family-focused activities on offer – including bushcraft, natural arts, hands-on archaeological interpretation and nature detective trails – really helped attendees engage with the events.

Delivery Partners involved in these partnership events readily noticed benefits.

“Just wanted to say thanks for inviting us along to be part of the day. We certainly had a really good day with lots of engagement with the visitors which were mainly family groups who often stayed with us for half an hour, which always makes it very worthwhile.”

“I was really pleased with how the whole day went – a good balance of informal learning that brought 70-80% new visitors to the site.”

“The public response to Sunday was clearly “what a great event”.”

Delivery Partners

Some attendees went out of their way to relay their thanks and positive comments to event organisers – including through e-mails and Facebook.

“Had a great day at the ‘Go Wild in the Woods’ in Buchan Park on Sunday! Well done to all the hard workers who made outdoor activities so accessible to young and old alike.”

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“We truly enjoyed the archaeology (the individuals there were incredibly welcoming and child friendly).”

Event attendees

Others clearly determined to make positive changes as a result of enjoying site events they had attended. 78% of attendees at Forest School public bushcraft events said they would take some form of positive action as a result of attending the event, such as: be more countryside aware; practice their new-found bushcraft skills; or spend more time in the countryside. This re-visiting of sites that people had first discovered through Weald Forest Ridge events was a common theme.

“We’ll be back to Hargate (Forest), which before this weekend we didn’t even know existed!”

“My first visit to this RSPB reserve, but it will not be my last!”

“I will revisit the Pembury Walks area on my own, particularly in late May to see if I can hear a nightjar.”

Event attendees

The quality of events staged, and the knowledge and skills of event leaders, were clearly recognised by attendees as crucial factors for determining their enjoyment of events and, as a result, what they might have learnt from the event.

“It’s a great pleasure to be taken through the local woodland by such experts.”

“(The walk leader) is a gem! Thank you for such an interesting morning.”

“The event, or course, is (the walk leader). No (walk leader) – no event!”

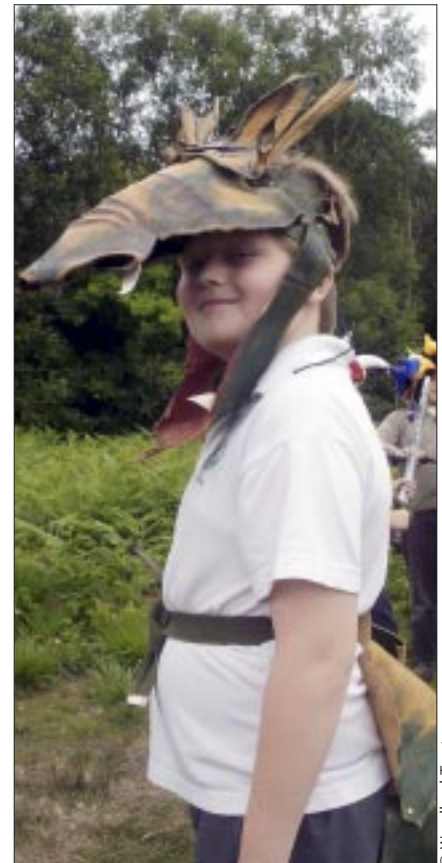
“A very belated note of very sincere thanks for such a stimulating talk last Tuesday. Now even us lay people really begin to understand and appreciate all the work you are putting into your project. Thank you so much for wonderful slides, your clear speaking voice and excellent explanation of what LiDAR is and what it can achieve.”

Event attendees

Additionally, it was clear that attendees related more to their local area as a consequence of attending events. Whilst they might not have immediately identified this as part of the Weald Forest Ridge, it was noticeable that access to their local heritage was important to them.

“The fact that you showed us how things related to ‘our’ area really caught our imagination and interest for the future.”

Event attendee



© Woodland Trust



Making celebration and learning fun was an important underlying theme to activities and events staged in the Scheme. This was exemplified in the Living History Activities project – five site-specific theatrical trails; written, produced and performed by a local theatre company; that interpreted fact-based historical aspects of some popular countryside sites. This fun element was recognised by the theatre company, as well as attendees.

“People learn more from watching one of our plays than attending a seminar. It’s about learning being fun.”

Delivery Partner

“Excellent. Really fun event.”

“Very funny. Great to see a show for all ages.”

Event attendees

But these site-based theatre trails gave far more benefit than just an enjoyable couple of hours in the countryside. Because they were based around human stories, and were performed by real people (albeit in character), the audience could engage and have empathy with the characters.

“If someone had just given me a piece of information about the original owners of Buchan Park, I would never have engaged with the characters as much as I did when they were brought to life in the Ostrich Feathers production. I really wanted to know did Albert marry Renee in the end? What happened to these characters?”

Event attendee

Gap analysis of feedback from one of the theatrical trails provided some very interesting results. The main motivators for people attending the trail were to enjoy the theatre and the countryside experience. Yet the greatest benefits they derived (i.e. the biggest “gaps” between pre-event importance and post-event satisfaction) were from learning more about the heritage of the Weald Forest Ridge and the particular site. The clear implication is that, by attracting the public to events and presenting heritage messages in an appropriate way, the public can be very receptive to learning about their heritage, even if the learning is subliminal against a background of enjoyment and fun.

7.2 The Outcomes from Public Learning Activities

At its simplest, Scheme learning activities helped raised awareness of the Weald Forest Ridge, and the wider High Weald AONB.

“There is definitely a greater awareness of what the landscape is – that it’s an AONB, that it’s the High Weald.”

“The feedback has been amazing. So many people have said ‘I didn’t realise this was here’ – it’s been the awareness raising that’s been the most important in the Scheme.”

“There has been maybe a perception change that the landscape is something to value.”

High Weald AONB Unit

“It’s benefitted communities – it’s opened people’s eyes to what’s possible – to the heritage assets in their local area that they can discover and explore and return to.”

“My general impression is that yes, their perception has changed. Lots of them lived in the WFR area but saw it as say the Ashdown Forest, rather than the WFR.”

Delivery Partners

“People were fascinated. They all said that ‘it’s opened my eyes and I never knew there was so much around me.’ It’s opened their eyes and told another story.”

Volunteer

Backed up by feedback from individual events, there was a lot of perception amongst the WFR Partnership that there was considerable public learning benefit derived from the LP Scheme. For example, many local people appeared to lack any real understanding of the need, and the reasons, for landscape management; and walks, talks and activities went some way to overcoming this.

“People normally see the countryside as just being there, just existing, and this Scheme helps them see that it’s been managed for years and by different landowners. It’s a good message to get across.”

“One of the main things we were trying to get across was that trees need to be managed. People don’t realise this and have lots of misconceptions. We haven’t solved the problem but we’ve gone a little way to upping the profile of woodland management.”

Delivery Partners





© Same Sky

Similarly, “forests with no trees” (i.e the four medieval hunting forests of the WFR), was a very difficult concept to communicate to people who were more used to thinking of forests as large expanses of woodland and dark, serried ranks of conifers.

“The word forest is a bit difficult. It refers to hunting places rather than wooded areas. The Scheme has got people to look at the landscape in a deeper way and to emphasise that forest equals hunting, not trees.”

Delivery Partner

Some of the key volunteers engaged with the Scheme particularly appreciated that the public, and themselves as well, benefited considerably from the learning environment they had been exposed to.

“Even people who know the area really well have found something new about it.”

“I’ve learnt quite a lot about the landscape. As part of the volunteer group we were invited to go on various different courses, for example the archaeological talk about Hargate (Forest), a guided walk out near Mayfield, the fungi foraging, the plant and tree id walk and the tree felling course.”

“I’ve got more understanding of how the landscape evolved. I know more about how the land has been used historically, like pig droving and coppicing – hornbeam for charcoal and chestnut for fencing.”

“The main benefit has been the training days, which were good and caused me to look at footpaths and bridleways in a different light. I saw them in a different way and understood the implications of what I saw. It caused me to be more interested in the parish.”

Volunteers

7.3 Schools Educational Delivery

Working with schools was another key element of Scheme delivery. This ranged from in-classroom, hands-on sessions in subjects such as art and drama; archaeological activities in schools; and site-based, Forest Schools teaching. Delivery was almost entirely focused on primary-age children, although some meaningful secondary delivery was also achieved.

In the majority of schools’ projects and their delivery, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

“They thoroughly enjoyed it...”

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“The children thoroughly enjoyed the day... the adults enjoyed it too! It was good to see the children so motivated.”

“We’d just like to send you a huge thank you for yesterday. We had a fabulous time and it was a very enriching experience for all involved. The event was also extremely well organised and the resources were fabulous!”

“They had an amazing time... excellent, kept the children really busy and motivated.”

“What a fabulous day! You even managed to organise the weather. The children had the most fantastic experience today – you really had laid on some spectacular and exciting activities for them. Most of all, thanks and a big well done ... for organising such a complex and enriching day.”

Teachers attending WFR Schools’ events

The deliverers of the schools’ project work also observed this positive response.

“Overall it has been a very positive experience. It has worked and delivered to a lot of children.”

“The biggest and most important thing has been to influence the way that children see things. This is the essence of the Scheme.”

Delivery Partners

“One teacher said on a monitoring visit with the HLF that it was great to see children go out and see what it is they’re learning about. They talk about things in the classroom and then go and see the landscape. It’s great to apply it.”

High Weald AONB Unit

Whilst staging high-quality teaching activities during the Scheme was obviously crucial, leaving a legacy of this work is also imperative for ongoing success. Ensuring future schools’ engagement with heritage was therefore an important part of the schools’ work. How this was achieved varied between individual projects.

The strategy in the Forest Schools project was to deliver accredited Forest School training to teachers and TA’s, so that they could continue to deliver activities in their schools. Alternatively, other projects produced physical resources, such as the arts and drama workshop teacher packs from the Open Your Eyes project, which are available online at www.highweald.org/learn/education/education-resources/1841-classroom-based-activity-sheets-and-resource-packs.html. With the Education Resources at Ashdown Forest project, the project itself was based around testing and developing resources that would lead to self-guided or tutor-led Forest visits by schools. Within the Scheme’s timescales, the tutor-led visits doubled in number.





“The Ashdown Forest is an amazing setting and children and local schools haven’t been making the most of it. We’ve made a really good start in getting people aware of this fantastic resource.”

High Weald AONB Unit

Secondary-age delivery tended to focus on small groups and individuals and, for those concerned, there was good engagement with heritage. This was recognised both by the partners and also those close to the children.

“We also did an educational project with two secondary schools working with 14 year olds – one of the most difficult to reach age groups, the most difficult to engage – and I’m pleased it worked so well.”

Delivery Partner

“My son might be too shy to say this, but he has really enjoyed creating his site willow sculpture (in the Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods Restoration project). It has given him motivation in the mornings to get up and go to school.”

Mum at Sculpture Trail Launch Event

Within the Forest Schools project, the Project Co-ordinator delivered forest school activity at a specialist school, and achieved some particularly meaningful outcomes, as illustrated by **Case Study 3**.

Of all the 31 projects in the WFR LPS, there was just one that, it was felt, did not meet the Scheme Management expectations of high-quality, partnership-orientated delivery. Organisational leadership was probably the main factor behind this and the Scheme Management Team adopted an approach to minimise impact on the wider Scheme, primarily through producing additional learning materials for schools involved with the project.

A very important reason for the overall success of the WFR LPS schools’ work was the connection to the AONB-wide, High Weald Heroes programme, and the fact that the Education Officer employed to deliver this programme (not funded through the WFR LPS) could support, guide and add to the WFR delivery. This is explored further in Section 8.3.

Case Study 3

The Benefits of Heritage Engagement for Behaviourally Challenged School Children

Woodland Grange School is a residential and day school on the outskirts of Crawley for pupils with autistic spectrum needs plus, possibly, other special education needs as well. The young people often have very challenging behaviour: requiring high levels of support and supervision and, typically, frequent physical restraints by trained staff.

30 Forest School day sessions were delivered by the Project Co-ordinator within the Forest Schools project in 2010 and 2011: with 1:3, and even 1:1, ratios because of the childrens' challenging behaviour. Activities were planned to achieve improvements to the school grounds – such as clearing invasive evergreens, coppicing hazel and making simple wooden craft items – whilst also encouraging improved co-operation and communication skills.

Initial sessions were blighted by poor concentration, lack of engagement, unfinished work, lack of trust, and fighting amongst the children. But continuation of the use of the Forest School approach gradually led to greater trust and respect from the children, positive responses to the work, initiation of enquiry and learning by the children and, as a result, increased complexity and risk in work undertaken – such as the use of saws and knives, and baking bread on an open fire.

On the strength of the positive results achieved during the Forest School sessions up to end 2011, the School has subsequently employed an environmental science teacher to continue providing a balance of classroom and practical outdoor learning. Ongoing projects with the students include creating and maintaining a formal and an allotment garden, a tree nursery and a wildlife pond within the school grounds.

“We are continuing with the kinaesthetic approach to learning as a result of our engagement with the Forest School approach.”

Head teacher, Woodland Grange School



© Catwick Greenspace Partnership

7.4 Volunteering

Volunteering was important in Scheme delivery, and 995 different people volunteered in some way in the WFR LPS. Beyond the purely financial aspect of contributing 6% of match funding, there were considerable benefits to the Scheme, and to the volunteers, from this engagement.

Many of the volunteers took part in practical conservation management on a range of project sites. Work delivered was often typical of the needs of sites and the sort of work undertaken by volunteers.

“We’ve done things like assembling bat boxes and dormouse boxes. We’ve built benches and placed them on the site where there’s a nice panoramic view. We’ve built bridges for people to walk over small streams and we’ve done some hedge-laying.”

“The first project was clearing small trees and shrubs from an area we wanted to turn into a pond through flooding the area.”

“We’ve created dead hedges to promote wildlife and to keep people on the footpaths.”

“We’ve removed all the non-native plants, like the rhododendron and conifers, to assist the heathland restoration work.”

Volunteers

This typical conservation volunteering was seen to be rewarding and enjoyable for a range of personal motivation reasons, such as exercise, camaraderie and learning.

“It’s good exercise, I like getting outdoors.”

“There’s a great comradeship from the team and I like meeting new people.”

“It’s very rewarding to start and finish a project and see the end results.”

“I spend a lot of time on the laptop, on the mobile and in the car. I love putting all that away and getting into the woods and getting out a shovel or an axe. I love that tiredness you get after physical activity, which is so different from work and stress-related tiredness.”

“Yes, I’ve met new people.”

“I’m improving my knowledge and skills and I’ve learnt things from the different training courses, like winter tree ID or tree felling.”

Volunteers



© BTCV

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

Levels of volunteering were, on some projects, considerably higher than had been anticipated in the Development Phase. Perhaps some Delivery Partners were being cautious with budgeting the financial value of in-kind volunteer support, but almost all projects easily exceeded their volunteering targets.

“I thought my original estimates of volunteer time were high, but we met the targets in half the time.”

Delivery Partner

A consequence of the Delivery Partner approach to Scheme delivery – alongside the “long, thin” profile of the Weald Forest Ridge – was that almost all of these conservation volunteers worked with one particular organisation at one particular site, such as the RSPB at Broadwater Warren, or Horsham Green Gym at Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods. It was clear their motivations were to volunteer locally, close to where they lived, where they could help conserve “their” heritage. The volunteers did not necessarily connect with the wider Weald Forest Ridge as a heritage asset, but this was not really an issue to successful Scheme engagement with volunteers: just a consequence of the Scheme’s operation.

“What’s important ... is that someone gets involved in their local site, gets an understanding of how it fits into the wider landscape and helps to manage its heritage.”

Scheme Management Team

But volunteering in the WFR LPS was not just restricted to conservation volunteering.

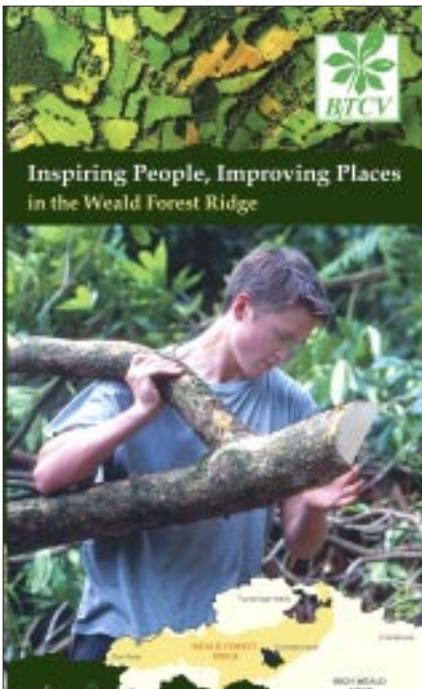
One project site – the Woodland Trust’s Hargate Forest on the edge of Tunbridge Wells – established a Friends group. Initially established to ensure community representation and consultation during site enhancement works, it is now continuing to develop as a strong community group; holding its own events, for example.

The Historic Environment Awareness (HEA) Project worked with members from several local history groups to undertake archaeological survey work as part of toolkit testing: delivering considerable informal training as a consequence. And it was the HEA Project that engaged the Scheme’s most dynamic and contributory volunteer. A landscape archaeologist living on the southern edge of the WFR initially became interested in the Scheme’s LiDAR survey, and went on to assist the HEA Project Officer with community surveying, toolkit testing and informal training.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed working on the project. It’s been fascinating and rather took over my life. I don’t feel like it’s come to a stop either, as there are opportunities to continue the work that’s been started.”

Volunteer





This HEA volunteer is the rare volunteer exception in the WFR LPS – someone who engaged with the whole Scheme area, and not just an individual site. Part of the continuation of this volunteer’s involvement in the Scheme’s ethos is her involvement in SEWAF (the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum). This volunteer-led informal organisation is acting as a legacy organisation for the HEA Project, with a remit across the wider south-east of England (see www.sewaf.org.uk).

Sustaining overall levels of volunteer input after the completion of the Weald Forest Ridge LPS is obviously important if an enduring legacy is to be left. With the conservation volunteering described at the start of this section – where groups are directly linked to particular sites – this will continue, as the groups are organised and managed by the site managers. This applies to Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods, Broadwater Warren, Kingstanding and Weir Wood LNR.

One important project in the Scheme – BTCV’s Inspiring People, Improving Places project – set out to establish four community-led conservation volunteering groups from scratch, and leave them as self-sustaining groups by the end of the Scheme. **Case Study 4** looks at the techniques used and the particular challenges faced in this project.

Case Study

Case Study 4

Establishing Sustainable, Community-led Conservation Volunteering

BTCV employed a full-time Community Project Officer with a target to identify four potential conservation volunteering groups, and then lead them through a process of development and establishment so that, by the end of 2011, they were able to sustainably manage themselves. This was a challenging task, but ultimately successfully achieved.

Key to the initial identification of groups was a high profile offer of help to communities, alongside running initial volunteer tasks on a range of sites across the WFR to offer the volunteering experience. Over time, the four groups did start to establish – albeit it with different timescales and motivations.

The first successful group – the Horsted Keynes Hackers – operated at a village/parish level: wanting to do something with their local public rights of way network, which they perceived as lacking management and hence difficult to use. The second developed alongside the Friends group being established at the Woodland Trust’s Hargate Forest site within the WFR LPS.

The remaining two had a more ecological focus on local greenspace sites.

All groups received guidance and support from the BTCV Officer including: organised tasks; free, practical skills’ courses; tools purchase; promotional assistance; and, importantly, leadership and health & safety training. But this support deliberately tapered over time, so that the groups gradually learnt to become more self-sufficient.

An important additional element to the project was immersing the local groups in the heritage of the wider Weald Forest Ridge.

Case Study 4 contd

“What we tried to do on several occasions was to take people out of their area. For example we took the Hackers out of Horsted Keynes. We did guided walks, a bat walk, wildflower identification walks. We went to meet the High Weald AONB Unit, who told us the story of the High Weald. They gave us the ecology and the historical background. People would then say ‘I get it’, ‘this is where we are in the landscape’. Key to that was taking people out of their area. Until you walk it, and hear it as you walk, it doesn’t make sense. We had big chats in the way back on the minibus about everything we’d learnt. Then people would go and tell others the story.”

BTCV

“I’ve learnt quite a lot about the landscape. As part of the volunteer group we were invited to go on various different courses, for example the archaeological talk about Hargate (Forest), a guided walk out near Mayfield, the fungi foraging, the plant and tree ID walk and the tree felling course.”

Volunteer

This wider learning really helped with the groups’ establishment. At the end of the project, there was a real sense of achievement with getting the four groups to be self-sustaining.

“The groups are able to stand on their own two feet, they’ve found their own niche and are stand-alone.”

“The legacy will be the continuation of the community groups we helped set up. We had 200 or so volunteers in total. The legacy is that they understand the story and they are responsible for their little pocket of the WFR, whether it be footpaths or a woodland.”

“Giving people ownership of local green space has been the biggest benefit.”

BTCV





7.5 Heritage Skills

Some specific skills training projects were undertaken in the WFR LPS, alongside skills acquisition through more informal learning opportunities. These delivered a diverse range of benefits for people. In part, these benefits derived directly from the work undertaken.

“The support, skills, confidence and resources we have been able to give teachers is important, in order for them to carry on what we have started.”

“Some of the trained volunteers might have the opportunity to work with Sussex Wildlife Trust in the future.”

Delivery partners

Especially where training events helped deliver physical outputs, there were clear and lasting benefits, both to the people taking part and also to the landscapes that they worked in.

“One I’ll tell the grandchildren!”

“My best bit was making the stool that Ian sat on. Can I come back?”

Participants

“We had some great training days making countryside furniture. There are now benches, gates and other site furniture on-site at Tudeley Woods, for example, that we made from scratch (from selecting and felling chestnut coppice on site to installing the finished products back on the same site).”

Delivery Partner

Some particularly interesting outcomes came about with the “Working Woodlands” training project, where a wide range of woodland- and woodland craft-related training was offered to professionals, interested hobbyists and the general public. Several trainees fed back that they were considering, or would be undertaking, a career change as a result of training.

“(I had) such a wide mix of people from different backgrounds. I’ve had even more interesting courses than normal. One guy looks like he’s going from being an estate agent to a coppice cutter. He’ll do quite well, against all the odds.”

“I have trained guys who’ve now changed careers and some who now cut their own stove wood.”

Delivery Partner

This niche that skills training within an LP Scheme provided, compared to the more commercially driven way that professional skills training is often delivered in the countryside sector, was particularly appreciated.

“The Scheme has filled a training gap for individuals and smaller traders who are not catered for by larger, nationally supported schemes.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

7.6 Scheme-wide Community Engagement?

The volunteering section (7.4 above) has already showed that the majority of volunteers who engaged with the Scheme actually engaged with individual projects and sites, rather than the wider Scheme. In large part, this also applied to broader public and community engagement with the Scheme. Many Partners readily recognised that they achieved, and normally exceeded, their engagement targets.

“We met our targets for recruiting and training volunteers.”

“We have more than doubled the amount of schools visits.”

“There were targets which we achieved and surpassed, both in terms of community groups and individuals being trained.”

“We did much more schools work than we envisaged.”

“We hit the young people’s target in spite of that area having some real funding issues.”

“We’ve achieved far more than we anticipated.”

Delivery Partners

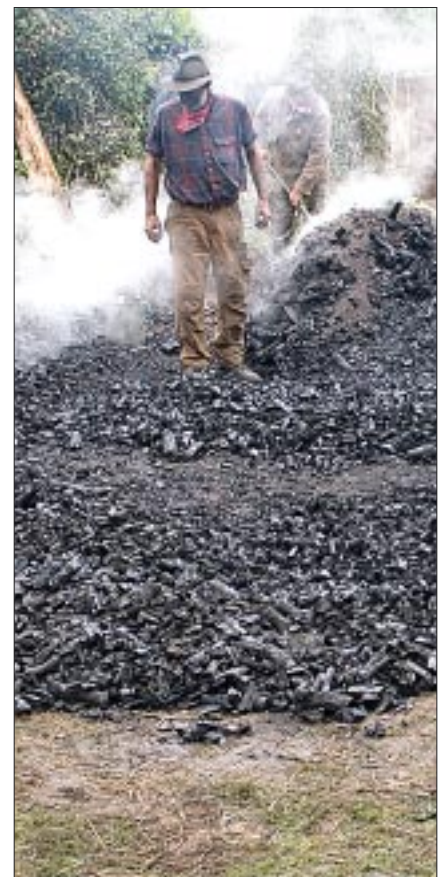
This strong project level of engagement could have been an issue in the WFR, in the context of the ethos and aims of Landscape Partnership Schemes. However, the Scheme Management Team recognised this potential Scheme weakness and ensured that projects were able to largely overcome this.

“Overall across the whole Scheme the community participation level has been exceedingly good, particularly given where we are and the third of a million target audience. We have achieved significant numbers.”

“The second tier – the projects – have all achieved good community engagement and it was difficult for us to add to this. The Scheme has been brilliant at engaging communities but 90%, if not 99%, has been at delivery level.”

Scheme Management Team

Whilst projects were reasonably geographically spread, there were inevitably some weaker areas – possibly Uckfield/Crowborough and





Crawley/Horsham, for example. The Scheme Management/Delivery Partner approach allowed the Scheme Management Team – enabled by their “umbrella” view of the whole Scheme – to proactively target some projects at areas and communities that might be in danger of not being given the opportunities to fully engage with the LPS.

“There were probably some hot spots and cold spots across the area. We tried to address cold spots by targeting some of the more flexible projects, for example the volunteer groups through BTCV and The Company’s historical plays, at these areas. Additionally, by using a database to monitor all Schools’ involvement with the Scheme, we could identify clusters of schools not engaging and hence target them specifically.”

Scheme Management Team



Key findings – People and Communities: Impacts and Benefits

- **Events and activities** were key factors in enabling communities to celebrate, become engaged in, and learn about the heritage of the Weald Forest Ridge. Several events were organised to include numerous Partners and projects within the one event, which also enhanced partnership working and learning.
- **Many beneficiaries** of public events stated their intention to re-visit one or more sites which they had discovered through the Scheme, or to make positive changes to their levels of engagement with heritage – having benefited considerably from the learning environment they had been exposed to in Scheme events.
- **By staging quality events** and presenting heritage messages in an appropriate way, it was found that people were very receptive to learning about their heritage, even if the learning was subliminal within more tangible enjoyment and fun. The site-based historical theatre trails staged within the Scheme were hugely successful on this count.
- **Many local people** appeared to lack any real understanding of the need and the reasons for landscape management in the Weald Forest Ridge. The Scheme's varied walks, talks, presentations and activities were very useful to start overcoming this.
- **There was overwhelmingly positive** feedback about the schools' projects undertaken within the WFR LPS. The Forest School approach was very successful, especially in engaging children from challenging backgrounds. Project design for almost all of the schools' work included a focus on legacy arrangements – ensuring schools' continued engagement with heritage after Scheme completion.
- **Most projects easily exceeded** their volunteering targets and there were considerable benefits from and for the volunteers. These benefits included the establishment of four self-sustaining volunteer groups from scratch within one, BTCV-led project.
- **Particularly given** the relatively large and narrow geographic profile of the Weald Forest Ridge, the interest of the majority of volunteers and event attendees was their local environment near to where they lived. They did not necessarily automatically connect with the wider Weald Forest Ridge, but information and learning was still focused at this landscape scale.
- **Training helped deliver** physical outputs and had other clear and lasting benefits, both to the people taking part and also to the landscapes that they worked in.
- **The Scheme Management Team's** proactive management role enabled the targeting of some project outputs to areas and communities that might not otherwise have had the opportunities to fully engage with the WFR LPS.

Key findings



8 Impacts and Benefits for Organisations and Partnerships

This Section considers both the 20 Delivery Partners who worked in partnership to deliver the Weald Forest Ridge LPS, as well as the wider organisational Scheme stakeholders. Many were “actors” in the Scheme, whilst all were “beneficiaries” in some way.

8.1 Working Together

By the very nature of a Landscape Partnership Scheme, there have been clearly recognisable benefits from bringing different organisations together under a landscape and heritage umbrella. These build on one of the Scheme Management objectives: to facilitate skills sharing amongst the Partnership to ensure that the Scheme delivers high quality projects. The benefits have stemmed from the discussion, experience-sharing and networking opportunities that such activities as the Partnership Forums have allowed.

“The networking has been extremely good. There’s been far more opportunities to network than I expected.”

“It’s been very helpful in terms of networking in particular.”

“The partnership working brings contacts and names.”

“Being able to bounce ideas around with other partners has been fantastic.”

“It has been quite constructive working with all the different organisations.”

“It’s brought people together – both new people and established contacts.”

“It’s been a good way of linking with other organisations and keeping in touch with what they’re doing.”

Delivery Partners

“There have been good experiences from contact with different partners.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

Two Delivery Partner elucidated this very clearly.

“It felt like you were working with people in a genuine partnership.”

“The word partnership was exemplified in every aspect of the delivery of this project and was essential to its success.”

Delivery Partners

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

This baseline of enhanced partnership working has been the impetus for a wide range of other organisational impacts and benefits in the Scheme.

8.2 Organisational Learning

One clear benefit was that many Partners felt they learnt a considerable amount about heritage from being involved in the Scheme. For some, this enhanced knowledge focused on the four medieval hunting forests.

“The emphasis on the old hunting forests is very interesting and the Ashdown Forest is the best preserved area of it. It helped me and others to understand the origins of our forest and what makes our landscape special.”

“I learnt a lot through the four maidens and four forests theme, and the LiDAR in particular was a real eye opener.”

Delivery Partners

LiDAR was one of the hooks that gave others a wider understanding of archaeology and the historic landscape.

“We’ve learnt loads. Landscape is the starting point for all our work – archaeology is rooted entirely in the geological and historical landscape and the environment.”

“For me it’s been about the sheer amount of knowledge – archaeology, heritage, the High Weald and so on. I knew practically nothing about, for example, archaeology and I probably dismissed it before. I now have a far better understanding.”

“I’ve learnt a little about the history of the woodlands and quite a bit from the archaeologists.”

Delivery Partners

With archaeology and the historic environment being one of the central themes of the WFR LPS, this inevitably led to a greater knowledge base about landscape heritage and the wider landscape in general.

“Yes, we’ve learnt about the landscape: whether it’s been rock formations or lowland heath, and how the landscape affects people who live in it.”

“The difference in knowledge over the Scheme helps me understand why the landscape looks the way it does. It brings it all alive. You realise you’re in a place which has been teeming with activity.”

“Totally. Absolutely. I now know the story of the High Weald and Weald Forest Ridge inside out and back to front!”

Delivery Partners





Very importantly, some Partners identified ways that they will use their newly acquired knowledge in a legacy capacity, whilst one specifically elucidated the benefit deriving from sharing information, experiences and outputs – something that the Scheme Management Team positively encouraged throughout the Scheme.

“I didn’t know about the WFR or realise that my site was in the AONB – I thought it was just outside. I use this now as part of the marketing. It was never mentioned before in the literature and it’s really useful for marketing and it ties up our site with others in the Scheme.”

“Yes – particularly the archaeology of the area and how the cultural use of the land has shaped the WFR landscape. It’s useful to understand the past in order to best manage ... in the future. We will use this information for the future management of our site.”

“It’s been great seeing what others have done. At one (Forum) I picked up on the family walks leaflets (i.e. Parent Toddler Walks) that one partner was doing in Kent and the way they were presented looked really good. We’re now looking at bringing ours up to date and it’s great to have these impressive ideas and a different way of doing interpretation. Each time a partner does something there’s something new to learn from, new improvements to our ways of working.”

Delivery Partners

One Delivery Partner, who runs training courses in a woodland environment, summed up this new-found knowledge perfectly.

“I find myself talking about why woods look the way they look all the time while I’m working now. I can’t help but spot saw pits everywhere I go!”

Delivery partner

8.3 Enabling New Opportunities

One clear message that emerged from the Scheme evaluation was that the partnership approach enabled many organisations to work in new areas and with new audiences. In part this was geographical – taking partners outside their previous working boundaries.

“It’s been good to stretch into West Sussex and work with a different county council.”

“It’s stretched our area geographically.”

“It’s guaranteed us going into a new area.”

“It’s normally difficult to justify time for networking, and working outside the county is just not normally done, but the WFR Scheme really helped us overcome this.”

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“The Scheme has opened us up to a new audience. It’s increased our understanding of cross-border working rather than keeping to a county.”

“It’s been an extension of the number of different sites that we’re working at and an extension of the number of partners.”

“Taking our work into new areas, with new communities.”

“The budgetary implications and climate of the last few years is forcing a new way of working, but this Scheme brought cross-border working and different ways of working forward in a positive way.”

Delivery Partners

But importantly, the WFR LPS also enabled Partners to work with new organisations and sectors, and to learn and benefit from these new contacts.

“It’s given us new contacts with Horsham and Tunbridge Wells Museums, for example.”

“It introduced lots of ideas and activities we probably wouldn’t have considered, for example The Company (who stage site-specific theatre). We wouldn’t have commissioned them on our own. It’s been very good.”

“We would never have come across The Company. It was a lot of work but it was fun.”

“We have made links with other partners that we may not even have come across otherwise, like The Company.”

“We definitely wouldn’t have met the archaeology people or The Company, but we did as a result of the WFR LPS.”

“I have met lots of other people and got to know the archaeology guys much better, which has been brilliant from my perspective, working in woodlands.”

“We had scope to work with new partners. We had the opportunity to meet and talk to other people and see how they work.”

“We knew about one particular group that worked with young people and heritage in this area and we’ve had the energy to work together and lots in common, but never the opportunity as our funding has come in different cycles. This Scheme gave us the reason and opportunity to work together and we hope this will have a legacy. They want to keep working with us.”





“It opened partnership working right up. We’ve been getting involved in community projects that we wouldn’t have done before.”

“It has led to us cementing existing relationships and creating some wonderful new relationships with very diverse organisations.”

Delivery Partners

Some Partners recognised that engagement with the LP Scheme has increased their ability to deliver appropriate work.

“I would have struggled if it wasn’t for the Scheme and other partners.”

“(Organisation name) was a small unit and was struggling before to do things on its own and this Scheme has developed its capacity.”

Delivery Partners

Other partners did recognise that opportunities could still have a mainly financial driver.

“The Scheme has enabled access to larger-scale funding than individual project grants would facilitate.”

“This joint working fits with the current economic climate, where there is pressure to find savings through working with others.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

“Schools are facing cuts and we’ve been able to provide cheap or free days out for them. This is incredibly important for some schools.”

Delivery Partner

In some instances, new opportunities created within the Scheme brought immediate and tangible results, such as this one identified by a woodland trainer in the Scheme.

“I met people from Same Sky (the Brighton-based arts organisation who led the Scheme’s Giant Maidens work), who I took out into the woods as they wanted an alternative to buying bamboo from China for their flag poles.”

Delivery Partner

Importantly, the Delivery Partners and wider stakeholders also recognised that there were clear legacy potentials from these new opportunities that were created by the LP Scheme. This is considered in Section 8.5.

8.4 Complementarity with Other HLF Funding

One interesting aspect of the WFR LPS delivery was that an interface arose with two other, HLF-supported projects.

The first was ESAMP's Skills for the Future project, where trainees took on long-term placements with ESAMP to enhance their archaeological and interpretive skills and knowledge. Through the Scheme's partnership approach, the trainees undertook some practical sessions with the Scheme's Historic Environment Awareness Project, including a LiDAR and survey training session on Ashdown Forest. These were very well received by the trainees and ESAMP.

“There were great cross-overs with Our Skills for the Future project and the WFR LPS.”

ESAMP

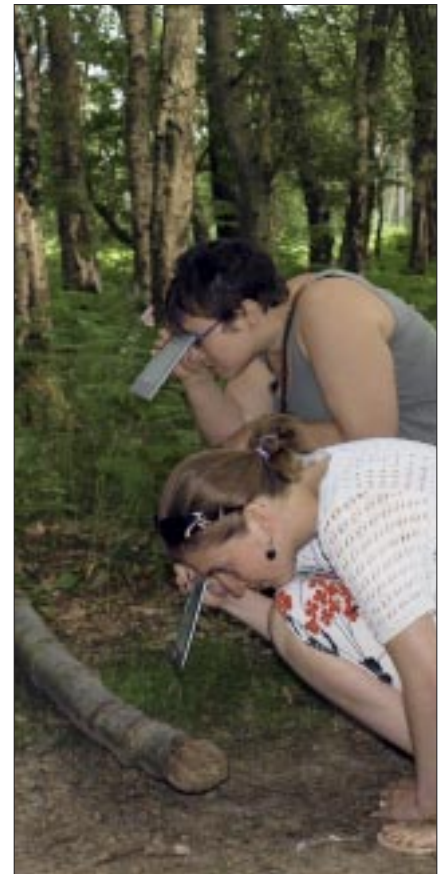
The second was High Weald Heroes (HWH): a primary school education programme being delivered across the whole of the High Weald AONB by the High Weald Unit. A part-time Education Officer was employed by the HWU to deliver High Weald Heroes, and this Officer was additionally contracted by the Conservators of Ashdown Forest to deliver their Education Resources at Ashdown Forest project.

The WFR Scheme Management Team worked very closely with the Education Officer, and there were many benefits. Marketing of the WFR schools' offer was carried out through High Weald Heroes, both directly by the Officer on schools' visits and also by e-mail to named contacts – recognising that HWH was a brand more readily identifiable by schools than the WFR LPS. Utilising the comprehensive HWH activity database, marketing could also be targeted at specific schools for specific events. Outputs from WFR projects were shared and promoted to an AONB-wide audience, ensuring wider usage and enhanced legacy (an example is the Teacher Packs from schools workshops within the Open Your Eyes project being uploaded to the HWH Learning Zone at www.highweald.org/learn/education.html) Because of the Education Officer's background as a primary school teacher, she also acted as a mentor to WFR schools' delivery partners, whose work experience was more in the heritage and countryside sectors.

“The successes have been massively boosted by the fact I'm running the HWH scheme and vice versa. I couldn't have offered nearly as much without the WFR Scheme, for example the Eye Spy booklets.”

“The Scheme has gone hand in hand with the High Weald Heroes project, so this package would have been less enhanced. Because of the WFR Scheme we've been able to give HWH schools more opportunities. These two projects have enhanced each other and worked in partnership.”

HWU Education Officer





“The schools’ based projects have been important, particularly the access to sites, and have contributed much more than High Weald Heroes has been able to do on its own.”

Partnership Board Member



8.5 Multiple Benefits, and at a Landscape Scale

Many stakeholders recognised that the WFR LPS delivered very broad benefits: both at a landscape, rather than individual site, scale and also through the compounding of small-scale, individual benefits.

“It’s a great idea, the projects complement each other across the landscape.”

“It raised awareness with my colleagues that we are part of something bigger.”

“If you can work on a landscape scheme then it’s much more effective than doing something in isolation. I feel strongly about this, it’s what we’re trying to do.”

“It was great to be able to set up projects like the one at Broadwater, where there were so many positives – the RSPB got a bridge out of it, they got volunteers, the volunteers got training and so on.”

“The partnership, the extra capacity to deliver, the training of teachers, the profile-raising of forest schools and making real change. They all happened.”

“It’s given us a big geographical vision – an interpretive vision of the High Weald.”

Delivery Partners

© Gatwick Greenspace Partnership

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

This is, perhaps, one of the true measures of success for an LPS – that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Similarly, several Delivery Partners recognised that they benefited from the promotional aspects of the Scheme, both in terms of individual sites and their visitors, and also in terms of more general profile raising.

“It’s raised the profile of the site.”

“Without the publicity we wouldn’t have the increased visitor numbers.”

“Our site has been promoted to a range of potential visitors and we have promoted the scheme to our visitors.”

“It’s generally upped our profile.”

“There have been a lot of benefits. Our profile has spread wider and further. There’s been lots of cross promotion.”

Delivery Partners

It was additionally recognised that the profile of the Weald Forest Ridge, and the wider High Weald, had also been raised.

“It has raised the profile and use of the word ‘Weald’.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

“The area itself has got an immense benefit out of the Scheme. It’s not just one thing but multifaceted.”

Volunteer

The benefits have also included greater skills and knowledge being embedded in organisational stakeholders.

“We’ve increased our knowledge through the Scheme. We have aggregated our knowledge into a higher level of work than would have happened otherwise as people are normally unconnected or over-worked.”

Delivery partner

The High Weald AONB Unit obviously operates at a landscape scale and, whilst being recognised as the initial driving force behind the WFR LPS, it has also derived many benefits. These have been at a governance level, as well as intra-organisational.

“The AONB Unit has been important as a catalyst for landscape-scale work.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

“We’re looking to set up a new Landscape Partnership Board and are learning from this one. If it fits within one local authority boundary, then it will be much easier for the authority to take ownership and a lead role.”

High Weald AONB Unit



© ESAMP



“It has been very good to get local authorities to think about big partnerships and the councillors have been hugely engaged as a result. This has been a flagship Scheme and has been hugely persuasive in terms of joint working.”

WFR Board Member

Finally, the WFR Scheme Management Team also recognised the multiple benefits from the Scheme’s delivery, and attempted to quantify these in order to assess the level of success.

“Getting benefits well over and above what individual partners could do on their own. There’s an almost limitless potential to what you can achieve.”

“There’s a pyramid of benefits which accrue from a partnership approach, you can keep building on each tier, the higher you get the more successful the Scheme is. We feel we have reached a high level in this Scheme.”

Scheme Management Team

8.6 Stronger Legacy Relationships and Enduring Partnerships

Organisational stakeholders were very clear that many existing partnerships have been enhanced as a result of the WFR LPS.

“The project has deepened the partnership between Sussex Wildlife Trust and West Sussex County Council.”

“It’s reinforced and taken forward existing relationships. It has been really good for me and I hope for others. I always thought this would happen.”

“There’s been a professional exchange, for example working with the rangers at Ashdown Forest or with the staff at Buchan Park.”

Delivery Partners

“The increased interest in these (school) visits has been fostered in part by the valuable partnership we have enhanced with the Ashdown Forest Conservators and the High Weald Unit.”

Schools Education Provider in the WFR area

But new partnerships have also been created, which will clearly continue into the future.

“The Scheme brought us together with Buchan Country Park and Horsham District Council and gave us a more co-ordinated approach to delivery.”

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“We’ve got to know ESAMP very well and will continue with them. We’ve said they can always use the site as long as they let visitors watch them when they’re working here. They’re very good.”

“The Forestry Commission are really close at St Leonard’s Forest but we didn’t normally have much contact with them until this Scheme.”

Delivery Partners

“Development of all the Waste Wood owners into one coherent group has been important.”

Partnership Board member

These partnerships and the enhancement of the Delivery Partners through the Scheme will also make it more likely that new opportunities will be created in the future.

“We know that opportunities are much more likely in the future.”

“The community performance at West Hoathly was very very successful and is leading to other work.”

“We worked a lot at the Ashdown Forest as one of the main ideas was to work with them, to use their facilities. I can see us working on that site and continuing to help young people access it.”

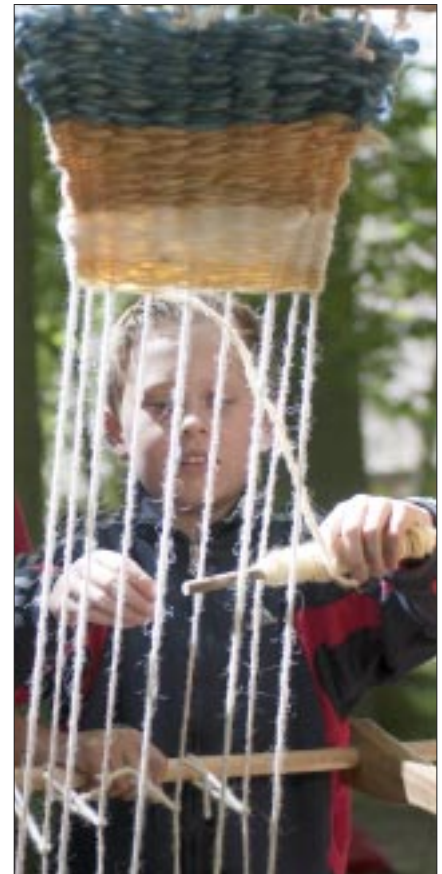
“Building on the success of the Go Wild in the Woods partnership event, the partners are already considering a date for a bigger and better one in 2013. There is significant will amongst partners to maintain and develop good working relationships that were formed through the WFR LPS, as collectively we are able to deliver more while also avoiding unnecessary duplication of work.”

Delivery Partners

“We are looking at ongoing joint events and working with Sussex Wildlife Trust and Horsham District Council.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

One specific Scheme legacy was directly achieved as a result of these stronger partnerships. The Forest Schools Co-ordinator within the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership (GGP) Forest Schools project was employed by GGP in 2012 as a Community Project Officer, following the conclusion of his WFR-funded post. The Officer’s new role is to continue the delivery of Forest Schools work, as well as provide broader community engagement and support opportunities.





8.7 It Wouldn't Have Happened Without the WFR LPS!

"It wouldn't have happened without ..." was such a frequent comment heard during the Scheme's evaluation that this final section looking at the impacts and benefits of the Scheme has been set aside for seeing exactly what "wouldn't have happened"!

An apology is due for including all the following quotes, but their sheer quantity hopefully emphasises one of the real successes of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme: that a considerable amount of heritage benefit has been delivered in the Weald Forest Ridge through a coherent partnership approach operating at a landscape scale. Without the heritage, partnerships and landscape drivers, there would have been much less benefit.

"I don't think all the partnership working would have happened if it wasn't for the overall cloak of the Scheme."
Scheme Management Team

"None of this would have happened without the financial clout of the Scheme, unless I could've tapped into other funding, which would've been unlikely. It would have been a completely different site."

"The most important thing was that we could get on and do things that might have been very difficult otherwise."

"Coppice Week wouldn't have happened, I wouldn't have had the idea. It's possibly the most significant thing I've done as a training provider."

"It would still be a forgotten woodland and the site budget would have been cut down even more. Things would've got worse."

"We did three archaeology leaflets and a short film. These wouldn't have happened without the Scheme."

"The acting, events, cultural landscape work and drama definitely wouldn't have happened."

"The archaeological project, the LIDAR survey, wouldn't have happened."

"The LIDAR and archaeology surveys wouldn't have happened. The county councils are always recommending that we do full surveys and now we've been able to. We would definitely not have had the funding for this without the Scheme."

"Some of the projects wouldn't have happened without all of the community input that the HLF and WFR LPS brought."

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“Some of the community group work wouldn’t have happened.”

“I don’t think the archaeology and history would have been a feature if not for the WFR.”

“There’s been quite a bit on the people engagement and visitor side that we wouldn’t have had the resources to do.”

“The path improvements definitely wouldn’t have happened. People would have still been arguing about it now as it’s a border path.”

“We’re doing an excavation now – this wouldn’t have happened without the Scheme.”

“We wouldn’t have done the cultural heritage work, for example restoring the carriageway and putting in tree guards and doing the planting. We would have just done the rhododendron clearance.”

“The funding allowed more community engagement work, we wouldn’t have done as much as we have.”

“We would have done the habitat restoration and the ground work, but possibly not to the same extent.”

Delivery Partners



Key findings – Organisations and Partnerships: Impacts and Benefits

- **There have been clearly** recognisable benefits in the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme from bringing different organisations together under a landscape and heritage umbrella.
- **Many Delivery Partners** felt they learnt a considerable amount about landscape heritage from being involved in the WFR LP Scheme. They recognise that they have greater skills and knowledge, which they are already applying in their ongoing work.
- **The Scheme's proactive partnership** approach enabled many organisations to work in new geographic areas, with new communities, and with new organisations and sectors. Many organisations felt that further projects and joint working will come from these new relationships in the future.
- **There was an important interface** with two other HLF-supported projects that geographically overlapped with the Weald Forest Ridge LPS. A key reason for the overall success of the Scheme's schools' work was the joint working with one of these: the High Weald Heroes programme operating across the whole of the High Weald AONB.
- **Many stakeholders recognised** that the WFR LPS delivered very broad benefits: at a landscape scale and also at a project scale. Additionally, a Scheme focus on promotion delivered general profile raising for the Weald Forest Ridge as well as individual sites.
- **Many outputs and outcomes** of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme simply wouldn't have happened without the opportunity which the HLF funding provided.



9 Challenges for Heritage, People and Organisations

Inevitably, there were many challenges experienced by the WFR LPS through the development and delivery phases – it would not be a landscape partnership scheme if there wasn't! – so this Section details all the main challenges that were faced.

9.1 The Scheme Area and Scheme Name

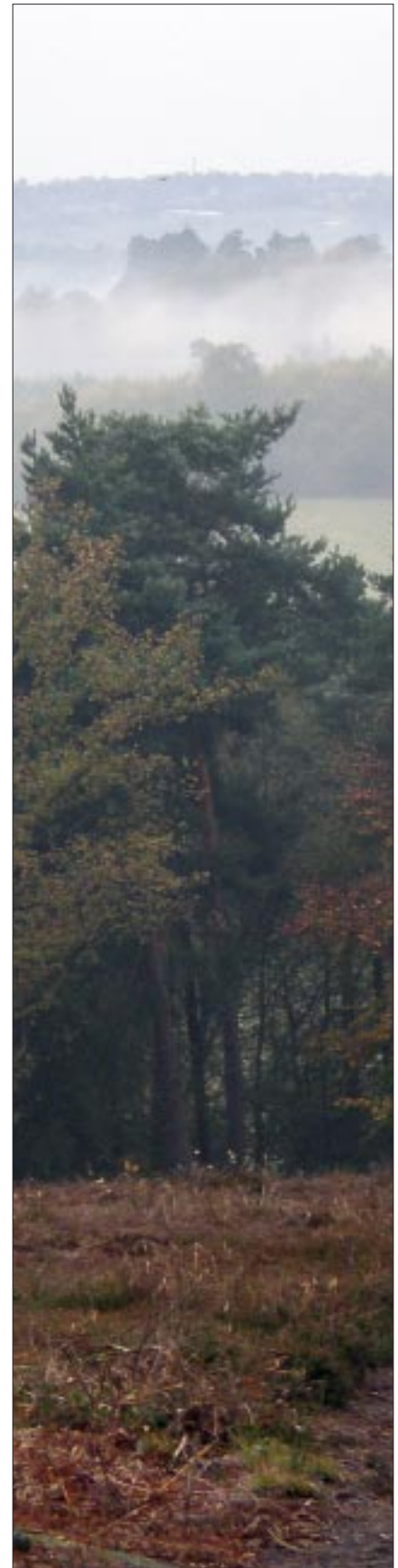
At 328km², the Weald Forest Ridge LPS area is much larger than most other LP's: indeed 30-40% larger than the HLF would allow, except in exceptional circumstances, under subsequent Strategic Frameworks. Because its character is defined by the four medieval hunting forests, it also means the Scheme area is "long and thin" on an east-west axis. This big geographic spread is compounded by main communication routes in the area running north-south (between London and the South Coast). The main towns at either end of the WFR – Tunbridge Wells and Horsham, for instance – are an hour's drive time apart, and only tenuously accessible by train.

All these geographic factors necessitated a pragmatic approach: to lessen any negative impacts from factors totally outside of Scheme control. The Scheme Management Team recognised it would have to manage communications and partner liaison to encourage Scheme-wide working. And several projects were developed to take into account the physical constraints: some of the schools' education projects, for instance, focused on specific areas – such as Ashdown Forest, or the Forest School focus around Crawley and Horsham – hence allowing local schools to engage with local projects and Delivery Partners to exploit the positives of the situation.

“There is a big physical length to the Scheme area and we are at one end of it. We could've had a larger project but couldn't generate the match funding. However, it has been a very good thing that we could focus on this tight geographical area, as the Crawley/Horsham end is sometimes diluted by the wider rural and middle class area in the Scheme.”

Delivery Partner

Section 4.1 has already alluded to one important challenge faced by the Scheme: how to badge and promote the WFR LPS, when it is a "sub-area" of a wider AONB and many audiences do not, in the first instance, understand the AONB designation and area. With the High Weald AONB Unit as the Scheme's Lead Partner, it was obvious that the Unit would not want the AONB designation usurped by the LP Scheme. Additionally, the very name of the "Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme" was a challenge for some.





“We inevitably had an issue with the Scheme name, with trying not to show the WFR as too separate from the High Weald and not focusing excessively on it. The vast majority of people struggle to understand the concepts of AONB and High Weald already, let alone with us throwing in another tier of potential confusion.”

Scheme Management Team

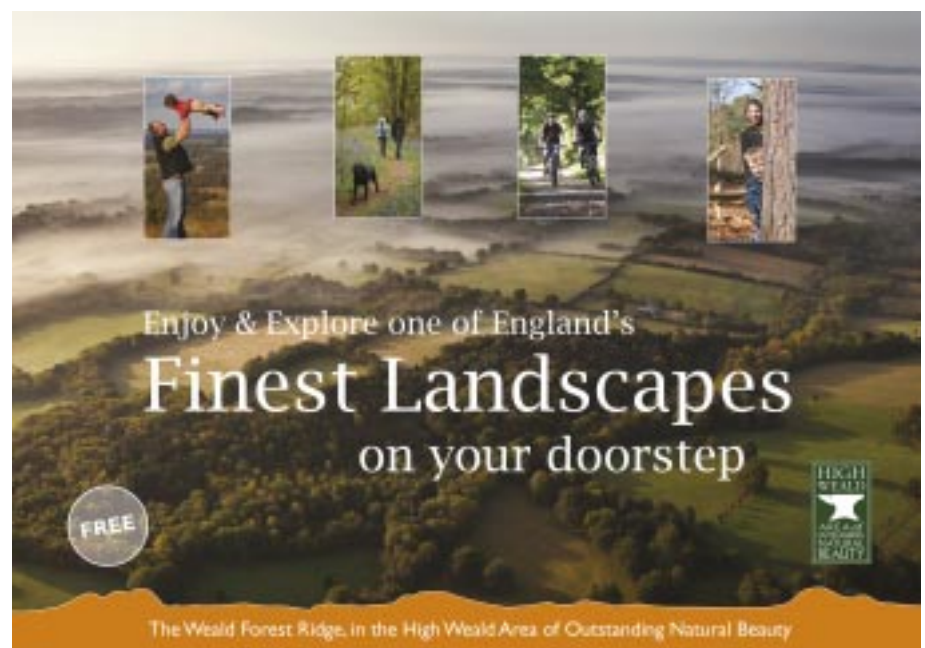
Consequently, an approach was developed where the LP Scheme had a clear brand and image – the WFR logo and “sandstone orange” colour – but this was used always in conjunction with High Weald branding. The WFR hence had a clearly designated position within the wider AONB: with promotion of its unique character and heritage regarded as equally important as its name.



“We have tried to show the WFR as part of the larger High Weald AONB. This could mean we have potentially lessened the impact of the Scheme, but it has kept things less confusing. In terms of legacy, does it matter that much? It is surely more important for people to know about the area’s character and heritage than to classify it with names.”

Scheme Management Team

This approach is reflected, for instance, in the Scheme’s “Enjoy and Explore” legacy leaflet: where the “England’s Finest Landscapes” national AONB brand is used in the title, and a geographic strapline of “The Weald Forest Ridge, in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” is clearly placed to help locate the reader.



© Woodland Trust

9.2 Scheme-wide Communications

A follow-on challenge from the Scheme area and name was identifying and delivering the appropriate level and style of Scheme-wide communications; balanced against communication at the project level.

It was relatively easy for Delivery Partners to communicate to their particular target audiences about what they were delivering, at a project level, in the WFR LPS. Site leaflets, interpretation boards and media releases, for example, are all communications mechanisms that organisations were comfortable delivering about their own work.

The challenge for the WFR LPS was to ensure that these carried Scheme, as well as project messages. Groundrules were set in the Stage 2 Implementation Plan: where a chapter on Scheme communications and promotion identified core messages and interpretive themes for the Scheme. At the start of Scheme delivery, a Branding Guidelines document was issued by CD to all Delivery Partners, accompanied by key logos. This “one-stop shop” clearly identified what was expected of Delivery Partner communications within the Scheme, alongside what support and advice the Scheme Management Team would provide.

Fundamentally, Delivery Partners were able to use their own brand within communications – provided key Scheme messages were incorporated, as appropriate, and HLF, WFR and High Weald logos were clearly displayed. This proved to be a very successful approach: placing ownership and legacy of communications with the Delivery Partners whilst ensuring the roles of the HLF, High Weald AONB Unit and WFR LPS were acknowledged.

A much bigger challenge was for the Scheme Management Team to effectively communicate with all target audiences at the Scheme-wide level: something readily acknowledged by the Team themselves.

“We’ve struggled with promotion, with the exception of what the Delivery Partners have done. Really getting the Scheme out there has been a big challenge. I feel this is an area we haven’t been particularly successful in, as opposed to the successful project level.”

Scheme Management Team

For the general public and local communities, the main difficulty was identifying exactly what to communicate, and when. The Stage 2 Implementation Plan proposed that an annual Scheme publication (some form of leaflet or small booklet) would be widely circulated to the Scheme’s 300,000plus target audience, through a doorstep distribution mechanism. But the difficulty was identifying exactly what the content should be.

“It’s difficult to put a consistent story out there for everyone to access.”

Scheme Management Team



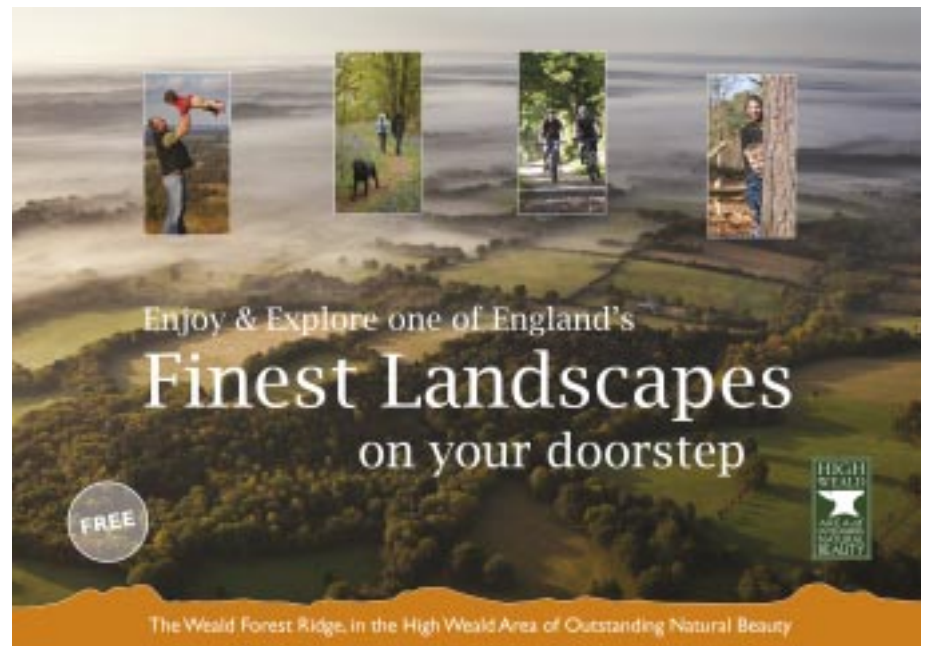


© Gatwick Greenspace Partnership

The Scheme Management Team was clear that these annual publications needed to do more than just promote that the WFR LPS was operating, and that it was delivering a range of outputs. This could be achieved by much less expensive mechanisms. As a result, these doorstep publications were not produced in 2010 or 2011, as the content was not self-evident. Instead, media releases and the web were used for mass communication: a much more cost-effective approach, although inevitably with less ability to measure effectiveness.

Doorstep distribution was only carried out in 2012, when a Scheme “Legacy Leaflet” was distributed to 130,000 households. At this time, a clear purpose and need could be identified:

“to communicate to the Scheme’s target audiences the opportunities available to access, enjoy, learn about, engage with, and explore the Weald Forest Ridge (and, by default, the wider High Weald AONB): focusing on those opportunities that are a direct result of the three year delivery of the WFR LPS.”



With distribution of this Enjoy and Explore booklet only taking place as this Evaluation Report is written, it is not possible to assess its effectiveness in achieving this aim.

Another challenge faced was how to effectively communicate at the parish level: a key gateway to local communities. The WFR Scheme area was defined by landscape and heritage character components, and its boundaries cut across those of parishes in a very random way. Consequently, parts of 22 parishes fell within the Scheme area, but the majority of these were small outliers of the overall parish area, quite separate from the main village(s). It proved difficult to engage these “minority” parishes with the Scheme. There is hence merit of seeking to align LPS and parish boundaries; which the High Weald AONB Unit has sought to do with its subsequent Battle and Brede LPS proposals.

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

An important role for the Scheme Management Team was also to communicate progress and delivery of the WFR LPS to Delivery Partners and wider organisational stakeholders. Beyond annual Partnership Forums (see Section 5.3), pictorial e-newsletters were the main mechanism used. In truth, these were not produced frequently enough to be fully effective: mainly because of staff turnover in the Scheme Management Team, work prioritisation, and new technologies being trialled.

Additionally, use of e-newsletters is very much a one-directional communication process and, with very little feedback from their circulation, it was unclear how effective they were in communicating Scheme delivery.

“There’s a lot of one-way information and no way of knowing if people are taking this on board or not.”

“It’s been more difficult with the wider stakeholders as we’ve struggled to find the best way to communicate – for example communication with local authorities can often be one-way only.”

Scheme Management Team

9.3 Too Long a Scheme, Too Short a Scheme?

Ideas for an LPS in the High Weald were first mooted in late 2003/early 2004, and it was September 2006 before the HLF Stage 1 application for the WFR LPS was submitted. Approval timescales, the Stage 2 process and staff recruitment meant it was the start of 2009 when the three year delivery phase of the Scheme finally started.

The evaluation exercise at the 2011 Partnership Forum showed that several stakeholders thought Scheme development took too long. There were many knock-on effects to this long timescale, which are explored more in Section 9.4.

“The Scheme had a long gestation period.”

“Some partners felt 2.5 years over the initial Stage 1 development process was too long – situations change over these timescales.”

“The Development Phase took a long time, for various reasons including HLF timescales, and consequently things changed inside partner organisations, such as staff and budgets. This had a negative effect.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

The High Weald AONB Unit feel that the long development phase was largely unavoidable, and a consequence of the HLF bid processes at the time. LP Schemes now have a shorter bid process, which hopefully overcomes this challenge faced by the WFR LPS.





© Weald & Downland Open Air Museum

One consequence of the long development phase was that delivery was to take place over a shorter, three year period. With a strong emphasis on project planning in the Stage 2 application, this was largely achieved by the WFR LPS. (The eight-month extension in 2012 mainly resulted from greater monitoring and evaluation work, and additional outputs as a consequence of project underspends.) In subsequent HLF LP bidding rounds, the delivery phase has been extended to up to five years (and indeed several LP Schemes synchronous with the WFR LPS were significantly extended beyond their initial three years because of difficult delivery issues).

Whilst the Scheme Management view is that a concentrated three year delivery period was appropriate for the WFR LPS, some partners felt that a five year period could have provided greater benefits.

“We would certainly have been interested in a longer grant period, such as 5 years, because the delivery time would have been longer and more proportional to the set-up and monitoring time. It takes time to build up reputation, interest and word of mouth.”

Delivery Partner

“Three years for delivery is a short marketing cycle for projects (especially training delivery). This means momentum needs to be built early in the three years, which has not always been possible.”

“By having a three year delivery period (as opposed to longer), delivery funding ceases as momentum can still be building.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

Additionally, delivery programmes were inevitably tighter in a three year programme and at least one Delivery Partner noted that this adversely affected work programming, particularly where partnership working was involved with another project.

“It was the case sometimes that we had to do something before we wanted to as the funding required it. This was problematic. For example we had to put the interpretation in before there was anything on the ground. We had to put in information about nightjars (that are ground-nesting) in front of a row of trees (to be subsequently cleared)!”

“It also happened with the all ability trail. People were advertising it before we’d even done it!”

Delivery Partner

9.4 Personnel and Organisational Continuity

A total of eight staff were employed on fixed term contracts through the WFR LPS: spread between the Scheme Management Team and four specific delivery projects. To their credit, six of these stayed to the end of their contracts and did not leave prematurely to new employment opportunities. Very importantly, two of these were the Scheme Manager and Scheme Administrator. This helped considerably in delivery and scheme management continuity: enabling the overall Scheme to, essentially, deliver to its initial programme agreed with the HLF, and to have consistency of claim preparation and reporting. This was especially important given that the finance support within the Scheme's Accountable Body changed at least four or five times in three years.

The one Delivery Partner Project Officer (BTCV's Community Project Officer) who left post – with five months of contract still remaining – was replaced with a temporary post. Perhaps inevitably, momentum was lost in these final few months, although project legacy arrangements were still put in place as planned.

The second post to leave early was the Scheme Management Team's Scheme Officer. This was actually twice: the first Officer leaving at the end of the first delivery year at end 2009, and the second at end 2011 – when revised final year programmes were put in place and consultants were used to backfill essential gaps left by having no Officer. These departures did, unfortunately, have some impact on the Scheme: particularly Scheme-wide communication with target audiences.

Staff continuity was also an issue with Delivery Partners using their own, existing staff to deliver outputs. Clearly this meant new relationships needed to be built by the Scheme Management Team, and Partners recognised it also affected their own delivery.

“There were certain internal problems due to staff changes in the site manager post and the fundraising team.”

“There were some staff changes during the project and therefore some complications in taking over from someone else. It would've been easier for one person to take the project through from start to finish.”

“Staff changes were a problem, but that's an internal issue not the Scheme's.”

Delivery Partners

Perhaps more of a challenge was personnel changes in Delivery Partners over the longer development timescale from 2004 to 2008. This meant continuity was lost and ideas developed by one person within a partner organisation were often not adequately transferred to others. Additionally, some Delivery Partners used dedicated development staff to produce their project plans for the HLF bid documents, and then continuity was lost when the successful projects were passed to delivery staff.





“I inherited a work programme. If I had been involved in the planning stage I might have suggested some different ways of working. But I have had to deliver a programme and where there have been differences of opinion I have had to simply say ‘this is what I was employed to do’.”

Delivery Partner

Additionally, some Delivery Partners did not communicate their developing projects within their own organisations. In one situation, this led to a fractious meeting between the High Weald AONB Unit and the Partner, where there was clearly poor upward communication of proposals within the partner’s organisation.

“Relevant people at all levels in partner/stakeholder organisations (including the very top) needed to be involved at the Scheme outset, which didn’t always happen.”

“Getting everyone/every partner involved and on board at the start of the Scheme is important – it wasn’t just about financial support to the Scheme Management.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

The umbrella view of the Scheme Management Team enabled them to see that positive and consistent engagement from Delivery Partners assisted their ability to be “good” Partners.

“I’d like to have got proportional buy-in from partners – not in monetary terms but in terms of their engagement. It would have been nice to build in a time commitment to partnership working at the start. It’s really evident at events based on who doesn’t come.”

“Unless all projects buy in and stick to the Scheme, this can have a major impact on how the whole Scheme goes.”

Scheme Management Team

9.5 The WFR Partnership Board

How the Board operated has already been evaluated in Section 5.2, but there were three particular challenges that the Board faced.

Firstly, at the Stage 2 Development Phase, the HLF identified a lack of community representation on the Board and requested this was rectified. Because the WFR LPS operated over a broad political area (parts of 3 counties and 5 districts), the Board did not feel that LA member representation was appropriate – or could, indeed, be effective – for this community interest. Hence, in 2009, a local resident (and former councillor) joined the Board. They became a valuable Board member, providing a counterpoint to the government agency representation. However, the local resident felt they struggled to really input to the Board’s role to steer and guide delivery, and from 2011 onwards took more of a “sleeping” role.

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

Secondly, there was one Delivery Partner on the Board; who represented a key land management organisation and was also a local resident. This Delivery Partner felt some conflict of interest with their delivery role in the Scheme, particularly as financial issues arose in their projects.

“Looking back I don’t think I should have been on the Board as we were recipients. I felt uncomfortable a couple of times and had a slight conflict of interest. This is partly because the (xxxxxxx) issue caused us lots of problems and I felt that with such a big misunderstanding it was right for me to resign. (Another Board member) rang and said ‘don’t’ and was very persuasive, so I didn’t.”

WFR Board Member

Lastly, it was a requirement of the Accountable Body, East Sussex CC, that their representative was the Board’s Chair. However, the representative never managed to attend Board meetings, for a variety of reasons: personnel changes (twice!); work loads; prioritisation of ESCC over Board meetings; and a realisation that the Board and Scheme were both functioning well without ESCC attendance. The absence of the Accountable Body did cause some consternation with other Board members.

“ESCC insisted on being chair and having the power of veto. But they’ve not been to a single meeting.”

“The fact that the Chair never came startled me.”

“It’s been an issue for me. I do look for commitment. Repeat non-attendance is an issue. I come all the way from (xxxxxxx) for these meetings and the guy down the road never came. I’m busy too, everyone’s busy.”

“One weakness was ESCC and the whole issue around an organisation saying ‘we’re leading and charring this’ but then not doing what it’s said it will.”

WFR Board Members

The Chair devolved to the Lead Partner representative. Thankfully, Board members could see implicit trust in this arrangement and the Board functioned very well without the Accountable Body presence.

“The HWU has a good reputation for getting on with things, so ESCC trusts that it’s going OK.”

WFR Board Member

The residual issue was that East Sussex CC did not experience first hand the benefits the WFR LPS was delivering to their area.

“The biggest negative is that a large chunk (of the Scheme) is happening in East Sussex, there are loads of good stories, but they’re not taking the opportunity to hear them and tell them.”

Delivery Partner





9.6 Procedures and protocols – an onerous burden for some?

Inevitably, in a £2.7million Scheme – with 31 different component projects delivered by 20 different organisations – there are going to be some challenging situations arising with recording and reporting, as well as financially claiming grant aid. The Scheme Management Team's role was to undertake all this work directly with the HLF. They then tried to simplify HLF processes down to the Partner project level.

Since this simplification process was obviously done at the start of the Scheme, the Scheme Management Team staff were themselves still trying to understand the full intricacies of the HLF systems. Hindsight inevitably showed that partner procedures could have been better established: although the Scheme Management Team did feel that some of the HLF electronic template forms could have been better designed (particularly having excel versions of the claim and partnership funding sections of the Grant Payment Request Summary).

“In a Scheme like this you don't have time to plan systems and at the start you don't understand exactly what you'll need.”

“It's too hard to change things part way through a Scheme as people are used to the systems.”

“I would streamline and simplify the procedures, in particular I'd put mechanisms in place to do people's adding up for them. That's been a huge time waster.”

Scheme Management Team

Several Partners did feel that the financial claim procedures were onerous and this clearly caused some resentment, especially where Partners still had to run their own financial systems in parallel with HLF claims. Additionally, East Sussex CC, as the Accountable Body, requested that all Delivery Partners provide proof of all spend in their project claims, even below the £100 threshold that the HLF operated. This generated more work for everyone.

“Partners found that reporting and accounting for their work took longer than they envisaged would be needed.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

“The claims were onerous at the start – the amount of time it took to deal with the claims was more than was envisaged.”

“We struggled with the spreadsheets and it took us days to do them. The (Scheme Management Team) explained how to do them, but the first time we had to do them was 3 months later and we'd totally forgotten.”

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“On a project level, it’s much more straightforward if you’re simply working on a single project. There are higher levels of input in a larger Scheme like this and added input from other people. For example, I had my own spreadsheets to monitor and (the Scheme Management Team) had their ones too. The Team were very good but it’s still an extra layer.”

Delivery Partners

One pragmatic Partner recognised that how they had developed their projects affected how easy they were to manage.

“I would have done this as a bigger project, as it was the same amount of paperwork as our larger site, but a lot less money.”

Delivery Partner

However, at the same time many Partners recognised that help and guidance was given by the Scheme Management Team and that, like with any new system, familiarity bred faster work.

“The claim process that partners had to do was generally good, although quite a complicated process. Initially, claims took a long time to complete (for which the additional time had not been built in to people’s work programmes), but they became faster to complete as time progressed.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

What was evident was that different Delivery Partners had very differing levels of skills and knowledge in financial management. This meant that the Scheme Management Team had to invest more time with some Partners than others, to the detriment of other potential work.

“Getting people to compile and submit accurate financial claims was a personal bugbear.”

“It’s a weakness when a lot of different partners don’t understand the financial side of things. Some of the partners have a structure in place for these things and some don’t understand the finance at all. It’s not one size fits all. There was some very top heavy development work to build them up. You don’t know that will be necessary until the start. Had not so much time been spent on this, we would’ve been freed up to do more on the ground. It was very heavy on the administration.”

Scheme Management Team



9.7 Balancing the Finances

Section 5 has already considered the delivery model employed for the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme. The model's consequence was that the 20 Delivery Partners received grant aid mirroring that from the HLF. But, to maximise the benefits from the match fundraising abilities of Partners, the Partners received varying grant percentages of between 40 and 72% – based on the need to balance their project budgets – whilst the High Weald Unit claimed one grant percentage with the HLF (61.47%).

This is a model not used in many LPS's and did carry a significant risk for the High Weald Unit, depending on how project budgets changed through Scheme delivery. It consequently required complex systems and close monitoring, but the benefit was that the Scheme Management Team always had a very detailed handle on Scheme finances, and could micro-manage a £2.7million budget very effectively.

“I'm a great advocate of our delivery model in terms of the different percentages. ... it's enabled us to make the most of the partners and the volunteers. It's enabled us to have the Scheme Management Team with only relatively limited other Scheme Management funding (which no one likes to pay for), and also with no requirement on the Delivery Partners to financially support the Scheme management.”

Scheme Management Team

One HLF action did cause the Scheme Management Team considerable additional financial work. Soon after the three year delivery period started, the HLF changed the Scheme's grant percentage by approx. 2%. This was done by removing the 10 year management and maintenance costs from the eligible costs, so obtaining the approved costs on which grant aid was given. This action, whilst sounding quite simple, generated considerable extra work for the Scheme Management Team, as the Scheme finances were already governed by a different grant percentage. But this change could not be replicated with Partners' own grant percentages so that the 10 year costs had to be managed one way with the Partners and a different way with the HLF – an unsatisfactory and very time consuming situation.

Perhaps inevitably in chastened economic times, there was concern amongst Delivery Partners about the financial risks they faced, and the requirement to provide appropriate match funding.

“Pulling in match funding from Delivery Partners' partners could create some tensions of where limited funding is best used.”

“The issue of changing grant funding percentages and exact amounts of funding not being known in advance was perceived as an issue by some.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011



© Horsham District Council

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“As we only received 50% grant aid, we had to gear it to this and put in a high number of schools, which created a heavy workload.”

Delivery Partner

Furthermore, some Partners clearly struggled to fully understand the way that the grant funding percentage worked on their project(s). The Scheme Management Team had to work within this constraint of differing skill sets in different Partners.

“The WFR grant funding was really complicated, especially as it was precisely 41.6%! Every time the budget changed then it had a knock-on effect.”

“It’s such a shame that we didn’t have a clear understanding of the implications of what we were letting ourselves into. I still don’t understand why it was 42% on one project and 51% on another, why wasn’t it the same?”

“Between my predecessor and (the Scheme Management Team) there was a lack of understanding about each other’s aims and objectives and particularly match funding,”

Delivery Partners

During delivery, it became evident that two Delivery Partners had flawed Stage 2 budget proposals, with knock-on issues with the Scheme’s variable grant percentage model. This Evaluation Report will not go into the details (as the Partners would be identifiable), but both Partners unfortunately finished the Scheme unhappy with the processes and financial outcomes, and perhaps wary of embarking on similar partnership working arrangements in the future.

Whilst a few Delivery Partners may have had trenchant views about the financial grant model used, it is worth stressing that it was the only model available for the Scheme: given the need to invest detailed delivery with the Delivery Partners rather than the High Weald Unit. It was also effective, and well managed by the Scheme Management Team.

Part of the Scheme’s financial balancing act was budgeting for the in-kind support of volunteers. All but one of the Scheme’s 14 projects that included volunteer in-kind support met or exceeded their targets. For some Partners, they felt this meant they had missed an opportunity to increase their grant funding support.

“The amount of money allocated against volunteering was a problem. We went past our volunteer targets in the first 6 months. We exceeded our match time by 5 to 6 times. This is a reflection of underestimating the scale of the volunteer contribution at the start. We could have put 5 to 6 times more match funding and still spent it. ... Greater match time funding would have enabled us to buy more equipment, arrange more training, etc and possibly therefore attract more volunteers. But it is very difficult to predict these things.”

Delivery Partner





“Perhaps some partners didn’t focus enough on the (financial) potential of volunteers in the development of their budgets/projects.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

Almost all of these projects with volunteer involvement did not set specific budgets to fund volunteer travel expenses, but one volunteer (backed up by a broader Partnership view) made a very cogent argument that this lack of support could impinge on people’s ability to volunteer.

“I have worked as a volunteer and also as a consultant and I do have something to say about this. I think it is very important that all HLF projects should pay out of pocket expenses for volunteers. Over the course of the Scheme, petrol became far more expensive. This Scheme should have paid expenses properly. The Scheme was quite exclusive and this element was badly written. The people who are employed get their expenses too, but the volunteers weren’t getting their expenses. I’ve got friends that I gave lifts to as they’ve not got much money. In an ideal world there would be a fund to get people to places. You need to be careful about this and to make the offer, otherwise projects can be very exclusive.”

Volunteer

“Volunteers and volunteering are hugely valuable (globally as well as in the WFR LP Scheme), but some Scheme processes were not necessarily inclusive enough (e.g. no expenses generally given).”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

There was one further financial issue that several Delivery Partners identified in the Scheme evaluation.

Section 4.4 has already explored how the grant funding of existing staff to deliver project work was a barrier to some potential Delivery Partners. Unfortunately, a few Partners did misunderstand exactly what was implied in this scenario – with one Partner thinking that costs could be used as a match funding contribution.

“There was a difference of understanding between Stage 1 and Stage 2. I understood in Stage 1 that you could put in your own staff costs as either a contribution or a cost. I had the distinct impression that this was the case and even remember reading it somewhere. Then this turned out not to be the case. It led to several problems as the Scheme was very demanding on my time. It was a confusion and a problem.”

Delivery Partner

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

The issue of some Scheme partners operating business models whereby their central staff are not fully-funded from core funds has already been considered in Section 4.4. But additionally, several Partners operating in the public sector felt penalised that they were unable to receive financial support for the essential delivery contributions of their staff, because their staff were already funded. To them, it was galling that they would have received support if they had recruited a new staff post to deliver or backfill, but when dealing with a 0.1 or 0.2FTE post over three years, recruitment was obviously not an effective option. At the Scheme's final Partnership Forum, there was a clear plea for the HLF to reconsider their policy on existing staff, particularly for the sector that is most likely to deliver LP Schemes.

“The HLF not financially supporting existing staff time has been a major obstacle.”

“The HLF not supporting the costs of existing staff who deliver projects caused problems for some partners, and perhaps doesn't recognise the particular circumstances of the environment/heritage/countryside management sectors. Partners felt this policy needs reviewing.”

“Even if not financially funded, the in-kind value of existing staff (as both a cost and income) should be able to be built in to budgets, again recognising the particular circumstances of the sector.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

One Delivery Partner even went so far as to question if the HLF uses precedent for similar situations on different projects they support.

“The HLF weren't consistent and apparently aren't consistent with how they allow different projects to claim across the UK. It is a bit of a blurry subject.”

Delivery Partner



© Horsham District Council

Key findings – Challenges for the Scheme

- **The WFR LP Scheme** area was relatively large, and defined by landscape and heritage character components, so that its boundaries cut through those of parishes. Combined with its location within the wider High Weald AONB, this presented some problems in terms of Scheme promotion and communication.
- **Delivery was largely** to a tight, three-year programme, which occasionally caused counter-intuitive work programming on projects. Some Partners felt a longer delivery period could have provided greater benefits, whilst others felt that the Scheme's development period was too long.
- **Personnel changes** inevitably affected the management and delivery of the Scheme and its individual projects, but mostly applied to Delivery Partner personnel not employed directly through the Scheme, rather than turnover of directly funded Scheme staff. The biggest impacts were a lack of continuity between development and implementation, as well as a lack of communication internally within Partner organisations.
- **Whilst, in general,** the Partnership Board functioned very well, the challenges it faced involved a lack of community representation; a conflict of interest for one Delivery Partner member; and non-attendance by the Accountable Body representative.
- **The Scheme ran** a relatively complex financial model of varying grant percentages for its different constituent projects, unfortunately exacerbated by the HLF's revision of the Scheme's overall grant percentage during the first delivery year. This financial model carried risk, and required intricate systems and close monitoring, but had the benefit that the Scheme Management Team could very efficiently micro-manage the £2.7million budget.
- **Several Delivery Partners** felt that the financial grant claim procedures were onerous, particularly when they still had to run their own financial systems in parallel with HLF claims. Some Partners were more able to manage this financial complexity than others; who inevitably needed more support from the Scheme Management Team. Some Partners even struggled to fully understand the way that the grant funding percentage worked on their project(s).
- **Several Partners felt** penalised that they were unable to receive financial support for the contributions of their staff, even when these posts were already fully funded.
- **As all but one** of the Scheme's 14 projects that included volunteer in-kind support met or exceeded their targets, this meant some felt they had missed an opportunity to increase their grant funding support.

10 Legacies and Lessons Learnt

This Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme evaluation has sought to draw lessons from the Scheme's delivery – for example the governance structures and processes that facilitated the Scheme's largely successful outcomes. Additionally, the High Weald AONB Unit, as Lead Partner, has wanted to maximise learning from the Scheme: to help underpin the Scheme's legacy and provide useful insights for the future – both within the Weald Forest Ridge and further afield. These lessons and legacies are considered in this Section.

10.1 Enhanced Heritage

The Scheme Monitoring Report, as well as Section 6 of this Report, has highlighted how much of the Scheme legacy has been delivered through physical project outputs. This has included the enhanced biodiversity and access on project sites, the various interpretation resources, and such specifics as the conservation of the historic Highbrook Smokery. Everyone involved with the Scheme has seen how important this more measurable legacy has been: how it has been a strong base for other Scheme delivery, and how the medieval forests theme has brought coherence to this work.

“In terms of the habitat work we have a big legacy there.”

“The site has been transformed with the heathland restoration and the grazing and the boardwalk.”

“We've done track re-grades and have already had people with mobility scooters using them.”

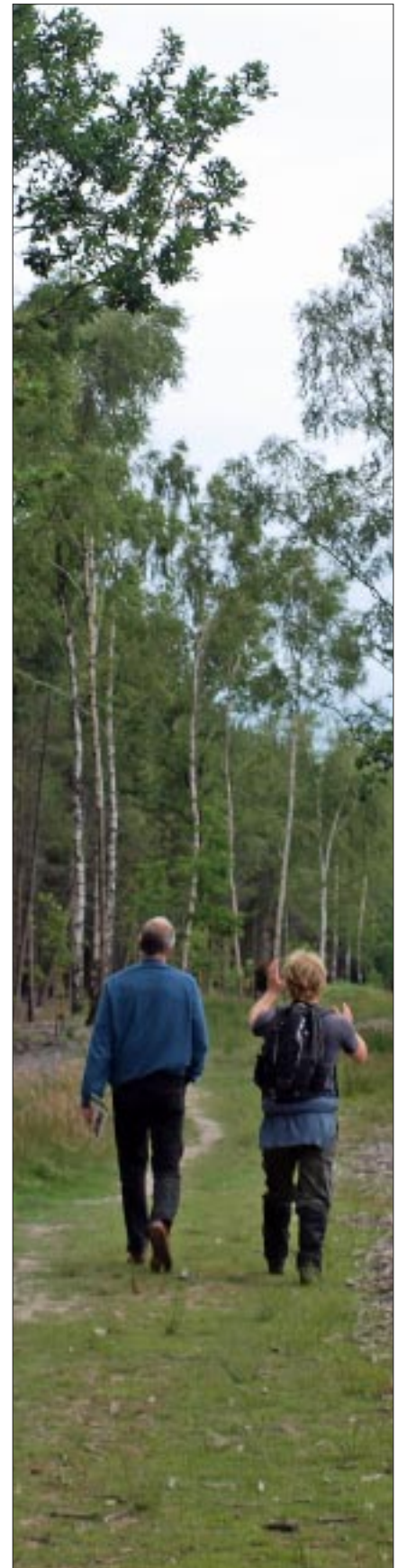
“Yes, there is unquestionably a legacy. The exhibition, the leaflets, the educational resources, the materials that were put in place.”

Delivery Partners

“There's been a lot of investment in 'bricks and mortar', which is a real strength of the Scheme. It works on the ground as well as in the paper documents, the leaflets etc.”

Scheme Management Team

These are the legacies that should rightly be expected from Landscape Partnership Schemes and it is felt that the Weald Forest Ridge has delivered very well in this respect.





10.2 Enhanced Access to Heritage

Equally important, it is the way that Scheme outputs have delivered the outcome of enhanced access to heritage that is also enabling the WFR LPS to leave an enduring legacy.

In part, this access has been through awareness raising and learning events: whether for children or adults, and whether overtly or covertly including fun and enjoyment.

“There have been a lot of memorable and interesting events that people will talk about for a long time.”

“To empower children to be confident about going into woodland is the first step in them engaging with their heritage.”

“As long as we’re talking about the background and history of the site, we’ll probably always talk about the rich heritage of the Weald Forest Ridge.”

“Some of the experiences that we’ve given children, such as lighting fires and making shelters in the woods, they will remember more clearly than anything else at school. The regular opportunities that we’ve been able to embed in them give them reference points that they will carry for the rest of their lives and is one that they will hopefully demand from their parents.”

Delivery Partners

A recurrent theme throughout this Evaluation Report has been that archaeology and the wider historic environment has been a key driver for the LPS. The three archaeological toolkits produced within the Historic Environment Awareness Project are proving pivotal for legacy in this respect.

These toolkits were designed for people to use in the WFR but, as shown in Section 6.1, they are already shaping similar work elsewhere, alongside the expertise derived from the area’s LiDAR survey.

“We’ve got a very good process in hand for anybody to survey their woods on the ground and from a documentary point of view, in our toolkits.”

“We’re raising awareness of archaeology in woodlands. It can also be adapted for heathlands and other landscapes.”

Volunteer

“The work has been a model for us to take forward and deliver elsewhere.”

Delivery Partner

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

“Some projects have definitely influenced wider across and beyond the region, such as the LiDAR survey which, for example, has shaped LiDAR work in the New Forest.”

Partnership Board Member

At a strategic level, people are already talking of the national legacy benefits accruing from this archaeological work.

“I would expect some of this work to find its way into exemplar documents in time.”

Partnership Board Member

“Our methodology and standards are being applied in heritage and landscape management elsewhere in the area and in Britain.”

Delivery Partner

“Lessons learnt within the Scheme are being disseminated and shared nationally, which is important to national-scale organisations. For example, this was one of English Heritage’s aims of being involved with the Scheme.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

Additionally, there are innumerable opportunities for communities, and the heritage sector in general, to build on the Scheme’s historic environment awareness footprint and continue to enhance the understanding of the archaeological heritage of the Weald Forest Ridge. In large part, this can be undertaken through SEWAF – the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum – that was enhanced and empowered through the Scheme’s work.

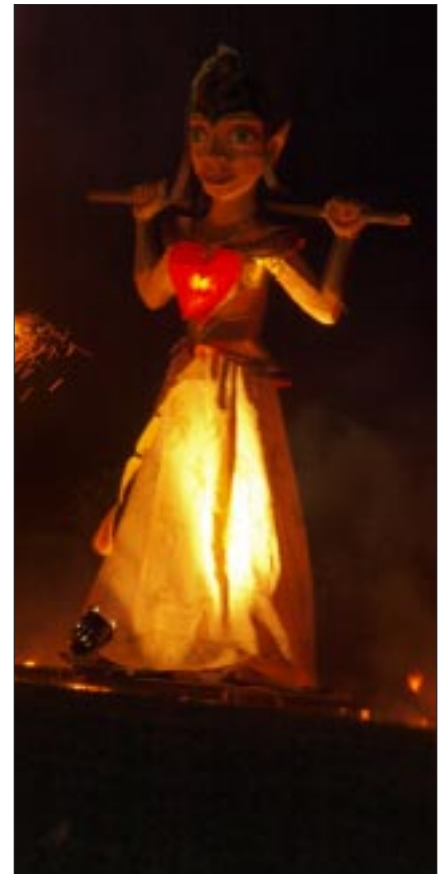
“There’s a spin off with LIDAR ... (as it has been transcribed) ... for the whole of East Sussex. This was all an added benefit. You could derive a whole load of projects from this if you have the time and money. It’s an area we know little or nothing about.”

Volunteer

“SEWAF – we got this up and running, which was an aim and is a legacy.”

Delivery Partner

A key lesson learnt from this archaeological work in the WFR LPS has been the importance of having a central theme or “hook” to the Scheme: one that draws individuals and organisations into the wider concepts of landscape and landscape heritage.





10.3 Engaged Communities

An outcome from enhanced access is that local people, site visitors, school children, site managers, and residents of the Ridge's eight neighbouring towns in general have all learnt more about the Weald Forest Ridge's heritage.

“People’s awareness about the woods will increase as information has been made available.”

Delivery Partner

Obviously, increased learning has led to increased awareness.

“There’s more of an awareness about the area.”

Delivery Partner

“It has helped to resurrect a landscape largely forgotten since the 1930s.”

“The Scheme has given communities a sense of place. The Scheme has aided understanding of the area’s landscape components and encourages people to think about landscape character.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

Furthermore, learning and training activities and events within the Scheme have all helped inspire people about the heritage: doubtless leaving many of them inquisitive to find out and undertake more in the future. How far this inquisitiveness and engagement might go could be impossible to judge.

“In a way we’ve only just started getting people excited and enthused. Now is a great opportunity to build on that.”

High Weald AONB Unit

“As a practical example, one child who took part in Forest School events came back to do work experience and now wants to do countryside work as a vocation.”

“If a kid has a nice time in the forest, they won’t forget it in a hurry and who knows which ones will become the environmental champions of the future.”

Delivery Partners

An important lesson learnt in the WFR LPS, however, was how challenging it could be to obtain real community engagement at the strategic, Scheme level: where there is a bottom-up, community-led approach to heritage issues. There were community-led projects in the WFR LPS: the Village Hall Management Committee conserved the Highbrook Smokery building, and four self-sustaining volunteer groups were established in BTCV’s “Inspiring People, ...” project, for example. But these communities were assisted with guidance, steering and support; and may not have been able to achieve their aims without this assistance.

Some LPSs, such as the Neroche LP Scheme in Somerset/Devon, have reported achieving strategic level community engagement. Comparing the WFR LPS to the Neroche Scheme, one key difference can be seen in the Scheme management structures: with Neroche able to establish a Local Stakeholders Group that shadowed and supported the Partnership Board. In part, this probably reflected differing strengths of the respective Lead Partners, different approaches to Scheme management, and different targeting of resources. But equally, it might also have reflected simple geographic differences: that there was no community willing, or able, to lead on heritage conservation in the WFR area – perhaps reflecting simple demographic and political differences resulting from the WFR’s South-East of England location. It could be that not all areas deserving of, and capable of delivering, successful Landscape Partnerships always have truly empowered communities to lead them.

10.4 A Stronger Partnership

One of this Evaluation Report’s key findings is the strong partnership that has lain at the heart of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme’s clear success: and which became noticeably stronger through the Scheme delivery. The High Weald AONB Unit played a significant role in leading this partnership, and was responsible for facilitating, maintaining and enhancing effective working relationships to deliver the various projects within the Scheme. Careful, considerate and appropriate management of the Scheme by the High Weald Unit was important for this. But, undoubtedly, such a wide and diverse range of positive outcomes could not have been achieved without the high levels of buy-in, support, skill and commitment provided by the Delivery Partners.

This stronger partnership is clearly a very important Scheme legacy –

“Relationships are now well-established and will repeat after the life of the Scheme.”

Delivery Partner

“The relationships formed between partners during the Scheme should provide new working opportunities going forwards, as many new relationships are lasting and beneficial.”

“The LP Scheme has created a lasting partnership dialogue.”

Partnership Forum feedback, 2011

“The short answer (on the Scheme’s success) is about enhancement and the building of lasting partnerships.”

Scheme Management Team





It is worth reiterating how this stronger partnership came about. Considerable effort was made during the early stages of the Scheme; to identify synergies between the Partners and their projects. This enhanced their motivations to achieve positive outcomes, as they could recognise that their work within the Scheme would complement the objectives and delivery goals of their organisations.

Clearly, a lesson learnt is that identifying synergies early on in an LP Scheme will pay dividends later on. And having a culture that encourages partnership working is key.

“People are more willing to talk in a Scheme like this: share their knowledge and know that you also have a genuine interest in the countryside.”

Volunteer

“The boundaries were gone, no one was wary of each other.”

Delivery Partner

10.5 The Whole Greater than the Sum of the Parts?

One of the broad objectives for this Evaluation Report was to test the oft quoted value of the landscape partnership approach – “that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.

Undoubtedly, the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme has been much more than a collection of disparate and unconnected projects and activities. The sum total of the Scheme’s achievements includes the numerous connections that have been created or strengthened between organisations, communities and individuals, as well as between people and the landscape. There is a very real sense that the Weald Forest Ridge LPS has contributed to the heritage, people and organisations in the Scheme area and the wider High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Part of this contribution has been through the many projects and activities that have helped people discover new and interesting places in the WFR. Places that they now have greater confidence and motivation to visit.

“People who’ve discovered sites will go back and use them. That may not be WFR specific, but encouraging people to use the countryside more is a good thing.”

Delivery Partner

Another part has been through the enhanced heritage of the Scheme area, and the increased knowledge about that heritage.

“(The Scheme’s) made an immeasurable difference on the ground.”

Delivery Partner

Evaluation Report 2009 to 2012

There has also been a learning environment that has enriched people, built capacity and increased knowledge of the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the Weald Forest Ridge.

“It has changed the way ... work is managed on the ground and has also provided lasting legacy in such things as an increased understanding of the ... archaeology.”

Partnership Board Member

And there are definitely new and/or stronger linkages between Delivery Partners and wider Stakeholders, which will continue into the future in both the Weald Forest Ridge and the wider landscapes of East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent.

“Ideas and relationships (that is what the Scheme is leaving).”

Partnership Board Member

From this Scheme evaluation, it is abundantly clear that the WFR LPS has been a well-managed and – despite some inevitable challenges – ultimately successful Scheme, which has brought together a wide range of different projects and activities under a strategic umbrella and delivered a huge range of benefits: both within the Weald Forest Ridge and also across a wider area.



Appendix 1 – Delivery Programmes, Partners and Projects

Appendices

Programme Theme/Project Name	Delivery Partner	Project Code
Landscape Scale Connectivity (Programme 1)		
Holistic Enhancements (P1.1)		
Forest Footsteps across the Ridge: Sheffield Forest	Forestry Commission	PA05
Forest Footsteps across the Ridge: St Leonards Forest	Forestry Commission	PA20
Forest Footsteps across the Ridge: Tilgate Forest	Forestry Commission	PA21
Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods restoration	Horsham District Council	PA04
Broadwater Warren restoration	RSPB	PA12
Habitat Enhancements (P1.2)		
Eridge Rocks habitat enhancements	Sussex Wildlife Trust	PA18
Old Lodge habitat enhancements	Sussex Wildlife Trust	PA19
Kingstanding habitat enhancements	Sussex Police	PA22
Visitor Enhancements (P1.3)		
Pathways to natural heritage: Weir Wood LNR	East Sussex County Council	PA10
Pathways to Tudor heritage: Birchden Woods	Forestry Commission	PA15
Archaeological Engagement (Programme 2)		
Archaeological Engagement (P2.1)		
Archaeological awareness activities	ESAMP	PA25
Living history activities	The Company	PA26
Archaeological Awareness (P2.2)		
Historic environment awareness	East Sussex County Council	PA27
Heritage Advisory Visits	High Weald AONB Unit	PA62
Built Heritage (P2.3)		
Highbrook Smokery restoration	Highbrook Village Hall Committee	PA29
Learning and Celebrating Heritage (Programme 3)		
Community Enhancements (P3.1)		
Discovering the magic of Ashdown Forest	Conservators of Ashdown Forest	PA01
Family safaris	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	PA32
Developing the community at Hargate Forest	Woodland Trust	PA59
Family Fun – parent and toddler	KHWP	PA51
Young peoples’ heritage project	ESAMP	PA60
Open Your Eyes to the Weald Forest Ridge	High Weald AONB Unit	PA61
The Weald Wood Kits Project	High Weald AONB Unit	PA63
Schools Education (P3.2)		
Forest Schools’ focus for the Weald Forest Ridge	Gatwick Greenspace Partnership	PA06
Educational resources at Ashdown Forest	Conservators of Ashdown Forest	PA36
Schools’ archaeological activities	ESAMP	PA44
Dragon Tails (or Tales of Dragons and Woodland Wyrms!)	Root and Branch Theatre Company	PA58
Reconnecting People and Place (Programme 4)		
Skills Creation (P4.1)		
Working woodlands in the Weald Forest Ridge	Esus Forestry & Woodlands Ltd	PA02
Local distinctiveness and buildings heritage	Weald & Downland Open Air Museum	PA41
Archaeological training placements	ESAMP	PA45
Sustaining farming and landscape	Plumpton Agricultural College	PA09
Volunteer and skills Development (P4.2)		
Inspiring People, Improving Places	BTCV	PA03



The Company

**Highbrook Village Hall
Management Committee**

Appendix 2 – A typical Project Event Monitoring and Evaluation Form

Appendices

EVENT EVALUATION
WEALD FOREST RIDGE LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME



Delivery Partner: XXXXXXXXX
Event Name: XXXXX
Date: XXXXXXXXX
Location: XXXXXXXXXXXXX

We hope you enjoyed our event. We would appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us what you thought about it. This feedback helps us to improve our events and to secure funding for future events. Thank you.

1. How did you hear about this event?

2. Please indicate your view of the following?

Please tick appropriate box	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Overall experience					
Pre event information					
Booking (if applicable)					
Event venue					
Refreshments (if applicable)					
Overall management of the event					
Knowledge of the subject area					
Attention to your needs					
Handouts					

3. Which aspects of the event did you find *most* interesting and why?

4. Which aspects of the event did you find *least* interesting and why?

Please turn over

5. Are there any actions that you are likely to take as a result of attending this event?
Yes/No

If yes, please give us an idea of what you have in mind.

6. What changes to this event, if any, would you propose?

7. Would you recommend the event to a friend or colleague?

Yes No

8. Would you attend another event run by us?

Yes No

9. Any other general comments

Please hand to your event leader or return to the:

Weald Forest Ridge Team
High Weald Joint Advisory Committee
Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, Flimwell, East Sussex TN5 7PR
E: t.tiltman@highweald.org T: 01580 879951 F: 01580 879499
www.highweald.org



Insert
partner
logo here



Appendix 3 – Typical Semi-structured Interview Questions for Evaluation Interviews, January 2012

Interview questions for WFR project delivery partners – Jan 2012

We would like to record the session, to keep a record of what you said in your own words. Any material will be anonymised, so we won't refer to your name, unless we have your permission.

Beginning

1. Why did you get involved in the Weald Forest Ridge scheme?

Benefits

2. What benefits have there been from being involved in the scheme?
i.e. in terms of project delivery, for stakeholders, for your organisation, for the area? Short term and long term
3. How many of the benefits would have happened anyway, without the scheme?
4. What has been most important for you about the scheme?

Partnership approach – only ask if this not answered in Q2

5. Have you met new people and organisations or got to know existing people or organisations better since being involved?
What has been the impact of this for you?

Problems

6. Were there any problems or is there anything that could have been improved or made better?
e.g. Resources, communication, audience engagement, information, staffing, administration, project management, support, funding claims, anything missing, any problems
7. Is there anything you would like to change or do differently next time, or feel that others should do differently?
8. Would you see yourself able to help with planning and running another scheme like this in future? (If not why not)

Future

9. How will the WFR scheme enable you to promote the area's heritage within your future delivery?
10. What will you think will be the legacy of the WFR scheme? Will the WFR vision last?

Appendix 4 – Semi-structured Interviews Undertaken, and Interviewees, February to May 2012.

	Interviewees	Organisation (Projects)
Project-focused		
1	Tom Forward, Pete Crawford Jackie Lewis	Gatwick Greenspace Partnership (<i>Forest Schools, PA06</i>) West Sussex County Council (<i>Forest Schools, PA06</i>)
2	Tim Hills, Alex Jenks	BTCV (<i>Inspiring People, Improving Places, PA03</i>)
3	Warren Young	(formerly) BTCV (<i>Inspiring People, Improving Places, PA03</i>)
4	Casper Johnson, Lyn Palmer	East Sussex County Council (<i>Historic Environment Awareness, PA27</i>)
5	David Rossney	Esus Forestry – Training (<i>Working Woodlands, PA02</i>)
6	Ian Dunford, Christabel Shelley	ESAMP (<i>four archaeological activity projects, PAs 25, 44, 45, 60</i>)
7	Ken McManamon, Simon Fathers	East Sussex County Council (<i>Weir Wood Reservoir, PA10</i>)
8	Kate Harris, John Stafford	Forestry Commission (<i>four FC site projects, PAs 05,15, 20, 21</i>)
9	Ros Marriott	Conservators of Ashdown Forest (<i>Ashdown Forest Education & Interpretation projects, PAs 36 & 01</i>)
10	Steve Wheatley, Alan Loweth (volunteer)	RSPB (Broadwater Warren, PA12)
11	Stephen Delahunt	Horsham District Council (<i>Leechpool & Owlbeech, PA04</i>)
12	Suzi Hopkins, Stephen Israel	The Company (<i>Living History Activities, PA26</i>)
13	Sandy Williamson, James Luxton	Woodland Trust (<i>Hargate Forest, PA59</i>)
Volunteers		
14	Jon Martin	Horsted Keynes Hackers/Danehill Historical Society (<i>BTCV and Historic Environment Awareness projects, PAs 03, 27</i>)
15	Kevin MacLeod	Hargate Forest volunteers (<i>PA59</i>)
16	Vivienne Blandford	Individual/South East Woodland Archaeology Forum (<i>Historic Environment Awareness, PA27</i>)
Scheme-level		
17	Paul Roberts, Jim Seymour, Alan Betts, Jason Lavender	WFR Partnership Board (<i>English Heritage, Natural England, Forestry Commission, High Weald AONB Unit</i>)
18	Trish Tiltman, Simon Aguss	WFR Scheme Management Team
Cross-sector		
19	Laura Sweeting	High Weald AONB Unit (<i>Ashdown Forest Education, PA36, plus High Weald AONB High Weald Heroes Programme</i>)
20	Hew Prendergast	(formerly) Conservators of Ashdown Forest (<i>Ashdown Forest Education & Interpretation, PAs 36 & 01, plus Partnership Board</i>)

Appendix 5 – Board Constitution

Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme Partnership Board – Memorandum of Agreement

1. Introduction and Definitions

- 1.1 The aim of this document (“the Memorandum of Agreement”) is to set out the governance and structure of the Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Board.
- 1.2 The High Weald AONB Unit (HWU) is acting as Lead Partner of a Partnership to develop and deliver a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme (HLF LPS) in the 328km² “Weald Forest Ridge” (WFR) area: set within parts of East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent. East Sussex County Council is acting as the Project Sponsor for the Scheme.
- 1.3 Planning and development of the WFR LPS commenced in 2004. A Stage 1 HLF pass was achieved in summer 2007, and Stage 2 approval is sought in autumn 2008; for the 3 year delivery phase to run from 2009 to 2011.
- 1.4 It is an HLF requirement of LPS projects that a Landscape Partnership Board is set up. A Board is defined by the HLF as:
 “People named by the ‘partner’ organisations who have the authority from these organisations to advise on the way an LP scheme is delivered and the LP fund is managed.”
 “The Board will be made up of named representatives of the organisations or individuals, which have together agreed to meet the scheme strategy and aims.”
- 1.5 A Landscape Strategy sets out the vision and aims for the Scheme, and identifies the key programmes.

2. Weald Forest Ridge LPS Strategic Aims

- 2.1 These are to:
 1. Encourage more people to get involved in caring for the Weald Forest Ridge’s unique landscape heritage.
 2. Conserve and enhance the distinctive natural and built features that make the Weald Forest Ridge a special place .
 3. Provide opportunities for people to learn about, access and celebrate, and benefit from, the Weald Forest Ridge’s landscape heritage .
 4. To give people the knowledge and skills to protect the Weald Forest Ridge landscape for future generations to enjoy.

3. Purpose of the Board

- 3.1 A Landscape Partnership Scheme’s success depends on the co-operation and shared purpose of all partners and their commitment to planning and implementing the Scheme.
- 3.2 Hence, the Board’s primary purpose is to act as an advisory body to support the development and delivery of a Landscape Partnership Scheme for the Weald Forest Ridge area.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

- 4.1 Overall, the Board will:
1. Advise and support the HWU and WFR Partnership in the development, delivery, evaluation and maintenance of the Scheme.
 2. Have an overview of all projects within the Scheme and encourage the cross-fertilisation of ideas and activities across the Partnership.
 3. Advise the HWU, the Project Sponsor and the Partnership on risk and other issues.
- 4.2 Specifically within the Development Phase, up to Stage 2 bid submission, the Board will:
4. Advise on and agree an implementation plan for the Stage 2 bid submission.
 5. Steer the work of the WFR Project Manager.
 6. Oversee the planning and delivery of the WFR's information, management and evaluation systems.
 7. Advise the HWU on the management of the development funding.
 8. Guide the preparation and approval of a detailed Year 1 work programme.
- 4.3 Specifically within the Delivery Phase of the Scheme, the Board will:
9. Steer the work of the WFR Team (Scheme Manager, Scheme Officer and Administrator).
 10. Advise on the implementation of the Landscape Strategy's programmes and projects during the 3 year project delivery period, ensuring that the approved purposes are met.
 11. Advise on the monitoring and evaluation of the Scheme for its 10 year contractual lifespan.
 12. Advise the HWU on the management of the WFR Landscape Partnership Fund.
 13. Advise on the production and agreement of an Exit Strategy for the Scheme.

5. Membership

- 5.1 Through the agreement of a Management Structure for the overall Scheme, the composition of the Board was initially agreed at 7 members. Membership of the Board will be for up to 5 years to ensure continuity in the development, delivery and monitoring of the WFR Scheme. The Chair will be elected by the Board.
- 5.2 At December 2007, the membership was agreed as:
1. Carolyn Dwyer, Assistant Director, Transport and Environment, East Sussex County Council
 2. Jason Lavender, Joint Director, High Weald AONB Unit
 3. Alan Betts, Conservator, Forestry Commission South East England Conservancy
 4. Paul Roberts, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage
 5. Hew Prendergast, Clerk to the Conservators, Ashdown Forest
 6. James Seymour, Weald Pevensey and NNR Team Leader, Natural England
 7. Vacancy (A partner representative with tourism, economic development and/or community engagement skills is being sought for this vacant position.)
- Subsequent changes will be made to this membership, with the agreement of the Board, as Scheme delivery progresses.
- 5.3 If a Board Member's organisation withdraws from the Partnership by withdrawing from project delivery, then the Board Member shall seek the views of the rest of the Board as to whether they should resign from the Board.
- 5.4 The WFR Scheme Manager (and/or another member of the WFR Team) will attend all Board meetings and provide the secretariat (e.g. produce and circulate agendas, papers, minutes, etc.). They will, however, have no voting rights.
- 5.5 Occasionally, members from the WFR Partnership may also be invited to assist the Board in its work. Board members may also sit on working sub-groups that report to the Partnership.

6. Meetings and Decision Making

- 6.1 The Board will meet at least twice a calendar year. This frequency may increase, when necessary, to tackle specific issues or critical periods of the development and delivery phases. If the Chair is absent from any meeting, the HWU will act as substitute Chair for that particular meeting.
- 6.2 All Board member decisions should support the implementation of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Strategy and be in the best interests of the WFR area. As a body which embodies the principles of co-operation and partnership, the Board will engage in constructive debate, and it is envisaged that most decisions will be reached by consensus. However, if a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken. Each Board member will have one vote, and in the event of a tied vote the Chairperson will have the casting decision.
- 6.3 The quorum for the Board shall be at least 50% (i.e. minimum of 4 in attendance from the 7 members initially agreed).

7. Urgent Matters

- 7.1 In exceptional circumstances, where an urgent decision is required and it is not possible to convene a Board meeting, the WFR Scheme Manager will alert the Board of the issue by e-mail and give 24 hours for a response. If no responses are received, Jason Lavender, as the HWU Officer representing the Lead Partner, will respond on behalf of the Board. Any such decisions will be reported at the next Board meeting.

8. Formal Agreement (Signatures)

- 8.1 The following Board members (as at 26th June 2009 Board Meeting) and their organisations commit their time and resources to carry out their duties under this Memorandum of Agreement.

Name	Organisation	Signature	Date
Andy Robertson	East Sussex County Council		
Jason Lavender,	High Weald AONB Unit		
Alan Betts	Forestry Commission		
Paul Roberts	English Heritage		
Hew Prendergast	Conservators of Ashdown Forest		
James Seymour	Natural England		
Economic Development and Tourism representative	Wealden District Council		
Sean Ashworth	Environment Agency		
Rowena Moore	Weald Forest Ridge Community representative		

- 8.2 Any changes to this Memorandum of Agreement shall be agreed by the members and a new signed copy of the Memorandum produced.