

For immediate release – 31 October 2024

## **New Hope for Dorset Meadows as Ryewater Farm Nature Reserve Expands**

- **Plantlife acquires 4.45 acres of land - extending vital nature reserve by 12%**
- **Grasslands restoration efforts will begin summer 2025 to make more wildflower meadows**
- **Restoring meadows will boost rare and threatened wildflowers**

Plantlife's Ryewater Farm Nature Reserve near Corscombe, North Dorset, is to be expanded following the purchase of 4.45 acres (1.8ha) of land neighbouring the existing site, so it can be restored to species-rich grassland.

The expansion has been made possible with a substantial grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, along with a successful fundraising appeal by charity Plantlife. This combined fundraising approach enables immediate purchase, initial action and long-term management of the Nature Reserve.

The initial work to clear the site of waste will take place when weather and ground conditions are suitable, as the site becomes too wet and inaccessible to carry this out over the winter. Other work will include fencing to prepare the site for future conservation grazing following species surveys and a hay cut. The site will be monitored to measure the biodiversity and habitat quality over time.

Plantlife ownership and management of the site will enlarge the Ryewater Farm Nature Reserve, improve the condition and significantly enhance the grassland on the new section of this Site of Special Scientific Interest in the long term.

The original Ryewater Farm Nature Reserve is a 38-acre nature reserve that is a haven for a diverse range of plants and fungi including Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Devils-Bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*. It is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation and an important area of species-rich wildflower meadows. Over the last 30 years the meadows at Ryewater Farm have increased in plant diversity with key species, including Yellow rattle, Common Spotted Orchid and Common Knapweed, increasing markedly.

### **Paul Rowland, Conservation Land Manager, Plantlife, said:**

*"Meadows support more priority wildlife and species than any other habitat – they are essential to life. Restoring this land to favourable condition will help us transform it to a species-rich ecosystem, protecting wild plant species, such as Common spotted orchid, Pignut and Yellow rattle, alongside the dormice and protected bat species that live there."*

### **Hannah Salmon, Head of Individual Giving, Plantlife, added:**

*"This purchase could not have been made possible without the substantial grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and generous donations of our members and supporters. We sincerely thank*



them. Safeguarding this reserve and managing it into the future is not only a massive win for nature but for communities in and around Dorset, now and for generations to come.”

**Stuart McLeod, Director England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:**

“Talking with National Lottery players, we know that nature and the environment are incredibly important to them. That’s why we’re proud to fund Plantlife to deliver this project that will protect and enhance the wildlife and biodiversity of this amazing landscape. At The National Lottery Heritage Fund, we’re incredibly proud to be playing a role in ensuring our natural heritage is safeguarded for generations to come.”

Meadows are one of the most magnificent but threatened habitats. Just 3% have survived in the UK, compared with their area less than a century ago. Botanically rich habitats, it is estimated that meadows home 1,400 different species of invertebrates.

For more information on Ryewater Farm and Plantlife’s nature reserves, go to [Our Nature Reserves - Plantlife](#)

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

Common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*: Flowers in a dense spike, pale pink with a darker streak and dot markings

Pignut *Conopodium majus*: Common in open woodland, hedgerows and dry grassland, pignut is a small umbellifer with fine leaves and delicate stems.

Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*: More or less hairless plant up to 50cm tall with spikes of yellow two-lipped flowers.

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### About Plantlife:

Plantlife is the global charity working to enhance, protect, restore and celebrate the wild plants and fungi that are essential to all life on earth. With two in five plant species at risk of extinction, biodiversity loss is now the fastest it’s ever been and Plantlife’s work has never been more vital. Plantlife champions and accelerates conservation action, working at the heart of



a global network of individuals and organisations, to influence and inspire landowners and land managers, public and private bodies, governments and local communities. As time begins to run out, Plantlife's position as the global voice for wild plants and fungi will help to bring lasting and positive change to our natural world – for everyone's sake.

**About National Heritage Lottery Fund:**

As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, The National Lottery Heritage Fund's vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033.

Over the next ten years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment.

We help protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

We are passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

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