



**Media Release; 3 May 2016 – for immediate use**

## **Grants to help communities help wildlife**

A new grant scheme called the Community Wildlife Fund has just been launched by the Tarka Country Trust. Grants are available for community groups to implement small scale projects that help benefit wildlife in the North Devon and Torridge districts within the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere area that stretches from Hartland to the base of Exmoor and Lundy to Okehampton.

The grant can be applied for by any community group from Parish Councils to scout groups. Richard Prowse, chair of the Tarka Country Trust, explained;

*“North Devon’s Biosphere is about connecting people and nature and we are keen to help groups across north Devon to do something to help their local wildlife. Whether it is restoring a village pond or planting up a wildflower meadow, there are plenty of opportunities to do projects that can be really beneficial to plants, animals and the environment”.*

Much of the funding for the grants scheme is coming from Marsdens Devon Cottages who are based in Braunton and have holiday cottages across the Biosphere area. They have been raising money for the North Devon Biosphere for several years now by asking their holiday makers to donate £1 when booking their break.

Adrian Culley, South West General Manager at Marsdens Devon Cottages said;

*“We are proud of our world class Biosphere environment which is so important to our visitors. By supporting the Community Wildlife Fund we can ensure that the money given by our holiday makers is spread across the whole area where our holiday cottages are located and provides direct local benefit.”*

Tom Hynes for North Devon Biosphere explained that in addition to funding, advice would be available for applicants:



*“Within the North Devon Biosphere there is a great wealth of wildlife knowledge and any group applying for a grant will be able to access advice which should help ensure the success of any proposed wildlife project.”*

The fund is open for applications until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Applicants need to be within Torridge or North Devon districts and projects need to be able to be completed within a year. Groups can apply for up to 75% of the total project costs (Parish Councils 50%), up to a maximum grant of £500. For further information, including the online application form and guidance notes go to <http://www.tarkacountrytrust.org.uk/>

Ends.

For more on this story or to arrange an interview call Tom Hynes on 07968 079431 or email [tom.hynes@devon.gov.uk](mailto:tom.hynes@devon.gov.uk)

#### Notes to editors

1. **Tarka Country Trust** was set up in March 1999. Following a successful application to the Millennium Commission, the Trust ran the Tarka Country Millennium Awards from 2000 to 2004. The Objectives of the Trust are:
  - To preserve for the benefit of the public the natural features of northern Devon whilst respecting any historical features.
  - To advance the education of the public about conservation and the protection of the environment in northern Devon.
2. **North Devon’s Biosphere Service** is a partnership organisation based in Barnstaple and hosted by Devon County Council. It is core funded by Devon County Council, North Devon Council and Torridge District Council. The Service co-ordinates and delivers activities set out in the North Devon’s Biosphere Reserve Strategy and works with a wide range of local, regional, national and international partners. More information about the work of the service can be found at [www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/](http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/)



3. **North Devon's Biosphere Reserve** is the first new-style UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the UK. It exists to inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature.

The Biosphere in north Devon is a special place with wonderful wildlife and landscapes, and an economy and social structure still strongly linked to the environment but it is also more than that. It is a community of people working together to champion life and the environment, empower people to get involved and explore new ways of living that address local and global challenges. [www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/](http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/)

4. **Marsdens Cottage Holidays** have an extensive portfolio of over 340 Visit England graded holiday cottages ranging from quaint old fishing cottages for two, to larger properties ideal for families and large groups. Great pride is taken in the quality of the accommodation. Marsdens have been providing holiday cottages in Devon for over 40 years.