

CASE STUDY 05

woods, landscape and heritage

The Neroche Project, Somerset

Named after the Norman motte and bailey castle near Staple Fitzpaine, the Neroche project aims to restore the landscape of the Blackdown Hills to their former glory and to protect beauty spots whilst enhancing the area's natural and historic features. A wide partnership has come together to propose and deliver the project and Forest Enterprise, as a major landowner and land manager in the area, has succeeded in winning £2m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help support the work required.

This will include restoring wildlife and ancient habitats, conserving archaeology, improving public access and involving local people in arts projects and training. A major component will be the removal of areas of conifers and either restoring the land to native woodland or to open ground.

Specialist work on mapping and monitoring ancient trees, butterflies and archaeology will lead and inform the practical work and the involvement of local people. In addition to transforming the landscape, the project will provide training for apprentices, re-introduce woodland grazing by cattle and pigs and assist in improving outdoor education for children through the Forest Schools initiative.

The Neroche project is an excellent example of bringing together a wide range of interests, forging an agreed vision and strategy and then delivering that vision through sound planning, implementation and funding.



Top: A children's art event at Castle Neroche

Above: Coppicing at Castle Neroche

Below: The Wellington Monument, Blackdown Hills, Somerset

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