



High Weald AONB 19 January 2023

It's time to check out another one of our successful Sussex Lund grant projects!

🌳 Frog Field nature recovery project, Beckley, East Sussex 🌳

In 2020, Beckley Parish Council successfully applied for a Sussex Lund grant to restore a local wildlife site called Frog Field. The site was created by the village WI in the 1990s, but over time had become neglected; it needed extensive work to 'open up' the habitat, boost biodiversity and make it accessible for visitors.

Work included:

- Expert surveys to establish which species of birds, insects, animals, trees and plants were present at the site
- Clearing of rubbish and debris, removal of selected non-native trees and replanting with native species
- Coppicing/cutting back trees and creating dead wood piles (great habitats for invertebrates!)
- De-silting some of the pond area
- Cutting back and restoring an overgrown ancient hedgerow
- Restoring and clearing the paths around the site, making it accessible for visitors.

Much of the work was carried out by local volunteers with assistance from contractors; ecologist Ralph Hobbs was on hand to advise. High Weald AONB team member Christine Meadows provided advice on plans for the site and supported the Parish Council in making their grant application.

The project team has run several guided tours since works finished, including one for local residents as part of the village's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Beckley now has a beautifully-restored conservation area to enjoy, and the hope is that visitors will try out some of the conservation methods in their own gardens.

A member of Beckley Parish Council project team says: "Over a period of time, and due to neglect, the site that was once a field had become a wood. It was amazing to see the reappearance of lost species once the site had been cleared of some of the excess of trees. Without the invaluable advice we received from Mr Hobbs and several of the team at the High Weald AONB Partnership it is unlikely this project would have been possible. Huge thanks and praise are owed to Cllr Mrs Tina Langmead, the Parish Council's Chairman, for her tremendous work in setting up and raising funds to see this project through to its end."

Sussex Lund will reopen for new applications later this year; if you own or manage land in the High Weald AONB, visit our website to learn more about the scheme and to register your interest: <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/sussex-lund.html>



