

National Estate for Nature Group

Meeting Minutes: 18 June 2026

Attendance

- Defra: Minister for Nature Mary Creagh CBE MP, Jed Hamblin-Boone, Edward Barker, Andrew Jackson, Ian Fenn
- Natural England: Tony Juniper, Amanda Craig, Andy Smith
- Forestry England: Mike Seddon
- Environment Agency: Jenni Balmer, Izzy Edwards
- Canal and River Trust: Heather Clarke
- The Church Commissioners: Paul Jaffe, Robbie Brett, Laura Moss-Bromage
- Clinton Devon Estates: Sam Bridgewater
- The Crown Estate: Bill Eyres
- Duchy of Cornwall: David Cope
- Duchy of Lancaster: Mark Coombs
- Elveden Estate: Rob Minty
- Holkham Estate: Jake Fiennes
- MoD: James Clare
- MoJ: Carl Von Reibnitz, Sara Harrison
- National Trust: Rosie Hails
- National Highways: Stephen Elderkin
- RSPB: Michael Copleston
- Wildlife Trusts: Dan Pescod

Apologies:

- Forestry Commission
- Department for Transport
- Homes England
- Network Rail
- Yorkshire Water
- United Utilities

Actions

Defra Group to:

1. Propose and schedule sessions and/or working groups for NEN members on topics including 30by30, supporting nature recovery with tenant farmers, nature financing.

Members to:

2. Consider assessing and screening land and feeding views on Defra's 30by30 Delivery Plan.
3. Continue to propose sites or other options for future discussion.

Minutes

Members met on part of the Church Commissioners' estate at Kent's Hoo Peninsula. They discussed the development and publication of estate management plans, including the Government Estate Nature Plan, and how to work as a group and with others to realise individual ambitions and deliver collective success.

Farm walks and on-site presentations and perspectives were provided at St Mary's Marsh and Stoke Marshes by local tenant farmer, farm cluster, RSPB and Church Commissioners representatives and project leads. Practical and administrative approaches to landscape scale habitat restoration for breeding waders and other wildlife were discussed, highlighting project successes, challenges and opportunities.

Members discussed similar approaches and replicating or unlocking further opportunities, with particular attention on tenancy contexts and accessing private markets and investment.

The significance was noted of positive relationship building and strong, long-term partnership between land owners, managers, tenants and advisors. Dedicated project management support, paired with ecological or land management expertise, was highlighted in driving and facilitating action on the ground and at scale, and in helping to tackle administrative challenges such as planning or grant applications and management.

Practical, policy and other measures were discussed to support long-term certainty, innovation, income diversification and blending public and private financing. NEN members encouraged each other to take risks and share advice on nascent market-based approaches, to help inform policy and process and smooth the path for others beyond the group.

Leadership on 30by30 was considered as a particular way for the NEN to demonstrate and engage others in positive action; and to support further policy development and guidance. The importance was also reinforced of recognising and delivering action which would not directly contribute to 30by30 but to the Environment Act targets and nature recovery per se.

Further sites, projects and case studies were discussed as opportunities to help understand, discuss and promote positive action within the group and to support communications to inspire others.