

Holistic

Adjective

characterised by the belief that the parts of something are interconnected and can be explained only by reference to the whole.

“the solution demands a holistic approach and a strategic vision of what can be achieved”

Many Parts, One Estate:
Cowdray’s Environmental Vision





Foreword

The environmental challenges we face as a planet are immense, and reversing the decline in nature requires collaboration. At Cowdray, the environment is central to everything we do. We are building on the work of previous generations to accelerate nature restoration and combat the effects of climate change.

Covering 16,000 acres within the South Downs National Park, Cowdray hosts a diverse mix of habitats. From the chalk grasslands on the South Downs to the River Rother, heathlands, woodlands, and beyond. Across the Estate, a range of nature recovery projects are already well underway.

Our approach recognises that no single issue stands alone; each is intricately connected to the next; from climate change and biodiversity decline to water quality and people's connection with nature, we recognise that one can not be solved in isolation.

Much of what we are doing is rooted in traditional practices, such as mixed farming and hedge laying, which our predecessors would have used. However, we are also embracing technology and new methods, combining our long-standing knowledge of the land with future innovations.

Our goal is to achieve environmental sustainability, securing a sustainable future for the Estate.

This document is not a one-off; in a rapidly changing world, we will adapt and evolve alongside it. By the end of 2026, we will publish our first report based on the Aims of our Charter, followed by biannual reviews and updates on our progress.

This document is set out in six Objectives with examples of how we will play our part; the list is not exhaustive and indeed it is designed to grow and adapt as our understanding of the issues grow.



Headline Objectives

Nature Objectives

Objective One – Carbon and Air Quality
Achieve Net Zero by 2040 and reduce our impact on poor air quality

Objective Two – Water
Ensure long term water security and, protect and improve water quality for people and nature.

Objective Three – Waste and Resources
Waste disposal optimisation: view waste as a resource to create a more circular economy.

Objective Four – Biodiversity
Enhance and increase biodiversity and bio-abundance.

Objective Five – Climate Resilience
Adapt to environmental change to ensure the long-term resilience of the land

Objective Six – Social Impact
Have a positive community and social impact: a Force for Good

Carbon and Air Quality

Achieve Net Zero by 2040 and reduce our impact on poor air quality

The Aim

1. Reduce our carbon emissions and ensure Net Zero by 2040*.
2. To reduce our impact on poor air quality.

The Benefit

The benefits of reducing carbon emissions are well documented and often grab the headlines; it yields multiple benefits, crucial for both environmental and socio-economic well-being.

By mitigating climate change, we safeguard against extreme weather, sea-level rise, and ecosystem disruptions.

Improved air quality reduces respiratory illnesses, enhancing public health. Transitioning to low-carbon technologies fosters innovation, job creation, and economic resilience.

How will we measure success?

- By working with our carbon audit consultants to measure our baseline and future reductions.
- By reporting our reduction in air polluting practices.

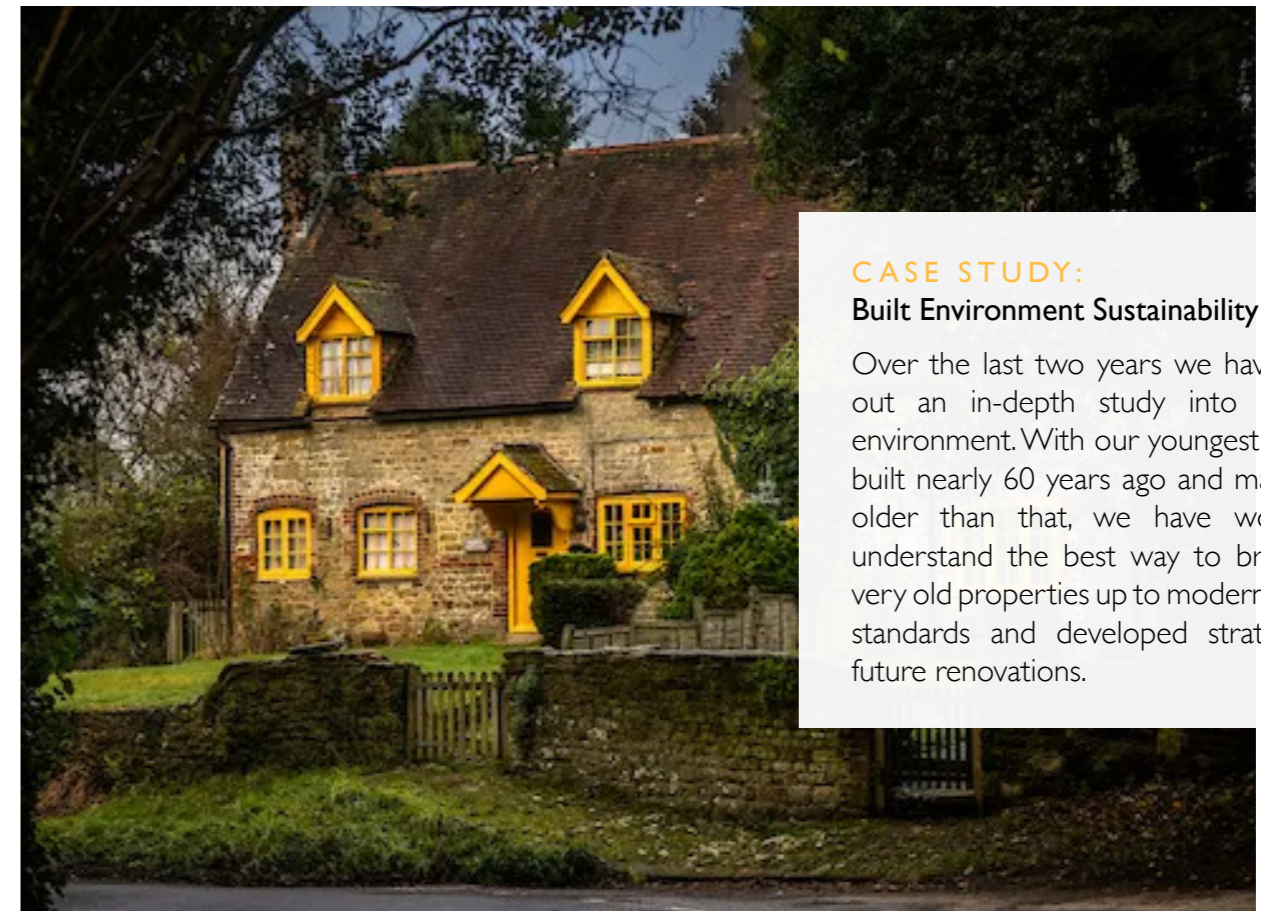
Current Situation

We are all well aware of the effects of climate change. While it may seem like a global issue, we recognise that our businesses, particularly agriculture, contribute to it. Although this impact may be small on a global scale, we acknowledge its significance locally and are committed to trialling new methods and leading by example as our understanding evolves.

When it comes to air quality, many might assume it is not an issue in the rural South Downs. However, in 2020, parts of Midhurst were declared an Air Quality Management Area after failing to meet national objectives. With over 60 vehicles on the road, we have implemented a policy to transition to electric vehicles wherever possible.

Across the Estate, numerous initiatives are being delivered by individual departments to play their part in combating climate change and help improve air quality. This Objective will bring those initiatives together.

**Most notably, our farming operations are a significant contributor to carbon emissions, and the challenges of achieving Net Zero across the sector are well documented. For that reason, the Farm has been working hard for several years on its own carbon auditing. This in-depth and rapidly evolving work will continue separately from our overarching Net Zero target while the science and knowledge evolve.*



CASE STUDY: Built Environment Sustainability Report

Over the last two years we have carried out an in-depth study into our built environment. With our youngest property built nearly 60 years ago and many much older than that, we have worked to understand the best way to bring these very old properties up to modern emission standards and developed strategies for future renovations.



CASE STUDY: Electrification of Fleet

We are now undergoing a 5-year plan to electrify our fleet. Where possible, new vehicles are always EV and we continue to monitor the introduction of larger electric vehicles. This transition is not just to lower GHGs but also improve local air quality with many of our journeys just a few miles.

	Energy Efficiency	Renewables and Technology	Carbon Sequestration
Short Term (end of 2027)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a full understanding of energy usage and improve data capture. Engagement with our team and the wider community on the choices they make Have a plan for residential and commercial properties which will flow from the Built Infrastructure Sustainability Report The Farm will continue its work to understand its carbon footprint and explore possible mitigation strategies in conjunction with key partners, including those within our supply chain and through collaborative initiatives such as the Omacast project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where financially viable and where planning allows, install renewables during refurbishments of properties Install remote monitoring to all existing solar PV to reduce downtime and optimise performance Renewables will be the first choice for powering events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offsetting will be used with caution and as a last resort. Work with partners to improve our knowledge of soil carbon in our farmed environment Large scale planting of trees will not be our go to solution, instead we will target where we plant trees to ensure a holistic approach With over 6,000 acres of woodland on the Estate, high-quality, homegrown timber plays a crucial role in long-term carbon sequestration and we will continue to work to better quantify it's contribution
Medium term (end of 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install technology in our buildings to reduce usage Electrification of the fleet Make quantifiable changes to events to reduce emissions Promote walking and cycling as means of transport around the Estate for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase solar PV for use on the Estate and for export Explore more innovative solutions such a methane capture which will have the added benefit of improving local air quality by reducing ammonia emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our regenerative farming will build soil carbon and projects such as our hedge restoration and wetland creation will further sequester more carbon
Long term	<p>Net zero by 2040 (Scope 1 and 2) And continue our journey to Carbon Negative</p>		



Battery-powered trimmer reduces greenhouse gasses and improves operator experience

Water

Ensure long-term water security and protect and improve water quality for people and nature.

The Aim

1. To use less, and capture, reuse and recycle more water in every aspect of our business.
2. To reduce our impact on poor water quality and use nature-based solutions to improve it.

The Benefit

Protecting water quality and availability ensures healthy ecosystems, human health, and sustainable livelihoods by preventing pollution, supporting agriculture, and reducing the impacts of climate change. It is crucial for economic stability, food security, and resilience to environmental challenges, benefiting both current and future generations.

How will we measure success?

- By monitoring water consumption and achieving a year-on-year reduction in usage.
- By using open-source data and collaborating with stakeholders to monitor water quality in the watercourses that flow through the Estate

Current Situation

Huge population growth, climate change and increased pollution is putting pressure on water resources.

Water is heavily abstracted to supply a growing population and water the crops needed to feed that growing population.

Increased pollution from agriculture, wastewater treatment plants, industry, and road run off mean there isn't a river in the UK that meets Good Ecological Status.

As humans we take water for granted; we turn on the tap and there's clean fresh drinking water and many of us underappreciate the issues in supplying it.

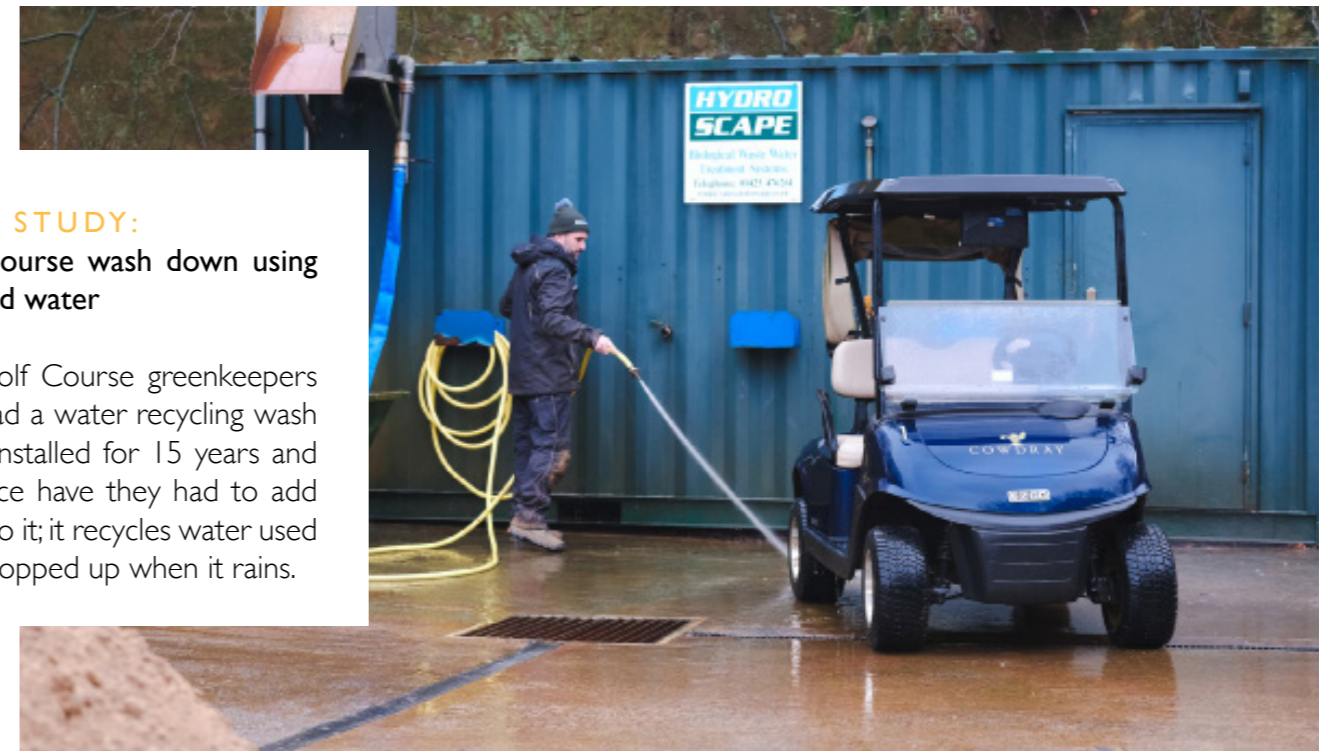
It's important to remember both people and nature need a clean supply of water.

CASE STUDY: Regenerative agriculture to reduce inputs and build soil water holding capacity

Our transition to regenerative farming will see a need for less synthetic inputs, a reduction in run off, and build water holding capacity in the soil to slow the flow. We aim to have 100% cover on all parcels over winter to protect our soils and further build soil health.

CASE STUDY: Golf Course wash down using recycled water

Our Golf Course greenkeepers have had a water recycling wash down installed for 15 years and not once have they had to add water to it; it recycles water used and is topped up when it rains.



	Reduce the water we use	Capture and store more water.	Protect water quality
Short Term (end of 2027)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a full estate water review • Increase monitoring of usage and water quality in conjunction with local stakeholders • Mindset change – educate our teams on the issues around water use and quality • Implement water saving technologies as standard in everything from urinals to polo pitch irrigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of our existing water infrastructure to improve our storing capacity • Build on the small-scale water storing capacity already implemented by individual departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue our journey into re-generative agriculture to reduce inputs and improve soil health • Reduce chemical use across the Estate in all departments. Use chemicals as a last resort • We will plant trees in areas prone to high water runoff to help prevent soil erosion and slow the flow of water; promoting better land stability and natural flood management
Medium term (end of 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of 2027 - Deliver a water reduction strategy to set an achievable but impactful target by 2040 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners and stakeholders to explore large scale water capture and storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the water meadow and river restoration plan in conjunction with other stakeholders to improve water quality • Work with experts to manage water pathways and implement real, lasting interventions
Long term	Review our water quality interventions and continue to make improvements and set new goals		



Waste and Resources

Waste disposal optimisation: view waste as a resource to create a more circular economy.

The Aim

To create an efficient circular economy of waste on the Estate through the mantra of reduce, reuse, recycle with the overall effect of reducing what is disposed of offsite.

The Benefit

Waste collection, treatment and disposal produced 3.7 million metric tonnes of CO2 in the UK in 2022, and we can play our part by reducing and optimising our waste disposal.

On a local level, reducing waste will mean fewer big vehicles on the road, improving air quality.

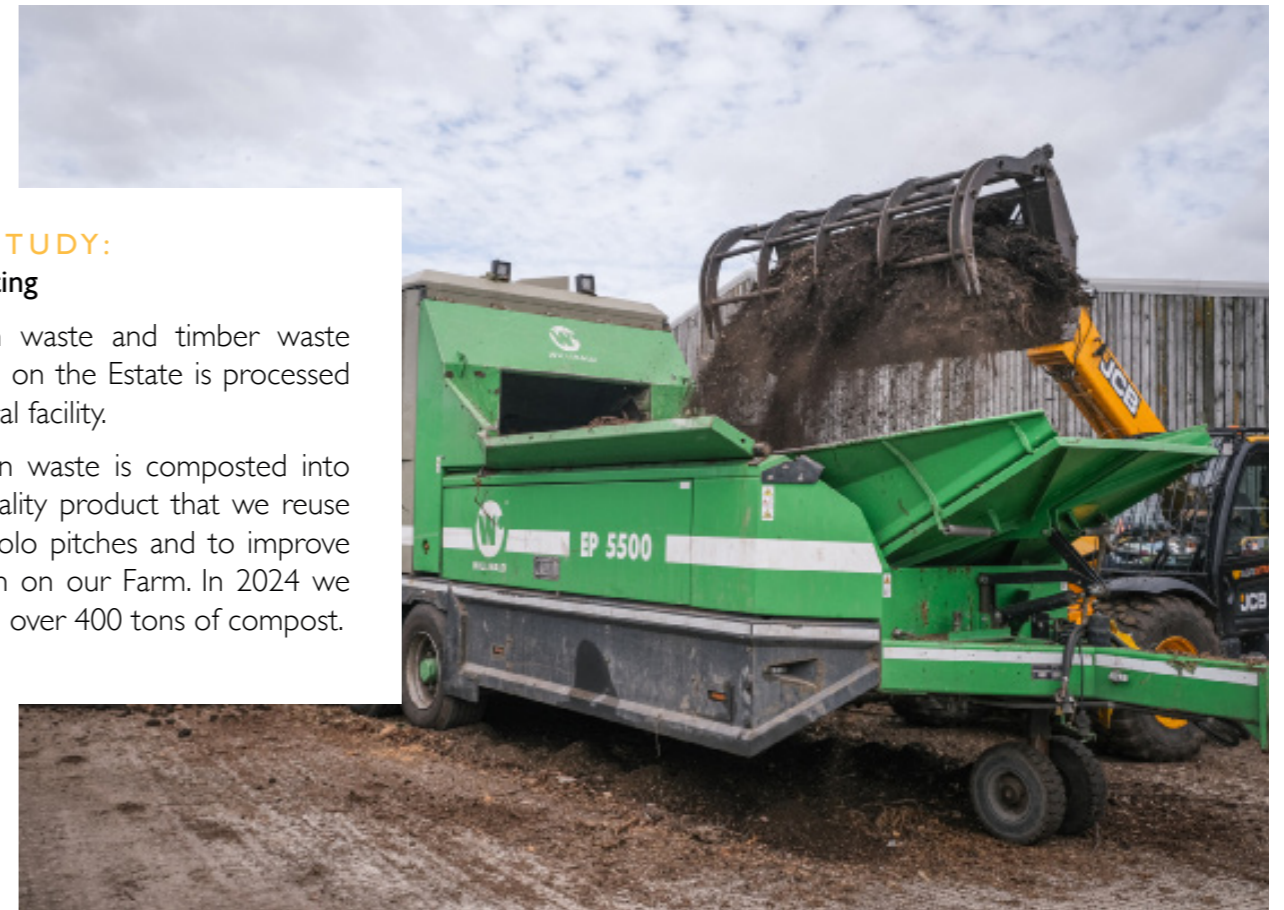
How will we measure success?

- We will continue our waste audits, conducting the next one in late 2026 and then on a biennial basis, ensuring a clear reduction in waste produced; an increase in waste recycled and an increase in waste reused on the Estate.

Current Situation

From over packaging to oversupply and food waste, we have a huge issue with waste globally. It's estimated that we each throw away 400kg of waste through household disposal each year. That doesn't include what we throw away in our work places, or food that is thrown away from oversupply or because it's too 'wonky'.

There is a value to waste, whether that's recycled plastics or to create energy, we see the benefits of a circular economy where we reuse the waste we produce. We will not view waste as 'out of sight, out of mind', and instead look at the opportunities to reuse it.

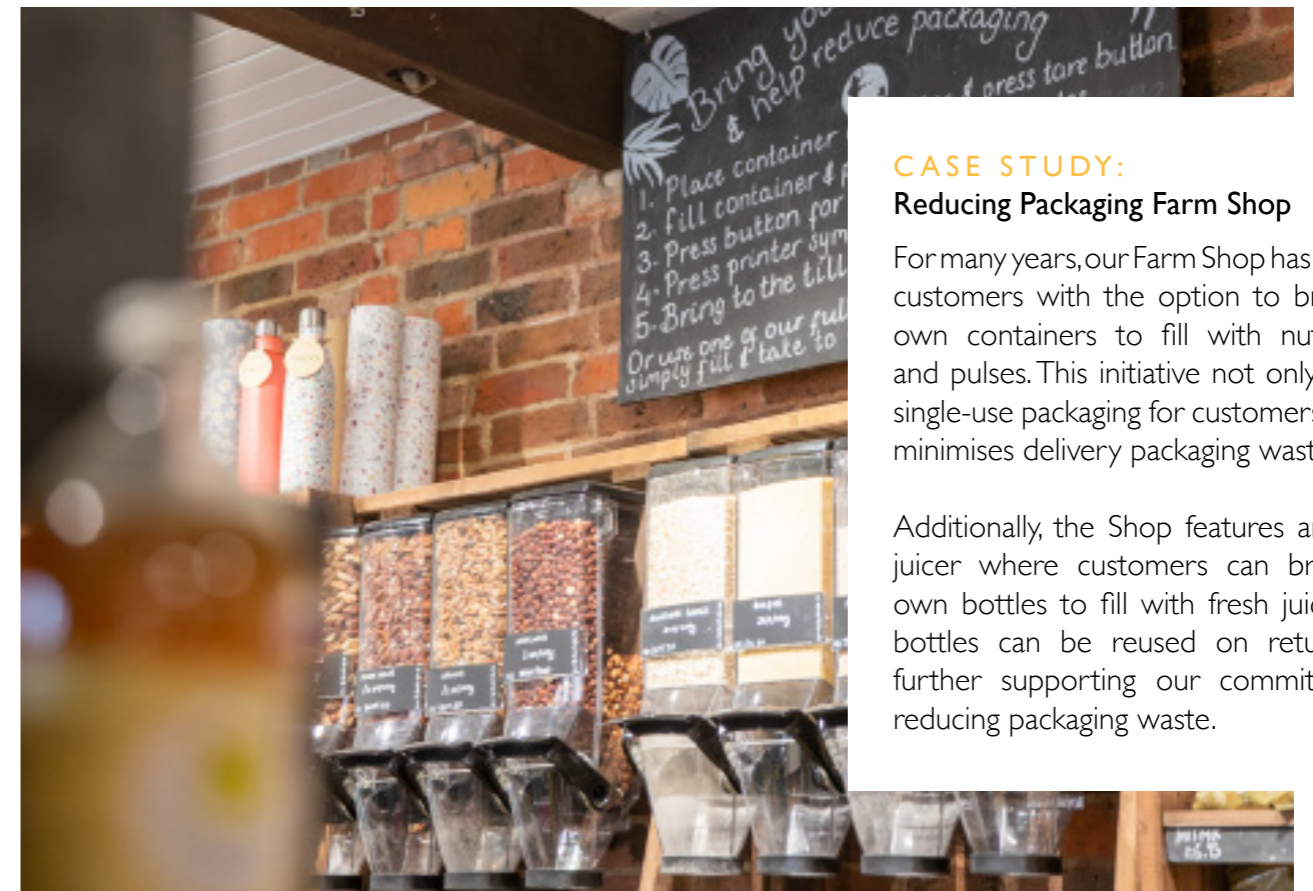


CASE STUDY:

Composting

All green waste and timber waste produced on the Estate is processed at a central facility.

The green waste is composted into a high-quality product that we reuse on our polo pitches and to improve soil health on our Farm. In 2024 we produced over 400 tons of compost.



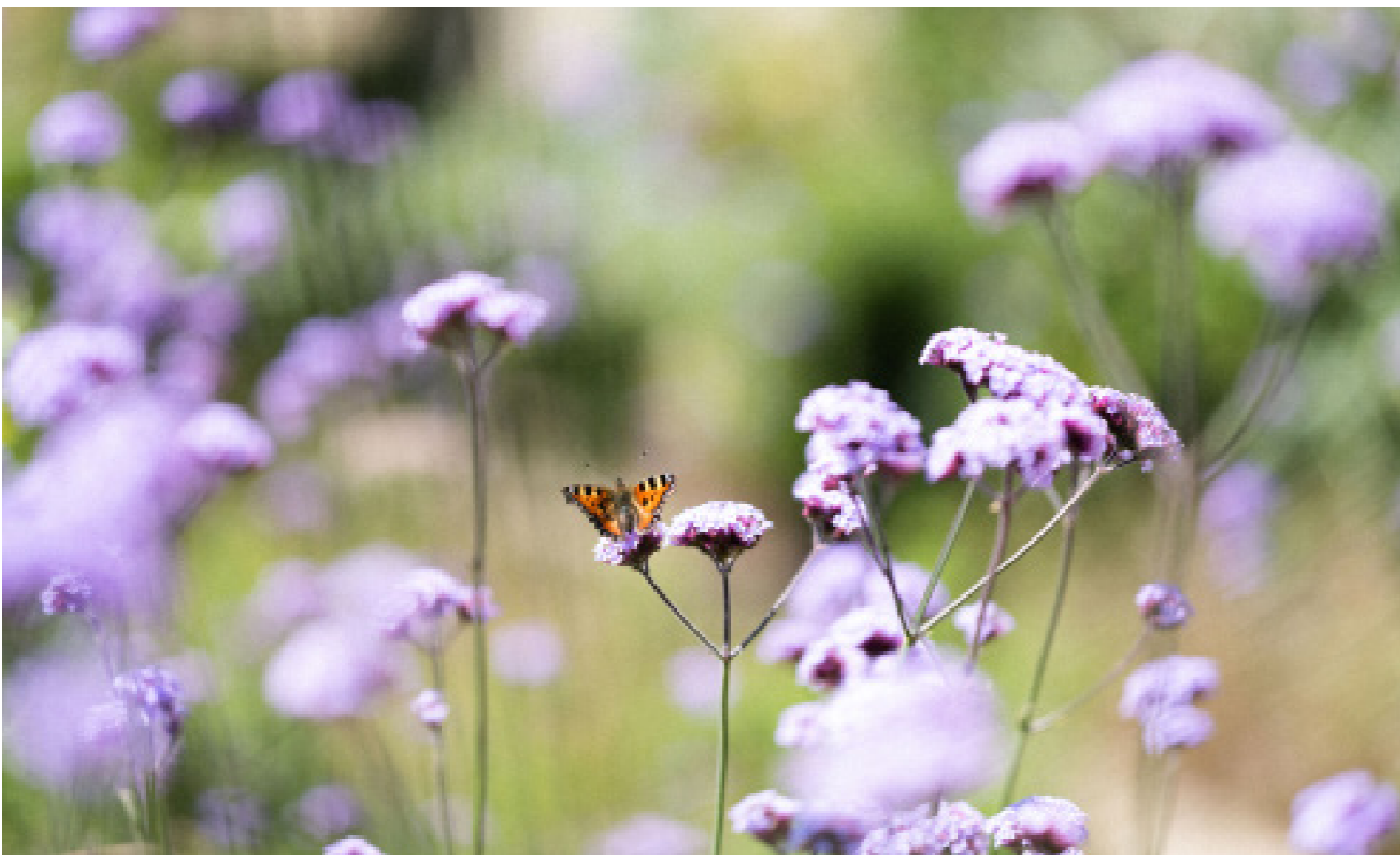
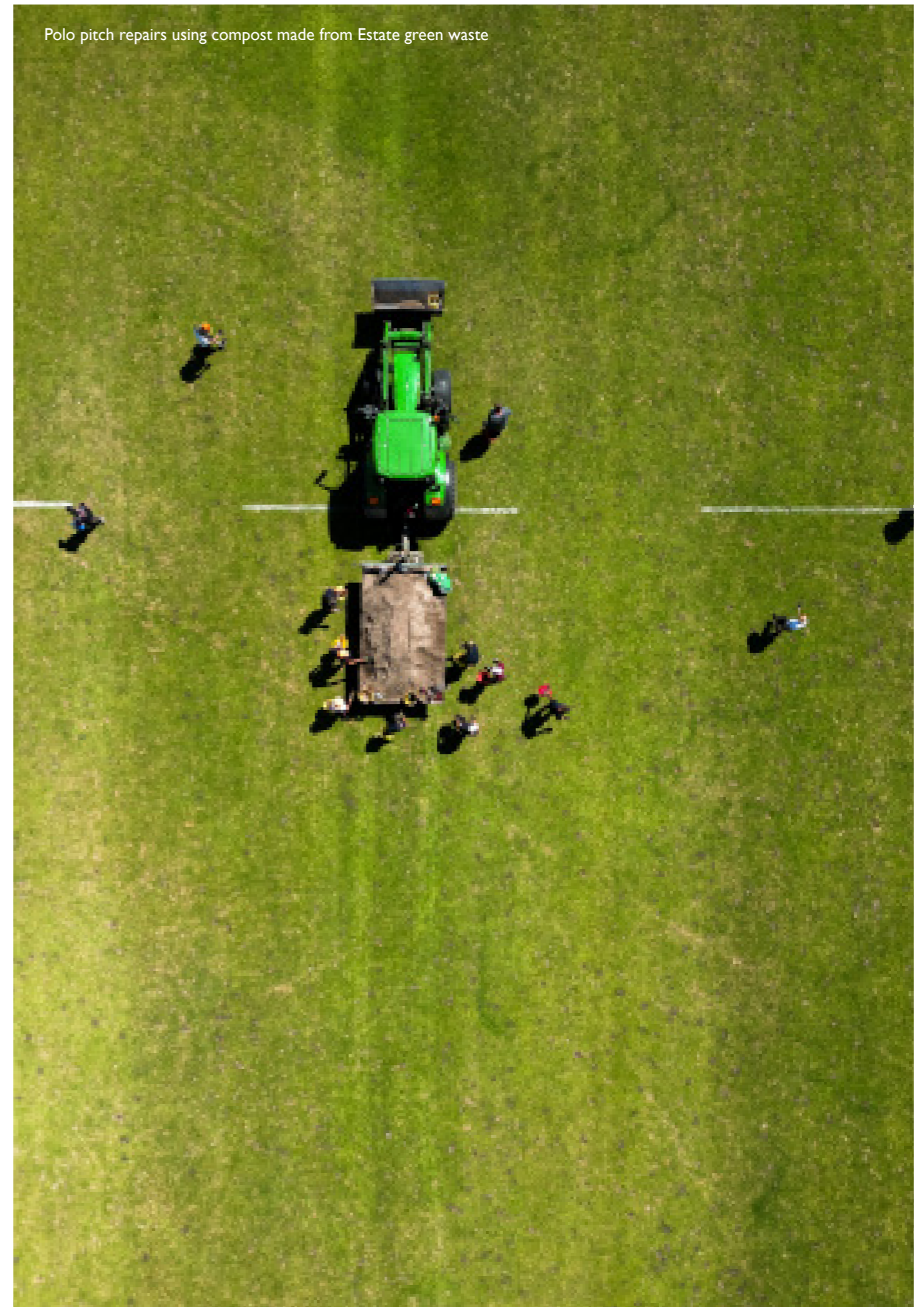
CASE STUDY:

Reducing Packaging Farm Shop

For many years, our Farm Shop has provided customers with the option to bring their own containers to fill with nuts, seeds, and pulses. This initiative not only reduces single-use packaging for customers but also minimises delivery packaging waste.

Additionally, the Shop features an orange juicer where customers can bring their own bottles to fill with fresh juice. These bottles can be reused on return visits, further supporting our commitment to reducing packaging waste.

	Reduce	Reuse	Recycle
Short Term (end of 2027)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the waste audit from 2019 and 2022 to improve data Engage with our teams about waste to increase recycling rates Use our position as a buyer to influence suppliers packaging choices Reduce more packaging on the products we produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One person's waste is another person's treasure, and we see value in reusing and repurposing waste from within the Estate and the local area. We will build on projects such as composting to ensure more is reused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve recycling rates in all areas of the business Install a food waste recycling machine onsite to reduce road miles
Medium term (end of 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set achievable targets to reduce waste produced onsite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to process our own waste in-house Have industry leading event waste management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use more waste to produce energy on the Estate such as biomass and methane capture
Long term	<p>We aim to have made a significant impact on waste in the medium term and will review our long term goals as we approach 2030.</p>		



Biodiversity

Enhance and increase biodiversity and bio-abundance

The Aim

To play our part in the fight to halt the decline in biodiversity and bio-abundance

The Benefit

Biodiversity is crucial for ecosystem stability, as it ensures the availability of resources like clean air, water and food, while maintaining natural processes such as pollination and nutrient cycling. It also supports human health, economic development, and resilience to climate change by offering a wide variety of species that can adapt to changing environments.

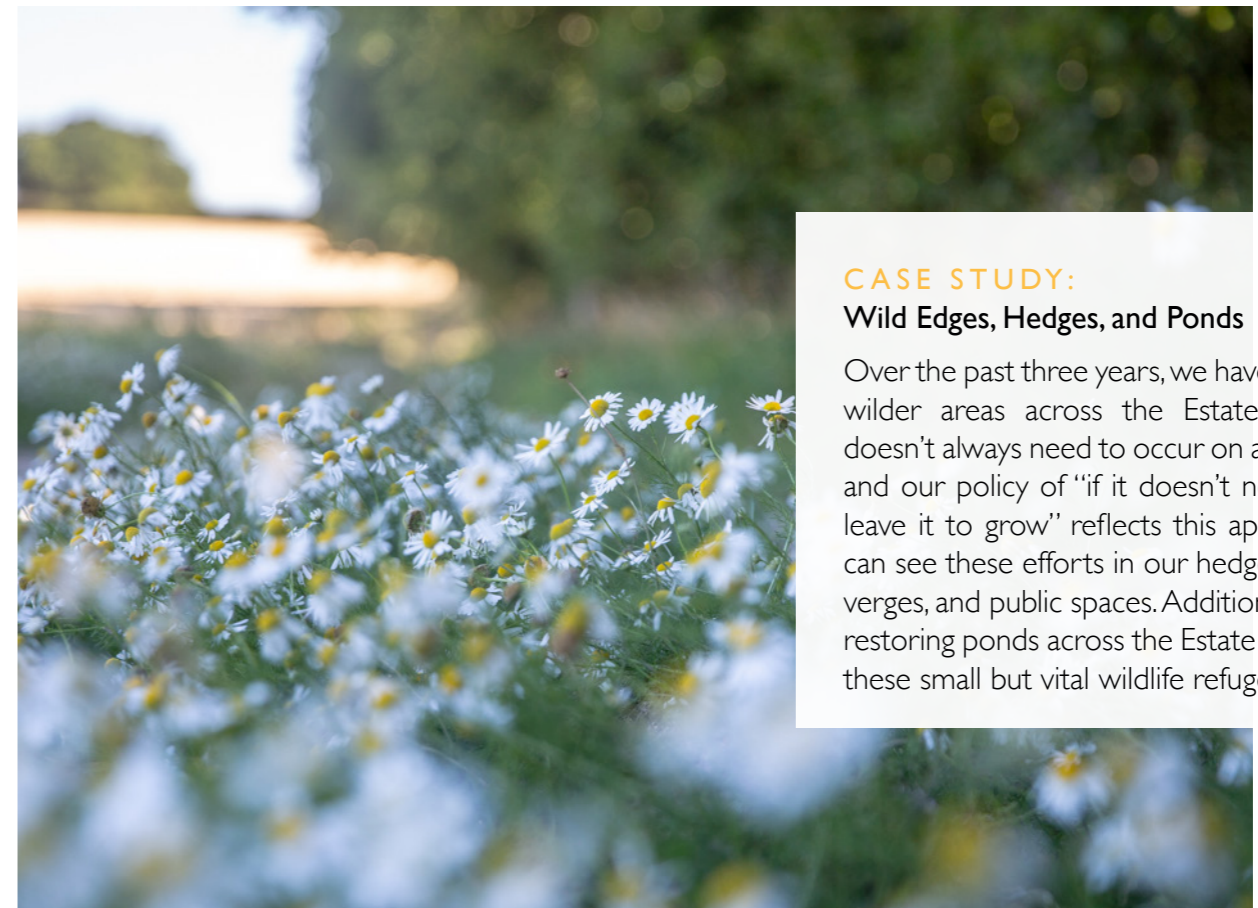
How will we measure success?

- Through various monitoring mechanisms we will see bigger, better and more joined up habitats. We will see more species and in greater numbers.

Current Situation

Biodiversity in the UK faces numerous challenges, including habitat loss and fragmentation due to urbanisation, agriculture, and infrastructure development. Intensive farming practices, such as monoculture and pesticide use, threaten the diversity of plant and animal species. Climate change poses additional risks, altering habitats and disrupting ecosystems. Invasive species outcompete native flora and fauna, further diminishing biodiversity. Pollution, including air and water pollution, affects both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, harming species and degrading habitats. Finally, societal disconnect from nature and lack of awareness about biodiversity conservation exacerbate these issues. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts across sectors to protect and restore habitats, mitigate climate change impacts, and promote sustainable practices that prioritise biodiversity conservation.

As land stewards we are acutely aware of the nature around us as have generations before us. With targeted projects and wider landscape scale schemes, we have been working to protect biodiversity for a long time and we will now accelerate that work.



CASE STUDY:

Wild Edges, Hedges, and Ponds

Over the past three years, we have expanded wilder areas across the Estate. Rewilding doesn't always need to occur on a large scale, and our policy of "if it doesn't need cutting, leave it to grow" reflects this approach. You can see these efforts in our hedges, roadside verges, and public spaces. Additionally, we are restoring ponds across the Estate to enhance these small but vital wildlife refuges.

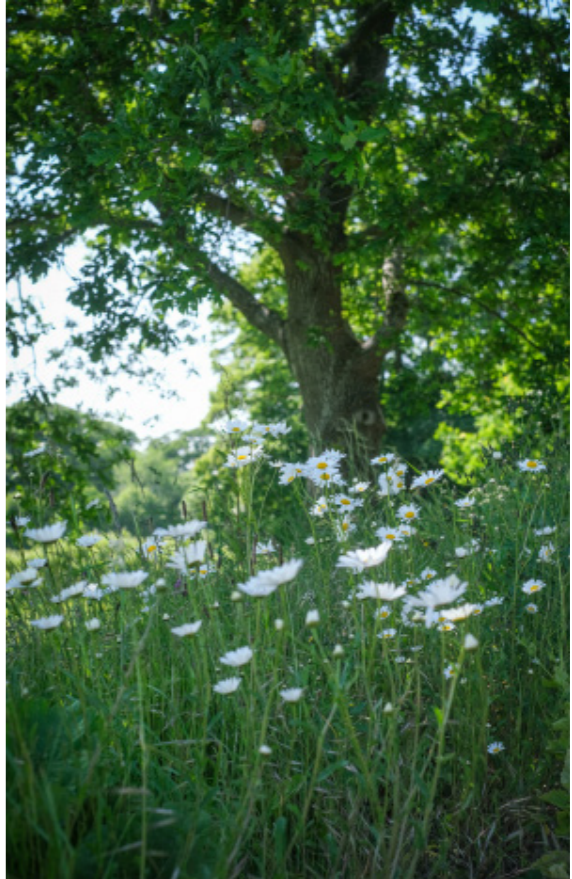


CASE STUDY:

Communicating with the Public through Bee Posts

Through subtle and inspiring initiatives, we have planted wildflowers and installed bee posts to encourage people to replicate these actions in their own gardens. These installations serve as a beautiful and effective way to inspire change and foster engagement with nature.

	Bigger	Better	More joined up
Short Term (end of 2027)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on our Wild Hedges, Edges and Ponds policy of leaving more areas to nature and restoring others to create these vital habitats Use technology and mapping systems to identify opportunities and record the increase in habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to restore hedges across the Estate, enhancing biodiversity and landscape connectivity. Train more of our teams in habitat restoration and monitoring techniques such as hedge-laying bird surveying to preserve these valuable skills and maintain healthy, resilient landscapes Advance habitat restoration through Countryside Stewardship, ensuring long-term environmental benefits and improved ecosystems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the work of decades of bird surveys and train in-house teams to carry out this work Work collaboratively with more stakeholders and corporates to deliver landscape scale impacts Host more children on to the Estate to understand the work we do, and the work needed in the future
Medium term (end of 2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver landscape scale projects alongside our neighbours and partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek out other opportunities to create or enhance habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to implement a whole Estate connectivity network of habitats. In theory a species can walk from one side of the Estate to the other fully protected by hedges, woodland or scrub
Long term	<p>Our long-term goal is to achieve measurable improvements across all data sets we maintain, including expanding the land dedicated to nature, increasing the diversity of species on the Estate, and boosting the population size of those species. Additionally, we are committed to supporting the South Downs National Park's goal of dedicating 30% of the Park to nature by 2030</p>		



Environmental Resilience

Adapt to environmental change

The Aim

Adapt to environmental change to secure the long term future of the Estate

The Benefit

By evolving and adapting to the changes we are already experiencing, we will ensure the long-term resilience of the land.

How will we measure success?

- Success will be measured by observing and reporting changes in our practices that reduce the impact of environmental change.

Current Situation

Globally, significant efforts are underway to combat environmental decline, including addressing climate change, decreasing clean water availability, and growing biosecurity threats. However, the impacts of these changes are already being felt across ecosystems, economies, communities, and individual health and well-being. Adaptation is essential, not only to address the immediate environmental challenges we face but also to build a resilient and sustainable future.

While reducing greenhouse gas emissions remains a critical part of mitigating future climate impacts, adapting to the changes already underway is equally important. Adaptation is necessary to protect people, natural systems, and economies as the planet continues to warm.

At Cowdray, we are witnessing these challenges firsthand, whether it's increased disease pressure on our woodlands, extreme weather events, or the spread of invasive species. Each of these challenges serves as a reminder of the need to adapt proactively to ensure the ongoing health and resilience of the land.



CASE STUDY:

More diverse mix of crops

Whether on our farm or in our woodlands, we are proactively building resilience against environmental changes. Traditionally, our farm focused on a rotation of four main crops, but we now grow over ten different crops. This diversity provides stability; if one crop fails due to drought, for instance, another may thrive.

In our woodlands, we are also taking a forward-thinking approach, considering the lifespan of a tree, which can be up to 100 years. We are moving away from monocultures, instead planting a diverse mix of species. Many of these seeds are sourced from central and northern France, reflecting the climate conditions expected when these trees reach maturity.



Nature Based Solutions

Adapt our Working

Plan for the Future

Examples of interventions

- Work with partners and stakeholders to implement more nature-based solutions
- Plant more trees.
 1. For shade for people and animals
 2. To slow the flow of water in extreme rainfalls
- Reconnect the River Rother with the floodplain to slow the flow and filter water naturally
- Build soil health so it can act like a sponge in times of heavy downpours

- Continue to plant a diverse mix of crops and explore opportunities to plant crops that will thrive in warmer climates in the future
- Have a proactive approach to removing invasive non-native species (INNS)
- Educate our teams on biosecurity and the threat of INNS

- Continue to educate and engage ourselves as the world evolves
- Adapt our goals and targets; we will be flexible but ambitious
- Think holistically and use technology to plan
- More renewables to make us less reliant on fossil fuels as they are phased out



Social Impact

Have a positive community and social impact: a Force for Good

The Aim

To secure and enhance the long-term prosperity of the Estate and the people who live and work on it by way of a holistic approach which cares for the land and engages with the wider community

The Benefit

Cowdray does not operate in isolation and recognises that sustainable, resilient and reciprocal relationships between the Estate and those we touch are essential for our business but also the wellbeing and prosperity of the communities we are a part of.

Having a beautiful place to live, work and spend time in has multiple benefits.

How will we measure success?

- Through a series of KPIs set out in our Social Charter.

Current Situation

The decline in social capital and the growing disconnection from nature and farming present significant challenges for communities and the environment. Social capital, the networks, trust, and shared values that hold communities together, has weakened in many areas, partly due to urbanisation, technology and lifestyle changes that have distanced people from the land and natural processes. Fewer people now have direct involvement in farming or understand where their food comes from, and even fewer have regular access to green spaces.

This disconnect from nature reduces awareness of environmental issues and can lead to less support for sustainable practices, conservation and environmental stewardship. Furthermore, without a connection to farming and the natural world, younger generations may miss out on learning the values of resourcefulness, resilience and responsibility towards the environment. Rebuilding social capital through initiatives that reconnect communities with the land—such as community-supported agriculture, farm visits and local environmental projects can foster a deeper understanding of and commitment to sustainable, nature-centred living.

CASE STUDY: A Year in Farming

Over the past two years, we have collaborated with local schools to deliver A Year in Farming, a year-long program designed to connect children with nature and farming. This programme runs throughout the academic year, culminating in an exciting full-day farm visit for the entire school.

In addition to this program, we partner with the Country Trust to host farm visits specifically for schools where more than 25% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can enjoy and learn from these unique opportunities.



CASE STUDY: Training in Traditional Skills

We are deeply committed to preserving traditional skills, recognising their historical significance and their continued relevance in today's world.

- Hedge Laying: Once a vital method for keeping livestock enclosed, hedge laying also rejuvenates hedgerows, enhancing biodiversity and benefiting nature. Recently, several members of our team received training in this ancient craft, ensuring the skill is passed on to future generations.
- Traditional Building Methods: Our works team regularly trains in traditional construction techniques, allowing us to maintain our heritage properties to the highest standards while preserving their historical integrity.

Access and Health

Stakeholder and community
Engagement

Employee
Engagement

Short Term
(end of 2027)

Deliver a Social Charter to complement this document

Examples of
interventions

- Be proactive in our approach to Public Right of Way maintenance by responding to all PRow enquiries within 24hr and take action within a week where possible
 - To improve access for all, we will install stiles with gates when they need replacing
 - Ensure health and safety is of the highest standards for all on the Estate
- Use local contractors and buy local where possible and appropriate
 - Continue to choose a local charity partner
 - Keep prices low to key events such as Cowdray's Maize Maze
 - Engage with the community on our activities through walks and talks
 - Promote the use of traditional techniques both through our own work force and third parties to preserve heritage skills
 - Engage with local volunteer groups to see where there are mutual benefits
- Continue to conduct a staff satisfaction survey (done bi-annually)
 - Contribute to the Cowdray workforce's skill development through training programs related to farming, forestry, or hospitality, with a particular focus on traditional, rural techniques where relevant
 - Inspire the next generation of Estate workers – from farming to admin, we will host schools, take on apprentices and host work experience trips
 - Have more internships and apprenticeships
 - Continue our extensive employee wellbeing programme



