



Bringing Biodiversity Back

KTIF Final Report 2021



Photo Credit – Lynn Cassells, Lynbreck Croft

1. Project Title / Applicants

1.1 Bringing Biodiversity Back – RSPB Scotland and Nature Friendly Farming Network.

1.2 RSPB Scotland forms part of the RSPB, a UK-wide nature conservation charity. Across the UK the RSPB employs 2139 paid staff and has 12101 volunteers. Within RSPB Scotland there are 315 paid staff and 2034 volunteers. RSPB Scotland is headquartered in Edinburgh. RSPB Scotland has a track record of delivering successful projects both large (Flows to the Future £10m+) and small (Project Puffin £55k). RSPB Scotland provide advice to farmers and landowners on a range of issues - from helping priority species to managing important farmland, upland and woodland habitats. Currently the team are involved in the delivery of four Biodiversity Challenge Fund projects and two National Lottery Funded projects, Corncrake Calling and Northern Isles Landscape Partnership project. These projects include delivery of management on the ground and the development of advisory materials and demonstration events targeted towards farmers and landowners. The team is also heavily involved in the delivery of the KTIF funded Biodiversity Monitoring in Shetland facilitated by Shetland Livestock Marketing Group.

The Nature Friendly Farming Network (NFFN) is a UK-wide farmer-led movement, that unites farmers from all sectors and backgrounds (big and small, organic and conventional) to manage their land in ways that deliver benefits for wildlife, soil quality, flood prevention and carbon storage, at the same time as growing healthy food. Created by farmers for farmers, they are the only truly independent voice advocating UK-wide adoption of food production methods that help the natural world.

Over the last two years, NFFN have engaged the membership across the UK with every government consultation on agriculture and the environment and provided considered responses. They have lobbied politicians directly (e.g. at meetings with ministers at our Parliamentary Farmers Markets in Westminster, Holyrood and Stormont) and attended events and shows across the UK (e.g. Groundswell, Royal Welsh, Royal Highland and Balmoral). NFFN farmers have also engaged directly with national media and gained important high-profile coverage for nature friendly farming (e.g. Countryfile, BBC Winterwatch, Radio 4). The organisation also seeks to share best practice and have created numerous farmer case studies and a practical guide to achieve net zero in UK farming.

2. Executive Summary

The commitment of Scottish Government to transition to a sustainable, net zero society by 2045 and restore Scotland's environment will rely on collaboration and innovation across rural sectors, which will be central to the realisation of economic opportunities to support recovery whilst protecting biodiversity.

With agriculture representing the predominant land use in Scotland, covering around 70% of the land area, it is absolutely critical that the commitment to biodiversity support and the

restoration of Scotland's environment go hand in hand with supporting the economic viability of farming businesses as part of a green recovery.

This project aims to explicitly highlight and share activities that enable the restoring, preserving and enhancing of biodiversity and ecosystems dependent on agriculture, particularly highlighting how farming with nature can promote resource efficiency, supporting a shift towards a low carbon and resilient agricultural economy in Scotland.

Due to additional Covid restrictions coming into force in January 2021, it was not possible to undertake regionally focused workshops. With challenges of rural broadband, planned on-farm visits could not be switched to remote. Instead, farmers and crofters took responsibility for their own filming activity and filmed themselves on-farm to be edited into a series of final films. Farmers and crofters also contributed to a range of case studies to highlight nature friendly farming practices across Scotland, aimed at bringing biodiversity back to farms and crofts.

This project has focused on bringing biodiversity back to farmed landscapes and highlighting the economic potential for increasing nature friendly practices as part of the wider NFFN Nature Means Business campaign, using the medium of film to ensure a lasting legacy from the project to promote this work more widely.

3. Project Description

This project initially proposed to highlight existing work undertaken on farms, crofts and estates in four specific regions of Scotland to promote activities and practice that aim to increase biodiversity whilst ensuring financial sustainability for farming operations. The project aimed to ensure ongoing impact by using these initial workshop sessions as a starting point for a facilitated community of practice to offer support and guidance to each of the four regions in developing their nature friendly farming work.

Due to Covid restrictions, it was not possible to undertake regionally focused workshops. Along with the challenges of rural broadband this meant that planned on-farm visits could not be switched to remote farm tours.

Farmers and crofters instead took responsibility for their own filming activity after being provided with guidance (Annex 1) which they then uploaded to a central online dropbox.

Editing of these films is being completed, and the final films will be shared publicly on the 22nd April at a webinar where the contributing farmers and crofters will be presenting their nature friendly approaches as well as answering questions from participants. Film editing was delayed due to challenges with the quality of footage submitted by contributors, and a requirement for re-submission on a number of occasions.

Farmers and crofters also contributed to 8 case studies to highlight nature friendly farming practices across Scotland, aimed at bringing biodiversity back to farms and crofts. These are being shared via the NFFN Farmer e-news which goes out to over 270 farmer members. They will also be shared with farmers and crofters throughout Scotland through RSPB's farmer e-news, the Farm Wildlife website.

4. Finance

The original total value of the project was £10,120 with a maximum KTIF award of **£7590**. In the end the actual cost of the project came in at £10,082 with the KTIF grant contribution of **£7561.50**.

	Final costs of project
Project development costs	£930
Project management & delivery costs	£2652
Farmer time	£2000
Materials costs	£200
Film costs	4300
In Kind	0
	£10,082

Project Development costs – NFFN sustainable farming lead’s time at the start of the project

Project Management and delivery costs – a combination of RSPB and NFFN time to deliver the project

Farmers time – contribution for the time the farmers put aside to help with the production of the videos and case studies.

Materials - filming brief for farmers to enable them to film during lockdown

Film costs - Editing of film footage, animations, and production of a final six films

5. Project Aims/Objectives

Project aims:

- To Share existing nature friendly farming practice across a range of farm and croft types across Scotland.
- Create a stronger nature friendly farming network community with support from a range of organisations to guide, advise and share practices to bring back biodiversity to farmed landscapes.
- Create a legacy resource in the form of a film to highlight existing practice and share potential actions to enable the restoring, preserving and enhancing of biodiversity.
- Establish a network who will benefit from future activity to develop biodiversity identification skills

6. Project Outcomes

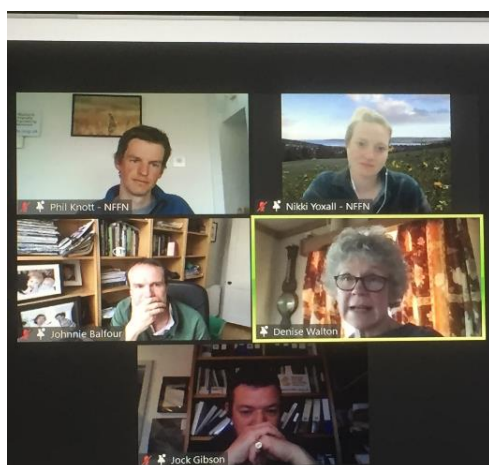
The tangible resource outcomes of the project were:

- six short films produced by farmers within the Nature Friendly Farming network highlighting the work they are doing on their farms and demonstrating how small changes can make big differences for nature and climate. The films came from farmers from different parts of the country covering a range of farming types. These will films have been uploaded onto [NFFN Youtube channel](#) (3-6 minutes each).
- eight case studies to complement the films focused on bringing biodiversity back to farms. These have been shared directly with 270 NFFN farmer members in Scotland alongside the 1,500 members from England, Wales and NI. Case studies can be found on the [Nature Friendly Farming Network - Sustainable Farming \(nffn.org.uk\)](#) website.



One of the case studies.

- a webinar where 40 participants came together to discuss the findings of the hear directly from farmers and crofters about approaches to bringing biodiversity back.



Webinar: Five of the farmers involved in the films

In addition, NFFN farmer members and webinar participants will be invited to join a facilitated online social media group to enable ongoing discussion and practice sharing over the next 12 months and beyond. This work will be led by a new 4-day a week NFFN sustainable farming lead for Scotland.

7. Lessons Learned

Travel restrictions undoubtedly set back the development of film material that effectively showcased nature friendly farming approaches, which would have been more extensive had the film team been able to film on location. Due to waiting for government updates around Christmas time, it was necessary to delay sending out the film guidance and requests to January, and ensure farmers had enough time to undertake filming and submit their contributions.

Additional filming guidance, with some practical remotely delivered sessions to guide filming content and style would have been ideal as some of the initial content from the participating farmers was of poor quality resulting in us having to ask them to film it again. Training similar to the work undertaken by Just Farmers would have been ideal as it was easy to see who had had training in the past few years. In future, NFFN would benefit from engaging with such a programme to enable its farmer members to access more specific training.

8. Communication and Engagement

The farmer e-news has good coverage across Scotland's regions, and has a 60% opening rate, which is the highest rate for NFFN farmer e-news across the UK nations (Wales 52% and England at 46%) which means approximately 150 farmers open and engage with the content in the e-news such as the case studies and KTIF project updates.

Social media has played an important role in sharing registration details for the webinar, (over 11k followers on twitter) and NFFN has utilised relationships with other organisations including Soil Association and the Pasture For Life Association in Scotland working in this space to share the webinar, and will continue to build on this to share the case studies and films over the coming months.

RSPB Scotland has been sharing the case studies, films and webinar through its social media and other communications including pieces on the RSPB farming blog & farming e-newsletter in September which goes to 3,125 within the UK farming industry and through the 700+ face-to-face farming contacts RSPB works with every year.

Printed versions of the case studies have also been taken to events in June and July where representatives of NFFN spoke to the public and farmers about their work. These events included the Edinburgh Science Festival and Groundswell Agriculture. With COVID restrictions lifting NFFN proposes to attend more events in person which will provide more opportunities to promote the key messages from Bringing Biodiversity Back.

9. Key Findings and Recommendations

There have been some advantages in the way the project had to be developed due to the impact of COVID restrictions. This resulted in remote delivery of the project but that enabled an expansion in the number of farmers involved in filming, covering more areas of Scotland and a wider range of farming systems. This has also strengthened connections with ambassadors from other organisations such as Soil Association Scotland and the Pasture Fed Livestock Association (PFLA) as well as enabling greater links within the existing Scottish membership of the Nature Friendly Farming Network.

The key finding from this is that there are many farmers and crofters engaging in nature friendly farming activity, but who are affiliated and working with a range of organisations in the sector. As such, more collaborative working in future would be beneficial, not only for the relevant farmers and organisations, but for those looking to develop these practices and understanding of where to go for that advice and guidance.

Farmer led peer support is a powerful tool (Blokland & Gouët, 2007) and as such, the NFFN in Scotland aims to undertake planning activity to consider how best to further facilitate such support within existing funding structures and projects. This work will be supported by a new 4 day a week post which expands the capacity of the NFFN network in Scotland.

Equipping farmers with skills and equipment to film themselves and their farming practices will help strengthen the voice of Scottish agriculture and enable more effective knowledge exchange.

10. Conclusion

The Nature Friendly Farming Network along with the RSPB is committed to developing the outcomes of this project, ensuring they are disseminated even more widely, utilising partnerships with other organisations to do so. We are also keen to ensure that these products are highlighted during the development of future Rural Development Policies.

Future projects involving farmer led filming will make use of additional training and support, and working with others in the sector such as the Soil Association and the PFLA will further strengthen the promotion of nature friendly farming practices and restoration of biodiversity in the farm landscape in Scotland.

11. Annexes

Annex 1



Contributor Filming Guidelines

Equipment:

- Use the best camera you have - if you can, set the resolution to 1080p. Smartphones often have this as standard.
- If possible, use earphones with a built-in microphone for hands-free calls. If you don't have these, ensure you film in a sheltered spot to avoid wind noise.

General Guidelines:

- Make sure you record landscape/horizontal orientation.
- Avoid covering the camera/microphone with fingers or hands.
- Keep the camera as stable as possible.

The Piece to Camera - *This is footage where you will be talking directly to the camera*

How to Film:

- Use a tripod if available. Alternatively, ask someone to hold the camera as still as they can.
- Avoid filming towards the sun (otherwise all we'll see is a silhouette!).
- Position yourself in the centre of the shot. The bottom of the frame should be at the centre of your chest. The top of the frame should be slightly above your head. Moving slightly left or right of centre can be less confrontational (*see examples below*).



- Review your recordings to ensure that you are well lit, heard clearly and there is no disruptive background noise.
- *Tip:* Record a short test video beforehand to check everything looks and sounds okay.

What to Say:

Please tell us about how you employ nature-friendly methods on your farm, and anything else you think may be relevant. Please also cover the following points:

- Introduction (Who are you? Where do you farm? How long have you farmed for? Any other relevant info).
- Tell us about the nature-friendly farming methods that you use. Why are they beneficial to you and the environment?
- Have you always farmed this way? Or did you make a change? If so, why did you change?
- Do you have plans for the future when it comes to nature-friendly farming?
- What would you say to a farmer who is yet embrace nature-friendly farming?

Cutaways - These shots, usually close-ups or landscapes, add context and keep the film flowing nicely

How to Film:

- These can be filmed stationary or slowly panned left to right.
- Feel free to be creative. It is good to have varied types of shots e.g. close-ups, long shots.
- Please film as much cutaway footage as you can! Cutaway content maintains audience attention and helps get your points across.

What to Film:

- This is your chance to show-off your farm!
- Please provide footage that relates to what you have told us in your piece-to-camera.
- General farm footage (e.g. machinery, livestock, fields, employees, produce).
- Film your surroundings to set the scene (e.g. nice scenery, farm buildings, livestock in fields).



Submitting Footage:

- Please upload your footage here: www.dropbox.com/request/hrpeT3c7POSfHe11qCBb
- The deadline for submissions is Saturday 13th March 2021.
- You will likely have lots of film clips to upload. Try uploading just a few at a time if your internet is slow.

Checklist

Please ensure that:

- your footage is filmed in landscape orientation and in HD
- you film both piece-to-camera and cutaway footage, following the guidelines above
- you submit your footage to the link above before Saturday 13th March

Thank You for contributing to the upcoming NFFN film series.
Good Luck! We look forward to receiving your footage.

If you have any questions or issues at all please contact

