# Contents

# Summary: Frome Nature Recovery Plan

### 1.1 Introduction and Context

This Nature Recovery Plan sets out how Frome can protect and improve biodiversity while supporting climate resilience. It also demonstrates Frome's ambition to contribute to, and help deliver, Somerset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), ensuring local action aligns with wider county priorities. By law, local councils must consider biodiversity, set objectives, and take action. Frome Town Council has already prioritised this through its Climate Emergency declaration (2018) and Ecological Emergency declaration (2021), recognising that healthy ecosystems are essential for wellbeing, climate stability, and long-term resilience.

Nature and climate action are closely linked. Woodlands, rivers, grasslands and soils store carbon, regulate water and temperature, and reduce risks such as flooding and heat stress. This plan brings together national, regional and local evidence, alongside community data from projects such as the Community Wildlife Mapping Project, to identify where action will have the greatest impact. The State of Nature.

## 1.2 The State of Nature

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world: It is estimated that around half of the UK's biodiversity has been lost, and many species continue to decline. Rivers are generally in poor health, soil quality is deteriorating, and habitats are increasingly fragmented. Recognising these challenges, the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) set out ambitions to improve the environment within a generation, including restoring habitats, recovering species and improving the health of rivers, soils and landscapes.

Somerset reflects this trend, with losses in grassland, falling butterfly populations, declining river quality, and increasing invasive species. However, Frome sits within a particularly important ecological landscape, surrounded by woodlands, river systems and species-rich habitats. The River Frome is a key wildlife corridor linking the town to the wider environment.

## 1.3 Frome's Natural Assets

Despite wider challenges, Frome has strong foundations for nature recovery. The town includes a rich network of habitats:

- **River corridor (River Frome and tributaries)**: key wildlife route supporting species such as otters, birds, bats and fish
- **Grasslands and meadows**: important for pollinators and biodiversity
- **Woodland, hedgerows and trees**: crucial for connectivity and wildlife shelter
- **Parks, allotments and public green spaces**: widely accessible and increasingly biodiversity-rich
- **Private gardens**: collectively vital habitats supporting a large share of wildlife

Over 1,300 species have already been recorded locally, supported by strong community involvement. Frome also benefits from an extensive network of green spaces—above regional averages—which supports both biodiversity and public wellbeing.

## 1.4 The Importance of Connectivity

A key message of the plan is that restoring, improving and connecting habitats is as important as protecting them. Wildlife needs linked habitats to move, feed, reproduce and adapt to climate change. Without connections, species become isolated and vulnerable.

Frome and its surrounding rural areas have rich natural networks. Strengthening the connectivity of habitats both within the town and out into the wider landscape beyond is therefore essential. This helps ensure that wildlife can move across Frome and into surrounding areas, and that nature-rich environments within the town feed into and support wider ecological networks beyond its boundaries including areas such as Whatcombe Fields and Rodden Brook.

Frome is well placed to strengthen these connections through "wildlife corridors"—linked routes made up of rivers, hedgerows, parks, gardens and other green spaces. These do not need to be continuous; even small "stepping stone" habitats (such as gardens, ponds or verges) can help wildlife move across urban areas.

Priority opportunities include:

- Improving the floodplain habitats and water quality along the River Frome corridor
- Expanding tree cover and woodland links across town
- Strengthening grassland and pollinator habitats
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## 1.5 The Role of Community Action

Community involvement is central to the plan. Frome already has highly engaged residents and groups contributing to conservation, monitoring and habitat creation.

Small actions—especially in gardens—can collectively have a large impact. Activities such as planting wildflowers, creating ponds, or installing bird and bat boxes help make urban areas more wildlife-friendly. Education, citizen science and volunteer programmes are key tools for scaling this effort.

## 1.6 Planning, Development and Funding

The plan highlights how planning policy can support nature recovery. Under Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) rules, developers must improve biodiversity by at least 10%. Identified wildlife corridors can guide where these improvements happen, ensuring they contribute to a connected ecological network rather than isolated patches.

Funding and delivery can be supported through:

- Developer contributions (BNG, Section 106, CIL)
- Environmental grants and partnerships
- Council-managed land acting as biodiversity sites

Embedding nature into planning ensures that new development enhances, rather than damages, ecological networks.

## 1.7 Climate Adaptation

Nature recovery is a key tool for climate adaptation. Frome faces increasing risks from flooding, heatwaves and drought. Natural solutions—such as tree planting, wetland creation and green infrastructure—can reduce these risks while supporting biodiversity.

Frome Town Council manages significant green space which already stores carbon and can play a larger role in carbon sequestration. Community feedback gathered through Somerset Wildlife Trust lead Act To Adapt process in May 2025, as well as other events such as the Climate Action Group meetings strongly supports nature-based solutions as the preferred approach to climate adaptation.

## 1.8 Key Actions and Objectives

The plan outlines a wide range of practical actions, including:

- Improving habitat management across council land
- Creating new habitats (ponds, meadows, trees, orchards)
- Enhancing the river corridor and tackling pollution
- Supporting key species through nesting sites and habitat features
- Promoting wildlife-friendly gardening
- Expanding community engagement and education
- Strengthening data collection and monitoring

Central to all actions is the idea of focusing effort within priority wildlife corridors to maximise impact.

## 1.9 Vision and Conclusion

The plan's vision is for Frome to become:

*"A town where nature is thriving, visible and valued in every neighbourhood, with connected green spaces that support wildlife, wellbeing and climate resilience."*

Overall, Frome has a strong ecological foundation and an engaged community. By coordinating action, improving habitat connectivity, and embedding nature into planning and daily life, the town has a significant opportunity to reverse biodiversity loss and create a more resilient, nature-rich future.

# 2 Introduction – The wider context

## 2.1 The policy background

By law, all public authorities, including town and parish councils, have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. They must "have regard to any relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy". The law states that, with the exception of parish councils, public authorities must also report on the actions they have taken to meet this duty.

Government guidance published in May 2023 outlines three key responsibilities for town and parish councils:

- Consider biodiversity in their area
- Agree policies and objectives to support it
- Act to deliver those objectives

Frome Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2018, recognising that a healthy natural environment is essential for the wellbeing of people, wildlife and the town's long-term resilience.

Nature recovery and climate action are closely connected. Healthy ecosystems play a vital role in storing carbon, regulating temperatures, reducing flood risk, improving air and water quality, and supporting climate resilience. Habitats such as woodlands, wetlands, hedgerows and species-rich grasslands can capture and store significant amounts of carbon both above and below ground, particularly within soils and root systems.

Recognising how closely linked the climate and ecological crises are, the Council declared an Ecological Emergency in 2021. Protecting, restoring and expanding natural habitats supports both biodiversity recovery and Frome's wider climate ambitions.

Following the ecological emergency declaration, Frome Town Council expanded its Resilience Team to support townwide carbon reduction and biodiversity work, starting with understanding the town's biodiversity baseline. To achieve this and involve residents, the Community Wildlife Mapping Project was launched with the Somerset Environmental Records Centre, using the iNaturalist app to enable citizen science. The project helps monitor local biodiversity while making the data publicly available for research and community use.

*Figure 1 - Beavers are now found all the way along the river in Frome*

This Nature Recovery Plan draws together information on the condition and extent of regional and local wildlife corridors; to explore how best to support connectivity and improve habitat condition, to provide conditions within an urban setting for nature to thrive.

The plan sets out clear, practical and community-driven opportunities for protecting and restoring nature across Frome over the coming years. It considers and aligns with wider regional and national efforts to support biodiversity across Somerset and beyond, including the Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and National ambitions for habitat restoration managed through Biodiversity Net Gain policy.

## 2.2 Supporting evidence

Using an evidence-based approach this plan draws on all the available ecological data, including records from the Community Wildlife Mapping Project, the Somerset Environmental Records Centre, and publicly available datasets on platforms such as UKHab, the Ancient Tree Inventory, People's Trust for Endangered Species, and the National Biodiversity Network.

In addition, this plan draws on evidence from Frome's Climate Adaptation Plan, developed in partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Somerset Rivers Authority as part of the Act to Adapt process. An Act to Adapt workshop, facilitated by Somerset Wildlife Trust in May 2025, brought together residents and local stakeholders to identify climate risks, resilience opportunities and priorities for action across the town.

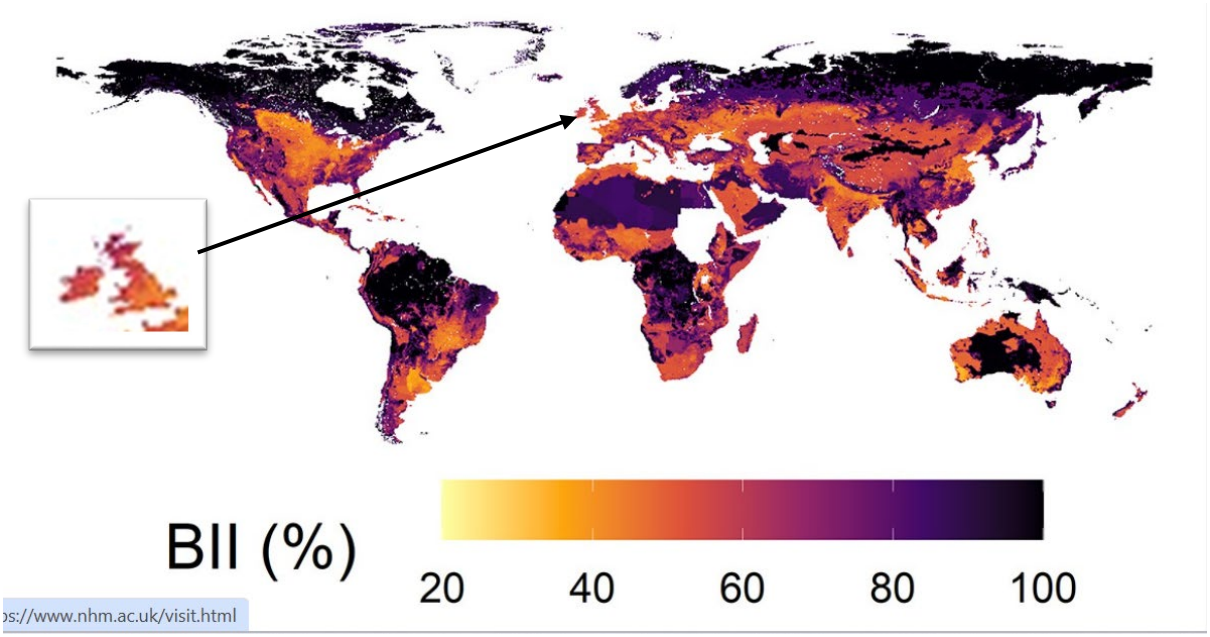
Together, these sources help build a picture of how nature is distributed locally, where important habitats and species are located, where ecological connectivity could be strengthened, and how the efforts of people in Frome who want to support nature recovery can best be directed. This evidence-based approach helps ensure that actions are targeted, effective and aligned with wider regional strategies.

## 2.3 The National Context:

Biodiversity in the UK is under threat from habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, pollution, invasive non-native species and climate change. England is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, ranking in the bottom 5% globally for biodiversity intactness (228th out of 240 countries and territories). It is estimated that only around half of the UK's biodiversity remains compared to its historical abundance. Many species continue to decline, with around half of plant species becoming less common and one in six species now threatened with extinction.

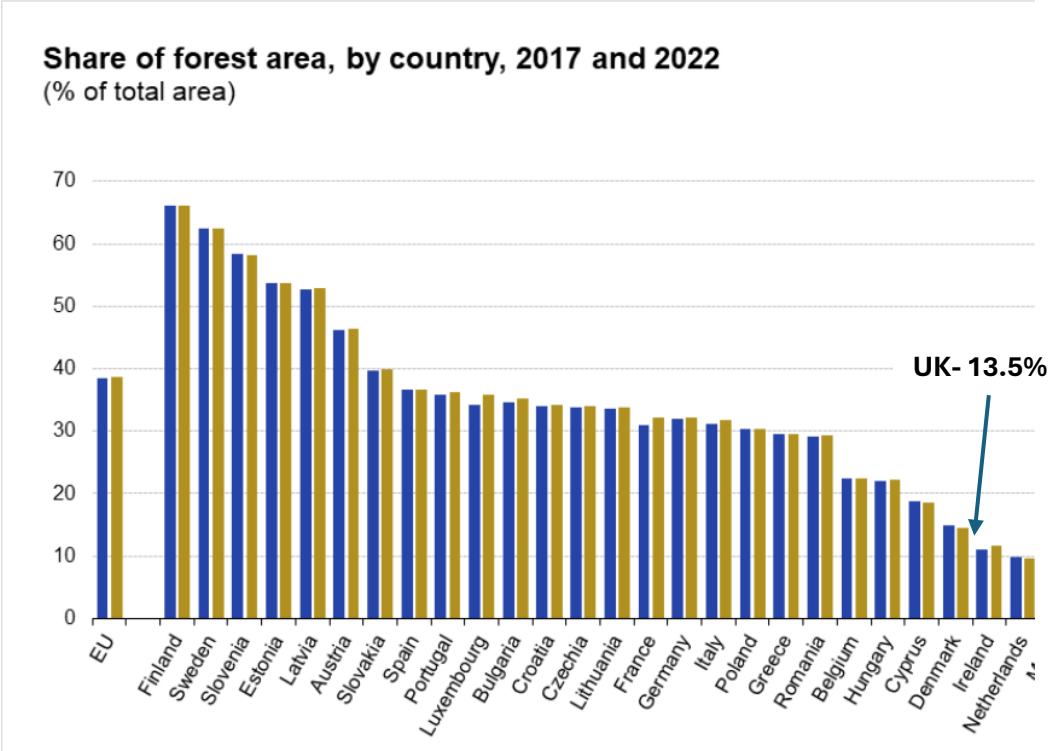
With some notable exceptions, the general trend for both bird and butterfly species is that abundance is declining, by around 20% overall in recent decades. In terms of trees, while the total canopy cover across England has actually slightly increased in recent years, nonetheless the UK has one of smallest rates of woodland habitat in Europe (see map below) and only half of these trees are native varieties supporting diverse species. Less than **one tenth** of these native woodlands are in a healthy condition.

*Figure 2 - World rates of biodiversity intactness*



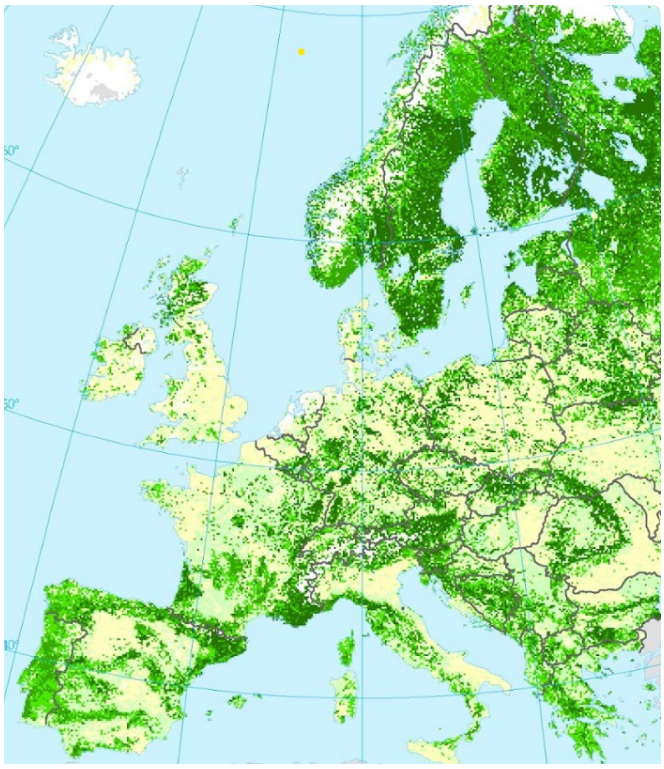

*Source: Natural History Museum Map*

*Figure 3 - UK ranks at the bottom, between Ireland and Denmark, of tree cover rates for Europe*




*Source: Eurostat*

*Figure 4 - UK, Especially England, has one of the lowest rates of woodland cover in Europe*



*Source: Ecoclimax*

The country's river systems are facing threats from sewage discharge, agricultural run-off and soil erosion: only 14% of rivers are in good ecological health (under the water framework directive).

*Figure 5 - River quality in the South West (blue is good)*


*Source: The Rivers Trust*

Soil health is degrading through erosion, compaction and the loss of organic material. Landscapes with degraded soil affect not only farming productivity but also pollinator health. Soil quality decline also has very serious implications for climate regulation: the ground's carbon storing potential is half of its full potential (with a carbon sink loss of nearly 10 billion tonnes)

There is strong evidence that natural processes are breaking down, threatening not only the beauty of the landscape, important though that is, but the very living systems that protect us. Lose natural function and we lose the processes that filter our water, regulate disease and pollinate our crops. When the ecosystems that help regulate our climate fail, we face increased risk of heat waves, fires, flooding, food and economic insecurity.

This picture underlines the urgent need to improve habitat quality, extent and connectedness, and this plan explores what we can all do in this vital work of ensuring nature can once again have the space it needs to thrive.

## 2.4 The regional context

As with the national picture, the natural environment across Somerset is also under increasing pressure. The Somerset State of Nature Report (2023) highlights significant declines in species and habitats across the county. Since 1990 Somerset has lost more than 5% of its grassland habitats, while butterfly distribution has declined by approximately 874 km². Rivers are also under huge pressure, with the number of river catchments classified as being in good ecological condition falling from 38 to 21 between 2009 and 2019. Invasive non-native species have increased significantly across the county, expanding their distribution by around 260% since 1990, while many farmland and woodland birds have experienced long-term population declines.

## 2.5 Frome's place in the network of regional habitats

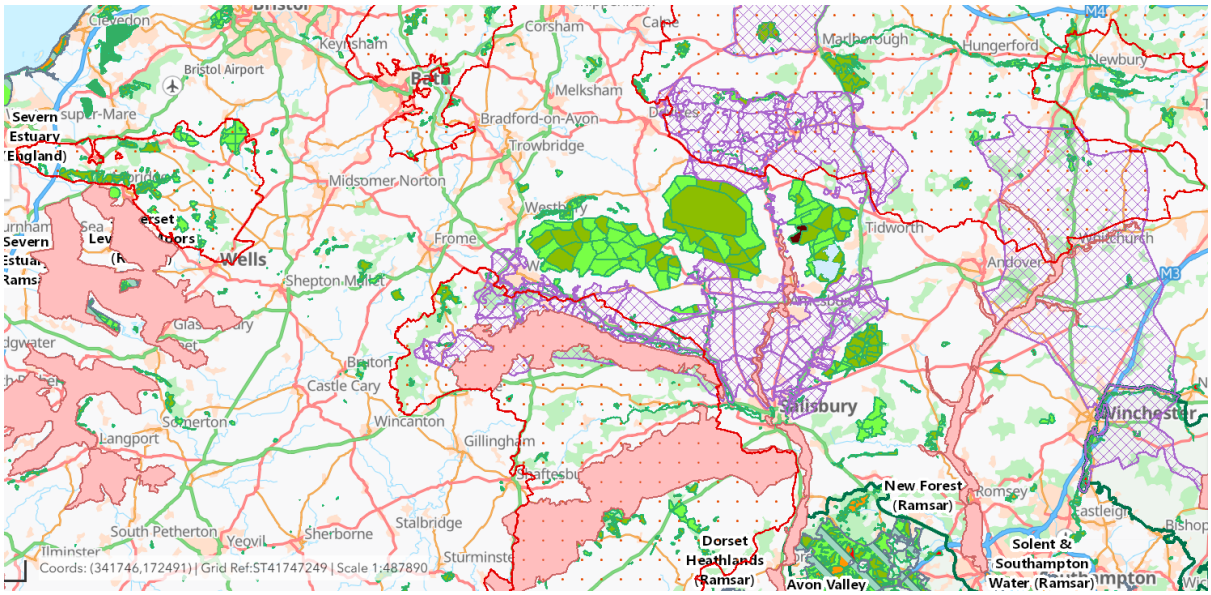
While the national and county picture is concerning, local action can play a vital role in reversing local biodiversity loss and helping to restore functional healthy ecosystems. Towns like Frome can contribute significantly through active interventions to restore habitats, strengthen ecological networks, help improve river health, and support wildlife-friendly management of both public and private green spaces.

Interventions at any level can improve ecological health, but to thrive, nature needs more than isolated patches of good habitat; wildlife also needs connections between those places. When habitats are linked by wildlife corridors such as hedgerows, rivers, grass strips or woodland edges plants and animals can move between them. Through such connectivity fauna is much more able to find food, mate and colonise new locations.

Connected habitats also enable nature to adapt to the large-scale shifts in their range that are needed as a result of climate change. Without connectivity across distance wildlife can become trapped in isolated pockets, making populations weaker and more likely to decline or disappear. In contrast when ecosystems function effectively it builds resilience, enriches the gene pool so reducing the risk of decline.

The maps below show the extent of the high value quality habitats in the areas surrounding Frome and the important corridors of wildlife connectivity of which the town forms a part.

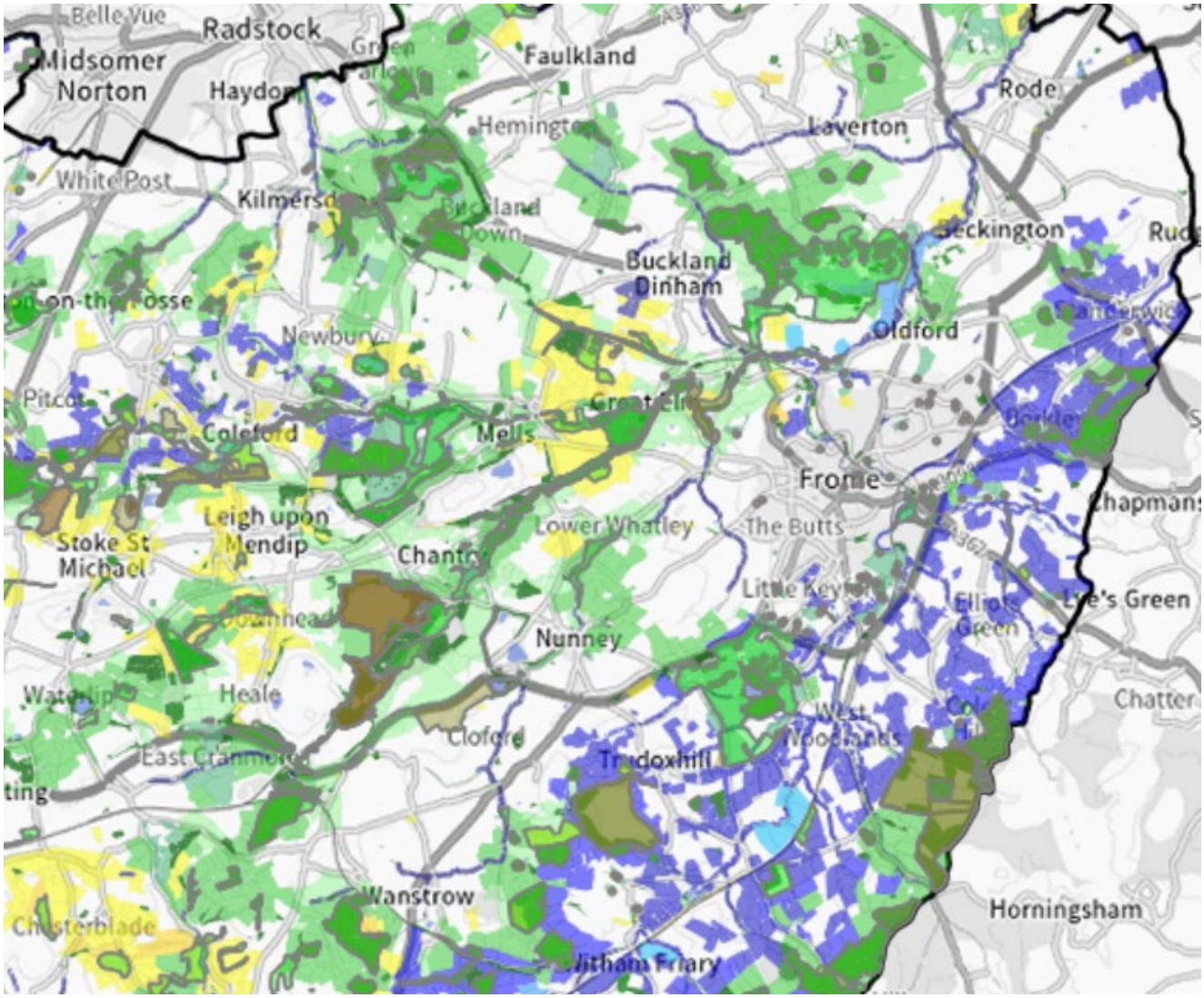
*Figure 6 - Defra Map showing Frome's connection to nearby wildlife rich landscapes (Dots – AONBs, Solid red – Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Purple Hatch – Nature Improvement Areas)*




*Source: Defra*

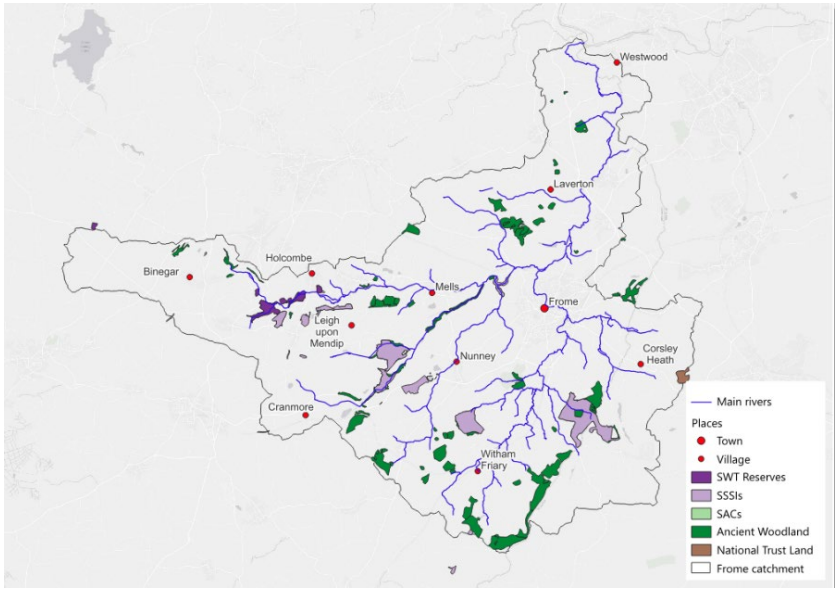
Even greater granularity specifically showing neighbouring habitat types comes from Somerset Council's Local Habitat Map (below). This shows a rich patchwork of woodland habitat that surrounds Frome on nearly all sides (green), together with water habitats to the South and East (blue), covering the river catchment of Frome near Witham Friary, and to a more limited extent, grassland habitat extending to the West (yellow). The local extent of the water and remnant woodland habitats is explored further below.

*Figure 7 - Somerset Council Local Habitat map*




*Source: Somerset Council Local Habitat Map based on SERC data*

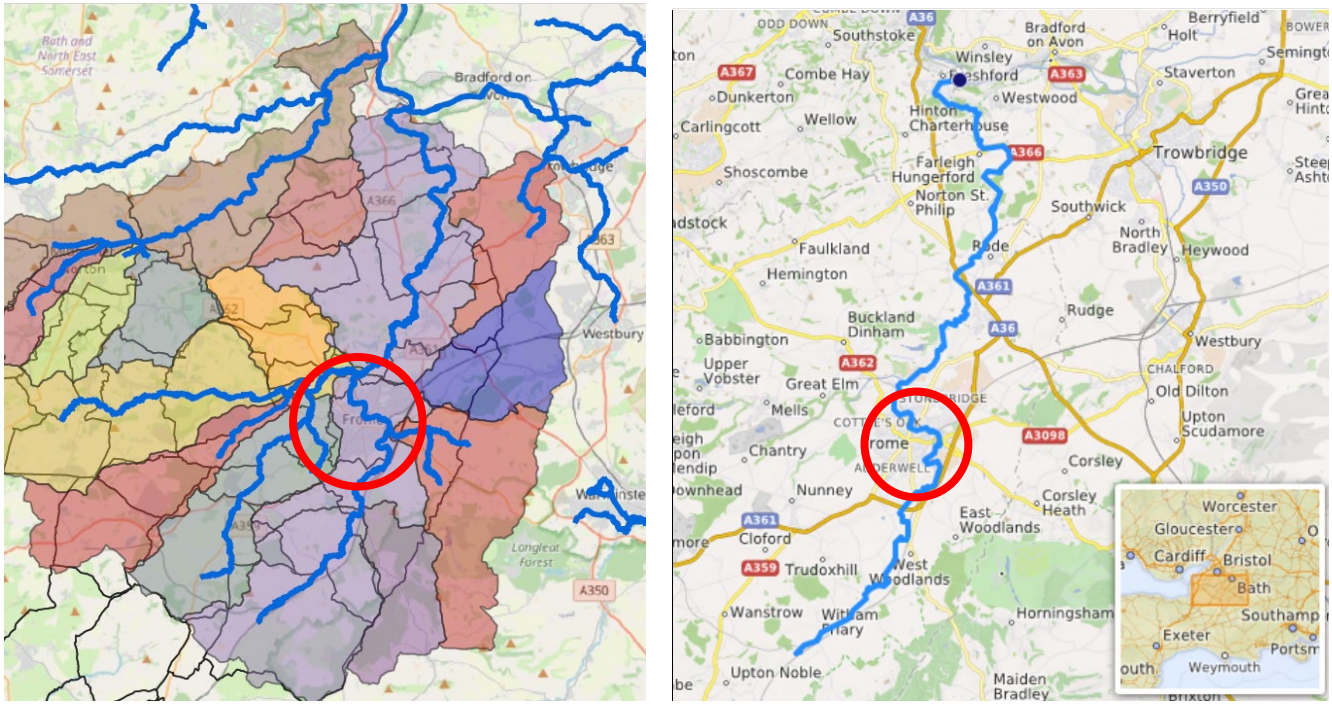
*Figure 8 – Sites managed for wildlife, giving context for habitat connectivity, around Frome*




*Source: SWT*

The value of the water habitat to the south, noted above, is due to this being the area where water drains to form the catchment for the river Frome. The river corridor that runs through Frome is one of the town's most continuous and highest quality habitats, offering great connectivity to surrounding high value habitats.

*Figure 9 - Maps showing the extent of river catchment of the river Frome (joining the Avon at Winsley). This river corridor runs through the centre of the town (circled red) providing high quality habitat connectivity to surrounding areas.*




*Source: Somerset Rivers Authority*

As well as the good quality water habitats, the region to the south of the town provides some of the best possibilities for woodland connectivity, as the area includes the vestiges of a very important former woodland corridor, the historic Selwood Forest. To this day, remarkable centuries-old veteran trees of very high wildlife value remain remnants of a woodland cover that originally would have stretched all the way from Frome to Shaftesbury.

*Figure 10 - Map showing the historic 1300 bounds of the Royal Forest of Selwood*


*Source:* [Forest of Selwood]

Frome therefore sits within a wider landscape of very significant ecological importance: ancient woodland, calcareous grasslands and river systems. Strengthening the ecological links between these landscapes is a key goal for improving Frome's ecological resilience.

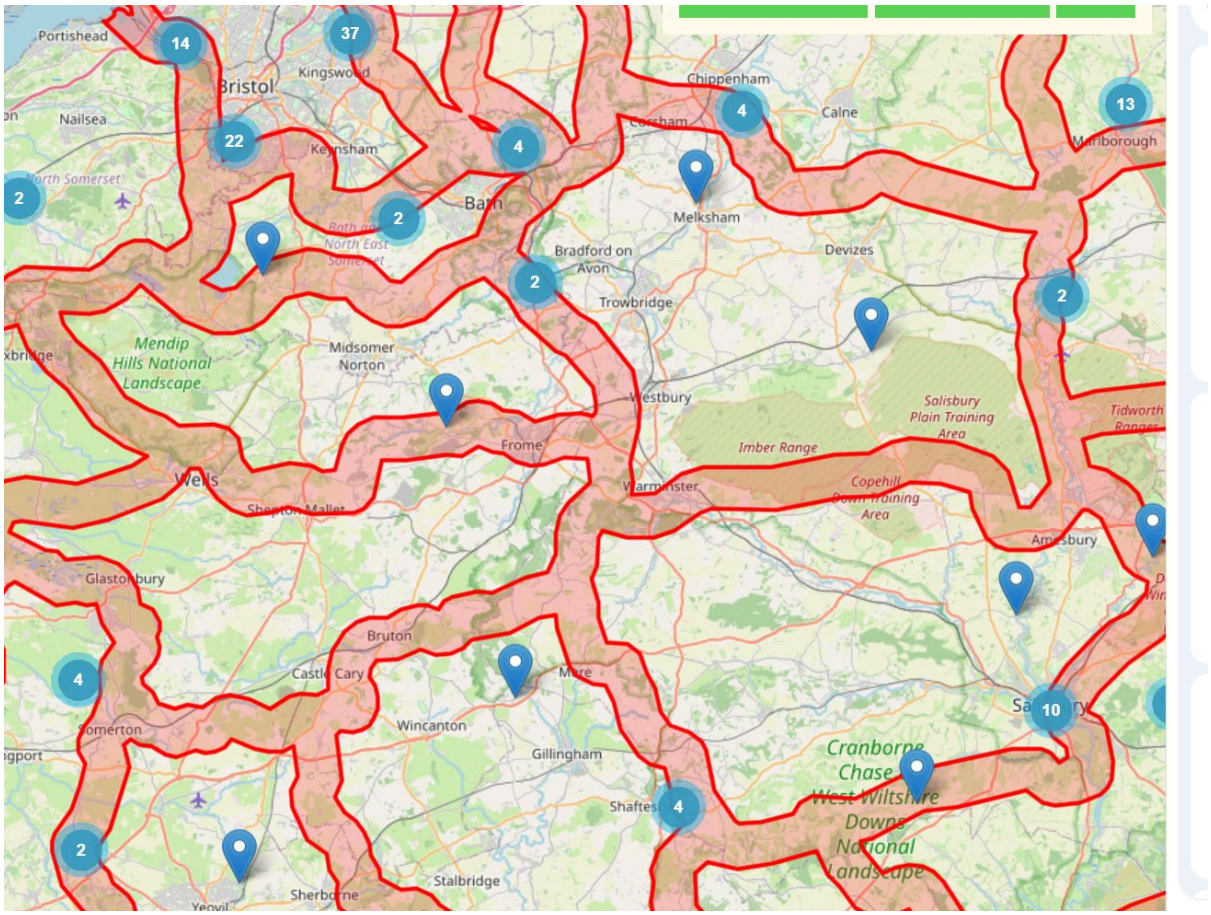
## 2.6 The habitat network around Frome

Buglife have created a guide to the lines of habitat connection that run across Britain named B-Lines (often called "Bee Lines"). These are the key wildlife rich corridors for bees and other pollinators. These corridors are based on existing flower rich places such as meadows, road verges and nature reserves, forming clear corridors across towns and countryside.

The local B-lines map below confirms the importance of Frome's connection with surrounding high-quality habitats, notably the Mendip Hills to the North, the Somerset Levels to the West, the Cotswolds to the North East, Salisbury Plain to the East and Cranbourne Chase to the South East.

Identifying corridors with the greatest potential for wildlife connectivity is an invaluable tool for helping to prioritise action, as it highlights the areas where action can make the biggest ecological difference. On a regional scale, priority corridors like those shown below can help communities, farmers and councils focus their efforts to create strategically helpful habitat stepping stones so that pollinators, and wildlife populations more generally, can travel, feed and survive across the landscape.

*Figure 11 - B-Lines network showing Frome's location at a key crossroads*




*Source:* [Buglife]

On a local scale, see section 4 below, the same approach of identifying the corridors that offer the highest potential for connectivity enables nature interventions to be coordinated for maximum benefit

## 2.7 Conclusions for Frome's Nature Recovery Plan

By considering the opportunities for Frome's habitats to connect to neighbouring wildlife corridors, it is clear that the areas of greatest potential are for:

- maintaining and enhancing the quality of the river corridor (including water quality),
- extending the cross-town woodland canopy and
- improving the possibilities for grassland connectivity.

These priorities support the national need for addressing the country's degraded nature connectedness generally and the limited extent of woodland cover specifically.

## 2.8 Links to Climate adaptation

FTC committed Frome to becoming a net-zero carbon town by 2030 after declaring a climate emergency in 2018. In order that our town is no longer driving climate change it is crucial to reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by the burning of fossil fuels. This mitigation of climate impact is achieved by the ongoing work of FTC's resilience team primarily via new clean energy projects and improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock.

Globally greenhouse gas emissions are still increasing year on year. This means that the entire planet, including Frome is locked into warming for years to come. This climate emergency poses many threats to Frome. 2024 was recorded as the hottest year on human record and 2025 is projected to exceed it. In Somerset, winters are becoming warmer and wetter, increasing flooding risks. Hotter and drier summers are increasing the risk of droughts, heatwaves and wildfires. Adapting to these changes is urgent and essential to reduce the impacts on our buildings, infrastructure, wildlife, green spaces and the daily life of Frome's residents.

There are inevitably residual emissions that cannot be eliminated and must be actively balanced by removing an equal amount of $CO_2$ from the atmosphere. Frome's indigenous ecosystems play an important role in this: our parks, green spaces and surrounding natural habitats are all busy sucking carbon out of the atmosphere. The wilder and more biodiverse a green space is, the more carbon it removes from the atmosphere. Therefore, efforts to tackle the climate and nature emergencies are synergistic.

The contribution to carbon net zero from the land that FTC owns is significant. FTC owns 35 hectares of land (equivalent to about 50 football pitches): approximately 2/3 of this land is grass and 1/3 is woodland (or tree/scrub mosaic).

*Figure 12 - Land owned and managed by FTC broken down by habitat type*

| **FTC land holding by habitat type** | **Ha** | Ha | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grass | **21.8** | | **63%** |
| Trees | **11.5** | | **33%** |
| Young trees (<15 years) | | 2.0 | 17% |
| Established trees (16-70 years) | | 3.4 | 30% |
| Older trees (70 years+) | | 6.0 | 53% |
| Hard standing | 1.4 | | |
| **TOTAL** | **34.6** | | |

These grassland and woodland habitats contribute significantly to Frome's drive to reduce the town's carbon footprint: on conservative estimates, approximately 70 tonnes of carbon are sequestered annually by ecological processes (equating to over 7,000 tonnes over 100 years) while the carbon in the ground and the trees themselves are an existing sink for approximately 5,000 tonnes of already captured carbon.

| **Carbon Capture across FTC estate** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Av annual carbon sequestered: tonnes / ha | Annual sequestered total (tonnes) | Total tonnes over 100 years | Av carbon sink in ground: tonnes / ha | Carbon Sink Tree tonnes / ha | Total Carbon Sink (tonnes) |
| Grass | 1.5 | 33 | 3,264 | 133.5 | | 2,905 |
| Woodland | 3.5 | 40 | 4,013 | 150 | 81 | 2,645 |
| **TOTAL** | | **73** | **7,277** | | | **5,550** |

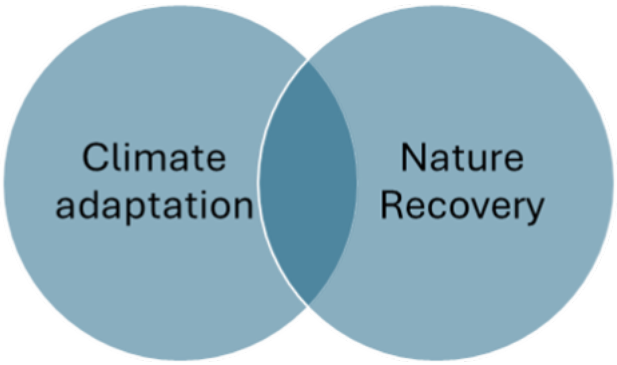
Sources for figures in red:
Lagas
Forestry Research

Plantlife

Since May 2025, local residents, Frome Town Council (FTC) and Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) have been working together as part of the Act to Adapt programme, funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority, to address the challenge: "How can we help Frome adapt to climate change?" At the initial, largescale climate adaptation workshop held at the Cheese and Grain and in following rounds of engagement, residents emphasised nature recovery interventions as the overarching preferred climate adaptation strategy. Whether it is planting more trees to create shade or rewilding landscapes as a buffer for flooding, nature recovery is, by far, the best climate adaptation tool available to us. (see Appendix section 2 for further details).

The Nature Recovery Plan outlined here provides a comprehensive route map forward for people in Frome who want to see natural climate adaptation solutions. A separate document to be published shortly - Frome Climate Adaptation Plan – will detail the actions that FTC and Frome can take to adapt to climate change that are not based on nature recovery.

It is intended that these two documents together represent a good starting point for local climate adaptation. These plans will increasingly feed into regional and national plans via new processes that are being set up with Somerset Council, Somerset Wildlife Trust and other stakeholders.




## 2.9 Links to Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The priorities and actions identified within the Frome Nature Recovery Plan align closely with those set out in the Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), demonstrating how local delivery can contribute to wider county-wide nature recovery objectives.

**Habitat creation, restoration and connectivity**

A key priority of the Somerset LNRS is the restoration and reconnection of habitats across the county to create larger, more resilient ecological networks for wildlife. The strategy identifies

opportunities to restore and connect valuable habitats, improve ecological corridors and strengthen the county-wide Nature Recovery Network.

The Frome Nature Recovery Plan supports this objective through its emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the River Frome corridor, extending the cross-town woodland canopy and improving grassland connectivity. Together, these actions help strengthen ecological connections within Frome while also linking the town to wider habitat networks across Somerset.

**Nature-based solutions for climate resilience**

The Somerset LNRS recognises that nature recovery and climate adaptation are closely linked, with habitat restoration helping to increase resilience to climate change, improve water management and reduce environmental risks.

Similarly, the Frome Nature Recovery Plan identifies nature recovery as a primary climate adaptation tool. Actions such as tree planting, woodland expansion, wetland creation, river restoration, natural flood management and improved soil health are intended to help the town adapt to increasing flood risk, heat stress and other consequences of climate change while also delivering biodiversity benefits. These actions directly contribute to the LNRS ambition of creating landscapes that are more resilient to future environmental change.

**Recovery of priority species**

The Somerset LNRS includes a range of priority outcomes and actions aimed at supporting the recovery of species that require targeted action, with specific measures identified for around 150 priority species across Somerset. These actions focus on improving habitat quality, increasing habitat extent and strengthening ecological connections between populations.

The Frome Nature Recovery Plan supports these ambitions through targeted actions for species identified as being at risk or experiencing local declines. Measures such as enhancing the River Frome corridor, expanding and connecting species-rich grasslands, increasing tree and woodland cover, and improving habitat diversity will help provide the breeding, feeding and movement opportunities needed by priority species. In addition, actions to expand wildflower-rich habitats and improve ecological connectivity will support pollinators and other wildlife that depend on high-quality, connected habitats. Together, these interventions contribute to the wider species recovery objectives identified within the Somerset LNRS

**Community engagement and local action**

A central principle of the Somerset LNRS is that nature recovery should be delivered collaboratively through partnerships between local authorities, environmental organisations, landowners, community groups and residents.

The Frome Nature Recovery Plan reflects Frome Town Council's established approach of working collaboratively with local communities. The Plan supports community-led projects, volunteering opportunities, education initiatives and the stewardship of green spaces by local residents and

groups. This helps to translate county-wide priorities into practical local action while building long-term support for nature recovery.

This Nature Recovery Plan strongly aligns and supports the objectives of Somerset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This is achieved through the principles of habitat creation and restoration, ecological connectivity, freshwater recovery, species conservation, community participation and landscape-scale action.

Through partnership working, community-led conservation and evidence-based land management the Plan aims to deliver nature recovery in Frome while also contributing to the wider ambition of creating a more connected, resilient and nature-rich Somerset.

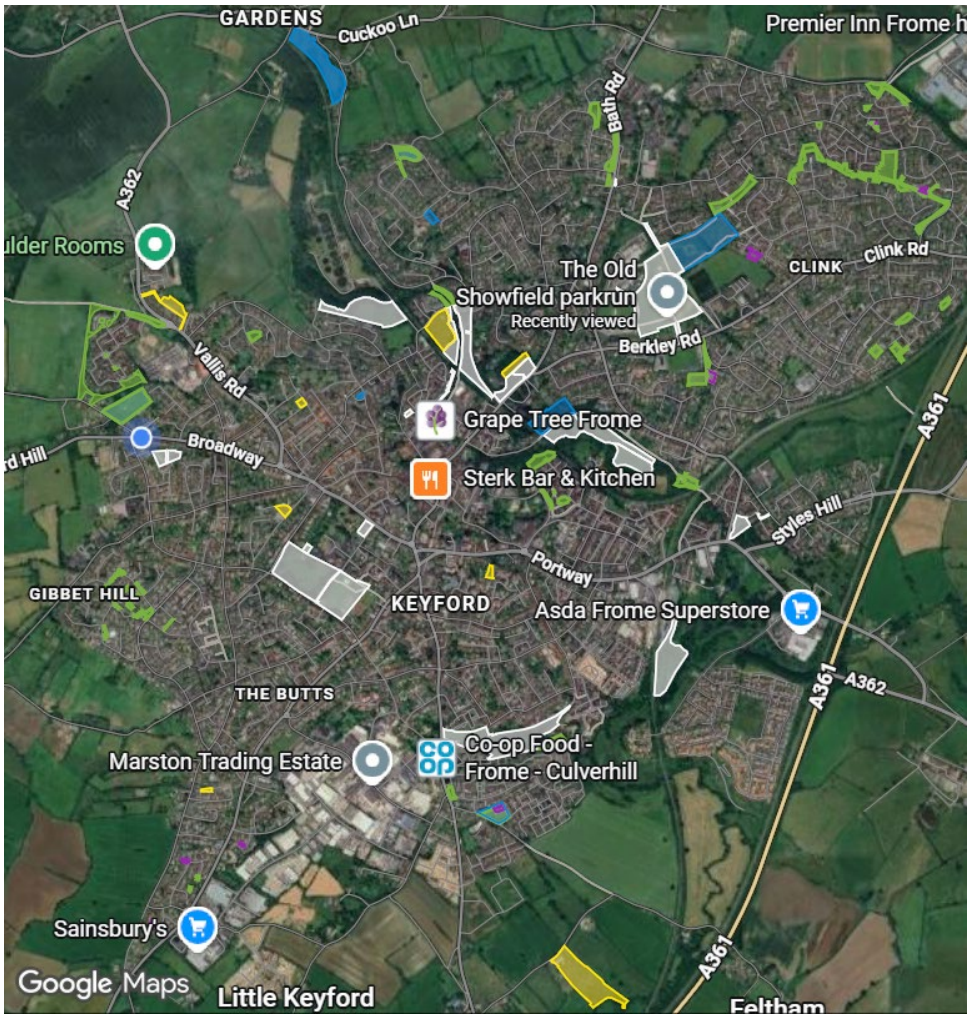
# 3 Frome's nature today – a snapshot

## 3.1 Green spaces within Frome

As the regional picture shows, Frome is a town surrounded by a mosaic of wildlife rich green spaces. Within the town boundary, a network of habitats supports a rich diversity of wildlife, including meadows, woodland areas, wildlife-friendly parks and gardens, riverside habitats, and many community-led nature projects.

In total the civil parish of Frome covers 833 hectares and of this Frome Town Council currently manages over 35 hectares of the public green spaces. In 2025 57 additional open spaces were transferred to FTC from Somerset Council as part of a process of asset devolution. In that same year, FTC acquired the biodiversity rich Adderwell Water Meadow, a Local Wildlife Site Coleway Lane Pond near Gypsy Lane, and the lease for Frome Community Woodland near Spring Gardens, all at opposite ends of the river as it runs through town. Together these new sites have expanded the opportunities for nature recovery and community engagement. Thanks to the diverse estate that FTC manages, there are many possibilities for facilitating habitat restoration and strengthening wildlife-friendly management.

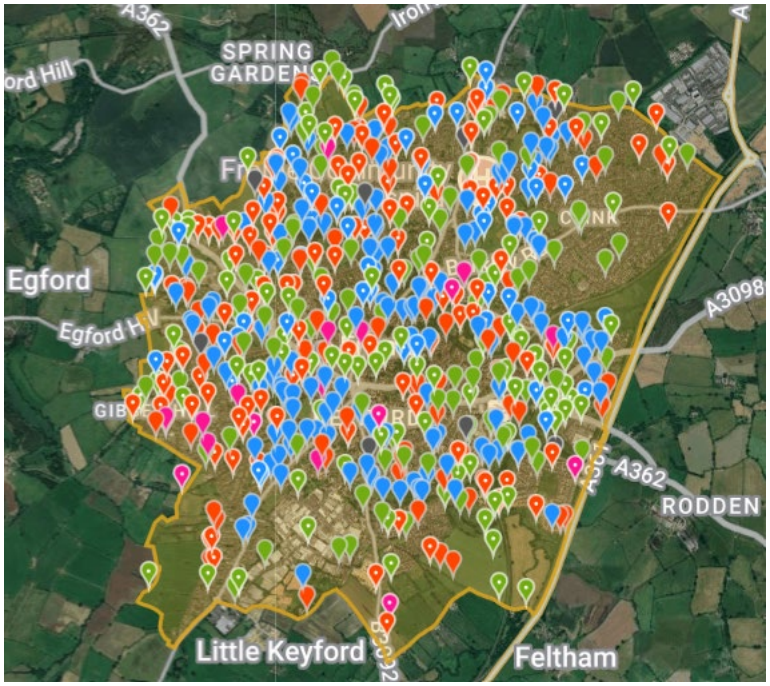
*Figure 13 - FTCs network of public open spaces across Frome*




*Source: Google MyMaps*

The town has a good understanding of its biodiversity baseline thanks to a wealth of local knowledge. Since its launch in 2021, the Community Wildlife Mapping Project has recorded over 1,300 species, from over 7,000 observations, which highlights not only the thriving richness of local ecosystems but also the enthusiasm of residents who observe, celebrate and protect them.

*Figure 14 - Map showing summary of species records for Frome on iNaturalist*




*Source: iNaturist using Google Maps*

Wildlife friendly initiatives from actively engaged community groups such as Friends of the River Frome, Frome Birders, Wild Bunch and Frome Beaver Watch enable a rich understanding of, as well as the means to actively protecting, local wildlife.

*Figure 15 – Photo of Wild Bunch volunteers surveying freshwater species at Vallis Vale*

## 3.2 Key Habitats in Frome

As seen in the regional picture above, there is strong potential for Frome to connect ecologically with – rather than being an urban block to – important high-quality habitats and regional wildlife corridors. Specifically, looking at habitats with the greatest potential for local ecological

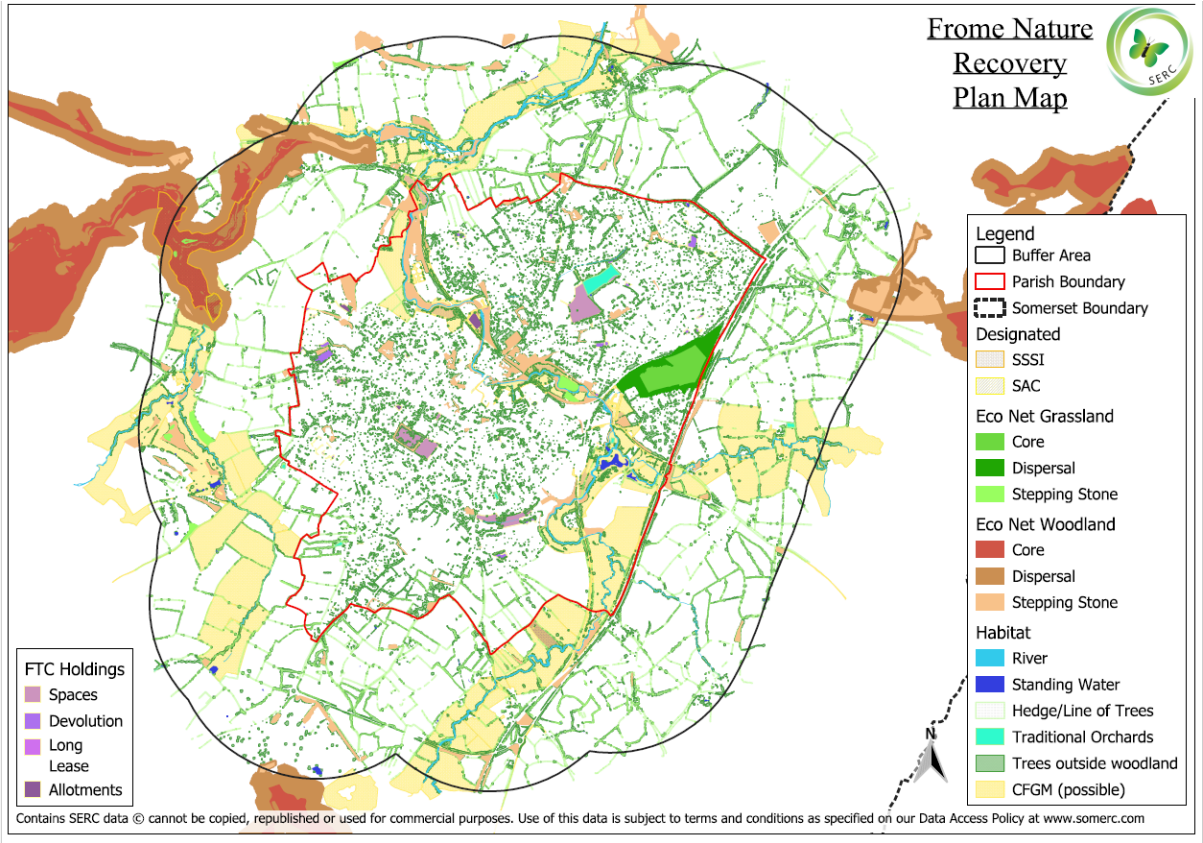
connectivity, these are riparian (river), woodland and grassland. Fortunately, this potential for being a wildlife enabler is supported by a rich cross-town network of green spaces, including:

- River habitats along the River Frome and its tributaries including Rodden Brook
- Floodplain meadows and grasslands including Rodden Meadow, Adderwell Meadow and Easthill
- Woodland and mature tree networks across parks, cemeteries and green spaces, as well as a number of traditional Orchards
- Hedgerows and scrub corridors connecting green spaces
- Wildlife-friendly parks and open spaces managed by Frome Town Council
- Private gardens and community growing spaces which form a large proportion of the town's green infrastructure

*Figure 16 - Orchard being managed by the local community management and rangers*

The habitat network within the town boundary has been mapped by the Somerset Environmental Record Centre (SERC). Understanding how these areas of high wildlife value can connect to each other and the surrounding landscape, and hence thrive, is the key evidence base for this report. The map identifies where habitat exists at sufficient scale for it to be considered a viable ecological unit (core), the areas with enough nature intactness to allow species to spread (dispersal), and areas that although small and isolated, nonetheless offer enough wildlife value to act as enablers for connectivity across a landscape (stepping stone).

*Figure 17 - Frome's network of habitats (Source: SERC)*




A review of each of the notable habitats follows.

## 3.3 The River Frome, its corridor and ponds

The River Frome is the town's most prominent and important natural feature in terms of habitat quality, extent and ecological value. It provides a largely continuous riparian corridor through the urban area, providing important connectivity to habitats within the town and linking them to the wider catchment upstream and downstream. The riverbanks, often lined with mature trees and diverse vegetation, offer important commuting, foraging and nesting habitat for a wide range of species.

While the river corridor provides excellent connectivity for terrestrial wildlife, the movement of aquatic species is affected by several historic weirs which interrupt natural river processes and limit the free passage of fish. There are opportunities to support the work of Friends of the River Frome, the Wild Trout Trust, the emerging Frome River Catchment Partnership and the Environment Agency in exploring long-term solutions to improve aquatic connectivity, including the replacement of hard barriers with more ecologically permeable structures where feasible. However, interventions at major structures such as Welshmill Weir are likely to be complex, costly and long-term aspirations.

The corridor formed by the riverbanks is important not only for wildlife associated with the water itself but also for species that depend on adjacent habitats. Riverbanks support wetland plants such as hemp agrimony, comfrey, wild angelica and meadowsweet, providing nectar sources for pollinators throughout the summer. The River Frome is also an important habitat for fish including bullhead, chub and brown trout. Otter and beaver sightings are frequently recorded along the

river, while kingfishers, grey wagtails, dippers, and Daubenton's bats are regularly seen using the watercourse. Together, these habitats form a vital ecological network, allowing wildlife to move through the town and connect with the wider landscape.

Whilst the River Frome supports a diversity of wildlife, it remains in poor ecological condition. This puts an increasing pressure on many of the species that depend upon it and highlights the significant opportunity for nature recovery within the river corridor and wider catchment.

*Figure 18 - The River Frome provides an invaluable, if imperfect, wildlife corridor through the heart of the town as well as enabling access to nature*

The River Frome, like many other rivers nationwide, has an Environment Agency ecological rating of 'Moderate or Poor' and is failing to meet 'Good Ecological Status' under the Water Framework Directive. There are many challenges and pressures on the river including phosphates, ammonia, bacterial contamination and pollution from;

- Agriculture: Fertilizer and manure/slurry runoff, cattle poaching and poor land management. Bacteria (E. coli, coliforms) from livestock.
- Wastewater: Treatment works and sewer overflows (CSOs), treated and untreated sewage discharges, and misconnections.
- Surface Water from urban environments: Flooding. Leaching from plastics, oils, textiles, PBDEs. Industrial and domestic pollutants.

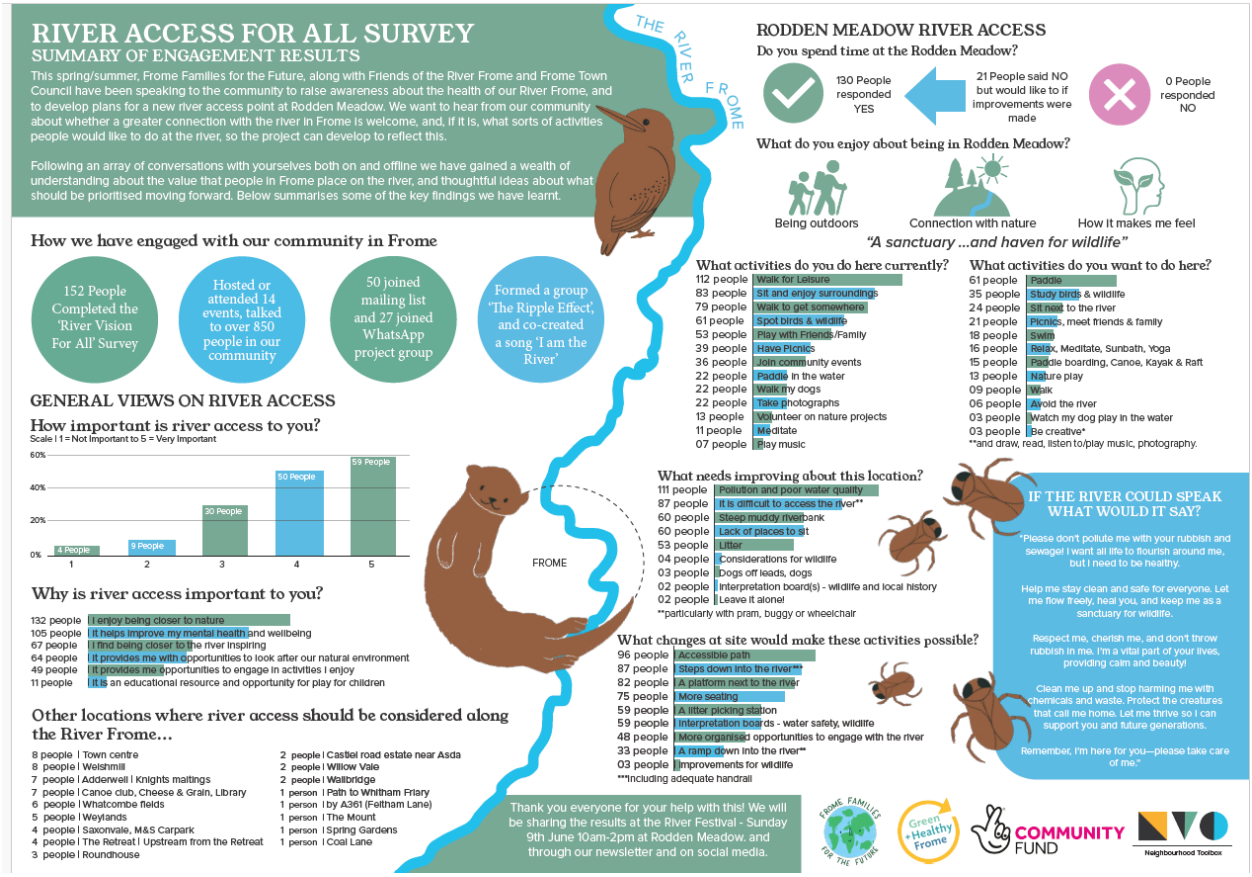
The aim would be to achieve 'Good Ecological Status' and provide a habitat for the flora and fauna that rely upon the river. This will also benefit the people who interact with the river for health and wellbeing.

The priorities and actions identified within this Nature Recovery Action Plan complement the existing River Frome Strategy, developed by Friends of the River Frome and adopted by Frome

Town Council. Together, these documents provide a shared framework for improving water quality, restoring natural river processes, enhancing habitats, increasing public engagement, and building resilience across the wider river catchment.

Local community groups play a key role in protecting and enhancing the River Frome. Friends of the River Frome monitor water quality, remove invasive species, and engage residents in conservation and water quality monitoring activities. Frome Families for the Future have conducted extensive local surveys into attitudes towards river access.

*Figure 19 - The community of Frome have been actively engaged in caring for the river*




*Source: Frome Families for the Future*

Urban ponds can be another highly beneficial water habitat for wildlife by providing vital breeding, feeding, and refuge habitats in landscapes otherwise dominated by hard surfaces. When connected as part of a wider network of green spaces, ponds act as stepping stones that allow species to move, disperse, and remain resilient amid urban change.

In 2021, a wildlife pond was created at Welshmill in partnership with Wild Memories – a nature activity-based community group lead by Froglife, providing additional habitats for amphibians, aquatic invertebrates, and wetland plants, further enhancing the ecological value of the river corridor and educational opportunities for the community. Work is currently underway to establish a pond at Broadway Community Gardens, and bring Coleway Lane Pond, acquired through devolution, into active management. Coleway Lane Pond is located on Gypsy Lane within Frome's only Local Wildlife Site (LWS). A further pond is under review for the Community Orchard in the Showfield.

*Figure 20 – Juvenile newts during a survey of Welshmill pond*

## 3.4 Meadows, grasslands, parks and wildflower areas

The extensive network of grasslands and green spaces form an important flower-rich habitat mosaic across Frome, notably including Rodden Meadow, Adderwell Meadow, Showfield, Dippy, Packsaddle, Birchill and Whatcombe Fields, but also smaller neighbourhood green spaces such as the green perimeter at Marley's Way or the wildlife reserve located on Gypsy Lane. Most are managed with reduced mowing regimes to allow wildflowers and grasses to thrive, supporting a rich diversity of invertebrates and pollinators and other wildlife.

Parks such as Mary Baily, Victoria Park and many others including Packsaddle, St Johns, Tower View and Egford add to this network of green spaces.

Further extending this green space are the nearly 4 hectares from 8 allotments spread across town. Allotments boost local biodiversity by acting as urban oases for animals such as frogs, toads, slow worms, hedgehogs, a wide diversity of insects, birds and bats, providing diverse food sources, nesting sites, and sheltered corridors. A 2019 study by the University of Bristol found that allotments host more species of pollinators (such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies) than parks and even many private gardens, making them biodiversity hotspots in cities.

Allotments also support action to reduce a town's carbon footprint - the average tomato moves just metres, compared with the 2,000+ miles travelled by a supermarket variety, according to one survey - and contribute to local food resilience.

There are currently about 350 individual allotment plots and strong demand for the same again. With land for allotments down 65% nationally, and given the strong biodiversity (not to mention the well attested community and wellbeing benefits), it is a priority to provide more space for allotments within Frome.

*Figure 21 - At over 2ha Birchill allotment offers valuable green space for flora including pollinators*

In total the green spaces in Frome (defined as; allotments or community growing spaces, bowling greens, cemeteries, religious grounds, golf courses, other sports facilities, play spaces, playing fields, public parks or gardens and tennis courts) amount to over 4% of the total area.

This extent of accessible public green space in Frome is comparatively very high. Frome benefits from no less than **four times** the level of green space compared to the level in urban environments across Somerset as a whole! (3% in Frome vs the average for Somerset of just 1%, and 1.33% for the South West region). *Source: Locality report for FTC July 2024*.

An additional benefit of there being such an extensive network of urban parks is the access it provides to people to enjoy nature and to be outdoors, helping to nurture the next generation of wildlife champions! In a 2025 survey of schoolchildren by FTC, parks stood out as the children's most popular feature of living in Frome. The popularity of open spaces was also a key finding from a survey taken of all town residents the previous year (see inset below). The multi-dimensional benefits of providing well managed public green spaces – people's enjoyment and wellbeing together with biodiversity and climate adaptation - helps underpin the priority given to this work by FTC.

*Figure 22 - What appeals most about Frome - from FTC's Building a picture of Frome report 2024 (drawing on the views of 973 respondents)*


The Pocket Meadows is a project aimed at enabling the community to act at a local level to play their part in improving the wildlife value of neighbourhood green spaces. Each year, local volunteers and schoolchildren help plant spring bulbs and wildflowers in parks and green spaces, creating habitats that are both beautiful and beneficial for wildlife. Such local participation to establish, but also to support, the ongoing maintenance of these miniature meadows, has helped communities feel connected to nature and empowered to make a difference. It has improved the town's habitat network and brought wildlife-friendly planting into public green spaces.

*Figure 23 - Community involvement establishing a wildflower pocket meadow*

Alongside flower-rich meadows, areas of rough grassland also play an important role in supporting biodiversity. While colourful wildflowers provide valuable nectar and pollen for pollinators, taller grasses and less intensively managed vegetation provide food and shelter for a wide range of insects throughout their life cycles, as well as seeds and cover for birds and other wildlife. Allowing some grass areas to remain less managed can increase habitat diversity, extend seasonal food availability, and create conditions for a wider range of species to thrive. Through appropriate management, including rotational cutting and retaining areas of longer vegetation, green spaces can support both wildlife-rich meadows and more natural grassland habitats as part of a varied and resilient habitat network. In FTC's managed parks and open spaces, this is achieved through a mosaic approach to grassland management, with some areas cut regularly to provide space for recreation, picnics and play, while other areas are managed with reduced mowing regimes to support wildlife and increase habitat diversity.

In addition to designated meadow and long grass areas, wildlife-friendly planting is incorporated into parks and recreational spaces. Plants are chosen for both being visually appealing but also beneficial for pollinators. In addition to this, a wildlife friendly approach to future management at FTC has a policy of not using herbicides for ongoing care.

*Figure 24. Pocket Meadow at Mary Baily playing fields planted by volunteers with flower seeds from CIC Meadow in My Garden*

## 3.5 Woodlands, woodland edges, trees, hedgerows and scrub

Given the particular importance of the woodland habitat network surrounding Frome, the town's woodland edges, scrub habitats and hedgerows form important wildlife friendly green corridors running through Frome.

In addition to the biodiversity value of the trees within a woodland itself, the wildlife interest of a woodland feature is enhanced by having margins that grade away from the trees with scrub bushes and then rough grass. Such transitional margins, or ecotones, provide excellent habitat for birds, bats and small mammals. Species in these margins such as hawthorn, dog rose, elder, bramble and blackthorn create valuable nesting and roosting cover as well as excellent food sources for wildlife.

Hedgerows particularly provide extremely important linear wildlife corridors, linking fragmented green spaces and enabling species such as hedgehogs, badgers and bats to move safely and easily between foraging areas. They also provide essential nesting and feeding habitats for birds and invertebrates. The UK has lost half of all its hedgerows since the 1940's. The value of those that are left is clear: 80% are considered priority habitats and safeguarding those that remain is a key priority.

FTC manages a very extensive 6km network of hedgerows across the town. FTC manages these on wildlife friendly principles and has recently brought several hedges (including at Birchill, Weylands and the Showfield) back into good condition through the traditional technique of hedge-laying.

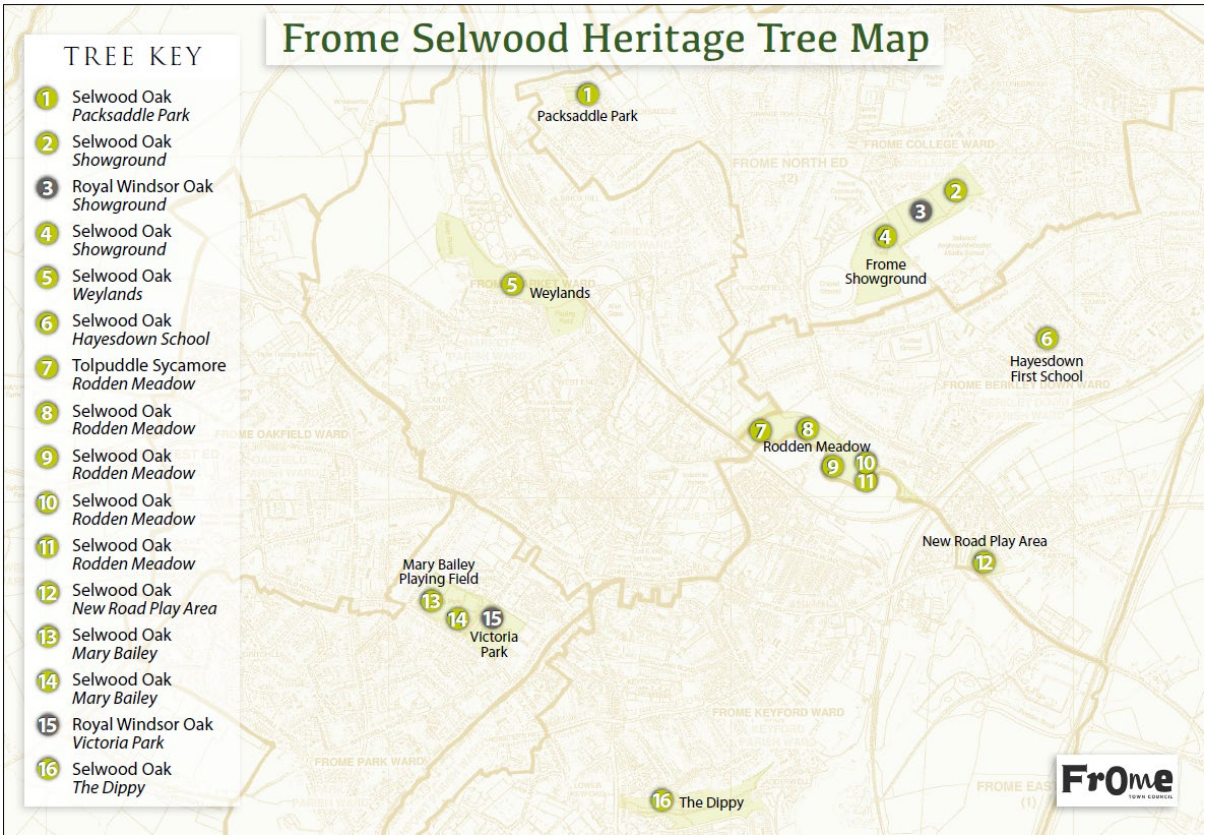
*Figure 25 - Rangers laying the hedge at Frome Medical Practice December 2023*

Frome is also home to areas of mature woodland and veteran trees. These older trees support a wide range of wildlife, including fungi, lichens, insects, birds and mammals such as bats.

Veteran trees are especially valuable because they provide features such as cavities, deadwood and decaying bark that cannot easily be replaced. To help ensure continuity of individual free-standing trees of high wildlife and landscape value, FTC has planted a number of oak saplings grown on from acorns of existing veterans, from the Selwood Forest legacy trees by Julian Hight

*Figure 26 - Veteran Sycamore tree at Millenium Green*

*Figure 15 - Map showing location of heritage oaks planted across FTC land*




*Source: Julian Hight*

FTC has an on-going programme to increase the canopy cover across the town and expand the town's green infrastructure. This has been managed by identifying locations that trees can be planted within its management plans for each site the council owns and by enabling the community to plant neighbourhood trees.

Recent initiatives have included planting a riverside site at Birchill (in 2020 TBC), establishing the Tiny Forest in Egford Park (in 2021) to create a dense, fast-growing woodland, creating high-quality habitat in a small area, and creating the town's first community woodland with 3,800 native trees and hedgerow plants by over 600 volunteers (in 2026).

*Figure 27 - Community support to plant 4,000 trees to create new woodland feature in Frome, March 2026*

These initiatives have increased tree cover, enhanced biodiversity and contributed to climate resilience while also providing new green spaces for the community to enjoy.

## 3.6 Gardens and urban green spaces


Gardens offer particularly important wildlife refuges in any town and play a crucial role in supporting the nation's biodiversity and climate resilience. According to RHS Gardening Report 2025, cultivated gardens across the country collectively cover an area more than three times the size of all National Nature Reserves. They host more than 50 million trees, and support around half of all UK birds, mammals, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians, as well as storing an estimated 158m tonnes of carbon. There is evidence that mammal diversity in gardens may actually be higher than woodlands, and that some butterfly species are faring better in gardens than the wider landscape.

Each garden has the potential to be an ecological powerhouse and while these are not mapped, they undoubtedly help to provide invaluable connectivity filling in the gaps in an urban setting between the town's extensive network of larger public parks and meadows.

The wildlife value of gardens can be significantly enhanced with techniques to provide space for nature such as creating ponds, log piles, flowering beds and nesting sites. Interventions like these can provide food and shelter for hedgehogs, bats, birds, frogs, newts and invertebrates.

Frome Wild Bunch, established in 2021, supports wildlife-friendly gardening across the town. Through outreach events, practical workshops and promoting Somerset Wildlife Trust initiatives such as Wilder Gardens, the group supports residents to transform their gardens into valuable habitats for wildlife. Activities have included on-street bird and bat box building workshops and wildlife gardening events.

Frome Town Council also promotes Somerset Wildlife Trust's Wilder Churches initiative, supporting faith groups to manage churchyards and associated green spaces for wildlife. There is

further scope to encourage neighbourhoods, community groups and local organisations to work towards Somerset Wildlife Trust's Wilder Communities award, helping to recognise and celebrate collective action for nature and strengthen ecological connectivity across the town.

*Figure 28 – Wilder Gardens Award Plaque by Somerset Wildlife Trust in one of Frome's private gardens.*


## 3.7 Community involvement

One of Frome's greatest strengths is its community. Groups such as the Wild Bunch, Ranger Volunteers, Friends of the River Frome, FROGS, Frome Families for the Future, local schools and wildlife-friendly gardeners contribute hundreds of hours for monitoring, habitat management and community engagement each year.

Frome has also pioneered innovative ways of connecting people with nature. The town's Nature Prescribing Group, developed through the Green & Healthy Frome programme, enables healthcare professionals to refer residents to nature-based activities such as guided walks, conservation volunteering and community gardening. These initiatives recognise the important role that access to nature plays in supporting both physical and mental wellbeing.

This level of public involvement is a rare and invaluable asset. It not only helps improve habitats but also builds a strong sense of ownership and pride in the town's natural environment. This Nature Recovery Plan aims to support and expand these efforts by providing opportunities for residents, organisations and landowners to work together in protecting and restoring nature across Frome.

*Figure 29 – Local wildlife groups and community volunteers during 2024 Big Green Summer Meetup*

# 4 Key Species in Frome

Frome supports a rich and varied range of wildlife thanks to its mix of rivers, green spaces, gardens and surrounding countryside. Local surveys, especially the Community Wildlife Mapping Project, have recorded over 1,300 species, including birds, mammals, insects, plants, fungi and amphibians. This highlights both the ecological value of the area and the strong involvement of residents in recording and protecting local wildlife.

The River Frome is a key habitat, supporting the notable species of beaver and otter but also kingfishers, dippers, brown trout and a wide range of aquatic insects. Bats also thrive across the town, using the river corridor, mature trees and green spaces, and local bat counts have helped to raise awareness about the importance of dark, connected habitats. Invertebrates and pollinators are particularly diverse, with Frome's meadows, verges and wildlife-friendly gardens supporting a rich array of butterflies, moths, bees and beetles that are vital to healthy ecosystems.

Frome's parks, buildings, hedgerows and gardens support many birds and mammals, including swifts and hedgehogs, both of which face national decline and need targeted support. Plants and fungi form the foundation of this biodiversity, providing food, shelter and healthy soils, though invasive species such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed threaten some habitats. Ongoing monitoring, habitat restoration and community action are essential to protecting native species and supporting nature recovery across the town.

*Figure 30 – Vicky, a juvenile hedgehog rescued in Victoria Park by a local resident, rehabilitated, and released after winter.*

For further species details see Appendix A1

# 5 The case for a co-ordinated approach

Sections 3 and 4 above mapped the key regional and local urban habitats for Frome and identified priority actions for nature recovery. To gain the maximum biodiversity benefit from wildlife interventions there is a powerful case for prioritising and coordinating action.

While all nature friendly improvements will benefit local biodiversity, there are significant additional benefits if multiple improvements are made along a linked route, especially where this can establish a corridor, sympathetic to wildlife, that connects to surrounding habitat hot-spots.

Interventions within such a corridor can create stepping stones for species to be able to move from one pocket of habitat to another. Parcels of strategically placed, wildlife friendly habitat, can allow animals to cross a non-continuous fragmented landscape more safely and gradually. Such 'permeable' corridors can become a key conservation tool for towns where hard barriers mean continuous habitat links are often not possible.

## 5.1 What does a stepping stone habitat offering good wildlife mitigation look like?

Even if small in size, an area of land managed for nature can offer flora and fauna vital support by offering germination space, shelter, food, or protection from predators.

Their presence in a corridor of occasional connectivity can allow seed and animals to cross from one patch to the next instead of the hazardous prospect of traversing large hostile areas (like roads or built-up areas).

In this way nature can move between habitats if localised conditions decline, gene pools can mix and become more resilient, and nature can adapt to climate change with species spreading and adapting the areas they colonise as needed.

An intervention within a wildlife corridor will be of value if it provides:

- Vegetation or structure (e.g., dense cover for mammals, ground litter for amphibians)
- Food resources (plants, insects, prey)
- Shelter and protection from weather and predators
- Protection from major disturbances (e.g., heavy human activity)
- Proximity to the next patch (distance depends on species mobility)

Some species have greater mobility and hence are able to move more freely between habitat pockets than others, particularly species that fly such as birds, bats and insects. But for less and more mobile species alike, increasing the presence of wildlife friendly stepping stone pockets in a coordinated corridor is an invaluable tool of nature conservation.

## 5.2 How can a corridor be wildlife friendly in a built environment?

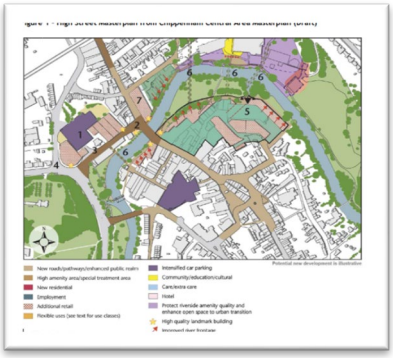
A wildlife corridor doesn't have to be a continuous strip of habitat to function. In built-up urban environments, corridors often exist as networks rather than uninterrupted line. In towns, a corridor is usually a series of linked habitat patches, such as parks, gardens, green roofs, roadside

verges and trees. Animals are then able to make progress along a corridor by reaching one patch after another and gaining sustenance and shelter before moving to the next. Some areas are "semi-permeable", meaning animals can move even where the presence of hard structures may appear to be barriers. Even in an urban setting, animals have the chance to cross quiet residential streets, gardens or school grounds. Nature friendly patches such as this offer bridges between habitat patches, even when the corridor isn't continuous.

With a little ingenuity and a small amount of effort, man-made barriers between habitats can be made even more permeable, such as by creating:

- Wildlife crossings (underpasses, green bridges)
- Hedge gaps ("hedgehog highways") between gardens
- Green roofs and walls linking elevated habitats
- Street tree planting to creating canopy routes

Making small mitigations like these can have a big impact on reducing fragmentation without requiring uninterrupted land. In this way, even heavily urbanised areas can support effective wildlife corridors, as long as habitats are close enough with interventions to enable them to be strategically linked.



**Case study of Green Corridors in a Town: Chippenham**

An example of a town that has introduced the principle of wildlife corridors into its planning and policy framework is Chippenham. Through the Town Council's 2022 Neighbourhood Plan and green corridor strategies they identified strategically important wildlife zones, such as along the River Avon. By enhancing the wildlife management of trees, scrub and grassland at key sites like Monkton Park, the town has successfully established functioning ecological corridors allowing species to move even within an urban environment.

The policy helped to remove barriers with new developments, such the development of the A350, by introducing nature friendly openings.

By advocating for wildflower meadows, longer grass areas, and managed wildlife sites, these nature friendly corridors have supported pollinators (bees, butterflies) and so increased the food supply available for animals higher up the food chain (birds, bats).

With green routes managed to provide greater food and shelter for insects, birds and small mammals, the result has been a boost to overall biodiversity.

## 5.3 The value of coordinated community action within a wildlife corridor

By identifying routes that have high potential value for wildlife, people living in those areas who are keen to help would be able to take nature-friendly local actions that are coordinated. Even though any individual intervention may in itself be smaller in scale, when combined with wider community action along a specific corridor they have the possibility to make a significant contribution to nature's resilience.

Wildlife friendly gardening is a good example of this. The wildlife value of gardens collectively is huge: as seen in section 4.6 above they support up to half of the nation's birds and mammals. Through education and practical encouragement, local communities can be enabled to take action in their own backyard which can make an urban wildlife corridor, even through a built environment, much more sympathetic – or permeable – to nature.

### Examples of actions for gardens within wildlife corridors

Gardens located within identified wildlife corridors can make an important contribution to nature recovery by helping wildlife move through the town. People can be encouraged to:

- Allow areas of lawn to grow longer and encourage native wildflowers to support pollinators moving between grassland habitats.
- Plant native trees, shrubs and mixed-species hedges to strengthen woodland connections and provide food and shelter for wildlife.
- Reduce outdoor lighting at night to help bats and other nocturnal wildlife travel along green corridors.
- Create wildlife-friendly boundaries, such as hedges or gaps in fences, allowing hedgehogs and other animals to move between gardens.
- Leave log piles, leaf litter and undisturbed corners to provide shelter for invertebrates, amphibians and small mammals.


Photo source: Hedgehog Street

Once a prioritised corridor is adopted it allows a range of additional coordinated supportive action to take place, such as local action to eliminate pesticide use, baseline wildlife condition surveys and follow-up research to track change.

Seeing the positive results that community action can bring, in the face of the enormity of the national nature challenges (seen in chapter 2), can be highly rewarding, empowering and motivating.

## 5.4 How can wildlife corridors influence planning development - BNG

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy (under the Environment Act 2021) strongly encourages habitat enhancements to be strategically located and connected to wider ecological networks. A formally adopted wildlife corridor can define a priority area for habitat creation/enhancement. This aligns with Somerset Council's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Developers are required to increase biodiversity by 10% when they build, ideally on the site itself, but they can do this elsewhere if needed. If they can't, they can buy government-approved credits instead. A wildlife corridor supported by the council could be used as one of these off-site locations. This means that biodiversity work done in these corridors can be prioritised by developers as it can help in supporting wider environmental goals and thereby improving the advocacy for their planning permission.

BNG uses a statutory metric that rewards habitat distinctiveness, condition, connectivity and strategic significance. Wildlife corridors will improve connectivity (key scoring factor) as well as offering the potential to create higher distinctiveness of habitats (e.g. wetlands, woodland strips)

Once a corridor is established, a council can register land as Biodiversity Gain Sites, generate BNG units (credits) through habitat creation/restoration and then sell these units to developers needing offsets. A wildlife corridor can help by aggregating multiple landowners into a coherent ecological network and delivering larger, more viable habitat blocks (which score better).

In addition to BNG funding, designating a wildlife corridor can attract additional funding sources such as Environmental grants (e.g. DEFRA, Natural England schemes), NGO partnerships (Wildlife Trusts, Rivers Trusts) and private natural capital investment. In this way, BNG credits can become just one revenue stream among several.

Without coordination, BNG can easily result in small, isolated habitat patches with much lower ecological value leading to poor long-term outcomes.

A wildlife corridor therefore helps to ensure habitat delivery is joined-up and improves landscape-scale resilience. See next section for how this important measure fits within the wider planning landscape.

## 5.5 Planning and policy implications from wildlife corridors

The identification of wildlife corridors provides a practical framework through which nature recovery can be more effectively embedded within planning and development in Frome. This approach aligns with the Frome Neighbourhood Plan, which identifies sustainability as one of its three "golden threads" and forms part of the statutory development plan used to inform planning decisions. The protection and promotion of *green infrastructure*, such as trees, hedgerows, parks and species-rich grassland, and *blue infrastructure*, including the River Frome, wetlands and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), are given significant emphasis within the policy framework.

The corridor approach is particularly relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives for the River Corridor and Public Open Space. Policy POS1 seeks to ensure that the nature-based infrastructure associated with the River Frome is maintained and enhanced for the benefit of both people and wildlife, while improving access in a manner compatible with protecting the river environment. The Plan also identifies implementation of the River Corridor Strategy and funding through Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions as key delivery mechanisms.

Similarly, the Public Open Space objectives emphasise the protection of natural landscapes, the prevention of inappropriate development on public open space, the provision of recreation opportunities, and the sustainable management of open spaces to protect and enhance wildlife habitats and biodiversity.

While Frome Town Council is not the determining planning authority, it plays an important role in representing community priorities and locally adopted policy positions within the planning system, including responses to both major developments and smaller-scale applications determined by Somerset Council. The corridor approach offers a way of ensuring that these representations are consistent, spatially informed and focused on long-term ecological outcomes

### 5.5.1 Protect existing ecological assets

A key priority is the protection and reinforcement of existing ecological structure and the policy designations that already support it. Responding to planning applications in its role as statutory consultee, the Council can emphasise the mitigation hierarchy, ensuring that avoidance of ecological harm is the first priority, followed by mitigation, with compensation considered only as a last resort. This reflects the Frome Neighbourhood Plan requirement that:

> *"All new developments must demonstrate that they have adhered to the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy and have achieved a >10% net uplift in biodiversity in line with the Environment Bill."*

#### Open / Green Space Designations

Particular importance should be attached to the protection of Open Areas of Local Significance (OALS), Local Green Spaces (LGS), public open spaces and other green and blue infrastructure assets identified within planning policy. This directly supports the Neighbourhood Plan objective:

> *"To protect natural landscapes and prevent development of public open space."*

These areas provide an essential spatial foundation for the wildlife corridor network and should be protected from fragmentation, erosion or incremental loss. In many cases they function as important ecological stepping stones within the urban environment and contribute significantly to landscape character, recreation and biodiversity.

#### Trees

The Council can also highlight the importance of retaining mature trees, hedgerows, watercourses and other established natural features that contribute to habitat connectivity across Frome. Particular vigilance should be exercised in relation to applications affecting trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), trees within Conservation Areas, and mature hedgerows, recognising their contribution not only to townscape character and heritage significance but also to biodiversity, canopy cover, climate resilience and ecological connectivity.

Construction activity near root protection areas should be subject to careful scrutiny, with particular attention given to changes in ground levels, service installation, compaction and other indirect impacts that may affect long-term tree health. This approach supports the objectives of the Council's Wild About Trees initiative and wider ambitions to increase urban canopy cover.

#### The River Frome Corridor

The River Frome should be recognised as the town's primary ecological corridor and "green heart". This reflects Neighbourhood Plan Policy POS1, which states:

> *"Otherwise acceptable planning applications that are closely related to the River Corridor environment and approaches to it will be supported where they take advantage of opportunities to improve the River Corridor environment, including access, subject to suitable ecological assessment."*

All proposals affecting the river corridor should therefore align with the River Corridor Strategy and seek opportunities to improve the river environment while maintaining continuous corridors of vegetation and trees that support biodiversity, flood management and climate resilience. Improvements to access should be compatible with ecological protection and should support opportunities for walking and cycling through the town in relative peace and safety.

Nocturnal avian and bat species

Sensitive lighting design should be promoted throughout the river corridor and other key wildlife routes to protect dark corridors used by bats and other nocturnal species. In accordance with the Frome Town Design Statement, external lighting should minimise light spillage and use only the minimum brightness and duration necessary for its intended purpose.

Special consideration should be given to the Mells Valley Special area of Conservation and associated Ecological Zone of Interest. Infrastructure proposals, including active travel routes and cycle network extensions, should avoid adverse impacts on this area wherever possible and demonstrate appropriate mitigation where impacts cannot be avoided, particularly in relation to bat foraging habitat, commuting routes and migratory flight lines. Lighting proposals within or adjacent to these sensitive areas should demonstrate how impacts on nocturnal wildlife have been avoided or minimised.

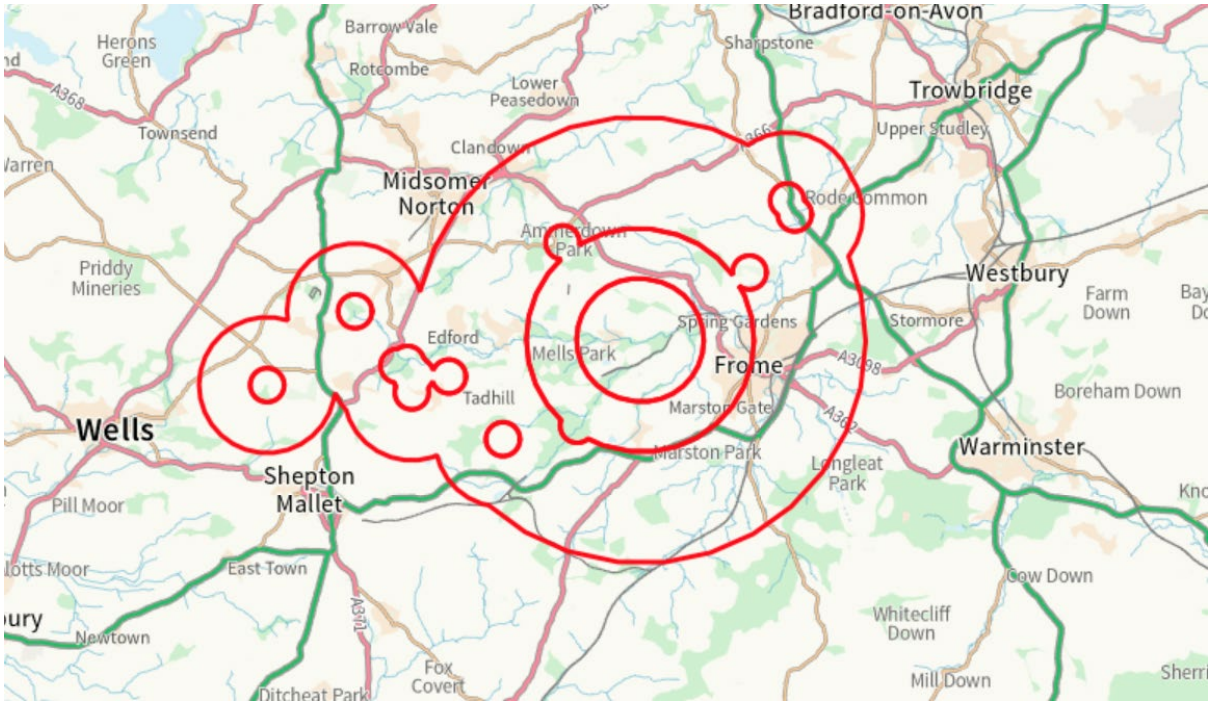
The Mells Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is an extremely important habitat for one of the UK's rarest bats – the Greater Horseshoe, now found only in the South West and South Wales regions. Surveys show that local habitat, notably caves, is used by up to 12% of the national population.

Surveys undertaken across Frome in support of planning applications have shown that these bats forage and commute through the urban area, with much of the town falling within the consultation zones associated with the Mells SAC.

Key to their ecology are dark corridors, connected habitats and night roosts. Temporary resting places provide shelter and feeding opportunities as bats move through the landscape. Small structures such as barns, outbuildings and even garden sheds can provide valuable night roost habitat, and their loss or conversion may have significant impacts that cannot always be mitigated through the installation of bat boxes.

Protecting and enhancing both commuting routes and roosting opportunities across the wider landscape is important for supporting greater horseshoe bat populations in and around Frome.

*Figure 16 – Consultation zone for Mells SAC*




*Source: Somerset Council My Maps*

### 5.5.2 Promote nature-positive development

As a growing town, major new developments provide both a challenge and an opportunity to promote landscape-scale nature recovery. Through its pre-application engagement and planning representations, Frome Town Council seeks to ensure that development reflects community priorities and contributes positively to the town's environmental objectives. The wildlife corridor framework provides a basis for guiding this engagement, helping to ensure that new development supports ecological connectivity and nature recovery.

#### Biodiversity mitigation

In line with national requirements and the Frome Neighbourhood Plan, developments should demonstrate that they have followed the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy and achieved a biodiversity net gain of more than 10%, with gains directed wherever possible towards strengthening identified wildlife corridors and ecological networks.

#### Urban greening

Within both allocated and non-allocated sites, the Council can support development proposals that incorporate biodiversity enhancements such as swift bricks, bat boxes, bird boxes, hedgehog access points and other urban greening measures that function as ecological stepping stones. These features can help reduce habitat fragmentation and improve connectivity across the built environment.

Habitat-rich landscaping should be prioritised through the use of native planting, species-rich grassland, orchards, hedgerows and structurally diverse vegetation. Boundary treatments should favour native hedges and permeable designs rather than close-board fencing where appropriate.

The conversion of front gardens to hardstanding should be discouraged, with permeable materials and soft landscaping promoted to support biodiversity, reduce runoff and improve urban cooling.

Where appropriate, green roofs, brown roofs, living walls and other nature-based design measures should be encouraged, particularly where they strengthen links between existing green spaces and contribute to wider ecological connectivity.

The Frome Neighbourhood Plan requires:

> *"New residential streets to be 'tree lined' in line with NPPF, with further trees planted in community orchards and gardens."*

Development proposals should therefore contribute to the Council's Wild About Trees objectives by incorporating tree-lined streets, opportunities for additional tree planting, and connections to the wider green infrastructure network. The Neighbourhood Plan also states that:

> *"Developers to liaise with Frome residents and FTC's Wild About Trees officer to identify opportunities for planting projects and maintenance."*

Larger developments and public open spaces should be encouraged to explore the creation of community orchards, "tiny forests" and other innovative urban woodland approaches that provide habitat, shade and climate adaptation benefits. This also supports the Neighbourhood Plan objective:

> *"To promote use of parks, open spaces and allotments."*

Lighting

Lighting design should form part of biodiversity-sensitive development. In line with the Frome Town Design Statement and Nature Recovery Plan, external lighting should minimise light spill, glare and unnecessary illumination, particularly near rivers, hedgerows, woodland edges and other wildlife corridors. Energy-efficient lighting should be favoured, and where lighting is required along active travel routes or public spaces, wildlife-friendly approaches such as sensor-operated lighting, low-level bollard lighting or solar LED studs should be considered where appropriate.

The Council can further advocate for landscape management approaches that avoid the use of glyphosate and other routine chemical treatments, supporting the Council's long-standing commitment to chemical-free land management wherever practicable.

### 5.5.3 Use nature-based infrastructure to address climate resilience and water management

The wildlife corridor approach enables biodiversity objectives to be closely aligned with climate adaptation and catchment management. Planning responses should support nature-based infrastructure, recognising the complementary roles of both green infrastructure, such as trees, hedgerows, parks and species-rich grassland, and blue infrastructure, including the River Frome, wetlands and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Together these features can deliver multiple benefits for biodiversity, flood management, water quality, urban cooling and ecological connectivity.

Sustainable Urban Drainage

Particular emphasis should be placed on SuDS that move beyond conventional grey infrastructure. Features such as swales, rain gardens, attenuation basins, wetlands, green roofs and brown roofs should be promoted where they provide habitat creation alongside flood risk management and improvements to water quality.

SuDS should be integrated into streets, public spaces and active travel routes wherever possible, helping to slow surface water runoff, improve water quality and reduce flood risk before water reaches the River Frome. This integrated approach strengthens ecological connectivity while contributing to the resilience of the wider catchment.

Open / Green Space Designations

Designated open spaces, Open Areas of Local Significance (OALS) and Local Green Spaces (LGS) provide important opportunities for nature-based infrastructure, where ecological, hydrological and recreational functions can be enhanced together. Measures such as rain gardens, swales, habitat-rich attenuation features and naturalised watercourses can reinforce their role within both the town's ecological network and its water management system.

This approach supports the Neighbourhood Plan objective:

> *"To manage public open space in a sustainable manner to protect and enhance wildlife habitats and biodiversity."*

Additional measures, including increased tree canopy cover, reduced hard surfacing, rainwater harvesting and permeable materials, can further support urban cooling, flood resilience and habitat connectivity across the wildlife corridor network. Sensitive lighting design can also contribute by reducing energy consumption while protecting dark corridors used by bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

### 5.5.4 Embed nature recovery into planning and place-making

At a broader level, the wildlife corridor framework provides a spatial lens through which nature recovery can be embedded into the wider shaping of place. The Council can use its role in planning consultations to support development that integrates movement, public realm, climate resilience and green infrastructure rather than treating them as separate disciplines.

This includes reinforcing the importance of designated open and green spaces and other green infrastructure allocations as core components of the town’s ecological structure. These areas should be viewed not only as protected assets but as active parts of a functioning corridor network that supports biodiversity, climate adaptation and community wellbeing.

Movement

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) provides an opportunity to frame active travel routes as green corridors. New walking and cycling infrastructure should incorporate trees, hedges and habitat-rich planting that separate users from traffic while simultaneously supporting wildlife movement. Such routes can contribute to both ecological connectivity and healthier, more attractive public spaces. Where lighting is considered necessary to improve usability and perceived safety, designs should minimise ecological impacts through measures such as sensor-controlled lighting, low-level illumination and careful avoidance of sensitive habitats and bat corridors.

The Council can also support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), modal filters and related place-making interventions that reduce vehicle noise and pollution while creating opportunities for pocket parks, street greening and habitat creation. Repurposing road space in this way can strengthen ecological networks and improve the quality of the public realm.

#### Food resilience

The Frome Neighbourhood Plan states that:

> *"All developments to include allocated space for communal food growing."*

Opportunities to incorporate communal food-growing spaces within new developments should therefore be actively supported. Allotments, orchards, community gardens and edible landscapes can contribute to biodiversity, food security, social wellbeing and stepping-stone habitat connectivity across the town. This also supports the Neighbourhood Plan objectives to provide informal recreation opportunities and promote the use of allotments and open spaces.

#### Policy development

Policy development and consultation, including the forthcoming (as of July 2026) Somerset Local Plan, the Frome Neighbourhood Plan and future reviews can use the wildlife corridor framework to align housing, transport, sustainability and environmental objectives.

#### Developer contributions

Developer contributions secured through Section 106 agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery mechanisms should be directed strategically towards wildlife corridor priorities. This reflects the Neighbourhood Plan's identification of Section 106 and CIL funding as key mechanisms for delivering River Corridor improvements. Contributions may support habitat creation, hedgerow restoration, tree planting, SuDS enhancements, river corridor improvements, access improvements, long-term habitat management, public open space enhancements and other green infrastructure projects that strengthen connectivity beyond individual development sites. Directing investment towards identified corridor priorities helps ensure that development contributes to a coherent ecological network rather than creating isolated biodiversity gains.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain delivery

Alongside directing Biodiversity Net Gain contributions strategically, there is a need to review safeguards and monitoring arrangements to ensure that wildlife mitigation and enhancement measures secured through the planning process are delivered and maintained in the long term. Robust management plans, transparent reporting and long-term stewardship will help ensure that BNG delivers meaningful benefits for nature recovery and strengthens Frome's wider ecological network.

### 5.5.5 Conclusion

The wildlife corridor framework provides a strong basis for Frome Town Council to influence planning outcomes in line with the sustainability objectives embedded within Frome Town Council policy. It directly supports the objectives for the River Corridor and Public Open Space by protecting natural landscapes, enhancing biodiversity, improving access where appropriate, and ensuring that green infrastructure is managed for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

While decision-making rests with Somerset Council, a consistent and evidence-led approach can help ensure that development supports ecological connectivity and nature recovery. Through the

application of the mitigation hierarchy, biodiversity net gain, sensitive lighting design and the protection of local open spaces, green spaces and other green infrastructure assets, both major developments and smaller-scale changes can contribute to a more connected, resilient and nature-rich town.

The River Frome corridor, strategic green infrastructure network, public open spaces, active travel routes and community-managed spaces all have a role to play within this connected ecological system. Strategic use of Biodiversity Net Gain, Section 106 agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy funding and other investment mechanisms can help translate corridor priorities into practical on-the-ground improvements.

Combined with community action, biodiversity monitoring, sustainable land management and nature-positive development, this approach provides a strong foundation for delivering long-term nature recovery across Frome while protecting the ecological networks and dark corridors on which many species depend.

## 5.6 Frome's Potential Habitat Corridors

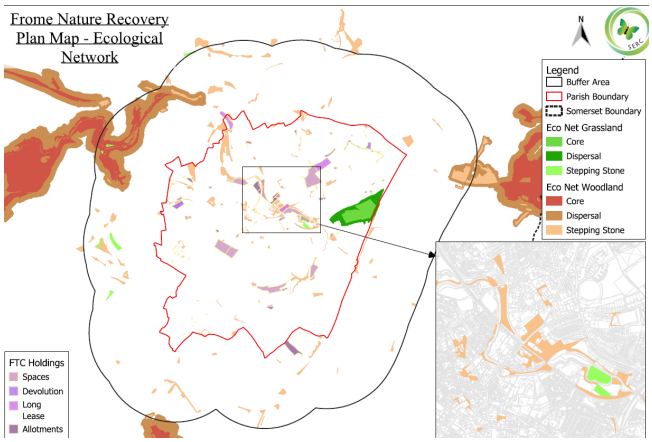
Identifying potential habitat corridors, as the B-Lines project has done on a larger scale (see figure 11 above), enables works to be prioritised and limited resources to be coordinated to achieve maximum effect across a wider area.

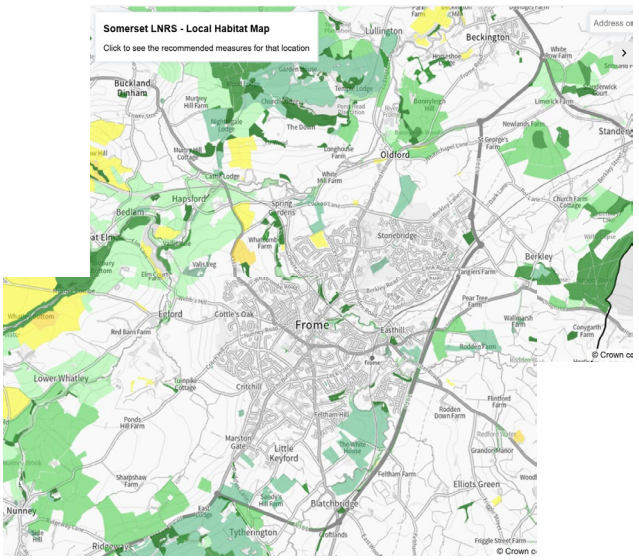
By looking at the B-lines corridors and their linkages to Frome (see section 2.6, Figure 11 above), together with the network of important wildlife rich regions that surround the town (Figures 6-10), it is possible to identify Frome's neighbouring touchpoints of highest quality habitat. These neighbouring biodiversity hot spots offer the greatest ecological potential for enriching Frome's town-based biodiversity providing they are connected by viable nature corridors.

Using the SERC basemap of Frome's habitats shown above (figure 17 above) and Somerset's Local Habitat map (figure 7 and summarised below) it is possible to plot the best fit for potential corridors across town, which build on existing pockets of town-based habitat and connect to adjoining high quality habitat.

These corridors offer the best opportunity for creating viable ecological networks that can reach out to the nearby nature rich biodiversity reserves.

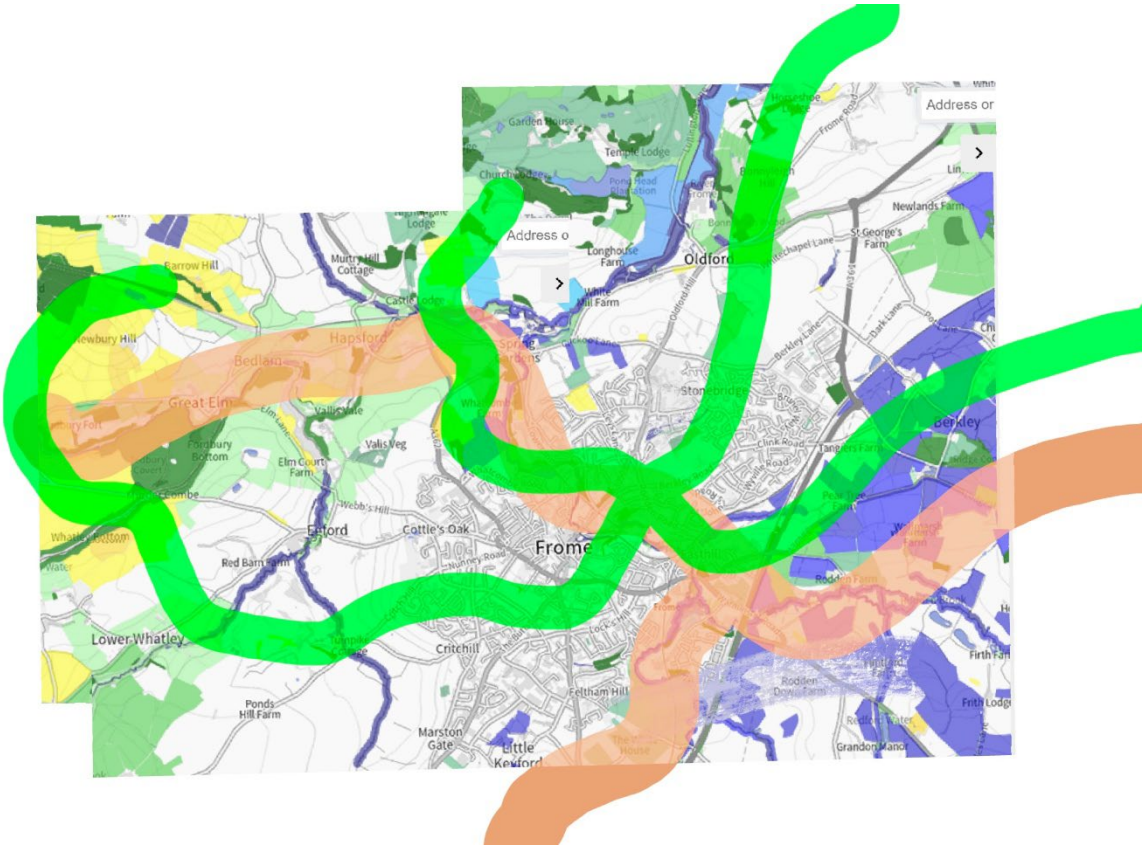
*Figure 31 – Assessment of habitat network around Frome using Ecological Network map from SERC (Left) and Somerset Council's Local Habitat Map (Right)*




Based on this data, the green lines on the map below mark the grassland corridors offering greatest connectivity and the brown lines identify the same for woodland.

*Figure 17 - Map showing best opportunities for connectivity through Frome to surrounding high quality habitat – brown – woodland corridor, green = grass corridor*




*Source: SERC with corridor interpretation by FTC*

# 6 Opportunities for Nature Recovery – Conclusions and Actions

## 6.1 Key report conclusions

The review above of the wider region (section 3) concluded the best options for offering connectivity to wider networks were from:

- maintaining and enhancing the quality of the river corridor (including water quality),
- extending the cross-town woodland canopy and
- improving the possibilities for grassland connectivity.

Having reviewed these habitats within the town boundary in detail (sections 4 and 5) it is clear that there is a strong ecological base to build on, to allow Frome's biodiversity to be enriched by neighbouring nature hot spots, thereby improving ecological function, connecting wildlife corridors that have been identified (section 6).

Building on these priorities, the key opportunities for improving Frome's biodiversity are to:

- Adopt the ecological corridors into Frome's planning guidance and use them to coordinate local initiatives: incorporate into the neighbourhood plan to ensure that wildlife principles are taken into account with new urban developments and mitigations (e.g. for Biodiversity Net Gain)
- Work with landowners and stakeholders within the Frome boundary to undertake wildlife friendly interventions in these key targeted corridors
- Incorporate the needs of wildlife into the management plans for all FTC sites
- Working collaboratively with key partners on regional nature priorities
- Enable the local community to take a more active role in managing their gardens in ways that are more wildlife friendly
- Undertake all of the above in partnership with the active and engaged Frome community who have played a central role in establishing Frome's existing ecological resilience
- Continue to work with the local community to map the existing biodiversity in Frome so as to assess the biodiversity baseline and track change.

## 6.2 Vision

Based on this assessment, a vision that encapsulates the breadth of ambition is:

> *"Frome will become a town where nature is thriving, visible and valued in every neighbourhood.*
>
> *Connected green spaces, that link to wider landscape-scale networks, will be championed by community groups and support wildlife, wellbeing and climate resilience."*

*Figure 32 - Volunteers removing invasive Himalayan Balsam from Adderwell Water Meadow*

## 6.3 Aims

Based on this vision the aims of this Nature Recovery Plan are to:

- Raise awareness of this Nature Recovery Plan
- Raise awareness of Frome's existing wildlife habitats and the priority corridors where enhancing wildlife connectivity will benefit biodiversity the most
- Strengthen ecological connectivity within the town and to the wider landscape
- Promote an understanding of the action the wider community can take to improve biodiversity and foster an empowered culture of collaborative care
- Identify measures to support key species where this can play an important role in improving overall biodiversity
- Take action to track biodiversity progress, celebrate successes and make nature more accessible to all
- Ensure biodiversity action is incorporated into FTCs management planning for all sites under its care and encourage this approach for private landowners
- Ensure nature priorities are included within all reviews of policy for planning, land management and climate adaptation

## 6.4 Objectives

To achieve these aims, the specific objectives of this plan are to:

| **Actions** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Habitat Creation and Land Management** | | |
| **Action** | **Objective** | **Outcomes** |
| Produce a species record list and biodiversity management recommendations such as hedgerow and | Protect and enhance habitats | Inform approx. 2 management plans per year |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| grassland management, together with actions from the NRP, to feed into FTC site management plans | | |
| Map and prioritise habitat improvement works across all FTC-managed land, especially within priority corridors (e.g. condition, connectivity, opportunity) | Protect and enhance habitats | The management plans for each FTC managed space to specify habitat types, condition, connectivity and opportunities for enhancement. Habitat enhancement priorities should consider the requirements of priority species. |
| Undertake habitat surveys of the Dippy, Victoria Park, and Showfield to inform SERC habitat mapping | Data collection and sharing/enhance habitats | Habitat surveys completed for the Dippy, Victoria Park, and Showfield by 2027, with data submitted to SERC habitat mapping |
| Work with the community to explore opportunities to create and look after Pocket Meadows on FTC managed land. Aim for 100m² of areas of Pocket Meadows looked after by community. | Create habitats | Aim to work with 5 communities or neighbourhoods per year to establish and look after Pocket Meadows. |
| Work with schools and community groups to plant 2500-3000 pollinator friendly bulbs each year (snowdrops, crocuses, bluebells. daffodils) in FTC managed spaces | Habitat enhancement/Community Action | 2400 - 3000 bulbs planted with 500+ community volunteers involved, including school children each year |
| Work with the community to explore options for increasing neighbourhood tree canopy cover over time | Create habitats/climate resilience | FTC will work alongside local neighbourhoods to identify suitable locations where there is both demand and opportunity for increased tree cover, ensuring planting is appropriate, beneficial for wildlife and supported by residents. FTC will also review opportunities for different types of planting and clearly communicate where new trees and green infrastructure have been enabled and delivered. By early 2027, produce a 3-year tree management plan to direct plans for tree planting across FTC sites. |
| Consider opportunities for additional community orchards | Create habitats/<br><br>Climate resilience | Three community consultations have been undertaken to explore opportunities to create community orchards. By early 2027 produce an orchard management plan for all existing FTC orchards (notably |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Millenium Green, Weylands, Showfield) |
| Improve wetland habitat at Adderwell Water Meadow through the creation of a scrape. | Enhance habitats and improve connectivity | Increased extent and ecological value of wetland habitat at Adderwell Water Meadow. |
| Review options for pond creation where community interest or management plans highlight the potential. New ponds should, where feasible, be designed to benefit amphibians, aquatic invertebrates and enhance habitat connectivity for species associated with freshwater habitats. | Create habitats/stepping stones | By 2028, to have reviewed options for creating a pond at the Community Orchard at Showfield, and to have undertaken community consultation on pond creation at devolution sites with potential and community interest. |
| Identify opportunities for linking wildlife habitats across suitable sites, notably within priority corridors, and work with landowners to support works being undertaken | Connectivity/Create habitats | New habitat corridors created and stepping stones created, demonstrably linking at least two previously disconnected habitat patches. |
| Work with stakeholders, including FoRF, WTT and Wessex water, to explore options for the restoration of the Adderwell Stream in the Dippy to improve habitat quality and restore the natural river profile. | Restore and improve habitats | Improved habitat quality and biodiversity through the restoration of a more natural river profile for the Adderwell Stream |

| **Actions** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **River** | | |
| **Action** | **Objective** | **Outcomes** |
| Deliver an annual invasive species monitoring and control programme targeting priority species on FTC land (e.g. Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed) | Reduce pressures from invasive species | Priority sites regularly monitored and Himalayan balsam and other invasive species controlled before seed production |
| Sensitive FTC management of FTC-owned river corridors to protect and enhance habitat connectivity and support species such as beavers, otters, wild brown trout, European water vole and White-clawed Crayfish where present | River corridor enhancement/Support key species | Opportunities for river corridor restoration and wildlife connectivity identified through surveys and incorporated into FTC land management plans by 2029. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Undertake assessments of habitat condition and identify opportunities for restoration and ecological improvement such as tree kickers and coppicing | | |
| Explore options for enabling an active river catchment partnership | River corridor enhancement and climate resilience | FTC to contribute to discussions that support collaborative catchment-scale action for river health, flood resilience, and habitat connectivity. Facilitate the establishment of 6 monthly river catchment meetings to explore measures to improve river quality with regional stakeholders to include land owners, conservation and regulatory bodies. Achieve 'Good Ecological Status' and provide a habitat for the flora and fauna that rely upon the river. |
| Work with local conservation organisations and community groups to improve the public's understanding of priority freshwater species including European Water Vole and White-clawed Crayfish. | Support key freshwater species | Improve understanding of opportunities for recovery of priority freshwater species within River Frome corridor |
| Explore potential for Rights for Nature application to protect the River Frome corridor | Protect and enhance the River Frome corridor | Rights for Nature opportunities assessed with key partners and recommendations identified for future action |

| **Actions** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Species Recovery in Built Environment** | | |
| **Action** | **Objective** | **Outcomes** |
| Explore opportunities with community groups and wildlife organisations to increase the provision of wildlife housing, including bird and bat boxes, hedgehog homes, insect hotels, and hibernacula, while providing guidance and support on wildlife-friendly habitat features. | Support key species | Wildlife housing opportunities identified and delivered in partnership with community and wildlife groups by 2028 to support local biodiversity and species recovery. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Identify suitable locations for the installation of swift boxes across the town and work with businesses and residents to provide nesting sites. | Support key species | A network of suitable swift and house martin nesting sites established across the town by 2028 to support local swift populations. |
| Produce an FTC guidance document outlining how the community can support key species, including targeted interventions on FTC land | Support key species | FTC guidance produced and published by 2027 providing practical actions to support key species including swifts, house martins, bats, hedgehogs, pollinators and birds associated with wetlands and connected landscapes. |
| Deliver an ongoing wildlife-friendly gardening campaign, including guidance, resources, and incentives, while promoting Somerset Wildlife Trust's Team Wilder initiative. | Create habitats | Reach at least 300 households within 3 years, with at least 70% reporting adoption of one or more wildlife-friendly actions, measured through an annual survey |
| Establish a Kerbside Wildlife Gardening Advice Service delivered by Frome Wild Bunch volunteers, offering residents tailored advice on habitat creation and wildlife-friendly gardening practices. | Education /Create habitats | At least 100 households provided with wildlife-friendly gardening advice within the first 3 years of the scheme. |
| Raise awareness of and interest in wildlife present within Frome | Education | Deliver 6 nature themed workshops annually possibly to include: 2 x bat workshops, 1 x dawn chorus walk, 1 x moth trap and 1 x Fungi foray |
| Raise awareness of and interest in wildlife present within Frome | Education | Review options for encouraging interest in wildlife through webcasting of hidden nature eg nest boxes |
| Raise profile of wildlife friendly gardening | Education /Community Action | Deliver 6 events annually. 200 residents engaged through annual workshops and events by 2028, with follow-up surveys demonstrating increased adoption of wildlife-friendly gardening practices. |
| Support educational interest in the natural world and caring for their immediate environment | Education | Support any interested school to manage the natural setting of their school for up to one day per year |

| Actions | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Community Action and Monitoring** | | |
| **Action** | **Objective** | **Outcomes** |
| Review opportunities to publicise Frome's priority habitat connectivity network through social media and other channels, and sharing information with relevant nature-based community organisations. | Education/Community Action/Data Collection | Improved community understanding of habitat connectivity and opportunities for nature recovery across the town by 2028. |
| Maintain and expand the Community Wildlife Mapping Project, increasing species records annually | Community action/Data collection | Increase wildlife observations submitted to the Frome Community Wildlife Mapping Project by at least 1000 records per year |
| Expand community-led monitoring (e.g. bat surveys, pollinator, moth counts and riverfly, and other priority species monitoring) | Community Action/ Data Collection | At least 5 structured monitoring events happening annually producing repeatable data assets for trend monitoring. |
| Engage schools in wildlife education and citizen science activities | Education/Community Action/Data Collection | Work with schools to deliver up to one biodiversity engagement day per school each year, increasing knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for nature reaching a minimum of 300 students annually |
| Review interest in hosting annual nature themed conference | Community Action/Practice Sharing/Education | Increased collaboration, knowledge and good practice sharing between community groups, environmental organisations, land owners, and local authorities. |

| Actions | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Planning, Policy and Partnerships - (in development)** | | |
| **Action** | **Objective** | **Outcomes** |
| Use the wildlife corridor framework to inform Frome Town Council's planning representations, advocating for the protection of mature trees, hedgerows, watercourses, OALS, designated open | Protect existing ecological assets | Planning responses consistently seek to protect ecological assets and reduce habitat fragmentation, resulting in a more resilient |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| spaces and other features that contribute to ecological connectivity. | | and connected wildlife corridor network. |
| Engage with developers through pre-application discussions and planning consultations to encourage developments to follow the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy, exceed statutory Biodiversity Net Gain where appropriate, and incorporate habitat features such as native planting, swift bricks, bat roosts and hedgehog highways. | Promote nature-positive development | New development contributes positively to nature recovery by strengthening ecological connectivity and delivering measurable biodiversity enhancements within the wildlife corridor network. |
| Promote green and blue infrastructure, including SuDS, tree planting, habitat-rich landscaping, permeable surfaces and rainwater management through planning responses and strategic engagement. | Use nature-based infrastructure to help address climate resilience and water management | Development increasingly delivers multifunctional infrastructure that supports biodiversity, improves water quality, reduces flood risk and increases resilience to climate change such as though urban cooling. |
| Use the wildlife corridor framework to inform planning representations, the Somerset Local Plan, the Frome Neighbourhood Plan, the Frome Area Movement and Place Plan and other Council strategies, while advocating for Section 106, Biodiversity Net Gain and other funding to support priority corridor projects. | Embed nature recovery into planning and place-making | Nature recovery is consistently reflected across planning and strategic decision-making, with developer contributions and external funding supporting the long-term delivery of the wildlife corridor network. |

Within 2 Years

Within 5 years

*Figure 33 - Community action from engaged local residents supporting thriving natural river corridors: painting a boarded up high street shop*


# 7 Monitoring and Reporting

## 7.1 Monitoring

Progress will be monitored using a combination of ecological data, habitat assessments and community-led recording. Key sources of information include:

- The Community Wildlife Mapping Project
- Species records from Somerset Environmental Records Centre
- Citizen science initiatives such as bat counts, bird surveys and riverfly monitoring
- Habitat condition assessments across Frome Town Council managed land

Monitoring will focus on tracking changes in habitat extent, habitat quality and species presence over time.

*Figure 34 - Public keen to discover the hidden life of ponds at Welshmill*

## 7.2 Indicators of success

To measure progress, a set of simple indicators will be used, including:

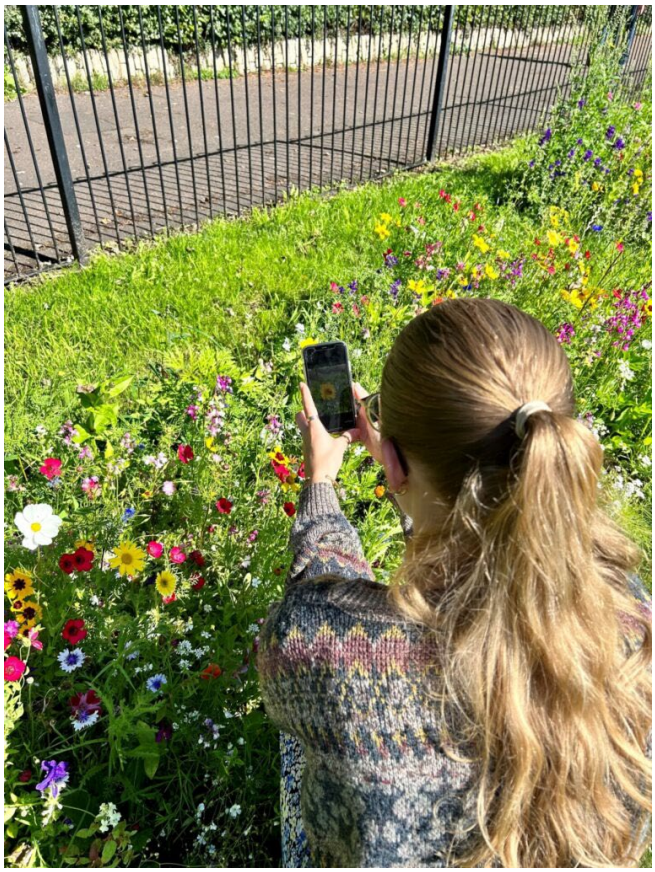
- Number of species recorded locally
- Area of habitat in good condition and improved or created
- Number of trees planted and survival rates
- Extent of wildflower and pollinator-friendly planting
- Reduction in invasive species presence
- Participation in community events and citizen science activities

## 7.3 Reporting and review

Progress against this plan will be reviewed annually and reported through Frome Town Council's existing reporting structures.

- Annual updates will summarise key actions delivered and progress made
- Produce a bi-annual State of Nature in Frome report to highlight changes in response of NRP initiatives – first one by March 2028
- This NRP to be reviewed and updated to Council bi-annually to reflect new data, opportunities and challenges
- Ongoing engagement with the community and partners will help shape future priorities

*Figure 35 - Frome's Community Mapping project will play an invaluable role monitoring nature's fortunes*



# 8 Appendix

## 8.1 Information on species present in Frome

Frome supports a wide variety of wildlife, reflecting the diversity of habitats found within and around the town. Records from the Community Wildlife Mapping Project and other local surveys have identified over 1,300 species, including birds, mammals, insects, plants, fungi and amphibians. These records highlight both the ecological richness of the area and the enthusiasm of residents who actively record and celebrate local wildlife.

The data collected to date shows particularly strong diversity in invertebrates and pollinators, alongside notable records of birds, mammals and plants associated with river corridors, grasslands and urban green spaces.

While many species occur in the town, some are particularly important because they are locally characteristic, declining nationally, or dependent on specific habitats. These species help illustrate the health of local ecosystems and can act as indicators of successful nature recovery.

### 8.1.1 River and wetland species

The River Frome corridor supports a range of species. Signs of the European otter are regularly recorded along the river, indicating suitable riparian habitat. Bird species such as the Common kingfisher, Grey wagtail, and White-throated dipper are also associated with the river and depend on healthy aquatic ecosystems.

Aquatic invertebrates recorded locally include species such as the Azure damselfly, reflecting the importance of the river and associated wetlands for supporting insect life.

The presence of Eurasian beaver within the catchment highlights the potential for natural processes to shape and enhance wetland habitats.

The Frome, and its tributaries such as the Mells, are also home to populations of iconic native fish such as wild brown trout, which in turn support other charismatic species like kingfishers, herons and otters.

Other notable species present in Frome associated with Frome's river and wetland habitats which have also been identified as ‘Requiring Additional Targeted Action’ in Somerset’s LNRS, include the European water vole, White-clawed crayfish and Reed bunting. Water voles are one of Britain's fastest declining mammals and depend on well-vegetated riverbanks and ditches with connected habitat corridors. White-clawed crayfish, the UK's only native freshwater crayfish, are highly sensitive to pollution, habitat degradation and competition from invasive American signal crayfish. Reed buntings are associated with wet grassland, river margins and wetland vegetation and can act as indicators of healthy wetland habitats. Their conservation depends upon maintaining good water quality, diverse bankside vegetation and connected freshwater habitats.

### 8.1.2 Bats and nocturnal wildlife

Frome's river corridor, mature trees and green spaces provide important habitat for bats, including the Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Serotine and Daubenton's bat.

Frome also benefits from strong community involvement in bat monitoring. Frome Town council hosts two annual bat count events, including the Big Bat Count, where residents take part in guided surveys to record bat activity across different locations. These events contribute valuable data, improve understanding of local bat populations, highlight trends and the importance minimising light pollution and connected habitats. For instance the repeated Big Bat Counts have confirmed that the rare Greater Horseshoe bat is regularly using the river corridor through Frome as a commuting route from their roosts near Mells or Spring Gardens to their foraging areas upstream.

### 8.1.3 Pollinators and invertebrates

The Community Wildlife Mapping Project highlights the exceptional diversity of invertebrates across Frome. A large proportion of recorded species are moths, butterflies, beetles and pollinators, reflecting the importance of flower-rich habitats and wildlife-friendly gardens.

Species recorded locally include butterflies such as the Red admiral, moths such as the Elephant hawk-moth and Poplar hawk-moth, and pollinators such as the Vestal cuckoo bumblebee.

The River Frome and its tributaries also support numerous species of riverflies such as mayflies, stoneflies and caddis, which provide important food resources for birds, bats and fish.

These species play a crucial role in pollination and form the foundation of many food webs. Their presence highlights the value of Frome's meadows, verges, gardens and green spaces.

### 8.1.4 Birds

Frome's parks, gardens, hedgerows and buildings support a range of bird species. Commonly observed species include the European robin, Common blackbird, and House sparrow, as well as less frequently spotted seasonal visitors such as Redwing.

A particularly important species for Frome is the Common swift. Swifts are summer visitors that rely on buildings for nesting and feed exclusively on airborne insects. Like many urban species, they have declined due to loss of nesting sites through modern building practices. House martins, another familiar summer visitor, have also experienced significant declines and continue to breed in small numbers in parts of the town, including around Whatcombe Fields and Adderwell. Improving understanding of their current distribution and supporting suitable nesting and feeding habitats should form part of future monitoring efforts.

Protecting and creating nesting opportunities through measures such as swift bricks and nest boxes is an important action for supporting this species. As a highly visible and much-loved bird, swifts can also act as a flagship species for urban nature recovery.

Several other bird species identified as conservation priorities within Somerset (LNRS) have also been recorded within habitats found around Frome and its surrounding landscape. These include Cuckoo, Lapwing, Grasshopper warbler, Reed bunting and Tree pipit. Cuckoos have experienced significant national declines linked to habitat loss, reductions in invertebrate prey and declines in

host species. Lapwings depend upon wet grasslands and low-intensity farmland management, while Grasshopper warblers and Reed buntings rely on dense wetland vegetation, scrub and marshy grasslands. Tree pipits are associated with open woodland, woodland edge habitats and scattered trees within grassland landscapes. Measures that improve habitat connectivity, expand species-rich grasslands, restore wetlands, maintain scrub mosaics and increase insect abundance will benefit these species alongside a wide range of other wildlife

### 8.1.5 Mammals of hedgerows and gardens

Hedgerows, woodland edges and gardens provide important habitat for small mammals. The European hedgehog, a species of conservation concern in the UK, is still recorded locally but faces pressures from habitat fragmentation and loss of nesting sites. Reports of high numbers of hedgehogs arriving from Frome area at Prickles Rescue in Cheddar indicates that Frome's hedgehogs need more support. Improving habitat connectivity across gardens, road signage and green spaces is key to supporting hedgehogs and other small mammals.

### 8.1.6 Plants, fungi, and invasive species

Plant communities form the foundation of Frome's ecosystems, underpinning the diversity of insects, birds and mammals found across the town. Records from the Community Wildlife Mapping Project include a wide range of native and naturalised species, from common wildflowers to less frequently recorded plants such as Hoary willowherb. These plants provide essential nectar, pollen, seeds and habitat, supporting pollinators and wider food webs.

Flower-rich habitats such as meadows, verges and garden plantings are particularly important, supporting the high diversity of moths, butterflies and other invertebrates recorded locally. Native species associated with grasslands and riverbanks such as knapweeds, oxeye daisies, and wild angelica play a key role in sustaining pollinator populations throughout the seasons.

Fungi are an often overlooked but vital component of Frome's biodiversity. Although under-recorded compared to other groups, fungi play a critical role in nutrient cycling, soil health, and supporting plant communities through mycorrhizal relationships. Mature trees, deadwood, and undisturbed soils in parks, woodlands and hedgerows provide important habitat for fungal species, contributing to the resilience and functioning of local ecosystems.

Alongside these valuable native plants, a number of invasive non-native species are present within Frome, particularly along the River Frome corridor and in disturbed or urban-edge habitats such as Addrewell and along the river frome. Species such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed can spread rapidly, outcompeting native vegetation, reducing habitat quality, and in some cases contributing to riverbank erosion.

Other invasive or problematic species, such as Giant hogweed, pose risks not only to biodiversity but also to human health. The presence of these species highlights the importance of ongoing monitoring, early intervention, and coordinated management.

Invasive non-native animal species are also present within the River Frome catchment and can have significant negative impacts on native wildlife.

American signal crayfish have been recorded in the river and are known to burrow into riverbanks, increasing erosion and contributing to sediment entering the watercourse. They also prey on aquatic invertebrates, fish eggs and juvenile fish, affecting the health of freshwater ecosystems. They outcompete native White-clawed crayfish and carry crayfish plague, a disease that has caused severe declines in native populations across Britain.

American mink pose a threat to a range of native species, including water voles, which have declined significantly across the UK.

Managing these species is challenging and requires a coordinated, long-term approach across the catchment to reduce their impacts and support the recovery of native wildlife.

Local groups, including the Friends of the River Frome, play an important role in identifying and managing invasive species through practical action and community awareness. Continued efforts to control invasive plants, alongside the restoration of native vegetation, will be essential to improving habitat condition and supporting nature recovery.

## 8.2 Key points identified by the participants of the Climate Adaptation Workshop:

The following were the conclusions from the public climate adaptation workshops run by SWT with FTC as part of Act To Adapt Process on 13th May 2025.

### 8.2.1 Expanding and Enhancing Green Infrastructure

**Tree planting at scale**
Increasing tree cover across Frome can provide habitat for birds, bats, and invertebrates, while also delivering shading, cooling, and carbon storage. Priority should be given to native, climate-resilient species and strengthening habitat links to the wider Selwood landscape

**Climate-resilient wildflower habitats**
Expanding wildflower meadows and species-rich grasslands builds on existing pocket meadow initiatives. These areas are critical for pollinators and can be designed to tolerate drought and changing seasonal conditions.

**Community-led green infrastructure**
Supporting community groups to create and manage green spaces (including verges, school grounds, and small urban sites) can significantly increase habitat availability while strengthening local stewardship.

**Improving soil health**
Healthy soils underpin all ecosystems. Actions such as reduced chemical inputs, composting, and low-disturbance land management will enhance biodiversity, water retention, and carbon sequestration.

### 8.2.2 Water Management and Wetland Creation

Flooding and water management were key themes in the adaptation workshop, with strong opportunities for nature-based solutions.

**Natural flood management**
Techniques such as leaky dams, re-naturalised channels, and floodplain reconnection can slow water flow, reduce flood risk, and create valuable wet habitats.

**Wetland creation**
Creating new wetlands, ponds, and marshy areas will support amphibians, aquatic plants, and invertebrates while also storing water during heavy rainfall.

**Restoring river function**
Enhancing the natural processes of the River Frome and its tributaries - through buffer zones, reduced hard engineering, and habitat restoration - can improve biodiversity, water quality, and resilience to extreme weather.

**Rainwater management**
Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), rain gardens, and rainwater harvesting can reduce pressure on infrastructure while contributing to urban greening and habitat creation.

### 8.2.3 Integrating Nature into Planning and Food Systems

The workshop emphasised the importance of embedding nature into planning and local food resilience.

**Planning policy reform**
Strengthening planning policies to prioritise biodiversity, green infrastructure, and climate resilience creates long-term opportunities for habitat creation within new developments.

**Local food resilience and land use**
Developing a local food resilience plan - including urban growing, community orchards, and peri-urban food production which can support both biodiversity and food security.
These spaces can be designed to include pollinator habitats, hedgerows, and agroecological practices.

**Biophilic design and green infrastructure**
Incorporating nature into the built environment (e.g. green roofs, living walls, street trees, and integrated habitats) can significantly expand urban biodiversity.

### 8.2.4 Community Engagement and Knowledge Sharing

A strong theme throughout the adaptation plan is the role of the community in delivering change.

**Connecting and supporting community groups**
Frome already has an active network of groups. Supporting collaboration can scale up habitat creation and management across the town.

**Engagement with schools**
Schools provide key opportunities for nature-based education, including bulb planting, meadow creation, and wildlife monitoring.

**Climate and nature communication**
Clear, solution-focused communication and events can encourage residents to adopt wildlife-friendly practices in gardens and local spaces.

**Citizen science and monitoring**
Building on existing initiatives such as bat surveys, the community can play a vital role in monitoring biodiversity and informing future action.

### 8.2.5 Building Ecological Resilience Through Natural Processes

Several workshop actions highlight working with, rather than against, natural systems.

**Soil, water, and vegetation as infrastructure**
Recognising natural systems as essential infrastructure allows Frome to adapt to climate impacts while restoring ecosystems.

**Nature-based climate adaptation**
Actions such as tree planting, wetland creation, and green infrastructure directly address overheating, flooding, and drought while supporting wildlife.

### 8.2.6 Linking Climate Adaptation with Biodiversity Recovery

The adaptation plan makes it clear that climate resilience and nature recovery are deeply interconnected.

To summarise the key opportunities include:

- Using nature-based solutions as the primary approach to climate adaptation
- Ensuring all adaptation actions deliver biodiversity net gain
- Strengthening habitat connectivity between urban Frome and the wider Selwood landscape
- Embedding community-led action at every stage

The actions identified through Frome's Climate Adaptation Plan provide a strong foundation for wider climate action and nature recovery planning which can help us achieve long term goals to:

- Restore and connect habitats across the town and surrounding landscape
- Improve resilience to flooding, heat, and drought
- Support key species and ecological processes
- Empower the community to take an active role in nature recovery