

New 'super' National Nature Reserve created to protect rare wildlife

A vast new 'super nature reserve', spanning large parts of Somerset and encompassing some of the country's most precious habitats, has been created today (19th May).

The declaration of the new Somerset Wetlands 'super' National Nature Reserve (NNR) by Natural England and partners will protect 6,140 hectares of precious saltmarsh, heath and wetland habitats, home to nationally significant wildlife populations.

The area is a stronghold for many different species of wetland and ground nesting birds like the Skylark, Bittern and Avocet. It is also a significant site for a huge variety of insects such as the hairy dragonfly, silver diving beetle and the raft spider – the second largest spider in the UK.

With the increasing need for a bigger, better and more joined-up approach to nature conservation, today's announcement is an important moment for nature recovery. The site will knit together a total of six nature reserves and other nature managed land in the Somerset Levels, Coast and Moors and will join England's developing Nature Recovery Network.

Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, said:

The creation of this very large National Nature Reserve is an important moment for Nature recovery in England. This is not least because it presents a practical demonstration of what can be done by working in partnership across the landscape at scale to reverse Nature's decline. Natural England intends to encourage other projects with similar ambition.

Seventy years from the creation of our first National Nature Reserves in England these wonderful places are needed now more than ever, as we face into the challenges of global warming, wildlife decline and reconnecting people with the natural world.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Today is a landmark moment for nature recovery in Somerset. A new super National Nature Reserve will not only protect wildlife and help tackle climate change by restoring peatlands and improving habitats, it will provide people with greater opportunities to visit these beautiful wetlands with consequent spin offs that will benefit the local economy too.

And crucially, this vast project will play an important part in

reversing the decline in nature through our Nature Recovery Network, as set out in our ambitious Environment Act.

Rosie Hails, Director of Nature and Science at the National Trust, said:

The huge challenge posed by the twin climate and nature crises is such that ambitious solutions are urgently needed at scale. The launch of a new Super National Nature Reserve represents a significant step forward in working across boundaries to address the most pressing environmental issues while, crucially, bringing nature closer to people.

We're proud to care for national nature reserves across the country, and the making of a new 'Super' reserve is a fitting way to mark 70 years since the first designation. Today, the creation and protection of space for wildlife to thrive couldn't be more important.

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts said:

Working across whole landscapes is essential to tackling the twin nature and climate crises. Super National Nature Reserves provide a great opportunity to engage a wide range of people, including private landowners, to tackle some of the issues affecting our nature reserves that need action to be taken at a landscape scale.

If we are to achieve nature's recovery, we need to create and restore wild places across the countryside, giving wildlife the chance it so desperately needs to spread and thrive. Natural solutions such as wetlands and peat bogs which store carbon are crucial for a healthier future. From booming bittern to red squirrels, wildflower-rich meadows and dramatic coastlines, we're proud that Wildlife Trusts in England care for a massive 53 National Nature Reserves – arguably our best places for people to enjoy nature.

We welcome today's announcement which we hope will enable more strategic management of land for wildlife, and we're looking forward to celebrating the Festival of National Nature Reserves.

The announcement today demonstrates how the Government is delivering on the Environment Act – a key target laid out in Act is to halt the decline in our wildlife populations through a legally binding target for species abundance by 2030.

The local tourism industry and residents are also set to benefit from this declaration, which will provide more people with access to nature by making it easier for residents of local towns such as Bridgwater and Glastonbury to

access the sites, as well as improving the health and wellbeing of the local community and provide economic benefits through developing wildlife tourism opportunities.

The declaration today is at the centre of celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the creation of England's first nature reserve on 19 May 1952. Today there are 219 sites, spanning 101,531ha. These 'nature hotspots' are key to restoring nature across England and helping to bring green space and wildlife to everyone, including those who live in towns and cities.

There will be a 'Festival of Nature Reserves' this summer to celebrate with a programme of events at nature reserves. To find out more about the festival and how to get involved in events across the country, visit <http://www.nnrfestival.com/>

Community to rescue pubs, clubs and farms backed by £2.2 million government funding

- Eight more projects set to benefit from the government's Community Ownership Fund
- Pubs, historic buildings and sports facilities included in projects to be taken over by community groups
- Part of wider £150 million funding package to level up communities by empowering them to take ownership of local landmarks

A boxing club, historic pub and city farm are among eight community projects across England and Northern Ireland set to be rescued by more than £2.2 million of government levelling up funding.

These grants will help community groups take control of venues in their area that are at risk of being lost forever and transform them into vibrant hubs for the benefit of local people.

This is all part of the government's drive to level up local communities across the country, create more jobs for local people, boost local businesses and build up local economies as a result.

Projects include the Victoria House in Oldham, built in 1874, which will be turned from a derelict hall into a boxing and personal development centre, offering support for vulnerable young people as well as fitness and wellbeing opportunities for all. Without this funding, the centre would have been forced to move.

Spaces within The Grade II listed Granville Hotel, designed by one of

Ramsgate's most famous residents EW Pugin, will also be saved from decay and restored to help protect the Kent town's heritage. Funding will renovate the bar and restaurant area, reviving the seafront venue and creating a new space for artists, start-ups and local businesses.

The family-run Old Red Lion theatre pub, one of London's oldest pubs, said to have been founded in 1415, is set to receive funding. The pub has a long history as a cultural bright spot in the local area and with this funding it will be relaunched as an arts venue and space for community work.

Minister for Levelling Up, the Union and Constitution, Neil O'Brien MP said:

From bringing historic buildings back to life in Ramsgate to creating a community farm in the centre of Bristol, the Community Ownership Fund enables local people to take on projects that benefit their communities and save venues that would otherwise be lost forever.

Through this fund we are empowering local people, restoring their pride in the places where they live and levelling up communities across the United Kingdom.

The fund is already helping communities across the country seize ownership of prized local assets that are at risk, including the [UK's most remote pub](#) in Scotland and [Gigg Lane](#), home of Bury FC.

The first round of successful projects was announced at the Spending Review in autumn last year. Applications to bid for round 2 of funding through the Community Ownership Fund will open in June this year.

The eight vibrant and exciting projects being funded through this latest tranche of Community Ownership Fund grant are:

- a community in Yorkshire taking ownership of the Countryman's Inn pub
- one of London's oldest pubs, the Old Red Lion in Islington relaunching its theatre pub venue
- the Oxford Arms pub in Herefordshire transforming into a vibrant community hub
- regenerating 30 acres of land at Hartcliffe City Farm in Bristol to benefit the local community
- a historic church in Somerset providing a community arts and social centre
- a boxing and development centre in Oldham, which aims to support young people and families
- Pugin's heritage building being restored into a vibrant community place for local people to enjoy stunning views which dining by the marina
- in Northern Ireland the regeneration of St Columb's Hall creating a community centre in the heart of Derry-Londonderry

See the full list of [successful bids](#)

Food security is now top of our agendas since Russia's invasion of Ukraine: UK at the UN

We are so grateful to the US for leading this week of action.

Food security is now at the top of all of our agendas, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The effects of the war are brought home to me daily by the 25 year old Ukrainian woman who has come to live in our home. When we can find some phone signal, we talk to her grandparents, who are in occupied Kherson, about their daily struggles to find something to eat.

Famine is once again being used as a weapon of war.

This doesn't just affect the brave people of Ukraine.

Ukraine's food and fertiliser exports were feeding up to 400 million people worldwide.

The simplest solution is, of course, for Russia to end the conflict and allow Ukrainian farmers to care for their crops this year.

We must urgently make multiple plans to export last years' grain by both rail and sea. And I know that my friend, Minister Solsky, is full of solutions in this regard.

We must collectively ensure that trade keeps flowing.

I am pleased that over 50 WTO members have committed to keeping food markets open, predictable and transparent. We should agree to prohibit export restrictions on food bought for the World Food Programme.

The G7 has a key role to play. Under our Presidency we secured the first ever famine prevention compact. I am delighted that Germany is now picking up the baton and taking this further with the Global Alliance on food security.

We must all, including multilateral institutions, scale up our support.

Over the next 3 years, the UK will send £3 billion worth of humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable countries, including in the Horn of Africa, Yemen and Afghanistan.

And the World Bank must deliver the promised \$170 billion over the next 15 months.

We particularly think of small island developing states, who are so reliant on imports.

We will continue to use British Investment Partnerships around the world to encourage the universal resilience of global food production.

The need is urgent. We must act coherently and together, and, as they sing in the Ukrainian national anthem, 'before the dew dies in the sunshine'. And, we need to ensure that the way we produce food remains sustainable in every sense.

[Leicester security operatives faced realistic terror scenarios in nightclub exercise](#)

Press release

Yesterday Leicester's Mosh Nightclub was the scene of a set of simulated emergency exercises for the club's management, staff, and security team.



Security Industry Authority

The exercise saw the club's security operatives challenged by four realistic scenarios under the guidance of Leicestershire Police, Leicester Fire and Rescue Service, and National Counter Terrorism Security Office. The initiative, which is part of the UK-wide Operation SENTRY, was led by the Security Industry Authority (SIA). Its purpose is to ensure preparedness in the unlikely event of a mass casualty event at a Leicester club.

The emergency exercise is designed for front line security operatives to enable them to put into practice [ACT Awareness e-learning](#) as well as the newer [ACT Security e-learning](#). This free e-learning course was designed by government counter-terrorism experts from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office, the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure and the SIA. The custom-built training provides up-to-date counter-terrorism

knowledge to help security professionals prepare for and respond to terrorist incidents whilst on duty. The counter-terrorism e-learning features specific drills that were showcased yesterday:

- mass stabbing (gang related knife attack)
- a marauding terrorist attack taking place outside the club
- acid attack
- a suspect package

This event is aimed to strengthen the resilience of Mosh Nightclub staff and to enable them to test their emergency plan.

Ronnie Megaughin, Head of Compliance and Inspections, said:

Putting Mosh Nightclub's security operatives into realistic terror scenarios is one of the best ways to prepare them in the event of a real-life incident. Security operatives may be the first people on the scene in an incident. Yesterday's staged terror incidents enabled security operatives to take part and deal with the scenario, and then receive an instant debrief from counter-terror experts. We know from experience that operatives, and their managers, really appreciate what they learn from these events and find them worth their while. Any of these security staff could find themselves as the first responder at a serious incident, and this exercise could literally be the difference between life and death.

Inderjit Singh, the SIA's Regional Investigator for the East Region, who is leading on the event, said:

We're really pleased with the commitment that Mosh's security staff put into yesterday's exercise. The main aim of exercises like this is to enhance public safety in Leicester's night-time economy by working with venues and security staff. It's also to showcase best practice by putting the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) awareness e-learning package, which we've been recommending to all licensed operatives, into practice. I'd like to thank all of our partners and especially Mosh Nightclub for hosting yesterday's exercises to enhance public protection.

The emergency planning exercise at Mosh Nightclub continues a programme of similar exercises and follows on from events in Chesterfield and London in autumn 2021 and Glasgow in April this year. A pilot event took place at Buxton in Derbyshire in October 2019.

Notes to editors:

Further information:

- The Security Industry Authority is the organisation responsible for

regulating the private security industry in the United Kingdom, reporting to the Home Secretary under the terms of the [Private Security Industry Act 2001](#). The SIA's main duties are the compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities and managing the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme.

- For further information about the Security Industry Authority visit www.gov.uk/sia. The SIA is also on [Facebook](#) (Security Industry Authority) and [Twitter](#) (SIAuk).

Published 18 May 2022

[Guatemala: UK statement on the re-election of the Guatemala Attorney General](#)

Government response

The United Kingdom has issued a statement following the appointment of the Attorney General.



Minister for Latin America Vicky Ford said:

The United Kingdom expresses its concern at the re-election of María Consuelo Porras to the post of Attorney General in Guatemala.

We note that Sra Porras is sanctioned on the US Engels List of undemocratic and corrupt officials, and that there are other serious reasons to doubt her suitability for this important role.

The United Kingdom will continue to work closely with international partners to encourage the Government of Guatemala to strengthen the rule of law and support and respect judicial independence.

Respect for the rule of law and judicial independence are essential conditions for Guatemala to boost prosperity, attract foreign investment, protect human rights, maintain a healthy democracy and win the fight against corruption.

Published 18 May 2022