

## Fund a plan for improved grassland reversion

*Help us to accelerate changes in our fields to become richer in grass and flower species*

Most of the fields at Heal Somerset are improved pasture. This is a type of cultivated grassland that has been human-modified from the original native grass and wildflower meadows which would have characterised the landscape. As a result, our fields are species-poor and especially lack wildflowers.

Improved pasture was established through ploughing and reseeded the land with specific plant species which were more nutritious and palatable for livestock, like perennial ryegrass, clovers, and other cultivated grasses, and fertilising the land to encourage their growth.

We want to investigate the applicability of a range of potential techniques for reverting improved grassland to a more varied sward over time, which could include cutting and removing grass to reduce fertility, using pigs to create bare earth, using cattle and ponies to diversify sward height and structure, using green hay from SSSI wildflower meadows and deploying yellow rattle which is parasitic on grass and suppresses grass growth, and time itself which will gradually see fertility levels reduce. Establishing the current chemical composition of soils, including pH levels, phosphate and nitrogen loads, will also be necessary.

Given the scale of Heal Somerset, we want to find funding to conduct some initial feasibility studies to help us establish which, if any, options would be practicable for accelerating the reversion of improved grassland and the potential scale and costs of using different techniques in different experimental areas initially to that end.



### **Impact**

An increased abundance and diversity of plant species including wildflowers on the Heal Somerset site.

### **Legacy**

A healthier grassland that will increase habitats and build resilience to critical climate change.