

# SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

## Welcome to our May Newsletter

This month we have continued surveys with our contractors, installed 'chirrup devices' and welcomed our Project Liaison Officer, Clare Fitzgibbon, to check on project progress.



Left: In April, Jaclyn and David hosted a site visit for Natural England Project Liaison Officer, Clare Fitzgibbon (middle) on Bryher.

Right: Dwarf pansy, Rushy Bay.



## Arable Plant Surveys Underway

Surveys are now underway to record arable plants across the Isles of Scilly. These important baseline surveys will help us understand which rare and special species are currently present and identify opportunities to support their recovery through land management. Ian Bennallick started the fieldwork last month and will be returning to the islands in mid-May to continue the surveys. Dave Mawer will be in touch to coordinate access and plan survey visits on St Martin's, Bryher, and St Mary's.

### Here's what to expect:

- **Survey visits will be arranged directly with you.**
- **The team will be wearing bright green hats** – so you, your family or your team can easily recognise them out in the field.
- **There will usually be someone available to chat during the survey**, so please feel free to ask any questions.



Left: Johann Hicks joins Dave and Ian Bennallick on a survey across Tamarisk Farm, St Agnes

Right: Ian and Jaclyn talk to Paul Whittaker, Trenoweth Flowers



# Regenerative Flower Farming & Conservation Grazing Support Teams are returning to Scilly

Specialist support teams from Terraformer and Pasture for Life will soon be back on the islands to continue their work with the Small is Beautiful project.

## Pasture for Life – Conservation Grazing

Dan Smith and Alex Crawley visited in March to meet land managers and discuss conservation grazing. They're reviewing your feedback and will return soon for follow-up visits. If you've not yet spoken with them, you'll have another chance during their next trip.



Right: Soil health specialists Terraformer conduct a site visit at Rob Hale's Tremelethan Farm

Left: Pasture for Life visit Downs Farm, St Agnes



## Terraformer – Regenerative Flower Farming

In March, Terraformer began developing a Regenerative Growing Guide for narcissi, focusing on soil health and sustainable flower farming. Thanks to all who hosted them – your input has been vital. They'll return shortly to visit more growers and develop practical, locally tailored advice. If we haven't reached out yet, we will soon.

# Passive Acoustic Monitoring: Listening to biodiversity

The Small is Beautiful project is using Chirrup.ai to baseline breeding birds across Scilly farmland and heathland. This will help us track whether future conservation actions are working by identifying trends in farmland bird populations over the coming years. From maintaining trees and hedges that support insect life, to protecting wildflowers that provide vital seeds for farmland birds alike, Chirrup.ai units have been deployed across farmland, land managed by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and Tresco Island Ltd. This data will provide the evidence to show farmers and stakeholders that their actions are making a real difference. Thank you to those who have assisted us to host the Chirrup units.



Left: Jaclyn with the chirrup unit, St Mary's; Middle, Steering Group, St Martin's rep, Ben Julian on St Martin's and Tresco Island Ltd, Jilly Halliday on Tresco



# The Isles of Scilly Farmers & Growers Initiative

The Isles of Scilly Farmers & Growers Initiative (IoSFGI) brings together local farmers and growers across the islands to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and promote sustainable agriculture. On Scilly, the land and community are deeply interconnected, and this initiative reflects that unique relationship.

Supported by Small is Beautiful and the Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership (IoSNL), the initiative is overseen by IoSNL member, Ben Julian (pictured right). The dedicated team of three officers, Kylie Carter (left), Issy Tibbs (middle left), and Jess Vian (middle right), represent the voice of the local agricultural sector.



Left to right, Kylie Carter (Salakee Farm, St Mary's), Issy Tibbs (Veronica Farm, Bryher), Jess Vian, Ben Julian (Churchtown Farm, St Martin's)

Island farmers guide the Initiative's direction, highlighting the support and information they need. One of the most valued aspects has been visits to mainland farms, where meeting peers facing similar challenges provides both insight and inspiration. We also host regular farm walks on the islands, helping to strengthen the bonds between local farmers and growers.

A major focus this year has been the ambitious and much-needed plans for an abattoir on St Mary's. It's a complex project with far-reaching positive benefits for the future of farming on Scilly.

At its heart, the Farmers & Growers Initiative is more than a support network - it's a growing movement. Through collaboration, connection and shared commitment, Scilly's farming community is working together to cultivate a resilient and sustainable future for the islands.

## Equality, Inclusion & Childcare: Supporting participation for all

An important part of our upcoming bid to DEFRA is the inclusion of an Equality Statement. This matters deeply. It's about making sure everyone has the opportunity to be heard. By listening to each other, we find better, richer, and more inclusive solutions. We are all different – and often the same – and those differences strengthen our shared work.

That's why we've chosen a blended approach to engagement: from kitchen table chats to island hall gatherings, and through newsletters like this one. However you want to take part, we want to make it as easy as possible.

One barrier we've heard about is childcare, making it hard for some families, especially those in farming, to attend events. We're responding to this by working with the wonderful Anna Wild and Helen Glenn to provide childcare at key networking events, so that no one is excluded because of family commitments.

But childcare isn't the only challenge. If there's anything that makes it hard for you to participate such as learning needs,



caring responsibilities, emotional wellbeing, or anything else – please let us know. We'll do our best to adapt and support you.

We also recognise that life on Scilly can sometimes feel isolating, even with strong family ties. Please remember there is now a Duchy Family Farming Ambassador and you are never alone in this. Keep talking. And let us know how we can make sure everyone who wants to be part of Small is Beautiful feels genuinely included.

# Consultation on St Agnes: Connecting Nature, Farming and Community

On 15 April, representatives from the RSPB, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and Small is Beautiful gathered on St Agnes to host a collaborative event – your feedback tells us you want to understand how these projects connect, and it's clear how much people care about the landscape we live in. Conversations ranged from seabird recovery and landscape planning, to what Small is Beautiful hopes to achieve.

Highlights included:

- The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust team helped make sense of the wider picture, tying together environmental goals with the needs of island communities.
- Aidan Hicks, a Small is Beautiful Steering Group member, spoke passionately about his family farm, which blends generations of fishing, land management, and regenerative agriculture. Aidan's focus on soil health and sustainable farming continues to support others across the islands.
- Paul St. Pierre (RSPB) and partners reflected on the success of the Seabird Recovery Project on St Agnes and Gugh – a model that could inspire action on other off-islands.

One St Agnes farmer put it perfectly: “A sustainable community means being socially connected, economically secure, and leaving nature in a better place.”



Left: Members of the St Agnes farming community, with IoSWT, RSPB and Small is Beautiful.  
Right, Aiden Hicks, Jaclyn, Dave and Aisling Khan provide an update at the Community Hall



## Stay in touch

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the topics in this newsletter, please get in touch:

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