NATURE VILLAGE STRATEGY

Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council

2027-2031

1: What makes Highcliffe and Walkford special?

Our unique natural environment with the unspoilt coastline, nature reserves, green corridor and prolific wildlife.

2: Why a Nature Village?

To protect and enhance our natural environment, encourage local nature recovery, involve the whole community in the environment and educate residents and visitors.

3: Vision:

Creating a network of green corridors, commons, nature reserves and coast where biodiversity and the community thrive.

4: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

- Strengths: Quality of the local environs, HWPC commitment, partnership with BCP Nature Town initiative, identity for the parish, investment in the natural environment and local nature recovery.
- Weakness: HWPC limited capacity and potential reputational damage if we do not deliver.
- Opportunities: Raise awareness of fragility of natural environment, encourage community engagement and cohesion, assist physical and mental health, create identity for parish.
- Threats: Could encourage more visitors and put more pressure on the natural environment, may divert HWPC attention from other important priorities.

5: Delivery/tactics

- Establish working group to establish a programme of events and initiatives year-round, delivered by community groups and organisations, national organisations and authorities.
- Appoint an events company to prepare a detailed plan for and deliver a 2027 Festival of Nature
- Seek sponsorship for events
- Commission interpretation and information boards
- Raise awareness of Nature Village in the village and beyond.
- Establish a long- term framework to maintain the status in the coming years.
- Work with BCP on installing bird/bat boxes, insect hotels, hedgehog tunnels and other infrastructure provided by HWPC.
- HWPC to sign off the proposals as the key funder of the project with an annual financial commitment.
- Work with schools, churches, businesses and community organisations to encourage standalone events and initiatives year-round, reflecting the changing seasons.
- Identify, establish and encourage community-led projects

- Work with organisations including BCP, CHOG, CHAMS, DWT, Woodland Trust, NPA, Meyrick Estate and others to advise and help to promote/deliver initiatives.
- Commission community environmental audit
- Improve accessibility with projects such as the clifftop ramp's refurbishment
- Nature village brand creation and Nature Village leaflet
- Annual bio blitz
- Residents' monitoring of wildlife/gardens and encourage initiatives

6: Potential funding

Funding mix: HWPC Precept, BCP Community Infrastructure Levy, BNG credits, Heritage Lottery, DEFRA Landscape Recovery, Meyrick Estate stewardship, business and community sponsorship.

7: Outcomes 2027-2031

- Delivering all the aims and objectives above and embedding the environment into the life of the village and community and serving as an exemplar for Local Nature Recovery (LNR).
- Full commitment from HWPC for the long term.
- Festival of Nature to be an annual event

8: Budget

Subject to HWPC approval in October 2026, £10,000 to include some initial funding for festival, and a long-term commitment to the NV project.

Timeline

September 22: First working group meeting

October 14: HWPC council meeting to agree NV Strategy and Festival of Nature 2027

October: WG meeting 2 and Festival planning to start with appointed events team

November: WG meeting 3/Festival planning/comms work

December: WG meeting 4/Festival planning/comms work

January: Nature Village formal launch event/festival and comms work

February: WG meeting 5/Festival planning/build up events

March: WG meeting 6/Festival planning/build up events

April: Pre-election period

May: WG meeting 7 and Festival of Nature end of May