



Nature Recovery
Shropshire and
Telford & Wrekin

Helping nature to recover...

Protecting Offa's Dyke and enhancing biodiversity



Offa's Dyke Conservation Project

Offa's Dyke, marking the English–Welsh border near Montgomery and Chirbury, runs through tenant farms of the Lymore Estate.

Dudston Fields, south of the Chirbury–Montgomery road, are archaeologically significant, featuring ridge and furrow, earthworks, and platforms suggesting historic dwellings.

The land is managed as permanent pasture under organic farming, surrounded by mixed arable fields, hedgerows, and mature oak trees along the Dyke.

The Offa's Dyke Conservation Project faced challenges including gorse overgrowth, livestock erosion, damaging fences and water troughs, and the need for archaeological oversight.

Collaborative actions with the tenant farmer and estate aimed to protect the monument while enhancing biodiversity.

photograph of gorse removal on the monument



Key Actions

- **Magnetometry survey to guide interventions.**
- **Gorse removal and reseeding with native grasses and wildflowers.**
- **Fence removal and new double-fenced hedgerow (hazel, hawthorn, willow, disease-resistant elm, black poplar, lime) to connect habitats and provide fodder.**
- **Relocation of water troughs away from the Dyke to reduce livestock pressure.**
- **Trial protective matting under oak trees to prevent soil erosion.**

Outcomes

- Discovery of an additional earthwork, leading to hedge rerouting and 400m of new hedgerow.
- Creation of wildlife habitat in ungrazed grass margins.
- Improved monument protection and biodiversity, with ongoing care needed for reseeded areas.



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Soil erosion on the monument is caused by farm animals. Their dung creates nutrient rich conditions for nettles to thrive in.

View from Offa's Dyke to the north showing mature trees and the newly planted hedge and fencing to the right.

Improvements to the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail

At Dudston Fields, the National Trail runs alongside the monument to the west. On this section of the trail, two stiles have been replaced with kissing gates to improve the access.

Moving the fence further away from the monument means people get a better view of the scale of Offa's Dyke when walking the trail.

The new hedge, in-between the fences has plenty of space to thicken out without causing problems for walkers.

Grazing animals also have plenty of space to move over the Dyke and out of the way from passing walkers.

New kissing gate to improve access on the trail



New Hedgerow Habitat

The newly planted hedgerow is a mix of hazel and hawthorn, with some willow and other native species.

Hedgerow trees include disease-resistant elm, black poplar, and small-leaved lime.

These were chosen as they are good hedging plants and will provide additional fodder for farm animals as the hedge matures. Willow especially is a source of cobalt, vital for lambs.

The placement of the hedge plants takes account of microclimates and soil conditions, including wetter and drier sections.