

The Knepp Accord

Between 10-12 September 2025 a group of wilders, geographers, farmers, ecologists, archaeologists, artists, a museum curator and a landscape architect came together at the Knepp Castle Estate for a workshop exploring the interconnections between wilding and archaeology. This statement reflects the commitment of those present to recognising how archaeological skills and knowledge can play a positive role in informing and inspiring nature recovery efforts and in helping people understand and engage with landscape change, in the past and the present. We are interested in how awareness of diverse past landscapes can help us to shape thriving future landscapes, not through restoration to a particular period but through guiding decisions about future change.

1 Archaeology can help us to understand the environmental history of places and the roles that different people have played in shaping environments over time.

Our environment has evolved through its interconnections with people over thousands of years. Understanding this dynamic relationship - and how and why it has changed over time - is an important first step in co-creating a nature-rich future.

2 By sharing stories of places and nature through time, archaeology can help to engage people with the idea that landscapes and people have shaped each other for millennia.

Archaeology can help us to imagine landscape change. By telling better stories about long-term relationships between people and landscapes, we can also build a better understanding of people’s ongoing position as custodians of landscape change. We are creators and curators of the future.

3 Archaeology can help to inform and inspire nature recovery at a practical level.

Archaeology is an important source of ideas for ways of doing things that are different to (and sometimes more effective than) how we do them now -- for instance, we can learn from the ways in which people in the past cooperated with other species like beaver, cattle and elk to shape beneficial habitats, or how they balanced woodland and farming practices in a way that nurtured biodiversity.

4 Archaeological evidence can inform practical management decisions.

Archaeological evidence can also help to identify the most appropriate settings for re-establishing ecologically beneficial species, habitats and practices – from horses to scrub to hay and water meadows – or to highlight settings in which novel approaches are needed if landscapes are to thrive.

5 Archaeological sites can actively support valued habitats and species.

Some archaeological sites already support important habitats and species and, in doing so, provide both valuable ecosystem services and exemplars of good management practice. Other archaeological sites can be managed in a way that encourages biodiversity and contributes positively to nature recovery agendas.

6 Restoring nature effectively requires collaboration.

Efforts to support nature recovery and to tackle outcomes of climate change are already changing archaeological practices and approaches. Working together across interest groups and learning how to listen and respond to each other in a spirit of respect and curiosity is vital if we are to achieve positive outcomes for nature and for the historic environment.

Signatories, July 2026



Charlie Burrell, Knepp Castle Estate

Brad Albrecht (Knepp Castle Estate)	Andrew Margetts (University College London)
Martin Bell (University of Reading)	Julia Meen (Oxford Archaeology)
Claire Birch (Wilder Doddington)	Bonnie Metherell (Knepp Wildland Foundation)
Amy Bogaard (University of Oxford)	Jacqui Mulville (Cardiff University)
Harry Buscall (Wild Ken Hill)	Nick Overton (Oxford Archaeology)
Nikki Caxton (Horsham Museum)	Matt Phelps (Knepp Castle Estate)
Tristan Colaço (Forestry England)	Rina Quinlan (Knepp Castle Estate)
Anna Collar (University of Southampton)	Anooshka Rawden (South Downs National Park Authority)
Anwen Cooper (Oxford Archaeology)	Neil Redfern (Council for British Archaeology)
Miranda Creswell (Independent Artist)	Nic Renison (Renison’s Farm)
Caitlin DeSilvey (University of Exeter)	Walter Riddell (Heppe Estate)
Erika Diaz Petersen (Historic England)	Tina Roushannafas (Oxford Archaeology)
Alice Dobinson (University of Oxford)	Danielle Schreve (University of Bristol)
Jack Durant (Youngwilders)	Dale Serjeantson (University of Southampton)
Rose Ferraby (Archaeologist and Artist)	Ben Siggery (University of Surrey/Surrey Wildlife Trust)
Hannah Fluck (National Trust)	Helen Smith (Bournemouth University)
Ralph Fyfe (University of Plymouth)	Rob St John (Independent Artist)
Sarah George (Knepp Castle Estate)	Rob Swinbank (Durham University)
Mary Gough (Heppe Estate)	Naomi Sykes (University of Exeter)
Ryan Greaves (Knepp Wildland Foundation)	Patrick Toe (Knepp Castle Estate)
Kirsty Harding (Cardiff University)	Harry Watkins (St Andrews Botanic Gardens)
David Kay (University of Cambridge)	Tony Whitbread (Knepp/Sussex Wildlife Trust)
Mark Knight (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust)	Nicki Whitehouse (University of Glasgow)
Jonathan Last (Historic England)	Elaine Willett (Natural England)
Peter Leeson (Tree Amble)	Sophie Yeo (Environmental Journalist)
Jamie Lorimer (University of Oxford)	