

North Devon UNESCO World Biosphere

Annual Report 2015—16



Inspiring a positive future by connecting people and nature

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Foreword



In last year's foreword I wrote about the "immense challenges of such changing times". I did so in the context of funding and budget cuts in the public sector. Little did I anticipate a year ago the challenges and changes that I would be considering as I pen this year's foreword.

Whether you joyfully consider June 23rd to have been 'independence day' or you lament the referendum as a catastrophe, or, perhaps, you just don't know what to make of it, the referendum outcome heralds a momentous change in our national life. So too in our localities. The Biosphere is built around its natural capital. Much of this is managed by farmers and all is subject to some degree of environmental regulation. Arguably the two areas of policy where the EU has had the greatest direct influence are agriculture through the Common Agricultural Policy and the environment through various directives such as the Habitats Directive and Water Framework Directive. Also, let's not forget the Common Fisheries Policy!

In short, the Biosphere is holding its breath on what might come out of the Brexit negotiations in these areas of policy which affect sectors and interests so vital to the economy, identity and core social and cultural values of the Biosphere. Of course, in truth we cannot really hold our breath. Business must and will continue as usual within the Biosphere, and in the many projects and activities to improve our catchment, coast and landscapes. As ever I commend the Biosphere team for the professionalism, energy and commitment with which it pursues opportunities consistent with a robust and adaptive strategy that seeks to ensure the Biosphere remains true to its UNESCO principles of sustainable development, principles that will become even more important in a Brexit world. We live in interesting times.

In March this year UNESCO's intergovernmental committee reviewed our work over the last 10 years. Not only did they commend our new Biosphere Reserve Strategy based on the State Of The Biosphere Reserve Report that compared conditions within the designation with those outside, they also agreed that North Devon should be recognised as a model Biosphere Reserve for others to follow.

Professor Michael Winter OBE

Biosphere Partnership Chairman

With continued thanks to our core funders



As ever, the annual report is a taster and cannot possibly cover everything that the Biosphere achieves in a year. You can always look at our website, www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk for more information or sign-up to our e-newsletter for regular updates.

The Biosphere Partnership's priorities are set out in the Biosphere '*Strategy for Sustainable Development 2014-24*'. Some of the objectives and targets from that document are included in this report to give context to the achievements set out in these pages. The achievements themselves are grouped according to the Partnership sub-groups that help guide and deliver progress against the 2014-24 Strategy.

Six key achievements for the year

1. **Catchment Sensitive Farming**—7th annual work programme completed. See page 4
2. **Estuary Project** channelled £120,000 to farmers to help them reduce pollution and improve wildlife habitat using 'soft engineering'. See page 4
3. **Marine Conservation Zones** - Two further sites that the Biosphere suggested have been confirmed at MCZs bringing our total to three. See page 11
4. The continuation and regeneration of the **Nature Improvement Area** after the Defra funded pilot phase. See page 8
5. Volunteers in the **Riverfly citizen science** project monitoring river water quality have taken nearly 300 samples. See page 15
6. Biosphere profile raising on the broadcast media—Escape to the Country and BBC Radio 4's Any Questions. See page 14



Cover of Biosphere 2014-24 Strategy Document



Biosphere Partnership Working Group Structure

Catchment Management

Healthy rivers and streams provide benefits for all. They bring life to our region and are good for the health, wealth and prosperity of North Devon. The Biosphere is leading efforts to find practical and affordable solutions to manage these precious resources at a catchment level which, in a rural area like ours, means supporting farmers to manage the land in ways that help improve water quality, lessen run off and increase biodiversity.

Biosphere Estuary Project

The Biosphere's Estuary Project uses on-farm wetlands to both improve water quality and benefit wildlife. During the 8 month's of the project, five grants were given to farmers that totalled nearly £120,000. The grants helped them to create wet ditches, sediment traps, reed beds and other 'soft' engineering measures that help improve water quality and prevent the loss of valuable soil and nutrients into watercourses. Building on this success, the Estuary project will continue in 2016-17

Catchment Sensitive Farming

A Catchment Sensitive Farming Partnership has been running in the Biosphere since 2009 with the aim of reducing diffuse pollution from agriculture in priority areas. In 2015-16 the partnership consisted of Natural England, the Environment Agency, Devon Wildlife Trust who hosted the CSF officer, and the North Devon Biosphere Service. Headline 2015-16 successes are:

- 20 new grant applications submitted by local farmers
- 14 Farm Infrastructure Audits
- 7 Soil Husbandry Reports
- 3 Water Management Plans
- 4 Rural Sustainable Drainage Reports
- 2 Soil Management Workshops

Biosphere Policy

Develop and apply agricultural systems that maintain productivity but reduce harm to the environment (ECON 5)



Tom Hynes & Andrew Mather discussing the newly created wetland ponds as part of the Estuary project

© Jo Stewart-Smith



Find out more about the estuary project through our YouTube film *"Constructed Wetlands in the North Devon Biosphere"*

Defra Facilitation Funds in the Biosphere

In June 2015, Devon Wildlife Trust were successful in securing the Biosphere's first Defra Facilitation Fund project within the River Torridge catchment (see page 8 for more details). In February 2016, the Biosphere team also applied for a Facilitation Fund programme within 33,944ha of the Taw valley.

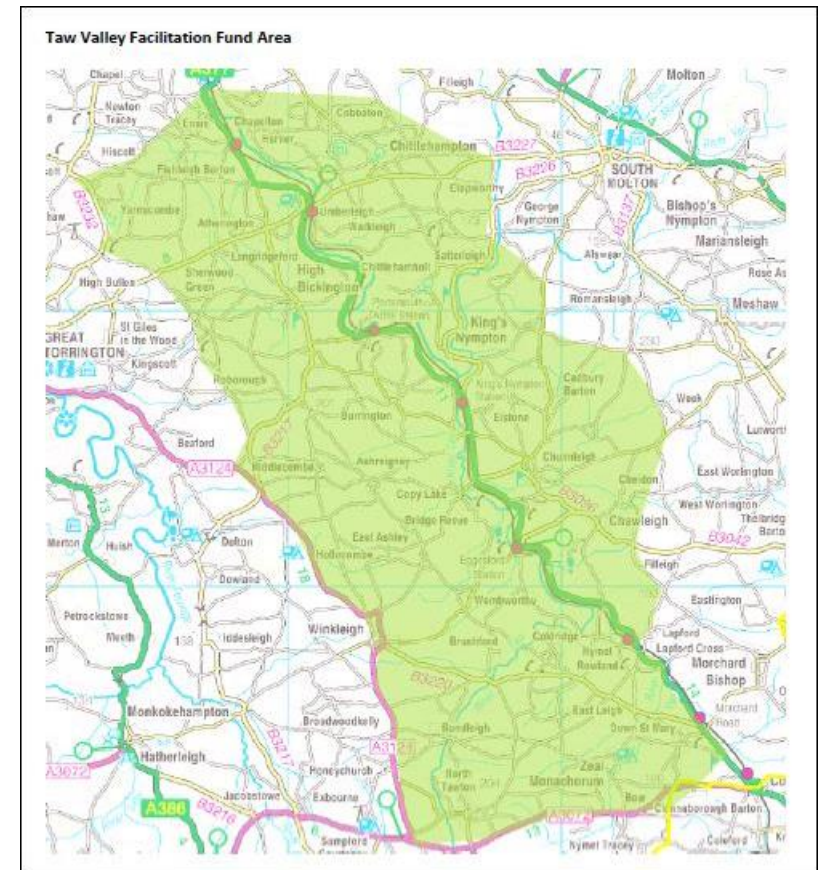
The Taw Valley Facilitation Fund will help address problems with phosphate, nitrate levels and faecal indicator organism levels in rivers and streams. It will also help bring woodlands into positive management and reduce flood risk.

The Devon Wildlife Trust led Greater Horseshoe Bat Project has also submitted a Facilitation Fund bid for the area around the North Devon roost in Braunton. **Both schemes were approved in August 2016**

Facilitation Fund programmes support farmers to work together to improve the environment. Specifically they deliver:

- Additional points for Countryside Stewardship applications together with help and advice to produce them
- Free workshops and training in agriculture, forestry, grants etc., with exact subjects identified by Facilitation Fund members
- General advice, support, and opportunities for joint working

Our Biosphere is an ideal place to host these funds due to our history of landscape scale nature conservation and well developed network of land owner support.



Farmer to farmer visits are common-place in Facilitation Fund areas.

The Catchment Partnership Action Fund

The 2015-16, £44,000 Catchment Partnership Action Fund (CPAF) project stems from previous work to improve catchment management in the Biosphere, especially the 2012-15 Taw River Improvement Project (TRIP). Focussing on the Taw, its aim was to identify and better understand the problems associated with water quality in the lower catchment as part of national work to meet Water Framework Directive (WFD) targets . It was led on behalf of the Biosphere by the Westcountry Rivers Trust. Achievements were:

- Catchment modelling that uses the latest GIS tools to identify and map waterbodies at higher risk of diffuse pollution in order to help target partnership interventions in future.
- Based on the modelling results, 25 land holdings were visited and 25 River Improvement Plans produced. The Plans highlight how changes in management and protection of the watercourses could make the business more efficient and economic.
- Further advice was delivered to land managers through workshops and volunteer days.
- Results were used by partners to target interventions (e.g. the Biosphere Estuary Project) and will be helpful in building future projects that address water quality issues.



Maize fields can often be a source of soil and nutrient pollution after harvest



River Taw near Eggesford

Forestry and Woodland Enterprise

Many people don't realise that our woodland economy is worth over £16M every year to the area. Even so, the potential for a greater economic impact from sustainably managed woodland is huge, particularly when so many are currently unmanaged. When we stack up all the known values of the services woodlands provide (carbon storage, flood attenuation, tourism, etc) the value is in the order of £58M per annum.

The Biosphere is setting up a Woodland Enterprise Zone and the Woodland Management group has submitted a costed document to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that shows the benefit that such a programme would bring. The LEP has rolled it into a wider programme for forestry throughout the Heart of the South West LEP area.

The low take-up for forestry in Countryside Stewardship has hindered much action on the ground. However, by working through trusted local partners, over 40 management plans have been produced for woodlands not currently managed.

Funding reductions led to the winding up of Silvanus, one of our woodland partners. Consequently the Biosphere Reserve team has taken their role within north Devon area and is continuing on some of their projects, namely:

- “Timber Girls” with Courage Copse. This is a celebration of the Womens’ Forestry Corps and their role during WWII. It will promote forestry as a career choice for the young women today.
- A bid to European Structural Investment Funds to develop a project to stimulate the demand and markets for woody biomass. See our sustainable energy section on page 13
- A collaboration with Swedish Biosphere Reserves to develop approaches to get more value out of woodlands.

Biosphere Policy (ECON 4)

Re-invigorate the forestry industry in north Devon underpinned by an approach delivering multiple benefits for the public and for commercial interests



There is significant potential for increased firewood production from unmanaged woods in the Biosphere

Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area (NIA)

The Northern Devon NIA was approved by Defra in 2012 in response to Sir John Lawton's 2010 *'Making Space for Nature'* report that called for more, bigger, better managed and more joined up habitats at a landscape scale. It is one of twelve of these nationally important landscape scale wildlife schemes across England and is working with landowners and communities in the Torridge catchment to restore and create habitats, improve water quality and increase public engagement with the environment.

Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area (NIA)

This year saw the NIA moving into its second phase as our initial Defra funding ended. Three new projects were developed and started to help fulfil the NIA partnership's ambitions through to 2020, and these are detailed below. The NIA programme also hosted the Catchment Sensitive Farming officer role for north Devon in 2015-16. During the year, NIA projects achieved restoration of 439 hectares of wildlife habitat, influenced 16.4km of riverside land, worked with 129 landowners and 66 volunteers, and engaged 448 other people in the NIA's work. Further projects are in development.

Torridge Headwaters Facilitation Fund

Led for the Biosphere by the Devon Wildlife Trust, the Torridge Headwaters Facilitation Fund has been running around Bradworthy and Woolery since December 2015. Until 2020, the Project facilitator is providing free advice and support to landowners to help them work more closely together, share skills and knowledge and improve the natural environment across their land holdings.

68 enthusiastic landowners including smallholders, organic farmers, beef and sheep farmers and large dairy enterprises, are taking part. They attend free events and workshops delivered by specialist partners on everything from information on environmental grants to soils and hedgerow management. 12 workshops were held during the year. The project is funded with £210,000 secured from Natural England.

Ambition in the NIA business plan to 2020

To enhance wildlife, increase connections between wildlife and people, and explore the economic benefits the environment brings to the area



Torridge Headwaters Facilitation Fund farmers examining a soil pit



Devon
Wildlife Trust

Restoring Fresh Water Pearl Mussels on the Torridge

Freshwater Pearl Mussels are one of Europe's ten most threatened species. The only remaining populations in southern England are on the Taw and the Torridge, but populations are in serious decline and are not thought to have bred successfully since the 1960s. Water pollution from sediment and phosphate, and low fish numbers, could all be factors.

By working with local communities, improving water quality and establishing a breeding programme, the Torridge Fresh Water Pearl Mussel Project is helping to ensure the recovery of the Biosphere's mussels. It is part of the 'Restoring Freshwater Mussel Rivers in England' project led nationally by the Freshwater Biological Association and funded through a Biffa Award. It is led locally by Devon Wildlife Trust, working with Westcountry Rivers Trust, Environment Agency and the North Devon Biosphere Service. Work includes surveys, press work, grants for landowners and setting up the hatchery facility for juvenile augmentation.



Fresh Water Pearl Mussel shell

Culm Grassland Flood Risk Project

During the year, Devon Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and Exeter University have been developing an exciting new project investigating the contribution that Culm grassland can make to management of flood risk downstream. Previous research indicates that Culm grassland may play a valuable role in holding water back during extreme weather events. More information will follow on this project next year.



Culm grassland © Mike Symes

Green Economy

By commercial, charitable and public sector partners working together, the Biosphere will create a more resilient economy that contributes to environmental and social wellbeing. The value of ecosystem services will be understood and realised and the local circulation of funds encouraged.

Improving the Tarka Trail

The Tarka Trail contributes £3.7million to the local economy each year and supports 60 jobs— See our Research section on page 14 for more information.

The Biosphere secured £14K of funding to enhance the experience for users of the Tarka Trail beyond items picked up through general maintenance. Those enhancements are listed below.

- New visitor interpretation was designed and installed in the railway carriage at Bideford station. Fresh and bright, the new designs replace an old, rather tired display put in nearly twenty years ago. Councillor Peter Christie of Torridge District Council officially cut the ribbon to open these new facilities in March 2016.
- Installation of 7 new interpretation boards at key sites along the Trail using solid oak posts that should last for 20 or more years.
- Replacement of all 21 Tarka Trail audio–interpretation posts. They now carry QR codes for on-the-spot access to the audio files through mobile phones.



New audio post near Petrockstowe

Biosphere Policy (ECON 3)

Develop a strong sustainable tourism policy and programme that improves year-round tourism activity, disperses tourism pressure and improves the inland tourism offer



New 'virtual window' interpretation in the railway carriage visitor centre at Bideford Station

Marine Management

Just like the land, the Biosphere's seas deliver a range of valuable social and economic benefits such as providing food, providing habitat and being a magnet for leisure. We have been working hard with the fishermen, the conservation sector and our Biosphere communities to care for them. Fishing data shows that catches in the Biosphere are sustainable. Whilst recognising and rewarding this achievement, it's important that we work with all concerned to keep our seas healthy with Marine Conservation Zones and a marine management plan backed up by good data.

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)

As part of a plan to manage Biosphere seas to ensure a sustainable future for fish and fishermen, the Biosphere Partnership's Marine Working group designed a set of potential MCZs for the area.

At the start of this year only the one around Lundy had been confirmed by government but since then, two more have been designated.

The two new MCZs are Bideford to Foreland Point and Hartland to Tintagel. They were chosen based on their unique habitat characteristics, which harbour rare and important species like the honeycomb worm, pink sea fan and spiny lobster. The Marine Working Group worked closely with local fishermen to ensure that key economic fishing grounds were not heavily impacted.



Strategy target (ENV2)

At least 10% of the Biosphere's marine area is covered by protection and a sustainable fishery economy is sustained



Sunset cup coral © Mike Deaton

The Biosphere Marine Working group includes fishermen, recreational users, divers, scientists and conservationists who buy into the Biosphere's vision of sustainable seas for the benefit of all.

Wildlife Watching Code of Conduct

We are very fortunate to share the coastline of North Devon with a wealth of marine wildlife that we want the public to see and understand. How can we do this without disturbing and harming that wildlife?

In January 2016, the Biosphere, in partnership with the Lundy Island Company, brought local boat tour operators together to receive training in responsible wildlife watching. The boat operators were then accredited to the UK-wide WiSe scheme, which is something that emphasises their responsible practices and gives them a marketing advantage over their competitors

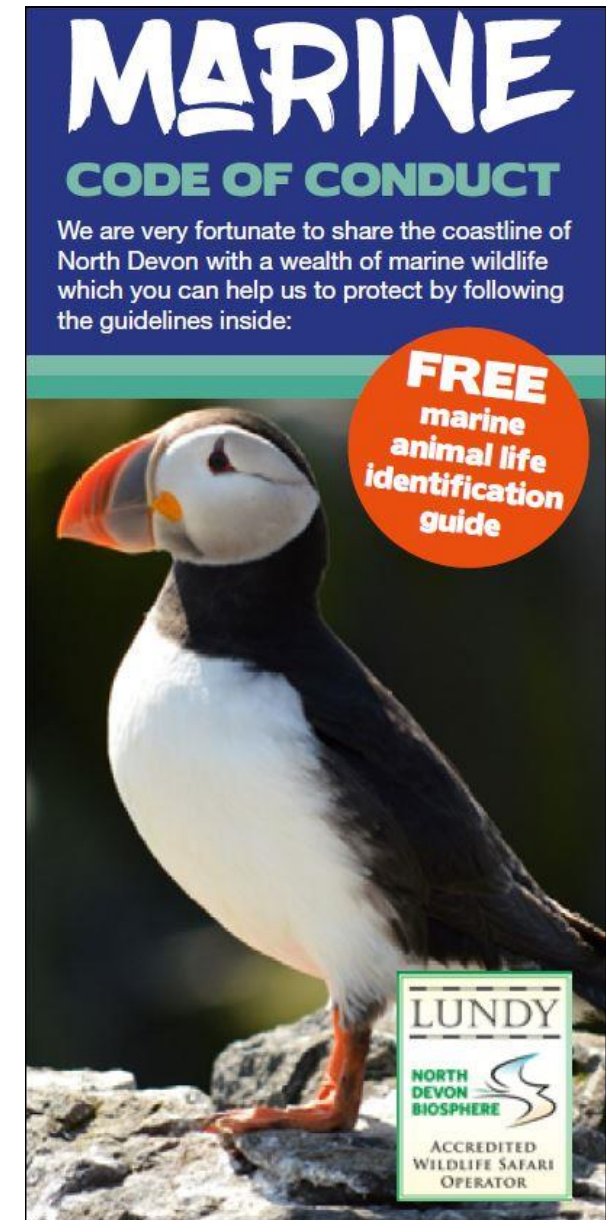
The Biosphere has also produced a guide and code of conduct leaflet to help residents and visitors to identify and watch our marine wildlife safely and without causing undue disturbance.



© Mike Deaton



Watching from the deck of the yacht Hecate off Lundy



The Biosphere wildlife watching code of conduct

Sustainable Energy

From domestic heating to transport, industrial processes to wood fuel production; how much energy we use and where it comes from is a major factor that helps determine this area's carbon footprint and contribution to climate change. North Devon's Biosphere Reserve is leading the way in tackling one of the world's biggest challenges at a local level.

Creating the environment for renewable energy

Our energy strategy has 3 key features. To reduce energy demand, to increase renewable energy input and, where possible, to have those energy projects locally owned and managed.

The Biosphere's Forestry and Energy Working Groups have worked together on a bid for European Structural Investment Funds to promote woody biomass district heating in new developments and suitable existing ones. The Biosphere Reserve will support the implementation of these projects in our area.

Energy 361, one of our main active partners, have been working in low income areas in the Biosphere to help people reduce their energy bills and access the Cosy Devon Central Heating Fund.



Strategy Target (SOC 3)

Reduce the number of homes classified as fuel poor by 20% by 2019

Strategy Target (ECON 7)

At least 80% of local energy work is serviced by local contractors and domestic energy efficiency is improved by 20%

Research into Anaerobic Digestion (AD) and Tidal Power

There are pros and cons to all forms of energy production and we seek to ensure that renewable energy projects in the Biosphere are as good as they can be. Currently, there are 4 anaerobic digesters operating in North Devon and to help decision making about further AD plants, the Biosphere has produced a paper setting out the environmental and economic benefits and problems concerning AD as a renewable energy source.

In a similar approach, we have been providing advice to ensure that the tidal energy demonstration area off the coast performs well and does no harm to the new Bideford to Foreland Point Marine Conservation Zone.



Anaerobic digestion plant—Holsworthy

Research

Research is one of the key functions for any Biosphere Reserve. We need to make informed decisions so understanding as much as we can about everything from environmental processes to social behaviour is vital.

Tarka Trail generates a £3.7 million tourism spend and supports nearly 60 jobs

The Biosphere was instrumental in getting the Tarka Trail (from Braunton to Meeth) included in a 2015 County Council study on the economic impact of three of Devon's multi-use trails. www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/news/report-shows-tarka-trail-contributes-nearly-4million-each-year-to-the-biospheres-economy

Research Leverage

We have the great benefit of having 4 internationally renowned research institutions on our doorstep; Exeter and Plymouth Universities, Plymouth Marine Labs and the Rothamsted Research Centre at North Wyke. We work with these organisations to develop a strong evidence base on which to base policy and projects. For example:

- PhDs—the Biosphere encourages and supports PhD research useful to this area. An Exeter University PhD completed this year tracked and modelled pebble movements along the coast during various wave and storm events. It will help us devise the right interventions to manage the Pebble Ridge at Westward Ho! and the coast to the west. We are supporting 2 other PhDs and have supported over 3 MSc studies.
- Sustainable Intensification Platform (SIP) - Exeter and Rothamsted Research, North Wyke are leading this national research project for Defra exploring the best ways to maintain agricultural productivity whilst safeguarding the environment. It is a multi-partner research programme valued at £4.5M, much of it invested in our area.

Strategy Policy (KNO1)

Develop the knowledge base and further research on critical themes for the Biosphere Reserve and disseminate

WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

PML

Plymouth Marine
Laboratory

NORTH WYKE



Pebble ridge research Westward Ho!

Community Engagement

Biosphere Reserves are about inspiring a positive future by connecting people and nature. They are a focus for finding creative and effective ways for people and nature to thrive together and that means involving people in all that we do.

Biosphere volunteers collect 12% of national Riverfly water quality records

Riverfly is one of the citizen science project successes brought into the area through the Biosphere's NIA project in 2014. It is a national initiative that monitors the long-term health of our rivers and helps pick up pollution incidents. By the end of the 2015 sampling season, 50 volunteers had collected 290 samples. There are now 50 active sites in the catchment; 6% of the national total.

"As a life-long fisherman, Riverfly was of interest to me straight away. I now sample three sites on the river Mere and am continually amazed at what creatures I find in my nets. I meet local people who are interested in what I do, they sometimes supply me with a welcome cuppa and like me, they are all pleased that people are coming together to look after our wonderful rivers". Nick Muir, one of the Riverfly volunteers .

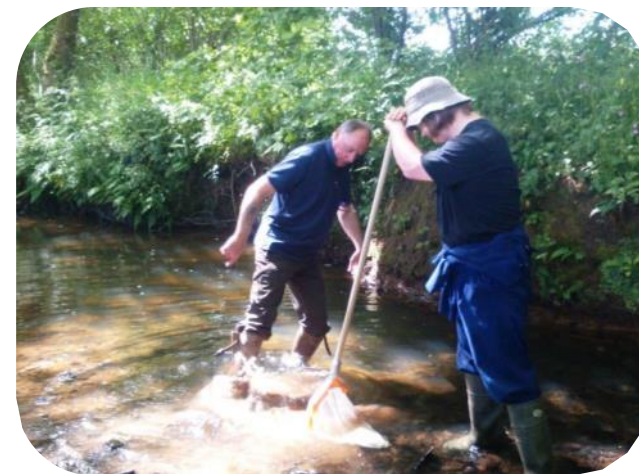
The Riverfly project has been supported with funds from the North Devon Fisheries Local Action Group, and Torridge District Council.

Valuable Verges

The Biosphere developed and submitted a £50K bid to the Heritage Lottery for funding to help local communities adopt road verges and manage them for wildlife. The project would trial an approach with a dozen communities across the Biosphere using road safety training provided through Devon Highway's Community Self Help Scheme. More information on this will follow next year.

Strategy Policy (KNO 2)

Sustainably raise awareness of the Biosphere Reserve through targeted communication;. Optimise the use of social media to build support for programmes and projects. Develop new tools for engagement with the community including arts



Volunteers from Easterbrook Farm residential home for adults with learning disabilities sample the Hole Brook near Monkeokehampton

Biosphere in the media

The Biosphere organised and hosted **BBC Radio 4s Any Questions** in May 2015. Messages about the Biosphere were mentioned in the introduction and reached over 1 million listeners.

The Biosphere team also hosted **BBC's Escape to the Country**, setting out the Biosphere message to hundreds of thousands of viewers. Further Biosphere content was filmed in the summer of 2016.

Launch of the Biosphere's community wildlife fund

This scheme, run by the Tarka Country Trust on behalf of the Biosphere was launched in spring 2016. Small grants of up to £500 are available for community groups to deliver projects that help benefit wildlife in the North Devon and Torridge districts within the Biosphere.



Part of the funding is coming from Marsdens Devon Cottages who have been raising money for the North Devon Biosphere for several years now by asking their holiday makers to donate £1 when booking their break.

"We are proud of our world class Biosphere environment which is so important to our visitors and since 2012 we have collected over £7,000 for the Biosphere. By supporting the Community Wildlife Fund we can ensure that the money given by our holiday makers is spread across the whole area where our holiday cottages are located and provides direct local benefit." Adrian Culley, South West General Manager at Marsdens Devon Cottages.



Orchid rich road verge near Hatherleigh



Filming with BBC's Escape To The Country at Velator Wetlands

Finance, Governance and Management

The Biosphere Reserve Team coordinates the work of the Partnership as well as developing and delivering projects and activities in support of the Biosphere Reserve Strategy and Action Plan

In this section we report not only on the direct work of the team but also on the project funding brought into the Biosphere through coordinated partnership working.

In 2015-16, the Biosphere team was directly involved in the Biosphere projects listed below, with a value to the area of £542K*

- **Nature Improvement Area: £210,000** consisting of:
 - ⇒ Fresh Water Pearl Mussel Project £67,000 (Biffa Award)
 - ⇒ Torridge Headwaters Facilitation Fund £37,000 (NE)
 - ⇒ Culm grassland project development £48,000 (EA)
- **Catchment Sensitive Farming: £87,000** (EA)
- **Estuary Project: £180,000** (EA)
- **Tarka Trail improvements: £14,000** (DCC/DfT)
- **Marine Code of Conduct: £7,400** (AONB SDF)
- **Catchment Partnership Action Fund: £44,000** (WRT)

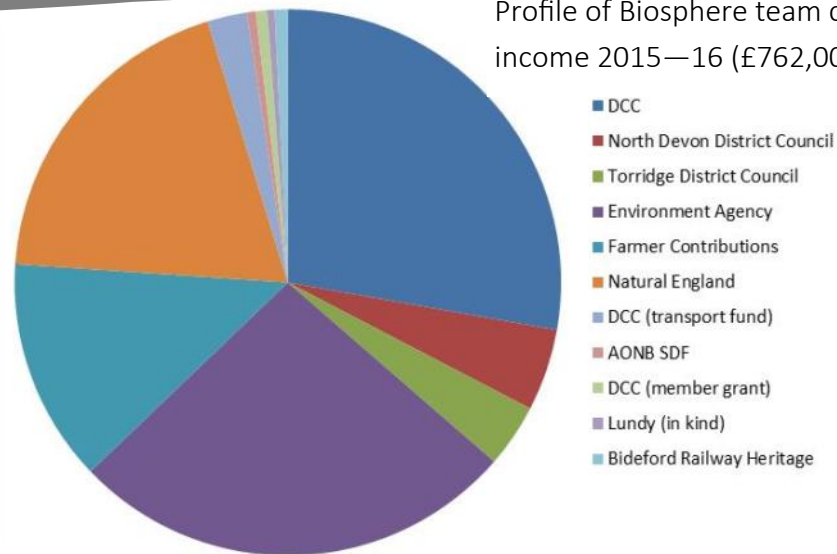
Every £1 invested in the Biosphere by core funders generates £3.4 for the area



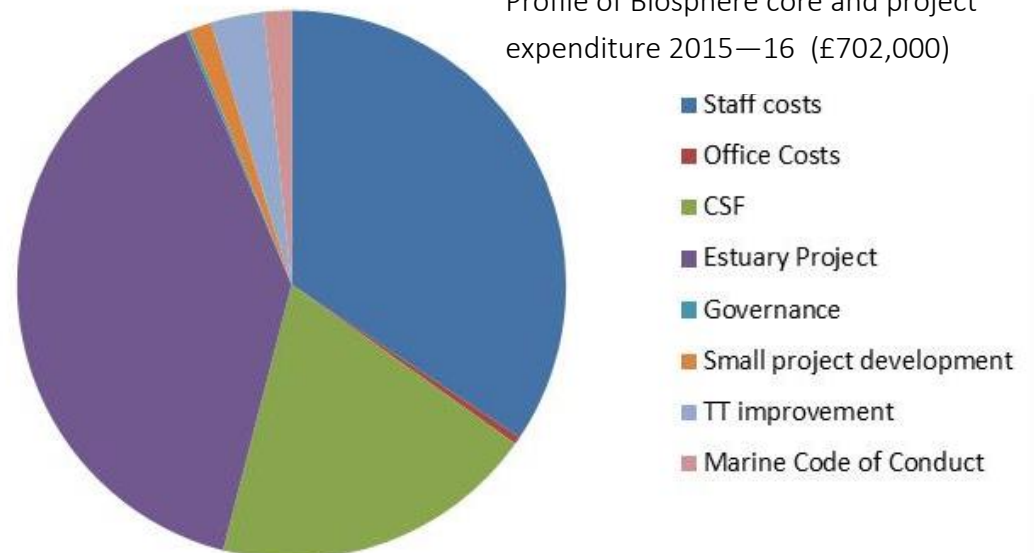
The Biosphere Service received £160K in core funding

* This does NOT include the £4.5M on research, the value of agri-environment funds attracted to the area or the Biosphere Services £160K core funding

Profile of Biosphere team core and project income 2015—16 (£762,000)



Profile of Biosphere core and project expenditure 2015—16 (£702,000)



The Biosphere Partnership

The Biosphere core staff team is immensely grateful to our partner organisations and individuals within the Partnership and its associated working groups. Without them and a wider network of people among our many communities, we could not be so successful. Below is a list of Partnership members as at 31st March 2015.

- **Prof Michael Winter OBE** (Exeter University) Chair of the Biosphere Partnership
- **Mark Wallace** (Director, Beaford Arts) Vice-Chair of the Biosphere Partnership
- **Phil Byers** (Chairman, Barnstaple Chamber of commerce) Vice-Chair of the Biosphere Partnership
- **David Appleton** (Natural England)
- **Jenny Carey-Wood** (North Devon AONB Manager)
- **Andrew Butler** (National Farmers' Union)
- **Richard Butler** (Biosphere Reserve Ambassador)
- **John Balls** (North Devon Fisherman's Association)
- **Cllr. Rodney Cann** (North Devon Council)
- **Cllr. Caroline Chugg** (Devon County Council)
- **Sarah Clark** (Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority)
- **Hector Christie** (Christie Devon Estates)
- **Robert Down** (Deputy Chair and Treasurer, Coastwise North Devon)
- **Brian Fraser-Smith** (Devon Association of Parish Councils)
- **Lesley Garlick** (Professional Planner, Devon County Council)
- **Hannah Harrington** (North Devon Council)
- **Prof. Peter Howard** (Bournemouth University Landscape Research Group)
- **Peter Jollands** (Chairman of the Biosphere Foundation)
- **Andrew Knights** (Marine Officer for North Devon, Natural England)
- **Kate Little** (Torrridge District Council)
- **Mike Moser** (Chairman, NIA)
- **Sue Neary** (U3A)
- **Steve Pitcher** (Chairman of North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership)
- **Tony Pratt** (Taw Torridge Estuary Forum)
- **Stan Pyle** (Bideford College)
- **Emma Richardson** (Devon Wildlife Trust)
- **Jay Rowntree** (Environment Agency)
- **Rob Sekular** (Countryside and Community Projects Officer, West Devon Council)
- **Richard Prowse** (Chairman, Tarka Country Trust)
- **Cllr. Gaye Tabor** (Torrridge District Council)
- **Eirene Williams** (FWAG South West)
- **Cllr. Jeremy Yabsley** (Devon County Council)

Our Biosphere is about bringing people together to build a future we can trust where people and nature thrive. Our success depends on the strength of the relationships and partnerships we create.



[Andrew Bell](#)

Biosphere Manager



[Tom Hynes](#)

Landscape and
Biodiversity Officer



[Matt Edworthy](#)

Community Officer



[Gigha Klinkenborg](#)

Office Manager



[Kate Hind](#)

Estuary Project Officer



[Sarah Barr](#)

Project Researcher



[Phil Metcalfe](#)

Project Researcher

The North Devon UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve exists to connect people; their culture and economy, and nature.

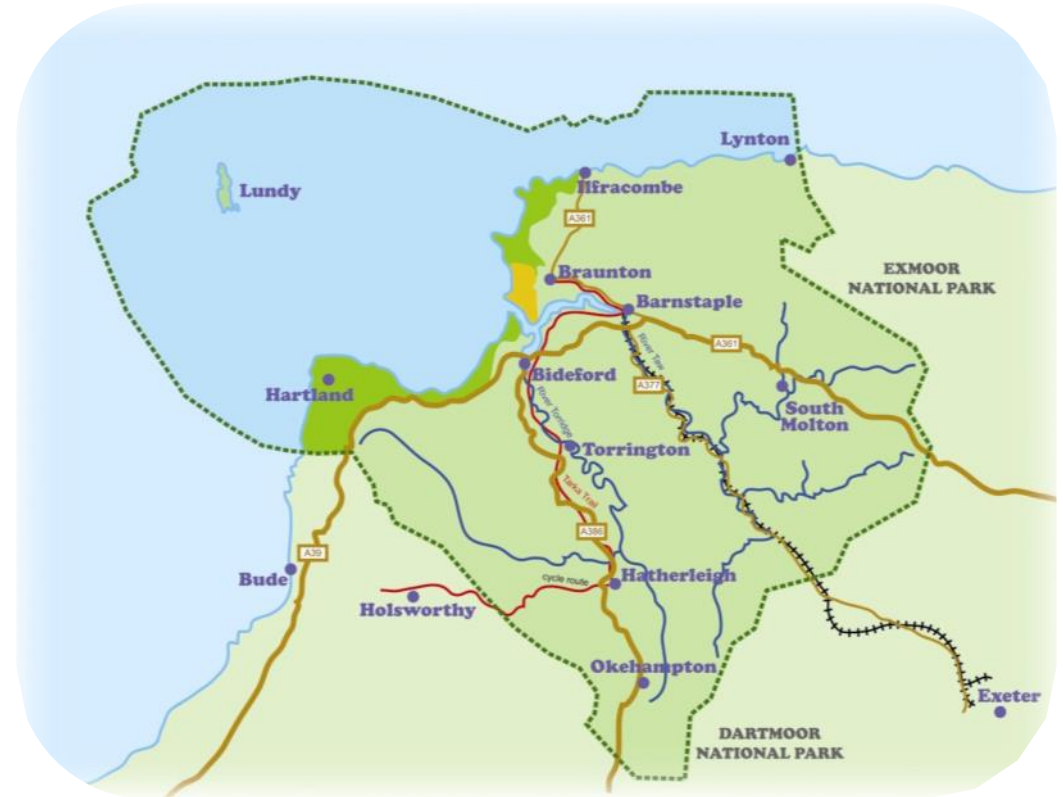
Designated in 2002, it was the first of its type in the UK. Others have followed in Scotland and Wales and last year the Brighton and Lewes Downs was designated. Other Biospheres are being developed on the Isle of Man and in Northern Ireland.

The UNESCO Biosphere designation puts North Devon on a par with other Biospheres such as the Niagara Escarpment and the Serengeti. All are part of a world network of 650 Biosphere Reserves in 117 countries.

All Biosphere Reserves, have goals to:

- inspire a positive future by connecting people with nature
- create the conditions for people and nature to thrive together
- empower people through participation
- explore new ways of doing things informed by learning and culture and creating connections between places, cultures and communities.

The Reserve's 1468miles² is home to over 160,000 people and important natural sites like Dartmoor, Exmoor, the enigmatic culm grasslands, the outstanding Braunton Burrows dune system and the Taw Torridge estuary. Its boundaries are defined by the river catchments that drain to Devon's north Coast as well as 568miles² of sea including the iconic island of Lundy.



Northdevonbiosphere



@NDevonBiosphere



northdevonbiosphere.org.uk



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



**North Devon's
Biosphere Reserve**

member of the World Network
of Biosphere Reserves