

# WEALD MEADOWS INITIATIVE

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION 2009 – 2011



### *Meadows 'A Vanishing Landscape'*

**Wildflower meadows**, although scarce, hold a significant proportion of the biodiversity of the High and Low Weald Areas. Around 95% have been lost over the last 50 years and those that remain continue to be under threat from change of use or lack of appropriate management.

**The Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI)** aims to assist landowners with practical solutions to the management and survival of the last remaining fragments of this rare and fragile habitat – wildflower meadows of the Weald. It is an established partnership project between the High Weald Landscape Trust, the High Weald AONB Unit, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd.

**From 2010 the WMI**, contracted by the High Weald Landscape Trust and funded by the Nineveh Charitable Trust and private donators, will be continue to support meadow owners while working with both existing and new partners such as the RBG Kew at Wakehurst to secure a long term future for our 'Vanishing Meadows'.

The initiative past experiences and work throughout the High Weald has identified the need for hands on advice and landowner networks to make grassland management practical and viable. It will therefore aim to:-

- Provide a comprehensive site specific advisory service for wildflower meadow management creation and enhancement, including site preparation, establishment and aftercare techniques. Please see [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org) for a range of technical information sheets & web clips
- Increase income for meadow owners to help encourage appropriate management and help secure their future as part of landowner networks or as part of the whole farm enterprise. This will be achieved by widening the economic outlets for meadow products, such as herb-rich hay and assistance through the Weald Grazing Network (WGN) with site grazing and animal transport.
- Encourage networking of meadow owners & contractors through targeted events, HWLT - WMI publications and online information.
- Co-ordinate the collection, processing and marketing of 'wild harvested' Weald Native Origin Seed (WNOS) from species rich meadows for use in enhancing existing species poor grassland and creating new meadows.
- Support Natural England (Defra) Environmental Stewardship Schemes and Habitat Schemes in the use of Native Origin wildflowers and grasses for creation and enhancement.

#### **For further information including surveying and advice please contact:**

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