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Briefing Note Weald to Waves

For Finance, Governance & Estates Committee on 15 August 2024

Introduction

The **Weald to Waves** network is a nature recovery corridor running across Sussex, strengthening biodiversity by improving connectivity but also supporting sustainable local food production and helping rural communities to thrive.



Whilst the official corridor currently runs from the Ashdown Forest in the High Weald and then follows the Arun, Adur and Ouse rivers to the sea at Climping, Shoreham and Newhaven, Weald to Waves are encouraging participation from outside of this initial area.

The project has recently added community green spaces such as allotments and village greens along with private gardens to its network. Pledging at least 30% of these parcels of land for nature recovery and recording them on the network map is completely non-binding with no legal tie or obligation - it is a purely notional scheme.

Parish Councils Input

There is concern amongst Mid-Sussex parish councillors about the lack of recognition of the importance of protecting nature and the countryside in our part of Sussex. Because we are relatively built up, we are not seen as a priority area for nature recovery even though we do have many important sites for wildlife. This issue was discussed at the new informal Environmental Network of local parish councillors and also at the Mid Sussex Voluntary Action Eco-Forum. Both were attended by Cllrs Majsai and Dyke.

Action

Rather than starting a new project, it was agreed that priorities were to map our Parish Council owned sites on the Weald to Waves network, and then to encourage local residents, community groups and landowners to do the same. This would be the start of beginning to create a visible Mid-Sussex nature corridor which would, as well as protecting nature and the countryside hopefully have some small influence around current development pressures.

Some Parish Councils such as Lindfield and Cuckfield have already made a start on this. We probably meet this 30% target already just by virtue of the way we manage Hurst Meadows/the Village Garden etc.

More information can be found here: www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/map/weald-to-waves-main-map and here: <https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/get-involved/gardens-and-greenspaces>

Proposal

It is proposed that the Parish Council agrees to pledge 30% of its greenspaces land to nature recovery and that these sites are recorded on the Weald to Waves gardens and greenspaces map. Residents and community groups such as the Woodland, Flora and Fauna Group and Hurst Rethink will then be encouraged to do the same.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee RECOMMENDS to Council that 30% of its greenspaces land is pledged to nature recovery and that these sites are recorded on the Weald to Waves gardens and greenspaces map and to encourage other local groups and residents to do the same.
