

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 June 2026

## National Meadows Conference Convenes at Kew Wakehurst, as UK Faces Continued Loss of Wildflower Meadows



Green winged orchids in the High Weald © High Weald National Landscape Partnership; Coronation Meadow, Ollie Dixon © RBG Kew

- **The National Meadows Conference 2026** runs from 19-20 June at Kew Wakehurst's wild botanic garden in Sussex, in the heart of the High Weald National Landscape
- Leading UK experts, land managers, ecologists and conservationists invited to explore how science can help restore one of Britain's most threatened habitats
- Conference co-hosted with High Weald National Landscape , Middle Marches Community Land Trust and Marches Meadow Group

Wildlife-rich grasslands and meadows are glorious at this time of year, and one of our most important havens for biodiversity, but these habitats are being rapidly lost and degraded and today cover less than one per cent of the UK.

One of the nation's most important gatherings dedicated to meadow conservation, restoration and management is taking place from Friday 19 - Saturday 20 June, at [Kew Wakehurst](#), a wild botanic garden and living laboratory in Sussex. The event takes place within the High Weald, one of England's most important strongholds for wildlife-rich grasslands.

*[The National Meadows Conference 2026: Translating the Science of Meadows into Practice](#)* will bring together land managers, ecologists, farmers, gardeners, researchers and conservation practitioners from across the UK to explore how the latest scientific understanding of grassland can be applied on the ground to restore and protect biodiverse wildflower meadows.

The conference comes at a critical time for meadow conservation. Despite their importance for biodiversity, climate resilience and human wellbeing, many wildflower meadows continue to disappear or become degraded through development pressures and land-use change.



Kew  
Wakehurst



Wakehurst provides an ideal setting for this conference. Situated in the heart of the High Weald National Landscape, the site is home to some of Sussex's finest wildflower meadows, including the celebrated Coronation Meadow, and has become a leading centre for meadow restoration and ecological research. Through habitat creation and long-term stewardship, Wakehurst is helping to demonstrate how degraded grasslands can be restored for the benefit of wildlife and people.

**Iain Parkinson, Head of Landscape and Horticulture at Kew Wakehurst comments on why meadows matter:**

*"Species-rich grasslands are among the UK's most valuable yet overlooked habitats. Beneath their colourful displays lies a complex web of relationships between plants, fungi, insects, grazing animals and soils that support a remarkable diversity of life.*

*"This conference will showcase the latest research into these ecosystems while providing practical guidance for those involved in creating, managing and restoring meadows across urban and rural landscapes. Discussions will focus on translating scientific evidence into real-world action, helping ensure these increasingly rare habitats can thrive into the future.*

*"I hope the event will inspire wider action to protect and restore meadows nationwide."*

**Gerry Sherwin, Business Manager, High Weald National Landscape Partnership says:**

*"As co-host of this year's National Meadows Conference, we're proud to showcase the High Weald National Landscape's wildlife-rich meadows.*

*"Meadows don't happen by accident. They are the result of an interaction between people and place and years of stewardship by farmers and other land managers.*

*"This conference is a great opportunity to share knowledge and perspectives. It will provide insights into meadow biodiversity and meadow creation. However, most importantly it will consider the support needed to ensure ongoing stewardship of our existing and very beautiful ancient grasslands."*

**Janet Cobb, Board Member, Middle Marches Community Land Trust says:** *"We are delighted to partner with Kew Wakehurst and High Weald National Landscape to deliver this growing and ever more significant conference. We need to champion the plight of UK meadows nationwide but also showcase the benefits that sustained stewardship can bring to these incredibly diverse habitats for people and wildlife."*

Hosted in a 250-seat marquee in Yew Tree Meadow, beside the [Millennium Seed Bank](#), one of the world's most important conservation facilities, the conference will explore every aspect of meadow ecology, from soils and fungi to seeds, pollination, grazing and human wellbeing.

**ENDS**



Royal Botanic Gardens  
**Kew**  
**Wakehurst**



Download high-res images here: <https://we.tl/t-bMrOKaBkkDNvCKqT>

For media requests interviews, and further information, please contact: [wakehurstpr@kew.org](mailto:wakehurstpr@kew.org).

## Notes to editors

### Event details:

#### [Programme information](#)

[Book tickets](#) **Price:** Two-day ticket: £45

**Date and time:** Friday 19 June 2026, 9.30am to 4.30pm (registration from 8.45am)

Saturday 20 June 2026, 9.30am to 1pm

**Location:** Kew Wakehurst - Meeting at main car park

**About Kew Wakehurst:** a wild botanic garden and living laboratory in the Sussex High Weald National Landscape. Its ancient and beautiful landscapes span 535 acres and are a place for escape, exploration, tranquillity, and wonder. Its diverse collection of plants from Britain and around the globe thrive within a tapestry of innovative gardens, temperate woodlands, meadows, and wetlands. Wakehurst is a centre for UK biodiversity and global conservation, seed research, and ecosystem science. At its heart is Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, the world's largest store of seeds from wild plant species.

**About the High Weald:** The [High Weald National Landscape](#) is an area of outstanding natural beauty with a medieval landscape of rolling hills, small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes. It covers parts of four counties – East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and Surrey, in the rural heart of South-East England and is Britain's fourth largest national landscape. It was designated in 1983 to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

The High Weald is one of 46 National Landscapes which are home to some of the most spectacular and valued countryside in Britain. Information on all National Landscapes can be found at <https://national-landscapes.org.uk/>

### **About Middle Marches Community Land Trust:**

The National Meadows Conference started from small beginnings in Shropshire in 2024 hosted by [Middle Marches Community Land Trust \(MMCLT\)](#) and [Marches Meadow Group \(MMG\)](#). In 2025, Emorsgate Seeds hosted in Bath. [Recordings here](#). In 2027, the conference will be hosted in Cumbria.

With thanks to [Habitat Aid](#)