



Media Release; 08/11/2016 – for immediate use

New Project to help road verge wildlife and communities

A new project has just started which will help communities look after local road verges to benefit wildlife. The Life on the Verge Project- Biosphere has appointed local conservationist Clare Manning to work with communities on road verge management.

Clare Manning says, *“there are some wonderfully rich and diverse road verges in this area and it is great to have this chance to help communities look after them for wildlife and for the benefit of local people and visitors. Life on the Verge - Biosphere has been supported by a £49,300 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to help communities to manage roadside verges for wildlife”.*

Road verges are an important wildlife resource and an integral part of Devon's heritage. They provide a range of habitats and are increasingly important wildlife corridors for threatened species and pollinators. They also provide one of the only opportunities for us to see wildflowers on a daily basis, in towns and villages, as well as in a largely intensively managed countryside.

Managing verges to deliver all these benefits is ever-more difficult as local authority management increasingly focuses on road safety needs, and that's where Life on the Verge- Biosphere comes in.

Through the project, funds, equipment and expertise will be available to help communities manage their chosen verges and promote their achievements. Case studies and best-practice guidance will help recruit more communities and sustain the volunteer network once the project ends.

Councillor Stuart Hughes, portfolio holder for highways at Devon County Council says “as well as receiving training to identify wildflowers and associated habitats, it is important that



volunteers can work safely by the roadside. Devon County Council Highways is proud therefore to be able to offer free highways safety training for verges volunteers through its existing Community Road Warden and Self Help schemes”

Richard Prowse , chair of the Tarka Country Trust, explains that, *“to get the project started, Clare will spend a lot of time promoting the project, visiting communities and helping them to get involved. I would urge anyone who is interested to contact Clare by e-mail at ‘verges@tarkacountrytrust.org.uk’ or 07796334222*

As well as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), this project has been supported by the North Devon Coast AONB’s Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) which is funded by Defra. The SDF supports projects such as Life on the Verge - Biosphere which bring environmental, social or economic benefit to the North Devon Coast AONB. Marsdens Devon Cottages, whose customers have been raising money for the North Devon Biosphere for several years are also providing funds.

Other project supporters are Devon County Council Highways, The Devon Biodiversity Records Centre and The North Devon Biosphere Service and Biosphere Foundation.

Ends.

For more on this story, including images, or to arrange an interview with Clare call Tom Hynes on 07968 079431 or email tom.hynes@devon.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. **Tarka Country Trust** was set up in March 1999. Following a successful application to the Millennium Commission, the Trust ran the Tarka Country Millennium Awards from 2000 to 2004. The Objectives of the Trust are:
 - To preserve for the benefit of the public the natural features of northern Devon whilst respecting any historical features.



- To advance the education of the public about conservation and the protection of the environment in northern Devon.
2. **North Devon's Biosphere Service** is a partnership organisation based in Barnstaple and hosted by Devon County Council. It is core funded by Devon County Council, North Devon Council and Torridge District Council. The Service co-ordinates and delivers activities set out in the North Devon's Biosphere Reserve Strategy and works with a wide range of local, regional, national and international partners. More information about the work of the service can be found at www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/
 3. **North Devon's Biosphere Reserve** is the first new-style UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the UK. It exists to inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature.

The Biosphere in north Devon is a special place with wonderful wildlife and landscapes, and an economy and social structure still strongly linked to the environment but it is more than that. It is a community of people working together to champion life and the environment, empower people to get involved and explore new ways of living that address local and global challenges.

www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/

4. **North Devon AONB** - This spectacular coastal area, which covers some 66 square miles from the boundary of Exmoor National Park at Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth on the Cornish border, was designated as an AONB in 1959. Further information about the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty can be found on www.northdevon-aonb.org.uk or www.explorethecoast.org

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) supports projects that bring environmental, social and economic benefits to the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The fund aims to support projects which develop and test new methods of achieving a more sustainable way of life in this area of great beauty and



diversity. North Devon Coast AONB receive this money from Defra because this area is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), along with National Parks, are considered to be the most special landscapes in the country and belong to an international family of protected areas. There are 38 AONBs in England and Wales, and a further eight in Northern Ireland. For further details, visit:

www.landscapesforlife.org.uk

The work of the North Devon Coast AONB staff unit is guided by the AONB Partnership, which includes representatives from: Devon County Council, North Devon Council and Torridge District Council, Coastwise North Devon, Country, Land and Business Association, Devon Wildlife Trust, Historic England (English Heritage), Environment Agency, Exmoor National Park, Forestry Commission, National Farmers Union, National Trust, Natural England, North Devon Biosphere Reserve Partnership, North Devon Plus, Tarka Country Trust, Taw Torridge Estuary Forum

The North Devon AONB is a stunning coastal area which is nationally protected for the beauty of its landscape. It is made up of several distinct landscapes, each with their own special habitats and geology with many of them receiving extra protection in their own right. The AONB contains many Sites of Special Scientific Interest including Braunton Burrows, which is the core of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

www.northdevonbiosphere.org.ok

5. **Marsdens Cottage Holidays** have an extensive portfolio of over 340 Visit England graded holiday cottages ranging from quaint old fishing cottages for two, to larger properties ideal for families and large groups. Great pride is taken in the quality of the accommodation. Marsdens have been providing holiday cottages in Devon for over 40 years. <https://www.marsdens.co.uk/>



6. **About the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).** Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. Website: www.hlf.org.uk and Twitter: @heritagelottery.