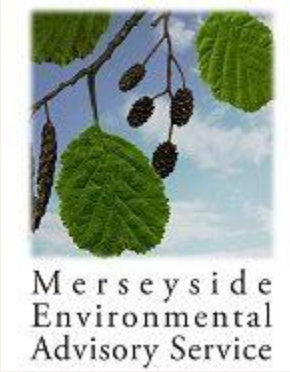


Nature Recovery Opportunities for Farmers and Landowners



Welcome to Water Lane Farm

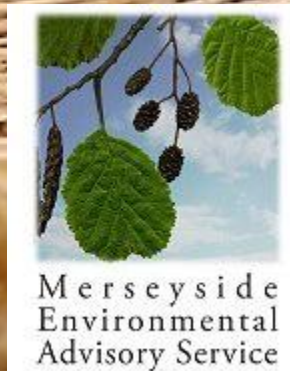


Running order...

- 16:00 – 16:30 – Arrive - Network and refreshments
- 16:30 – 16:40 – Welcome & Introduction
- 16:40 – 16:55 Presentation- Farmland Species Recovery Project Overview
- 16:55 – 17:15 - Presentation – Nature-Based Funding Opportunities and Launch of Habitat Banking Guide
- 17:15 – 17:30 Environmental Land Management Update from NFU
- 17:30 – 17:40 Q&A

- 17:40- 17:50 – Break

- 17:50 – 18:20 - Hartsgrove Farm Case Study
- 18:20 -18:30 – Next Steps
- 18:30 - 19:15 Networking and Supper



House keeping

- Operational farm
- Toilets
- Fire exit
- Wi-Fi
- Refreshments
- Slides and papers
- Q&A – post its



Introductions

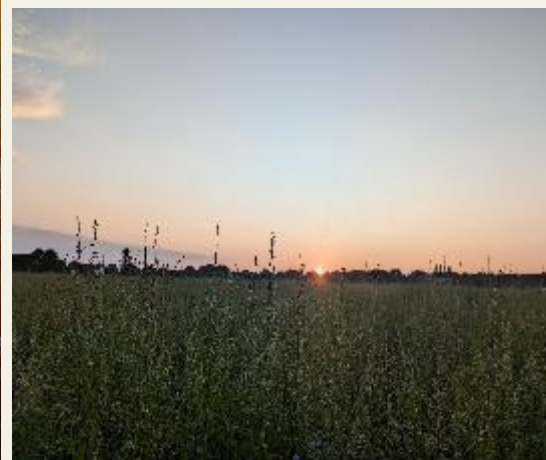


- UK one of most nature depleted countries – bottom 10%
- Biodiversity widely accepted to be in decline
- Locally sites in poor condition, habitats fragmented and most species groups in decline. Strong declines in: butterflies (25%) and arable plants (16%)
- Liverpool City Region approx. 40% farmland
- Significant levels of local authority, estate and farmer land ownership - explore nature recovery opportunities
- Celebrate success of Farmland Species Recovery Project and learn from good practice
- Grow a network and local nature market
- An update on Environmental Land Management schemes





Liverpool City Region Farmland Species Recovery Project



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Liverpool City Region Farmland Species Recovery Project

Introduction

The Liverpool City Region Farmland Species Recovery Project began in August 2023 and completed in March 2025. Beyond this period up to 2030, Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) with support of the landowner will carry out monitoring and essential maintenance of the capital habitat works undertaken.

Background

The Project is designed as a farmland demonstrator targeting recovery of 10 farmland species including a range of birds, brown hare, water vole and purple rampion fumitory (a plant of arable margins) which are species of principle importance and in a state of local and nation decline. This Project was funded by Natural England's Species Recovery Programme Capital Grant Scheme and Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. Mersey Rivers Trust and National Farmers Union also provided support on baseline surveys, capital works design, farmer liaison and agri-schemes.



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Target Species



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WATER VOLE (*Arvicola amphibius*)
Dr John Pinnegar
(CC-BY-NC)



BROWN HARE (*Lepus europaeus*)
Iain Robson



PURPLE RAMPION
FUMITORY (*FUMARIA PURPUREA*)
JOSHUA STYLES
(CC-BY-NC)



SKYLARK (*Aluda ARVENSIS*)
GRAEME BAXTER
(CC-BY-NC)



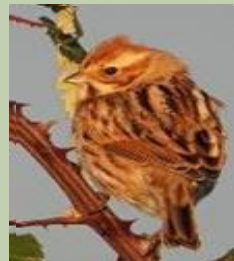
YELLOWHAMMER
(*EMBERIZA CITRINELLA*)
NIGEL VOADEN
(CC-BY)



CORN BUNTING (*Emberiza calandra*)



TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*)



REED BUNTING (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)



LAPWING (*Vanellus vanellus*)



GREY PARTRIDGE (*Perdix perdix*)

Project Outputs



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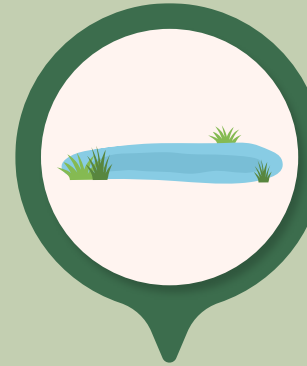
OVER 2.7KM OF SPECIE RICH
HEDGEROW PLANTED



0.6 ACRES OF WET
WOODLAD
PLANTED



OVER 3 ACRES OF
WETLAND CREATED



0.3 ACRES OF SCRAPE
CREATED



OVER 5 ACRES OF
MEADOW ENHANCEMENT

Woodland & Hedgerow



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- 2.73 km of species-rich hedgerow
- Restored & reconnected boundaries
- Shelter for livestock & crops Soil retention & reduced erosion
- Long-term, low-maintenance field structure
- Supports yellowhammer, tree sparrow, grey partridge, brown hare
- Wet woodland created (incl. native black poplar)

Wetland & Scrapes



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- LCR landscape: low, flat, water-holding
- Scrapes, ponds & wetland features
- Better water storage & drainage
- Reduced flooding & soil loss Less cattle poaching; better grazing
- Supports waders, amphibians, invertebrates, water vole
- Works placed on wetter, less-productive land

Species Rich Meadow



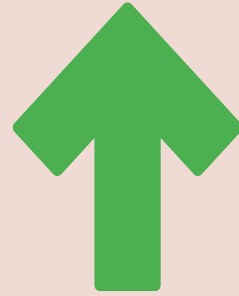
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- 2.1 ha enhanced at Kiln Farm Local seed from WWT Martin Mere
- Deep roots: better infiltration & water storage
- Meadows store carbon like woodland Low-input grassland
- Supports skylark, yellowhammer, corn bunting, grey partridge





BNG UPLIFT



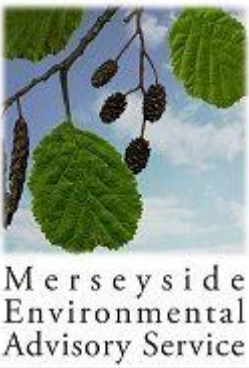
30.21 UPLIFT

30.21 BNG unit uplift this equates to approximately £906,300 of assets for the landowners



VEED

Partnership Working



VOLUNTEER TIME



A Total of 12 volunteers were involved in the project. Taking part in activities such as Brown hare surveys, tree planting and reviewing camera trap footage.

"It was great to work with the MEAS team and understand the values of some of the natural features and habitats on the farm and also increase them further.

The hedgerows and ponds look great and I'm sure the wildlife agree I look forward to hopefully doing more in the future with the team around BNG"

Olly Harrison, Water Lane Farm

"Mersey Rivers Trust were delighted to be involved in this vital partnership project, working alongside MEAS to support vulnerable farmland species in the LCR. We hope we can build on this great work in the future to further conserve and promote the recovery of species across the City Region."

Andy Martin (Senior Project Manager for Merseyside, MRT)



Monitoring – going forward

Habitat	Monitoring activity	Frequency	Links to SFI options
All habitats	Breeding and winter bird “snapshots”	Annual	
Hedgerow	Inspection for failures and condition	Annual	CHRW1: Assess and record hedgerow condition - GOV.UK
Enhanced grassland	Botanical walkover	Annually June/July	
Sparrow boxes	Bird box checks	Annual (March to June)	
All habitats	Brown hare survey	Annual (February/March)	

Habitat	Management activity	Frequency	Links to SFI options
Hedgerow	Remove guards	Year 2-3	
Hedgerow	Formative pruning	Winter of year 1 (2025)	CHRW2: Manage hedgerows - GOV.UK
Hedgerow	Regular cutting	Every 2 -3 years, starting in year 3 (2027)	CHRW2: Manage hedgerows - GOV.UK
Enhanced grassland	Twice annual meadow cuts with clippings removed	Twice annual, once in March – April, once in late summer after flowers have set seed)	GRH6: Manage priority habitat species-rich grassland



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Thank you for listening!

Farmland Species Recovery Project

<https://investinginnaturelcr.com/resources-reports/fsrp/> -



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Nature-Based Funding Opportunities

- A key aim of the Farmland Species Project was to build a local network of landowners – project legacy
- Nature, farming and land management working together and supporting prosperity and wider benefits such as flood alleviation
- Natural England's new strategy:
"Recovering Nature for Growth, Health and Security"
- Recognition of nature as critical infrastructure – underpins growth and well-being
- Nationally and locally opportunities to diversify your business...

Nature and farming

National Food Strategy(Defra, 2022) found:

- Least productive 20% of farmland in UK produces less than 3% of our calories/food
- If 10% of this land managed for nature then would result in 1% less food which could be made up for through food wastage
- Drought, flooding and rising input costs impacting profit and reliability of yields
- Is maximum sustainable output of your land reached...?
- Opportunity to pivot business towards nature-based opportunities on less productive land...?
- Potential for a more sustainable/reliable income

You could make more doing less!



Nature recovery opportunities

For farmers, land-owners and managers



Biodiversity Net Gain

Register as a Biodiversity Gain Site to receive payments towards habitat creation, enhancement and 30-year management

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-a-biodiversity-gain-site>

Apply for Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) to create, enhance and manage habitats

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024/sfi-scheme-information-expanded-offer-for-2024>

Sustainable Farming Incentive

Capital Grants

Grants for 3-year agreements offering capital works for specific environmental benefits such as natural flood management

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-grants-2024/applicants-guide-capital-grants-2024--2>

Scheme pays farmers to manage land in a way that enhances the environment and mitigates climate changes effects

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-get-ready-to-apply/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-preview-guidance>

Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Wood Grants and Incentives

Various grants and incentives available for woodland creation and management

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/woodland-grants-and-incentives-overview-table/woodland-grants-and-incentives-overview-table>

Through the planning system developers have to compensate for impact to farmland habitats and species which are a key priority of the Liverpool City Region Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The farm could receive payments from the developer via the Local Authority or other restoration fund to provide strategic ecological compensate packages

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Local examples – guidance and practice

- NEIRF project – <https://investinginnaturelcr.com>
- Local habitat banks emerging (public/private led)
- Countryside Stewardship in place e.g. Sefton Coast
- Growing take up of Sustainable Farming Incentive
- Landscape recovery ELMs
- Capital grants projects such Alt Catchment NFM project
- Local Authorities e.g. Section 106 agreements
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Great crested newt district level licensing
- Water friendly farming network
- Wetter/carbon farming
- Nature North – regional nature market



INVESTING IN NATURE
Liverpool City Region



We'd love to work with you...

Contact us:

info@eas.sefton.gov.uk

0151 934 4951

Fill out a feedback form

Farmland Species Recovery Project

<https://investinginnaturelcr.com/resources-reports/fsrp/> -



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Setting up a Biodiversity Net Gain habitat bank

Rachael Rhodes

Principal Ecologist - BNG



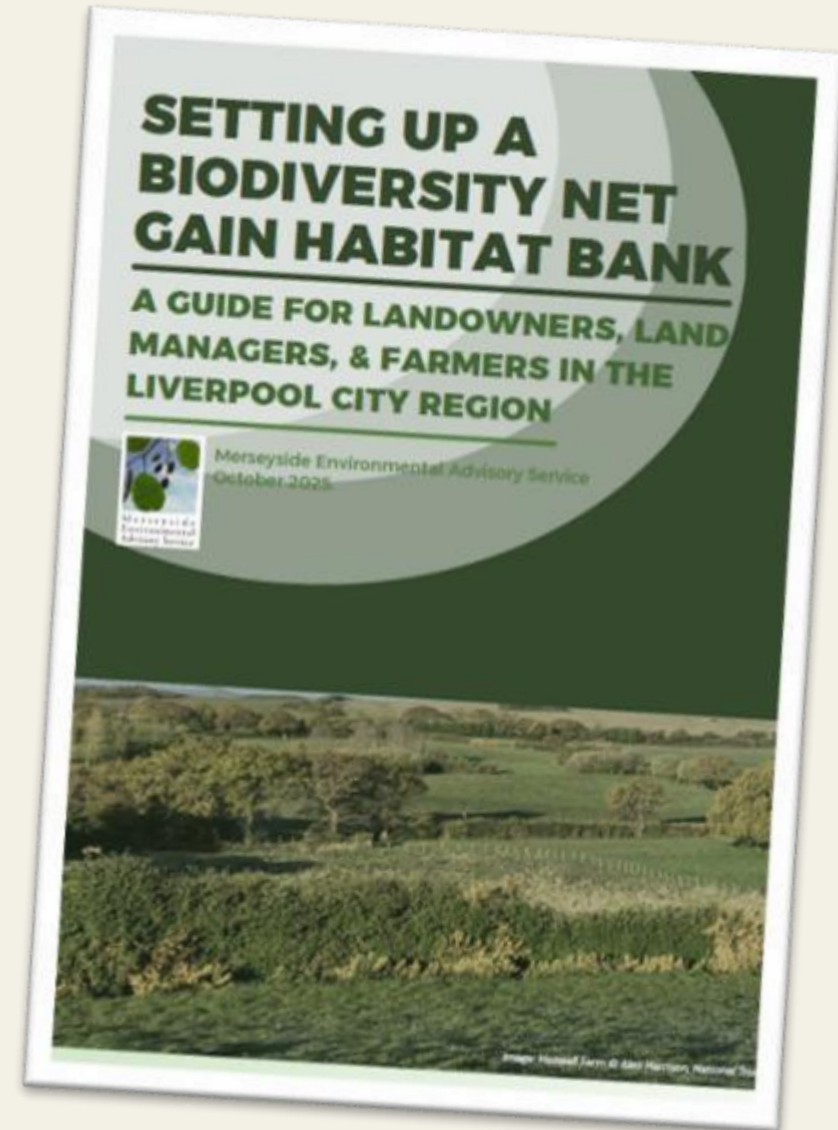
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Setting up a Biodiversity Net Gain habitat bank; Guide for landowners

Launched! - Now available

Provides an overview of BNG habitat banking for landowners.



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Biodiversity Net Gain fundamentals

What is BNG?

BNG is '*an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than before*'.

Now a legal requirement for most development to deliver BNG either on site or off site.

What is a BNG habitat bank?

A habitat bank is a created /enhanced habitat the value of which is measured in Biodiversity Units. These units are then sold to developers to allow them to meet their BNG requirement.



Why should you consider developing a habitat bank?

BNG habitat banks provide a funded mechanism to allow landowners to enhance and manage the biodiversity on their land.

Benefits

- Diversify your business
- Generate income from unprofitable land parcel
- Local wildlife recovery
- Ecosystem services e.g. flood alleviation, soil protection, pollination



KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER

Commitment

The habitat bank will need to be managed and maintained for 30 years, a legal agreement will secure this. It is a long-term commitment.

Cost

Prior to generating revenue from unit sales, there are costs in setting up, maintaining and administering the habitat bank.

Knowledge

Landowners will need to seek specialist advice from ecologists and legal and financial advisors.



Key considerations and set up process

Set up key requirements:

- Ecological expertise
- Legal agreement
- 30 years management and monitoring
- Registering on the national register

Habitat bank models

(1) Landowner-led: you undertake all elements and costs (set up, legal, admin, management, monitoring) but directly receive payment from unit sales.

(2) Third Party: work with a habitat bank company, delegate responsibility and work. This usually involves leasing land, and contracting you to manage it. This option may offer less financial return.



Key steps towards habitat bank establishment



BNG demand and sales

Development demand in the Liverpool City Region is high and there is a requirement for BNG units. Although the BNG market is still young, recent research has provided the market data below, from Biodiversity Units UK October 2025*.

Habitat Type	Distinctiveness	Average price*	Supply
Other neutral grassland	Medium	£25,650	Abundant
Woodland and forest	Medium	£34,709	Medium
Heathland & shrub	Medium	£29,840	Abundant
Lakes/Ponds non priority	Medium	£83,398	Rare
Lowland Meadow	Very High	£34,815	Medium
Watercourse- ditches	Medium	£109,089	Uncommon
Watercourse- rivers & streams	High	£153,750	Scarce
Watercourse- priority habitat	Very High	£203,861	Scarce
Individual trees	Medium	£29,265	Rare
Traditional Orchard	High	£36,118	Medium
Wet Woodland	Medium	£50,225	Scarce
Mixed deciduous woodland	High	£34,849	Uncommon
Open Mosaic Habitat	High	£48,907	Scarce
Floodplain wetland mosaic	High	£60,151	Uncommon
Hedgerows	Med-High	£24,263	Medium

*Average prices per units sold in the north of England, river units average from whole of England.
See biodiversity-units.uk/signup



Examples of BNG potential



Water lane farm

Created 0.81km of species rich native hedgerow = 6.28HeU
@£24,263 per HeU = £150,430.



Kiln farm

Enhancement of 2.1ha other neutral grassland = 6.76HU
@£25,650 per HU = £173,394



Kindling farm

Pond creation and restoration of an existing pond = 2.15HU
@£83,398 per HU = £179,305

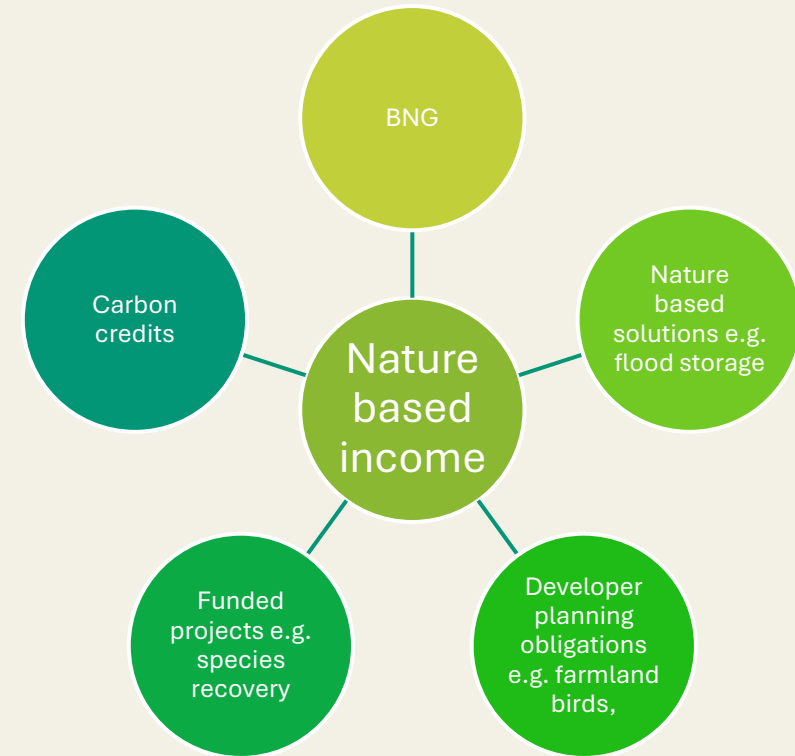
N.B remember these figures need to cover set up and management over 30 years although BNG unit pricing will increase with inflation.

Creating a nature based sustainable income stream

Investing in Nature in the Liverpool City Region project – see website - [Investing in Nature LCR – Investing in nature recovery in the Liverpool City Region](#)

Consider blended finance options which can generate a number of income streams, providing a sustainable income stream which maximises your opportunities and fit your circumstances

Nature friendly farming/landowner network – to attract funding and provide a point of contact.
- Interested fill out the feedback form.



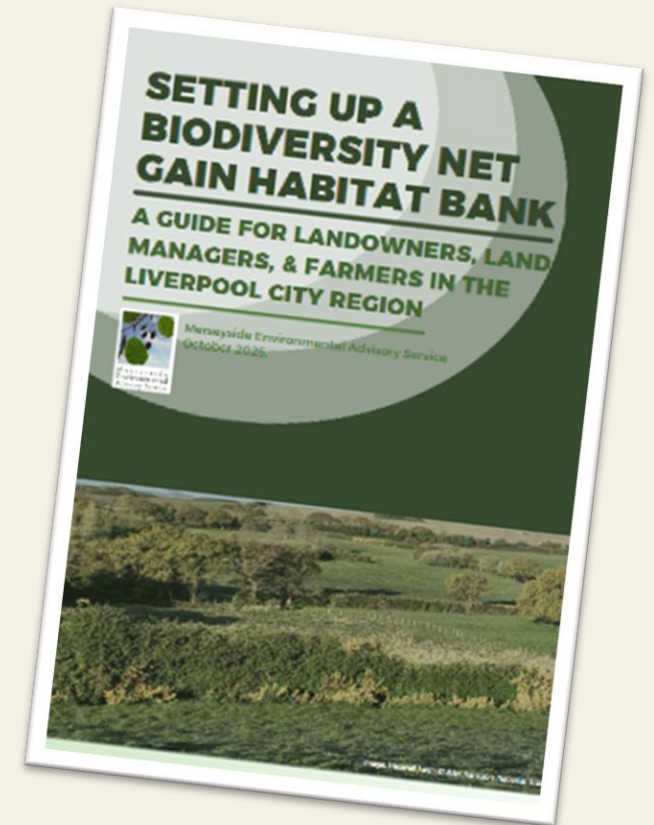
Thank you!

MEAS

We have ecological and planning expertise in house
We continue to support Local Authorities in delivery of
nature recovery projects

Any questions?

Rachael Rhodes – Principal Ecologist - BNG
Rachael.Rhodes@eas.sefton.gov.uk



**More details provided
within the guide!**



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Next steps

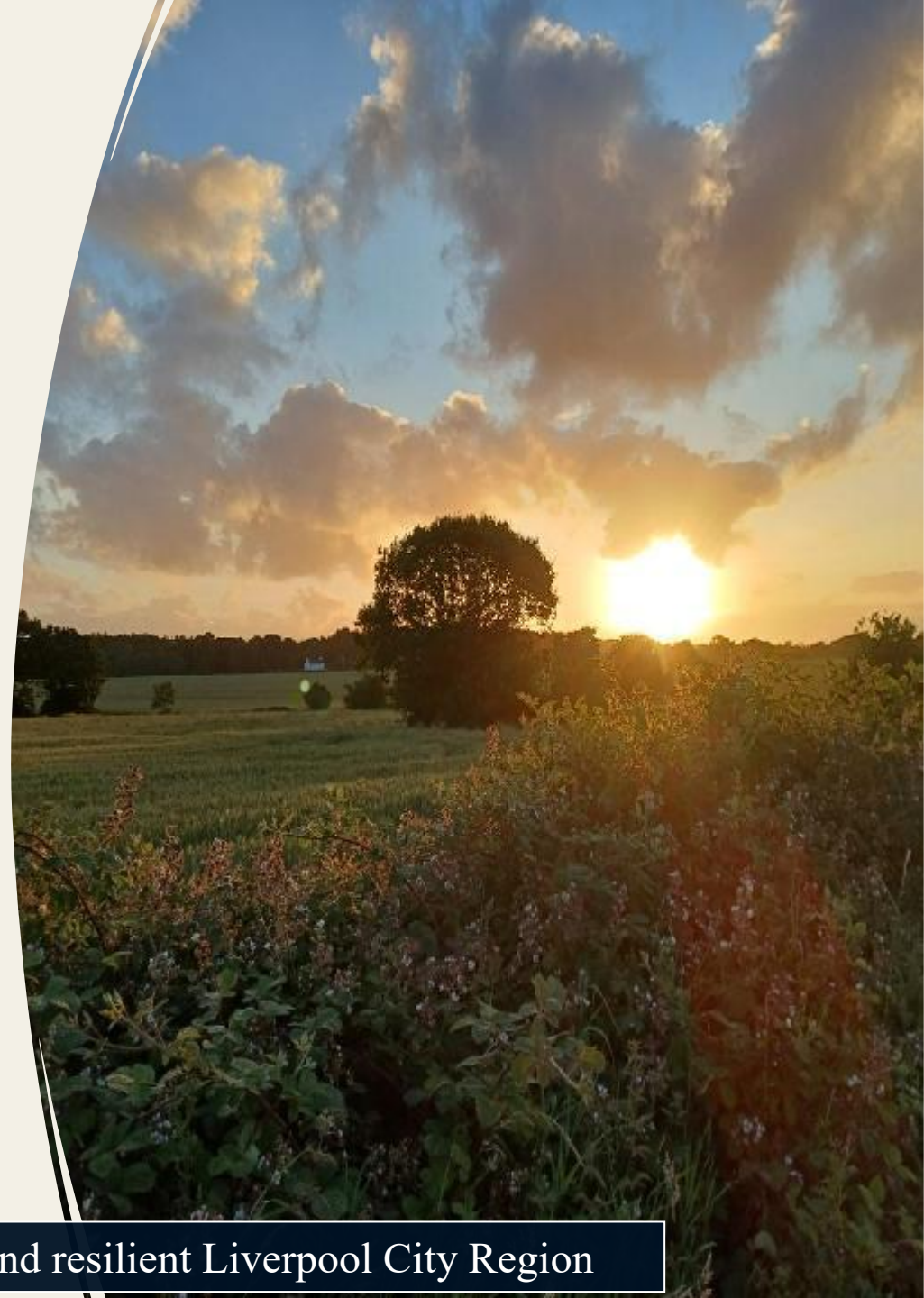
- How can we help and where next?
- What are the challenges / barriers
- Grow a community and nature market
- Project pipeline for nature opportunities
- Review feedback and we'll be in touch

Thank you!



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