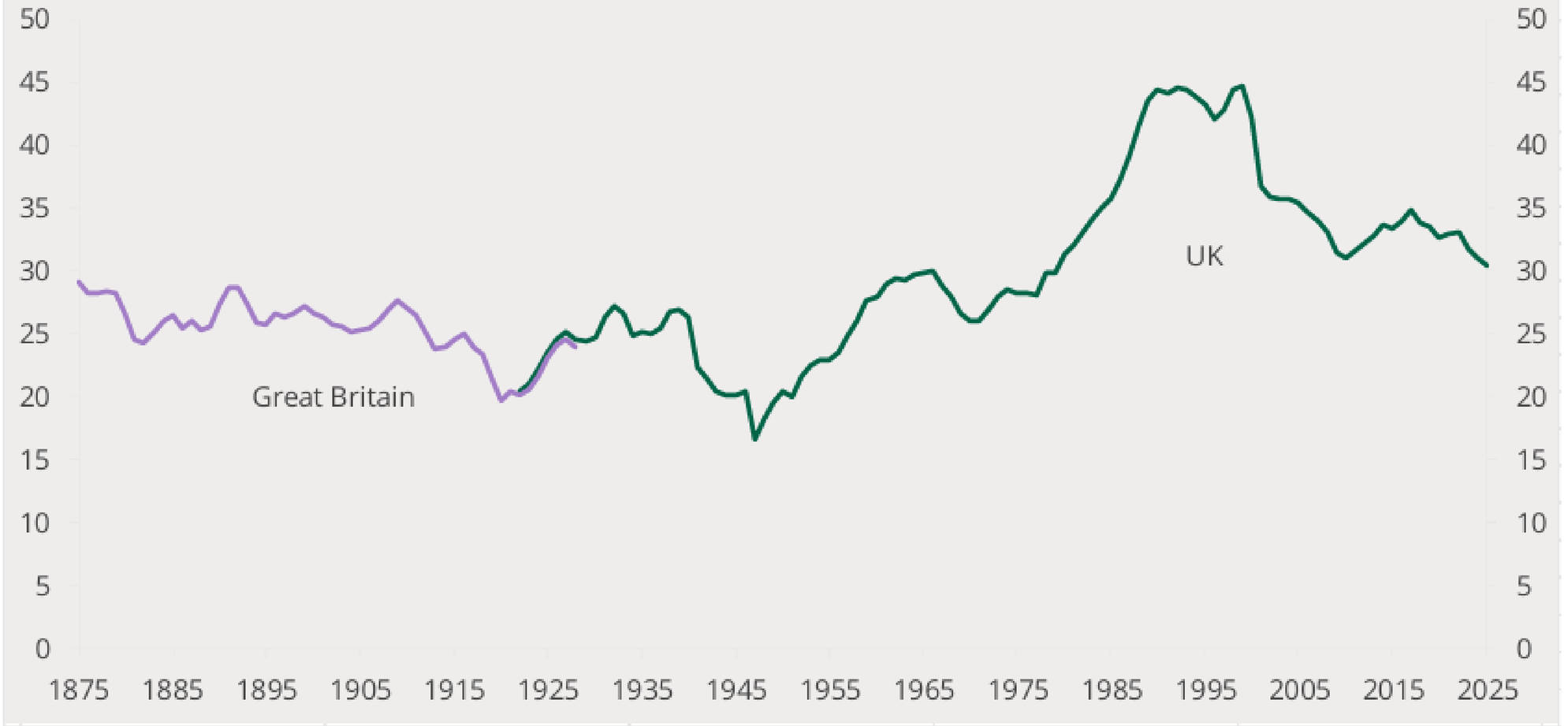


Keeping farming in the uplands

Uplands symposium 2026

Total number of sheep on farms in Great Britain/UK

Millions



Sources: B. R. Mitchell, British Historical Statistics; Annual Review of Agriculture, various years; DEFRA, Agriculture in the UK 2025, table 8.4, 9 July 2026

Food targets and the uplands (and fibre)









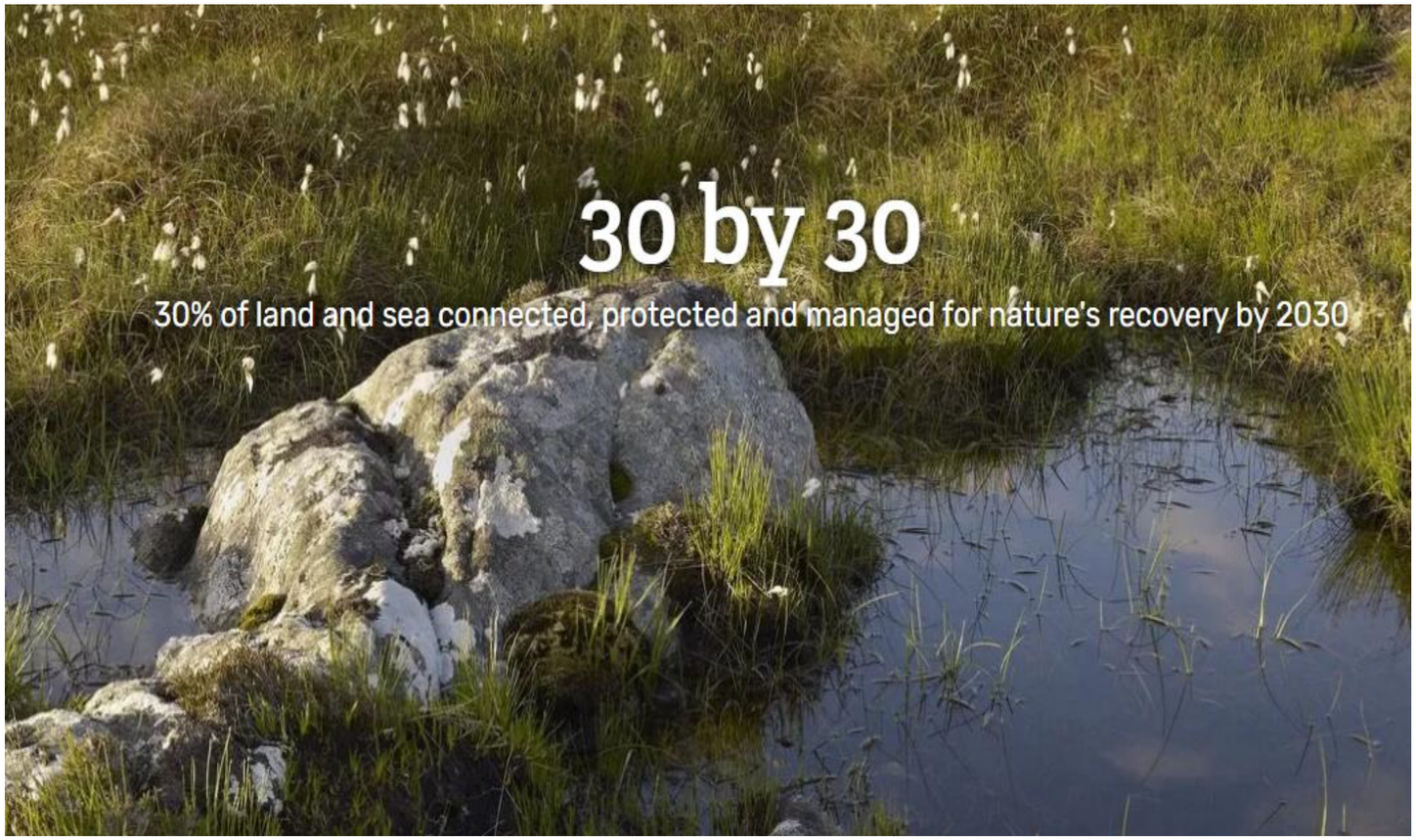
- Maintain indigenous food production
- 65% for all foods and 77% for indigenous foods
- The uplands are highly multi functional
- Not as simple as land sharing or land sparing – the reality can be both.
- Upland farm output often contributes indirectly to food production – breeding stock and store animals

Climate change targets



- Emissions from agriculture accounted for 13% of UK emissions in 2025
- Sequestration and offsetting opportunities are significant in farming and land management. Peatlands and trees have led the field – are soils and grasslands and vegetation catching up?
- Emissions need attention too and have fallen between 2008 – 2025
- Opportunities in uplands arguably lie more in sequestration than emissions reduction?

UK Nature targets



For land:

- 30x30 aims to ensure that natural habitats and species are protected against threats and supported by long term management
  Uplands include significant nature features – many created by farming and grazing.
  But protected sites regularly reported as in unfavourable condition
  Can we demonstrate nature delivery through farming rather than instead of farming?

Environmental Targets (Water) Regulations 2023



Nutrients and Sediment:
Reduce the load of total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and sediment entering the water environment through agricultural diffuse pollution by at least **40%** by **31st December 2038**

Consider water retention and flood avoidance – peatlands and blanket bog in uplands

Also consider protection of aquatic life – water is part of the 30 x 30 nature targets

Air quality: policies, proposals and concerns

Published Tuesday, 30 June, 2026

Research Briefing | Environment

Louise Smith Paul Bolton Annalise Murray

A briefing on evolving air quality policies and legislation across the UK, targets, statistics and health and inequality concerns.

- 16% drop in ammonia emissions by 2030
- Uplands - burning/swaling/ wildfires and air quality
- Peatland management and N2O emissions

Sources of air pollution

Poor air quality arises from a range of pollutants, including sulphur dioxide; nitrogen oxides (NO_x); particulate matter; ozone; non-methane volatile organic compounds; heavy metals; polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons; benzene; 1,3-butadiene; carbon monoxide; and ammonia. These pollutants come from natural and human-made sources such as fossil fuel combustion, road transport, industrial processes, waste incineration, domestic heating, agriculture, solvents and chemical reactions in the atmosphere.

Recent wildfires in England- headline numbers

28,299

Hectares burnt in 2026

1354

2026 Reported wildfires

13,000

2026 Emergency calls

966

wildfires attended in 2026

Climate related
Also land use related
Regularly happen during nesting and breeding season
Puts life and property at risk
We are picking up the cost

Source: South Yorkshire fire service

Northern Region

England’s uplands: scale and strategic importance

40%
of female breeding sheep

27%
of beef breeding cattle

13%
of England’s agricultural workforce

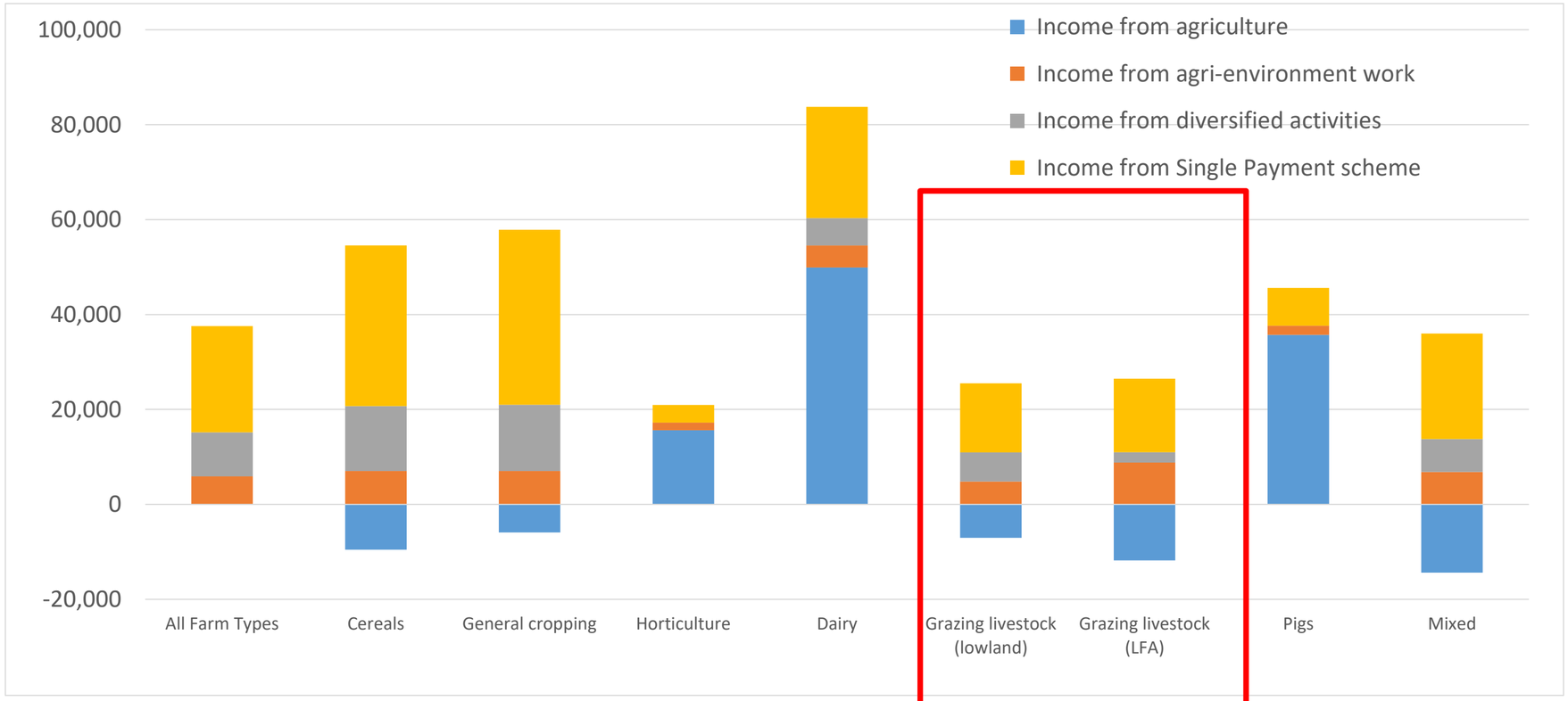
82%
of England’s common land

75%
of uplands in Protected Landscapes

Upland farms form a significant breeding base for England’s livestock sector while managing landscapes with extensive public, environmental and cultural value.

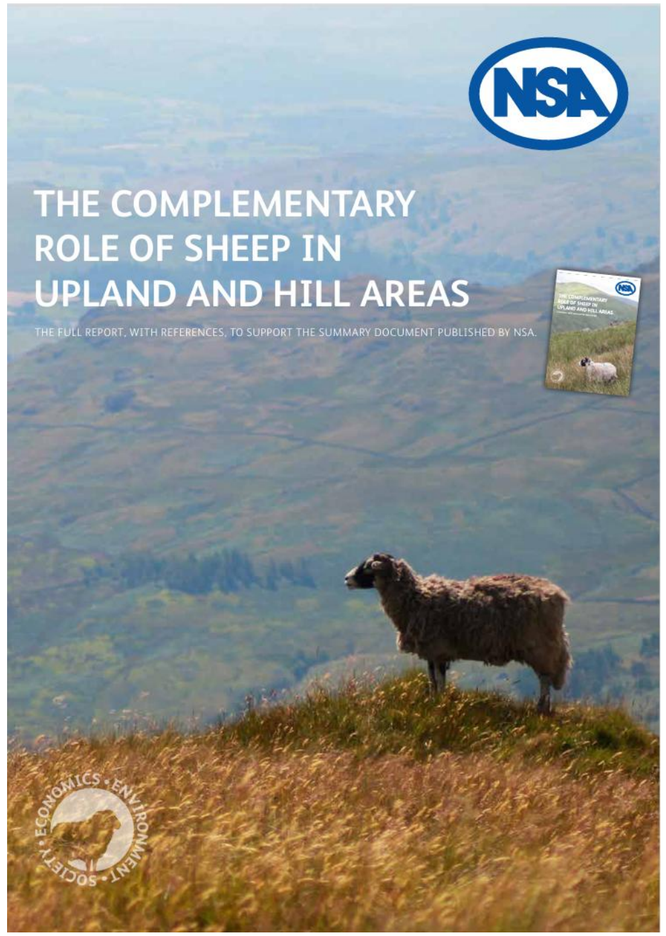
Source: NFU, The Uplands: A vision for prosperity, stewardship and resilience.

Grazing livestock enterprises been dependent on support payments

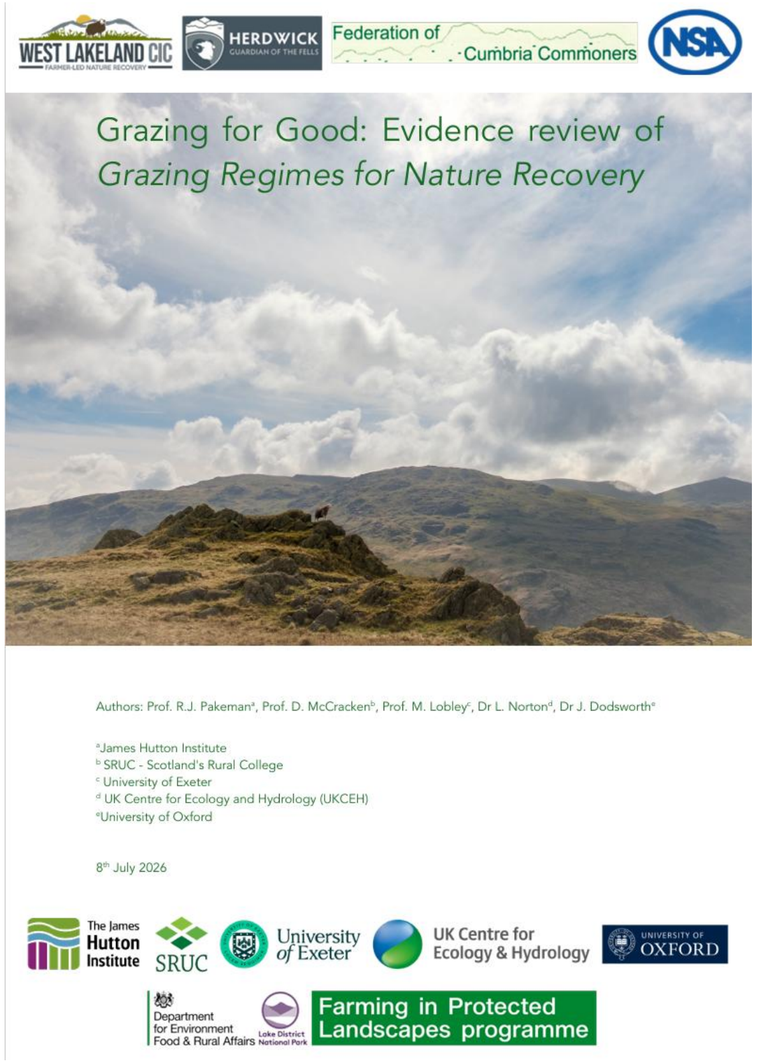


Source : Defra, Farm Business Survey

Leading the conversation









Upland farming as part of the solution



September 2026

- Meeting to bring interested parties together to discuss wildfires and good public outcomes from uplands
- Site visits to view differing management and objectives
- Open discussion about role of livestock farming in uplands
- Full agreement that wildfires are not helpful or desirable
- Need to avoid wildfires starting but accept they will happen and mitigate risk of spread
- Mosaic habitats beneficial for many purposes

A focus on Dartmoor



Combestone Tor, Holne Moor, Rob Fraser

Key stats

- 95,312 hectare National Park est. 1951. Ranges from 30m - 621m above sea level
- 35,882 ha (37%) is common land in 92 separate land units with some 54 landowners, and app. 850 registered commoners
- 25,452 ha are designated SAC and 67% of all commons are SSSI
- 1078 scheduled ancient monuments
- Long history of grazing
    - 1500 ponies summer and winter (20,000 in 1950s)
    - Cattle 3500 in summer and most off in winter (2000 in 1950s)
    - Sheep 38,000 in summer and 31,000 in winter (13,000 in 1950s)

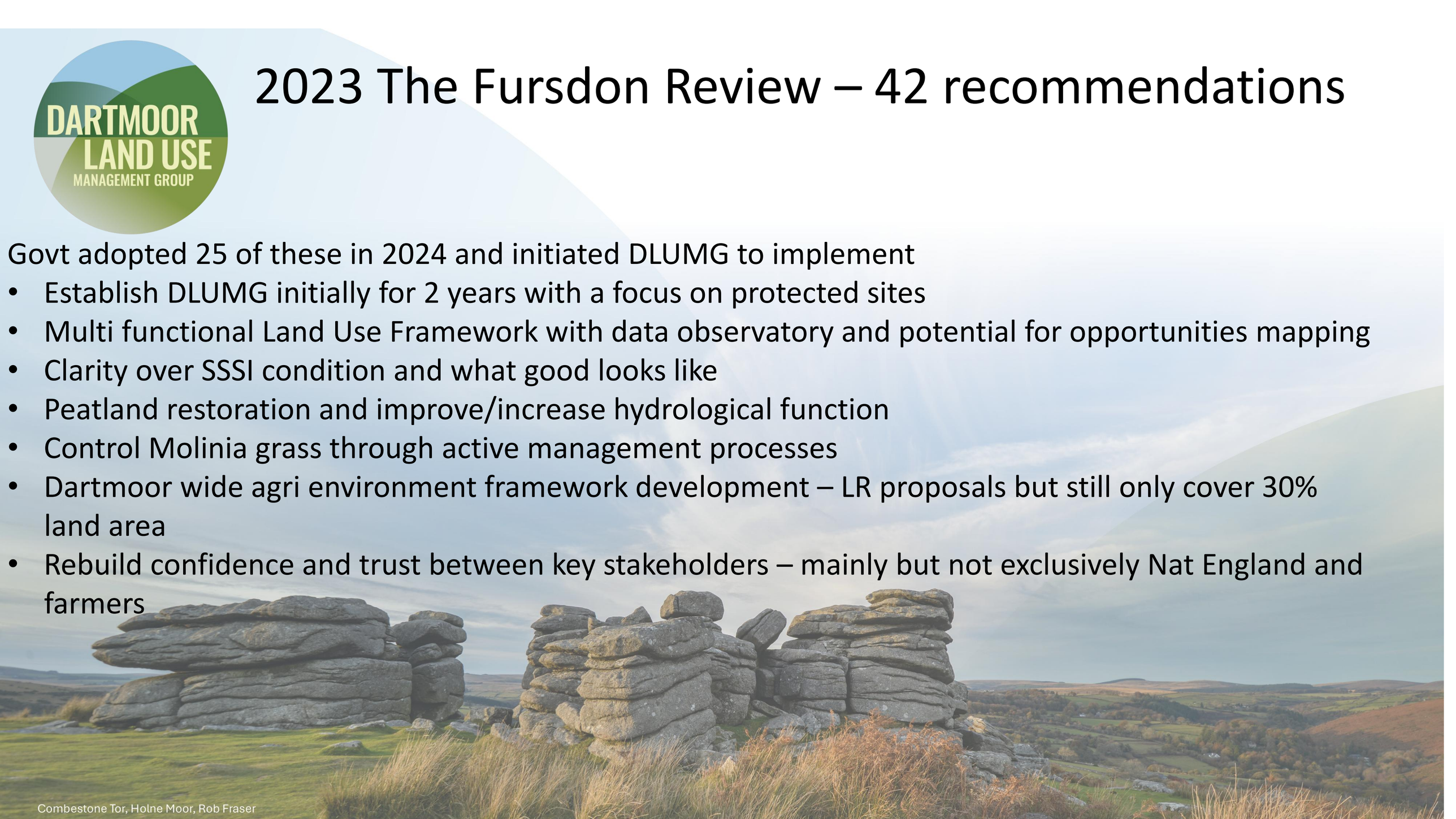


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2023 The Fursdon Review – 42 recommendations

Govt adopted 25 of these in 2024 and initiated DLUMG to implement

- Establish DLUMG initially for 2 years with a focus on protected sites
- Multi functional Land Use Framework with data observatory and potential for opportunities mapping
- Clarity over SSSI condition and what good looks like
- Peatland restoration and improve/increase hydrological function
- Control Molinia grass through active management processes
- Dartmoor wide agri environment framework development – LR proposals but still only cover 30% land area
- Rebuild confidence and trust between key stakeholders – mainly but not exclusively Nat England and farmers



Combestone Tor, Holne Moor, Rob Fraser

DARTMOOR LAND USE MANAGEMENT GROUP

We are an independent advisory group, established following a Government review in 2023. Our purpose is to ensure the appropriate future **management of Dartmoor's protected landscape** and the creation of a multi-functional Land Use Framework, to improve outcomes for people and nature.

The group is independently Chaired and works to encourage collaboration, cooperation and trusted relationships between all those with a responsibility to manage the Dartmoor National Park land area, ensuring it is an **environmentally resilient landscape, underpinned by viable and sustainable farming businesses**.



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Improved nature outcomes underpinned by viable farm businesses. Natural resources, archaeology and heritage.

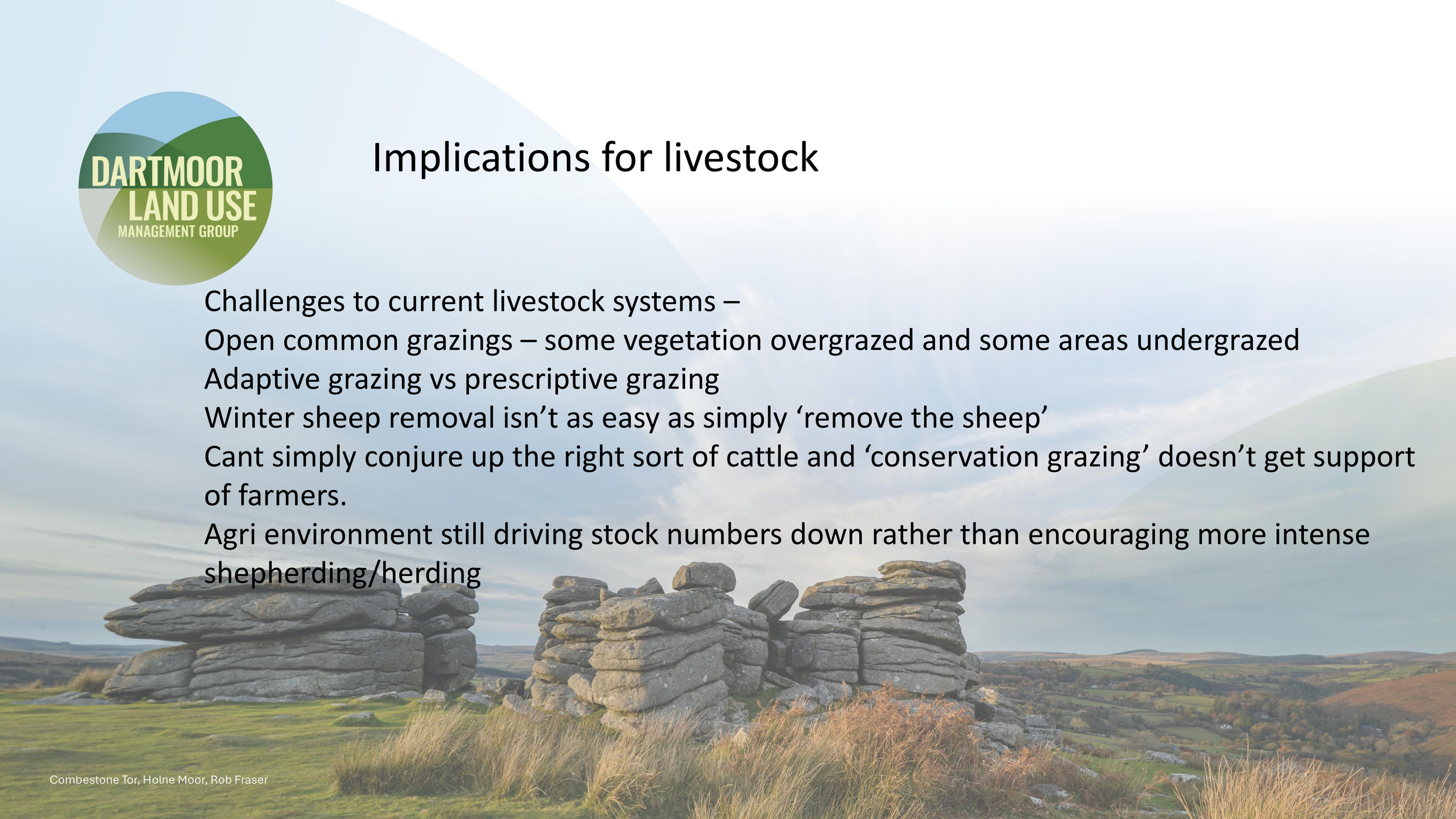
Principles papers/ papers of understanding/unpacking ‘issues’ eg swaling
Development of Land Use Framework
LUF to inform opportunities mapping – peat wetting; tree cover; opening up engulfed heath shrub/letting the light in
Monitoring and site assessment workstream – to support Common Standard Monitoring
Practical field trials – Adaptive grazing, rest and recovery, and stock management options and costs; Molinia control; Bracken management



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Implications for livestock

Challenges to current livestock systems –
Open common grazings – some vegetation overgrazed and some areas undergrazed
Adaptive grazing vs prescriptive grazing
Winter sheep removal isn't as easy as simply 'remove the sheep'
Cant simply conjure up the right sort of cattle and 'conservation grazing' doesn't get support of farmers.
Agri environment still driving stock numbers down rather than encouraging more intense shepherding/herding



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Looking forward

- The future of and role of DLUMG
- Trials extensions
- Ongoing Dartmoor governance role and ensuring the use of the tools developed



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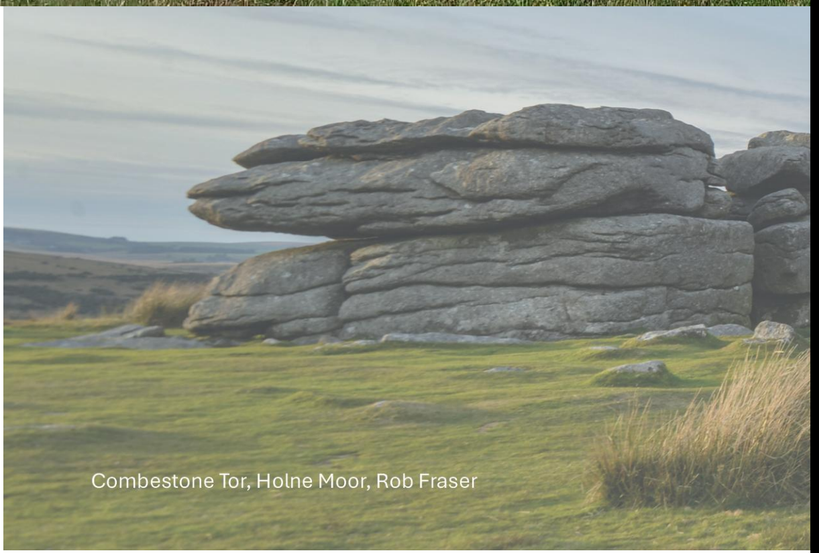
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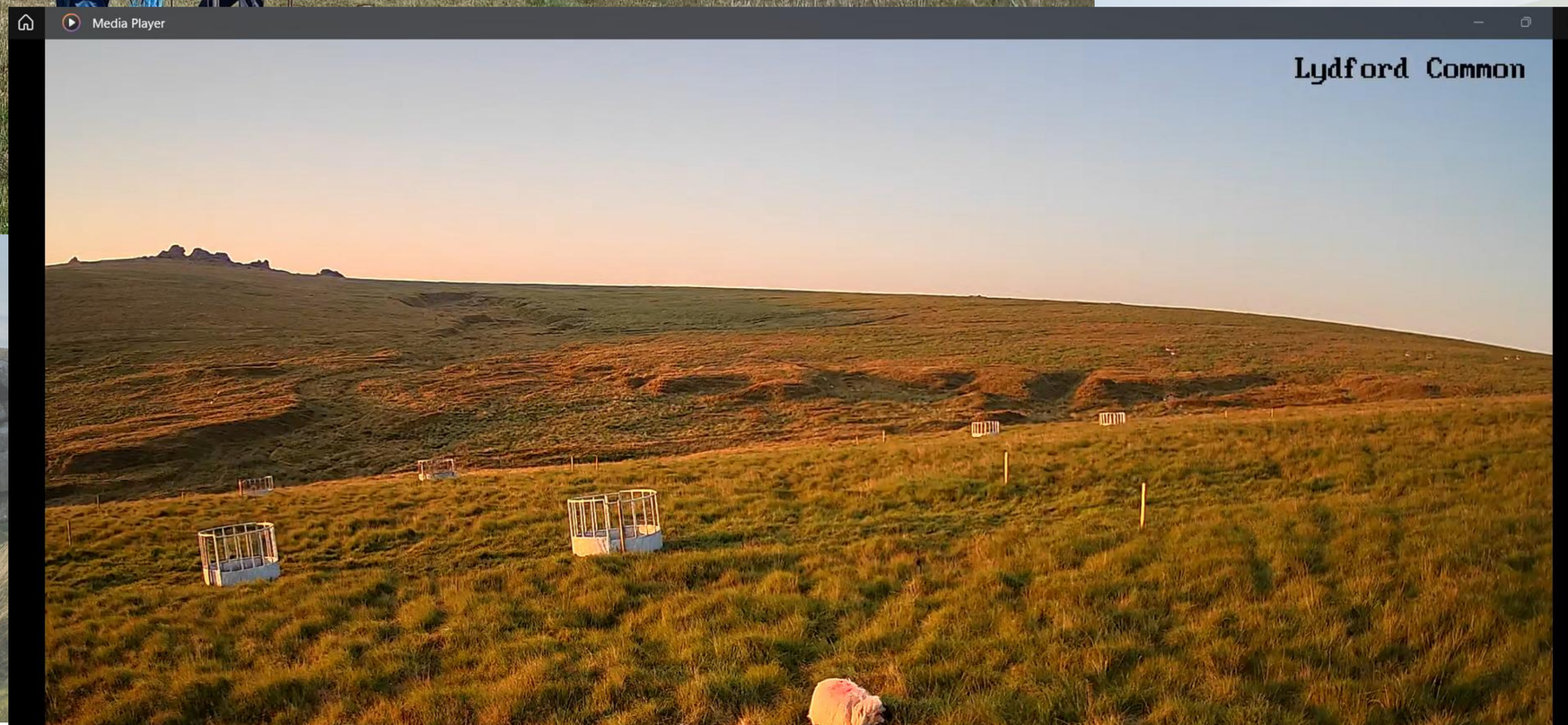




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BLACK MOUNTAINS LAND USE PARTNERSHIP

NATURE NETWORKS FUND 5, 2026-2029

Cronfa Treftadaeth
Heritage Fund

Mewn Partneriaeth â **Llywodraeth Cymru**
In Partnership with **Welsh Government**



CONSERVATION GRAZING

PEATLAND RESTORATION

BRACKEN MANAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

CONSERVATION GRAZING

The Black Mountains are dominated by Molinia, which creates a dangerous fuel load for potential wildfires as well as crowding out biodiversity. Cattle can help control the prevalence of this plant, also known as purple moor grass.

Farmers apply for funding to purchase cattle, cover grazier time, and install practical infrastructure (handling pens, virtual fencing, water troughs). Payments will be increased in line with results - the better the habitat outcomes graziers achieve and document, the more they earn.



PEATLAND RESTORATION

Working in-line with the National Park's peatland priorities on surveying, grip-blocking, rewetting, and Sphagnum reintroduction across priority upland bog areas, improving water regulation and reducing ongoing carbon loss.



BRACKEN MANAGEMENT

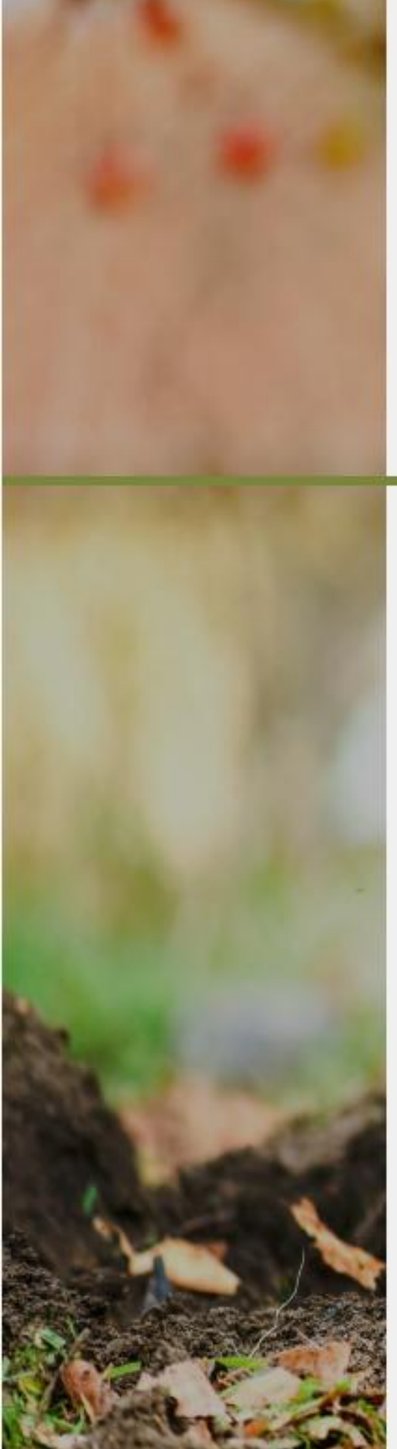
Updated surveys and a funded, long-term management programme across common land, with local contractors carrying out the work wherever possible.



HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

Targeted work to reconnect fragmented heathland, bog, and woodland, including protected areas for endemic Black Mountains Whitebeam.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A participatory land visioning process, building the community's shared plan for the Black Mountains landscape. Skills training for young farmers and new entrants in conservation grazing and habitat monitoring. Coordination support to help graziers access the SFS collaborative tier together. Local contractors prioritised for all habitat works, keeping money in the community wherever possible.

