

# Quantock Hills

## Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



April/May 2021

Spring Newsletter – Issue 12



### IN THIS ISSUE:

- **PIED FLYCATCHERS HOME IMPROVEMENTS**
- **QUANTOCK LANDSCAPE PARTENERSHIP PHOTO COMPETION**
- **VOLUNTEERING UPDATE**
- **COASTAL STORYWALKS**
- **TAUNTON NORTH YOUTH CLUB**
- **QLPS UPDATE**
- **GREATER QUANTOCK LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT FUND**
- **UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE**
- **QUANTOCK WORD SEARCH**

## Home Improvements for the Quantock Hills Pied Flycatchers

**Iain Porter**

**Quantock Hills AONB Development Officer**

Thanks to a generous donation from Friends of Quantock the Rangers have been able to replace a number of nestboxes in the Sessile oak woods in the north of the AONB. The nestboxes are part of a national monitoring scheme for the Pied Flycatchers, a summer migrant, which travels all the way from West Africa each spring. The Quantock Hills AONB has been involved in the monitoring scheme in the Sessile oak woods for over 20 years.

The Pied Flycatcher time their spring migration to arrive just in time to feed their young on emerging caterpillars. Changes in climate in the UK can affect when caterpillars emerge and therefore have an effect on the breeding success of the Pied Flycatchers. The monitoring programme on the Quantock Hills has shown consistently high numbers of birds are using these special oak woodlands and thanks to the donation from Friends of Quantock they will be able to for years to come.



# Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Photo Competition

Vickie Sellick

Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Project Support Officer



The QLPS have launched a new Photography Competition, which will run until 31st March 2022. Rather than the traditional landscape photos of views from and of the hills, we want to look a little deeper and differently at the communities present in the Quantock Hills AONB & surrounding LPS area.

## The 3 categories are:

- Village Life- must be taken within a village or settlement in the Quantock Hills AONB and surrounding LPS area.
- People of the Quantocks- an image representing the people of the Quantock Hills AONB and surrounding LPS area.
- Quantock Working- an image of working life within the Quantock Hills AONB and surrounding LPS area.

Images should be a maximum of 5MB, colour and black and white entries will be accepted, and with a total of 9 entries per person you can enter 3 photos per category. 1st and 2nd prize winners in each category will win a £100 and £50 outdoor gear e-voucher respectively. There will also be a £50 e-voucher for the best picture submitted by a young person aged 16 or under (though young people's pictures are also eligible for the main prizes).

Photos should be sent to [qlps@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:qlps@somerset.gov.uk) with a completed entry form which is available to download from [www.qlps.org/downloads](http://www.qlps.org/downloads) along with full terms and conditions. Entrants must have received permission from any recognisable people in an image (or that of parent or guardian if a minor) for it to be entered into the competition.

## Volunteering Update

Verity Jones

Quantock Hills & Blackdown Hills Volunteer Coordinator



Beautiful weather, easing of lockdown restrictions and the return to volunteering with the AONB- what could be better! We have tentatively restarted volunteering from the end of March - bringing back out the butterfly surveyors and the Volunteer Rangers initially.

The Volunteer Rangers did some excellent work over the Easter weekend being out and about on the hills patrolling and helping making sure visitors to the Quantocks were enjoying the hills responsibly. Since then we have been slowly bringing back groups of volunteers many of which will start back from May such as the Countryside Volunteers with the National Trust; various other wildlife surveying volunteers and our engagement groups - many of which haven't been out for 15 months!

I am also trying to sift through the many volunteer enquiries that we have received over the past year in order to try get you out and about. Thank you for your patience and if you haven't heard from me yet, I'll be in touch soon! 👍



# Coastal Storywalks

**Chris Edwards**  
**Quantock Hills AONB Manager**

If you love getting out and exploring the spectacular Quantock coastline and beyond while learning about the heritage, nature and tall tales surrounding Somerset's rugged landscape, Storywalks are an exciting innovation. They can be accessed via your phone or tablet connecting you to the local landscape and history, embellishing your experience of the local area by linking facts, myth, history and tales to locations. The walks are between one and five kilometres long and are set along Somerset's coastline from Brean Down to Minehead.

The stretch west to east from Watchet to Combech is of particular interest to us in the Quantocks with a couple actually within the AONB boundary – there are Storywalks based at: Combech, Steart Marshes, Stolford, Lilstock, Kilve Heritage, Kilve Natural History, St Audries Bay and Watchet.



These Storywalks use the internet and the location finder in your phone to unlock chapters in a story about the area you are walking in. There's no need to download anything, simply go to the England Coast Path Storywalks page <https://englandcoastpath.storywalks.info/> to find a coastal Storywalk near you and start walking.

They have been created by local poet Chris Jelley with local historian Dr Helen Blackman, marine biologist Mark Ward (from Somerset Wildlife Trust's Brilliant Coast project), and the communities along the trail. They are funded by Natural England and brought to you by the Council's Rights of Way Team who are hoping to run hosted Storywalks at local events during the summer.

"Storywalks are little journeys into the curious history, folklore and abundant nature along a trail," said Chris Jelley. He added "Reading them aloud is a brilliant family friendly way to discover the broad history of a location and its inhabitants."



# Taunton North Youth Club

Jon Barrett

Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Community Engagement Officer



We had a great time at Taunton North Youth Club this Easter supporting local partners Youth Unlimited and SASP (Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership) in bringing activities to local children entitled to free school meals. I set the group a nature-themed task to make and create a kinetic environment imitating the search for food of our resident dormice.

As the week-long activities promoted health and wellbeing, we thought it would be good to explore some of the feeding habits of our local wildlife in this range of fun and playful craft activities. It was great to see so many children respond to the task and get really stuck into the idea.

The group made a series of marble-run style games, building environments from recycled materials and getting a ball to travel an adventurous and suspended path to its destination without falling to the ground. We were thinking about the journeys of dormice along woodland canopies and the challenges they face in the wild.

The children had to develop a network of 'trees', getting the ball to cross the large open space of the youth club. This taught valuable lessons in the habitats of dormice, the threats to their existence, and the vulnerability and isolation the species might face. For example, a dense but isolated area might leave the ball stranded, whereas too few elements between areas might lead to more dangers and an unsafe passage.

The group had a fun time playing with these ideas and it was great to be working in the community, getting to know our younger audiences alongside local partners and building relationships for the future.

For more information and to see pictures and videos of the exciting week, please see the QLPS Instagram page highlights and Facebook page:



[@quantocklps](https://www.instagram.com/quantocklps)  
[@quantock.lps](https://www.facebook.com/quantock.lps)



# Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Update

**Bill Jenman**  
**Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager**



Our redeployments to support the vaccination and testing programmes have now ended, but they enabled us to “recycle” about £8,000 of refunded staff time for later in the LPS which will be very useful.

We advertised for a replacement Natural Heritage Officer back in February but the recruitment was unsuccessful so we have re advertised and are offering a relocation package this time; at the time of writing we already have a better response this time around so we’re hopeful of having someone in post soon. We’ve also renamed the position “QLPS Wildlife Officer”.

At the end of March we met as a team in person, for only the third time ever! It’s so good to be able to get out and about a bit more. We are starting to plan the activities and events programme for when Covid restrictions finally ease completely so watch this space...

## Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund

**Iain Porter**  
**Quantock Hills AONB Development Officer**

Since its launch in 2015 the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund has awarded nearly £144,000 to nearly 50 projects that have enhanced the landscape in and around the Quantock Hills AONB. The fund has been provided by EDF Energy and is part of the mitigation measures associated with the Hinkley Point C development.

The funding already provided has allowed over 2.6km of new native hedges to be planted, nearly 4km of important hedgerows to be managed, over 230 orchard trees to be planted, 12Ha of woodland to be managed, nearly 2,000 native trees to be planted and nearly 12Ha of wildflower meadow to be planted.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for farmers, landowners, community groups or individuals to undertake landscape enhancement projects. Funding is on a 1st come, 1st served basis and projects could include tree planting, works to manage hedgerows, orchard planting or restoration, planting of wildflower meadows, management of small woodlands, willow pollarding or pond restoration. There are also opportunities for funding for restoration of heritage features, such as drystone walls.

If you have a project idea please visit [www.quantockhills.com/greater-qu-landscape-development-fund](http://www.quantockhills.com/greater-qu-landscape-development-fund) or contact Iain Porter at the Quantock Hills AONB Service on 07977 412077 or [iporter@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:iporter@somerset.gov.uk) where we will be happy to discuss your project idea and guide you through the application process.



Silted up pond, Aisholt (before photo)



Restored pond, Aisholt (after photo)

# Understanding The Landscape

**Dan Broadbent**

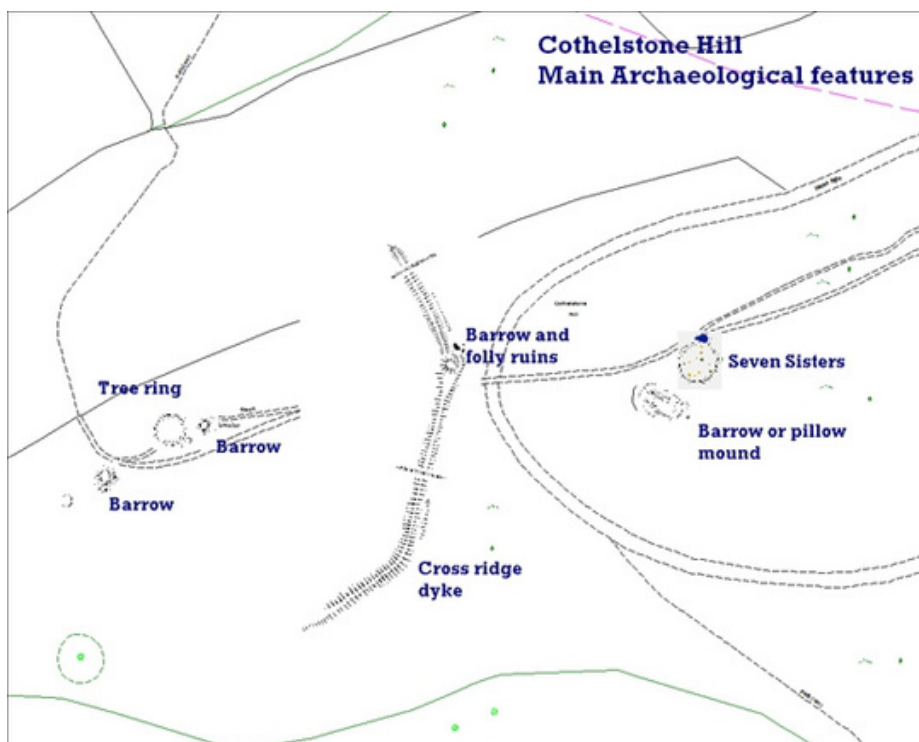
**Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Historic Heritage Officer**

With the gradual easing of lockdown, we are hopeful that, this summer, we will finally be able to commence our exciting programme of archaeological works, which form a substantial part of the historic heritage aims of the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme. 'Understanding the Landscape' is our community archaeology project. It aims to create a force of local heritage detectives by providing local people with opportunities to be trained in a range of archaeological techniques, take part in genuine field research, and thereby help to reveal the hidden heritage of the Quantock landscape.

We will be beginning with excavations at Cothelstone Hill, due to commence in July. This will be the first of four excavations planned to take place over the next four years at locations across the QLPS area. The excavation at Cothelstone is aimed at better understanding a cross-ridge dyke, an earthwork bank extending around 280m roughly North-South across the Western side of the hill. The form of the feature, plus the fact that it has been impacted by later ploughing, suggests that it may be of prehistoric origin.

Later in the year, we will also be launching our Village Test-Pitting programme. Over the next four years we will be supporting local people in five Quantock villages to excavate small 1m2 test-pits in their own gardens and recording them archaeologically. This is an increasingly well-used technique for both engaging communities in archaeological research and for providing information in occupied areas which other methods struggle to access.

Our programme will be launching this October, with a test-pitting event in Bicknoller on the weekend of October 16th/17th. Specific research aims for the weekend include identifying evidence of prehistoric activity within the area now occupied by Bicknoller; and gaining insights into the foundation and development of the village, not least in helping to establish whether the village was an Anglo-Saxon or post-Conquest foundation.



No experience is necessary to take part. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Dan Broadbent, Historic Heritage Officer for the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme at [dbroadbent@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:dbroadbent@somerset.gov.uk)

**To find out more about our Historic Heritage Projects visit our website at <https://qlps.org>**





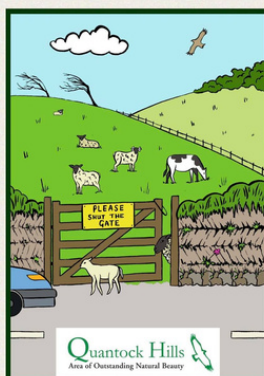
# Quantock Word Search

S Q O O Z A V E T C H A M K F Y Y E E R R Q W H O  
P H Z W W I O W H E A T E A R A A X H C D G G Z J  
J E U P T A P R E L R B C D Y C C Q C K B I T N J  
U K I J Z F G O A A E W P D W F B I A G Z Y Q U W  
A G N F Q P H T U N R V B E E F L Y S O M R O O B  
D P D V T S I N A D G W R R I R U O G R W J J Z U  
R B C A V U K T E I B E I R A G E Z W S H A F C X  
C Y M B X S U S D N L P T G S P B N T E G E M U P  
T V Y K Q Y S A L E O A V I N N E E U N R S J S S  
H G Q K P R R R E A S C M M P Y L D E J O A C V Q  
W P H A O R S T F G S R R B A O L T N X V G W E Y  
P P W O J M U P Q V O J B X I K M F Y O U K P T A  
V I W M U G P N I W M S C V J R T M I E N D T V V  
P F R O G S P A W N T I S K O R C V Q C B Q N O R  
W J P Y Y A E O Y Y B O Z R Y G C P N N L A W M X  
M C N P M R L M N E M E F C A O C U M A H A O Z N  
K E A E Y S P N A D I B A A A K Y Y I R Y C E W M  
R C Q T A I T P I R R J O G X J O F V Y U W F G P  
B M K C J C F A R M T H M P H U P V Y Z A X H J E  
A D R M A L R O R J F I W R Z W O J I I C K X P A  
T R O B S Y D W P S Y I N L I R P C U O N I Y O K  
D O I R C D I E P E H C N N R L E O M A R S R P D  
X T S J E N Q O R J F S R A A Y T Y S D D A P A P  
E O N A Q O M A G U I G N K R R R R N V T E P J K C  
E M P E P T A C P Y Y E F M W R D F A N V V Q O T

ADDER BEEFLY BLOSSOM BLUEBELL CELANDINE EARWIG  
FROGSPAWN GARLIC GORSE HARE HOUSEMARTIN LAMB  
MAYFLOWER ORANGETIP POND SLOWWORM VETCH VIOLETS  
WAGTAIL WHEATEAR



PLEASE  
REMEMBER TO  
ONLY PARK IN  
DESIGNATED  
PARKING AREAS  
ON THE  
QUANTOCKS



PLEASE  
REMEMBER TO  
CLOSE GATES TO  
PROTECT GRAZING  
PONIES AND  
LIVESTOCK ON  
THE QUANTOCKS



PLEASE  
REMEMBER  
FIRES & BBQ'S  
ARE NOT  
PERMITTED ON  
THE QUANTOCKS



# Quantock Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



[www.quantockhills.com](http://www.quantockhills.com)



[facebook.com/quantock.hills](https://facebook.com/quantock.hills)



[twitter.com/Quantockhills](https://twitter.com/Quantockhills)



[instagram.com/quantockhills](https://instagram.com/quantockhills)



[quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk)



[www.youtube.com/quantockhillsaonb](http://www.youtube.com/quantockhillsaonb)



## Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme



[www.qlps.org](http://www.qlps.org)



[facebook.com/quantock.lps](https://facebook.com/quantock.lps)



[twitter.com/quantocklps](https://twitter.com/quantocklps)



[instagram.com/qlps](https://instagram.com/qlps)



[qlps@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:qlps@somerset.gov.uk)

Landscapes  
for life  
.org.uk

QUANTOCK  
HILLS  
One of the  
AONB Family