



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Welcome from the Small is Beautiful team

Welcome to the first issue of the Small is Beautiful newsletter! We are excited to launch this update which is designed to keep you informed about the progress and developments of the Small is Beautiful project.

Over the next 18 months, we will be sharing key milestones, insights and ongoing activities during the project's development phase.

Our aim is to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the initiatives underway and how they are shaping the future of sustainable farming and environmental conservation in the Isles of Scilly.

Stay tuned for updates on our partnerships, achievements and plans for the next stages of this exciting journey.



Small is Beautiful project team:

Project Supervisor, Heather Webb

Programme Manager, Jaclyn Pearson (above)

Project Officer, David Mawer (above)

Project development underway

The Small is Beautiful project is part of Defra's Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), Landscape Recovery programme, which aims to restore and enhance the natural environment of the Scilly Islands through sustainable farming and habitat restoration. The initiative focuses on creating and maintaining landscapes that are beneficial for both the environment and local farming communities.

Small is Beautiful is a locally led, collaborative partnership with farmers and growers, the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership, Tresco Estate, the Duchy of Cornwall and other land managers.

The project aims to incentivise and reward farming practices that contribute to the recovery of ecosystems, plus regenerate soils at a scale to suit Scilly.

The overall project vision is:

“An intricate landscape, distinct by its small scale, but rich in wildlife, with thriving communities, enterprises and farms supporting flower and insect-rich habitats.”

The project is designed to help farmers and growers adopt land management practices that improve biodiversity, manage habitats and contribute to the recovery of threatened species.

Specific project aims are:

- **Restoration of natural habitats:** including the management of heathlands, wetlands, and coastal areas to enhance biodiversity and restore key ecosystems.
- **Sustainable grazing:** promoting sustainable livestock grazing methods that regenerate soil health, water retention and biodiversity.
- **Agroforestry:** integrating trees and shrubs into agricultural systems to provide shelter for livestock and wildlife and help sequester carbon.
- **Wildlife-friendly farming practices:** encouraging the use of under-sown crops, cover crops, the maintenance of hedgerows and the establishment of wildflower meadows to support pollinators and farmland birds.

Island farmers: Book your visit from 'Pasture for Life'

Building on existing grazing practices

A key element of the Small is Beautiful project is the development of a grazing plan that supports both conservation grazing, on Wildlife Trust land, and regenerative grazing on farms. The project has teamed up with Pasture for Life, an experienced organisation specialising in regenerative grazing.

Their expertise will guide the development of a grazing system focused on finishing livestock on grass, with minimal supplementary feeding. This approach will help keep the islands' pastures productive while enhancing soil health and boosting biodiversity.

The conservation grazing management plan will be adapted to the varying habitats across the inhabited and possibly the uninhabited islands, taking into account different livestock types and grazing models. This includes strategies for managing cattle, goats, and ponies - key species in conservation grazing that help control invasive plants and maintain habitats like heathlands and maritime grasslands.

The project will engage local farmers and conservation experts to develop a farming system that is both environmentally sustainable and economically viable.

A small-scale abattoir, proposed for the islands, will further strengthen the local economy by allowing livestock to be processed on-site, ensuring that meat produced in Scilly stays within the community with high welfare standards.

This initiative not only promotes regenerative farming practices, but also contributes to the larger goal of landscape recovery in the Isles of Scilly, helping to create a healthy and resilient environment for the future.



David Mawer visiting Borough Farm, Tresco Estate.

David will be in touch regarding a site visit with you soon, or please contact him directly, if you prefer:

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Arable plant surveys

We are delighted to announce that Rosemary Parslow and Ian Bennalick will be joining us to carry out the much-anticipated arable plant surveys as part of the Small is Beautiful project.

Both Rosemary and Ian bring a wealth of experience in botanical surveys and conservation management, making them the perfect fit for this important task.

These surveys will help identify and catalogue key arable plant species across the Isles of Scilly, laying the foundation for targeted conservation efforts on participating farms. *(continued on the next page)*



David Mawer and Jaclyn Pearson welcome Rosemary Parslow (middle right) to the project with Project Liaison Officer, Natural England, Clare Fitzgibbon (middle left).

Their work will not only focus on the identification of species, but also provide valuable management recommendations that will assist farmers in integrating arable plants into their farming practices. This is a critical component of the project, which aims to conserve native arable plants while enhancing the overall biodiversity of the islands.

In addition to the surveys, Rosemary and Ian will play a key role in advising on seed bank activation methods, providing practical, cost-effective management strategies. They will also be advising Jaclyn and David on how they can train and support local farmers.

Their expertise will be instrumental in developing a comprehensive monitoring framework to ensure the success of the conservation efforts across the project area.

We are confident that with their skills and experience, Rosemary and Ian will make a significant contribution to the project's goal of restoring and maintaining a diverse range of arable plants, fostering a healthier ecosystem and more sustainable farming practices in the Isles of Scilly.

The importance of biosecurity in the Isles of Scilly

The Isles of Scilly are a unique and fragile environment, home to diverse ecosystems, rare wildlife, and a rich cultural heritage. However, their isolation makes them highly vulnerable to invasive species and diseases. Effective biosecurity measures are essential to protect these ecosystems, safeguard agriculture and support local livelihoods.

The Small is Beautiful project recognises this importance and is actively exploring ways to prevent the spread of harmful threats, including Dutch Elm Disease, Varroa mite and bovine tuberculosis (TB).

Dutch Elm Disease could devastate native Elm populations, vital habitats for many species, while Varroa mite, a parasite affecting honeybees, threatens pollination and food production.



Proactively addressing these risks will sustain Scilly's biodiversity and agriculture. Bovine TB poses a serious risk to farming and its prevention is critical for the agricultural economy.

In November, the project held a biosecurity workshop, bringing together over 20 different stakeholders on Scilly and within government, to prioritise efforts and plan actions.

The project is keen to support farmers and land managers in improving biosecurity. This could include funding infrastructure, training, or compensating land managers for actions like monitoring and controlling invasive species.

The next biosecurity workshop is planned for Thursday, 13th February. If you would like more information or to get involved, please get in touch.

Bryher, Tresco, St Martin's & St Agnes primary school pupils design project logo

This inspiring initiative united pupils from the three off-island school bases, involved three boats, a field trip to Tresco, and over 30 excited children enjoying time with their neighbouring island friends.

The logo depicts key Scilly species selected by the children. The Scilly shrew symbolises all the islands, the red-barbed ant represents St Martin's, the dwarf pansy reflects Bryher, and the storm petrel (a flock of birds) embodies St Agnes. These species showcase their unique habitats, with hopes the project will help them flourish.

The children wanted a house to symbolise the island communities, a tractor for farming, a cow for conservation grazing, and lots of wildflowers to support their favourite creature—the Scilly bee!



The Small is Beautiful Steering Group

- **Jacob Blackett**, Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership Manager
- **Julian Branscombe**, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, Chief Executive Officer
- **Kylie Carter, Issy Tibbs and Jess Vian**, Farmers' and Growers' Initiative Officers
- **Twiga Drewett**, Duchy of Cornwall, Rural Estate Surveyor
- **Graham Eggs**, Farming Representative, Bryher
- **Rob Hale**, Farmer Representative, St Mary's
- **Aiden Hicks**, Farming representative, St Agnes
- **Ben Julian**, Farming Representative, St Martin's
- **Harry Legg**, Council of the Isles of Scilly, Lead member for environment, environment services, and climate change
- **David Mawer**, Small is Beautiful Project Officer
- **Diana Mompoloki**, Duchy of Cornwall, Land Steward
- **Matthew Morris**, Duchy of Cornwall, Rural Director & Director Isles of Scilly Nature Co.
- **Mike Nelhams**, Tresco Estate, Gardens Curator
- **Jaclyn Pearson**, Small is Beautiful Programme Manager
- **Tony Richardson**, Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership Chair
- **Heather Webb**, Duchy of Cornwall, Head of Future Farming and Director Isles of Scilly Nature Co.



Steering Group members visiting rocket hives on Tresco.

Get in touch

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact either Jaclyn or David:

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