

Greenprint Forum newsletter: summer 2025

As well as such highlights and delights as the arrival of the swifts in our skies and the emergence of young frogs from wildlife ponds, summer also brings with it World Ocean Day, which is observed globally on 8 June to raise awareness of the importance of the marine environment and the issues facing it, and which coincided with the start of a week-long multi-agency activity in Lowestoft to address end-of-life fishing gear.

Brought together via the Eastern & Southern Plastics Coalition, partner organisations including the Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority, Keep Britain Tidy, and East Suffolk Council, and funded by RWE, teamed up to organise an initiative to give the local commercial fishing fleet the opportunity to dispose of end-of-life fishing gear responsibly, freely, and for recycling.

During the course of the week, this ocean recovery project captured hundreds of kilogrammes of gear (including nets comprised of many kilometres equivalent of line and filament) from points up and down the coastline, eliminating the risk of it ever ending up in the sea. It was all then sorted and separated on site by a team from Keep Britain Tidy preparing each stream of material prior to it being sent off for reprocessing, with trawl net and gill net destined to be turned into pellet for new products, and rope recreated into composite mixed plastic board. All the material collected, even if non-recyclable, is now no longer at any risk of ending up in the sea.

It is hoped that the learning and insights gained from this initiative, believed to be the first of its kind in Suffolk, will inform future work in the area of tackling end-of-life fishing gear and crucially preventing it from escaping into the marine environment in the first place.



You don't have to be in the fishing industry, or from one of the agencies like those involved in the project above, to get involved in direct action on ocean pollution - there are groups like Suffolk Beach Cleans (active in north Suffolk) and Litter-Free Felixstowe who organise group litter picks in coastal areas and welcome volunteers - feel free to follow them via their respective Facebook pages to keep informed of details of their next activities - and of course we have Beachwatch season coming up in September when groups around the coast are encouraged to survey the marine litter they find whilst doing a local beach clean, helping the Marine Conservation Society to gather important data on a national scale. As usual, we will be arranging some Beachwatch activities for our members to get involved in - if you're a member you'll be kept informed by email once details are finalised.

In this issue - we've got an update on the **Bee Cafe movement**; how a community stepped in to secure **Holton Pits**; news about a **biodiversity project in Melton**; a spotlight on a **kitchen garden in Woodbridge**; **get creative in Saxmundham**; and find out about an initiative to help **kittiwakes in Lowestoft**. Of course, whilst there is as always plenty in this issue, there will be lots more that we have not captured; the environmental world is always an active one especially in eastern Suffolk where we are so lucky to have so many active groups and individuals taking the initiative.

This newsletter is of most value when content is informed by its members. If you have a story about action you are taking or enabling that contributes to our shared vision that you would like to share, or would like your project (whether established, new, or emerging) highlighted in a future issue of our newsletter, we would be delighted to hear from you via greenissues@eastssuffolk.gov.uk



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Elmhurst Kitchen Garden - springing into summer

The spring season has been a busy time for our human bees buzzing away at the secret garden in Elmhurst Park, Woodbridge.

Workers have been sowing and planting, hoeing and clipping, composting and mulching in order to produce a wide variety of vegetables and fruit ready for harvesting in the summer, autumn and winter.



In the case of the supreme queen of vegetables, asparagus, we have begun nurturing a young crop which - fingers crossed! - will be ready for cutting and gently simmering in lightly salted water in three years' time.

At its best asparagus should be served with melted, organic Suffolk butter and freshly ground black pepper.

The alternative is Poor Man's Asparagus using samphire or samfer which can be harvested in the East Anglian salt marshes from July to September. This is described by the late doyenne of country living, Peggy Cole, in her *Taste of the Country Seasons* (Morrow & Co, Bungay, Suffolk, 1996, page 131).

In addition to opening to the public every Saturday morning, when the growers gather to undertake the many gardening tasks, we have also welcomed more than 100 visitors from tiny tots to Victory in Europe celebrants, on special opening events.

On Tuesday, 6 May, children from Barnabas Nursery enjoyed learning how to water young plants. Some, alas, got rather wet.

Then on Saturday, 10 May, as part of the VE celebrations in the park, we opened for afternoon visitors who enthusiastically shared their horticultural triumphs and disasters.

For the coming summer months, we look forward to welcoming many more visitors between 10 and 12 noon every Saturday, sharing tips, and discussing the challenges of vegetable and fruit production in a period of changing climate and peat free growing.

Look out for the growers of Elmhurst Kitchen Garden, tucked away behind the wall in the corner of Elmhurst Park adjacent to the bowling club.

You are welcome to join us there any Saturday, 10:00-12:00, to mooch about, enjoy the benefits of growing veg and share horticultural horrors and hot tips.



Sue Kentish, Elmhurst Kitchen Garden





The Art Station, Saxmundham: The Creative Environment Event Series

Over the coming months The Art Station, Saxmundham presents the event series “The Creative Environment” sharing presentations, discussion and creative activity, to explore the impact and possibilities of creative engagement with our natural environment for the wellbeing of our community and natural heritage.

The event series offers opportunities to meaningfully connect with community, creatives and environmentalists to amplify arts-in-nature practice examples from across Suffolk and Cambridge. Together we will share thoughts, ideas and opportunities and encourage networking to inform the ongoing development of creative environment work with and for East Suffolk’s market towns. This work is generously funded by East Suffolk’s Community Partnerships Fund and will see themed events held in Leiston, Saxmundham and Aldeburgh during June, September and October respectively.

The first of the series, **The Creative Environment: Young Connections** will be held on Sunday 22 June, Long Shop Museum, Leiston, IP16 4ES 10:30 – 13:00, and explore engagement with the creative environment for the wellbeing of Suffolk’s families, children and young people.

Artist and Game Designer Henry Driver will present Treeplanter, a nature game resulting in real world tree planting consequences, created in collaboration with West Suffolk College and University students. There will be the opportunity to see the launch of Treeplanter – ‘Leiston Level’ and to hear from Leiston’s young people about their collaboration on this and their perspectives on arts-in-nature practice.

Director of Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination, Emily Dowdeswell will present Call for Spaces of Liberated Learning designed to spark conversations about creating spaces where children flourish, ‘particularly forests, fields and unruly artscapes’ and their work with young people which led to its development.

Refreshments and vegetarian lunch included.

The Creative Environment: Shifting Perspectives

Saxmundham Market Hall, Saturday 20 September with presentation from Ruth Catlow, Co-founder and Director of Furtherfield, employing art and technology for eco social change, including innovative multi species roleplay, and Kasia Posen, Project Development Officer at Suffolk Artlink, sharing the Wild About Kirkley project exploring mapping, foraging and creativity to engage with Kirkley’s unique natural environment.

The Creative Environment: Walking as Discovery

Aldeburgh Church Hall, Saturday 11 October with presentations from Richard Allenby Pratt, photographer and founder of The Suffolk Project, a study of the rural landscape and its people, and Suffolk based artist and gardener Jevan Watkins Jones, lead artist on The Art Station’s Riverside Walks.

Visit theartstation.uk to book your place and for further details of the complete event series.

Contact Bethany@theartstation.uk with questions and access requirements.

Bethany Mitchell, The Art Station





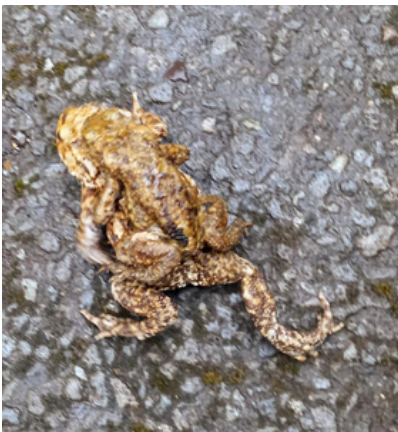
Critical Green Infrastructure*



In Melton we are working on a citizen science project to get a broad picture of the biodiversity in the parish over the course of a year. The project is called BIMP, Biodiversity in Melton Project. As we progress various broader ideas come up. Below, I try to describe one of them. A few weeks ago the papers were full of the news of a fire at an electricity substation that resulted in the closure of Heathrow Airport. This resulted in the cancellation of hundreds of flights to and from Heathrow with the consequent disruption to thousands of passengers. But it didn't end there. Planes that were in mid-air had to be turned back or re-routed. Planes and crews ended up in the wrong places. Time sensitive freight (eg soft fruits) was spoilt. Hotels had to respond as did other airlines, taxis, other transport.



There will be thousands of insurance claims to deal with. People missed weddings, funerals, stag dos, birthday parties. There were massive knock-on effects around the globe. This is one piece of infrastructure (power supply) having an effect on another piece (airport) which is part of the wider transport system which is a key component of the human system. When talking about infrastructure we naturally start talking about 'systems' and how systems interact with wider 'systems! All of this refers to just one species, homo sapiens. Other species have their own systems; perhaps not as complex and expensive as human systems and not engineered in the same way. But some species are very dependent on a particular piece of infrastructure. During March I became aware of a group of local volunteers turning up in Saddlemakers Lane to help toads, frogs and newts (mainly toads) safely cross the road - meanwhile carefully recording numbers and uploading them to a national database. In total 862 toads were helped plus 60 frogs and a similar number of smooth newts.



Presumably there will have been many additional creatures that crossed later in the night (the volunteers tended to work at dusk for 2 to 3 hours) and sadly some that got squashed by vehicles. These amphibians were making their annual breeding migration from some soggy unkempt woods to two ponds on the other side of the road. I later found out that toads try to return to the pond in which they were born. Breeding ponds need depth and suitable plant life around the edges. For this population of amphibians the ponds are essential for future survival. One of the ponds is on a large estate, the other in a good-sized garden. Neither pond was accessible for further study. (I wondered what predators are aware of this protein harvest - herons, otters, grass snakes, etc).

I checked on an old map (1905) and the ponds were in existence then. So presumably this migration has been going on for at least the last 120 years. If anything happened to these ponds - pollution, drying up, in-filling by landowners, new homes, etc - the results would be devastating for the amphibians. In my opinion such Critical Green Infrastructure, once identified and validated, should be protected by law. Some scientists believe we are in the sixth Mass Extinction Event. In UK we have resolved to reverse biodiversity decline by 2030. How we look at nature and how we protect existing aspects of nature has to move up the priority list. We need to look at the requirements that animals have and decide how critical those needs are. For instance, we are changing building practices and some creatures have traditionally used buildings for shelter. We have slowly realised this and somewhat tardily now have barn owl boxes, bat boxes and swift boxes.

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Perhaps we need to think about the less glamorous house sparrows and starlings which are now on priority lists. Other infrastructure depends on the animal involved and the function it performs in their requirements for living. For instance veteran trees may be important to many creatures in many ways eg bats, owls, woodpeckers, invertebrates for shelter, food, hunting, mating, etc. Certain landmarks may be important for many migratory species. Many animals use river valleys, streams, hedgerows for travelling through the countryside. Barriers and roads may disrupt progress. I recently went out bat hunting and came across a lane bordered on one side by mature trees and a stream and on the other by overgrown hedges (including leylandii). Dozens of bats were whizzing up and down this flyway presumably feeding. I'd never thought about such things before - I'd never really thought about bats - but they are great indication of a healthy environment and biodiversity.

Who knows, perhaps flyways need protection, or at least consideration. We need to have a greater understanding and respect for the needs of other creatures especially when considering changing the environment to favour us. Perhaps not MAGA but rather MNGA - Make Nature Great Again! (* I'm using the term "Critical Green Infrastructure" to mean key aspects of the environment that non-human species need and rely on. If destroyed or damaged the species suffers severe consequences.)

Dick Dolan, Biodiversity in Melton Project (BIMP)

SUFFOLK LEISURE & TOURISM TRAILBLAZERS



Funded support for leisure and tourism to improve sustainability.

Environmental charity Groundwork East have launched a new campaign to offer free support to help leisure and tourism businesses in the county improve their environmental sustainability. Fully-funded support is now available to leisure and tourism businesses based in Suffolk and features one-to-one advice from Groundwork's sustainability experts who can help create a carbon footprint for businesses and work to help them identify cost and carbon savings.

The support package features a series of toolkits to inspire and track progress as well as workshops covering topics such as cutting costs and carbon and how to communicate effectively about sustainability. There will also be an opportunity to undertake accredited Carbon Literacy training, which provides an introduction to climate change and its impacts on our lives at a local and global level.

This package of support is funded by Suffolk's public sector leaders as part of their support for delivering the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. This sets out how we are working together to support and guide our residents, communities, and businesses to make the changes required to best set Suffolk on the path to net zero by 2030. To find out more and sign up for support visit the Carbon Charter website: <https://carboncharter.org/trailblazers/>

Kerry Stranix, Groundwork East



Holton Pits

Holton Pits began in the 1940s as an important quarry for sand and gravel and it continued to be used as such into the 1960s. Fossils were often found on the site and in 1958 the Geologists Association visited it. Some of the fossils found there can now be found in the Ipswich Museum.

“At Holton, in the Blyth Valley, a limb bone of a Jurassic Plesiosaur in the upper levels of the Norwich Crag Series (Westleton Beds) implies the presence of floating ice which must also have transported the occasional sub-angular blocks of various rocks found there.” – Geological guide to Suffolk.



The site was designated an area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1988 and a [County Wildlife Site](#) in 1991 with its inclusion in Suffolk’s “County Wildlife Sites Register”.

When the gravel pit ceased to be quarried the pits gradually rewilded and became a much-loved area for people to roam. Anglers fished in the larger of two lakes, children played in the open areas and climbed trees and everyone enjoyed the natural surroundings without having to get into their cars to get there. There were some plans by the owners to extend and resume quarrying but they decided instead to extend a quarry elsewhere and cease extraction at Holton. In 2006 discussions began about who was to own the naturalised site. In 2017 Cemex, the owners informed Holton Parish Council that they were no longer able to donate the land or offer financial support.

Then suddenly, in August 2022 “For Sale” signs appeared. The community mobilised to prevent the pits becoming unavailable to local people. Cemex were happy to sell the land to the community if the funds could be raised. A huge community effort resulted in the formation of Holton Pits CIC, the raising of the necessary funds and the successful purchase of the land in November 2023. The funds came from generous donations, fundraising activities, and the Government's Community Ownership Fund.

Now that we have the land, it is up to us to look after it and make sure that future generations can enjoy this lovely place.

Much of the information in this short account comes from a scrapbook compiled by Edith Summerhayes.



More information can be found at www.holtonpits.org

supplied by **Rebecca Horton, Holton Pits CIC**



Landowner help needed to benefit nature

Can you help to achieve ambitious targets for nature recovery within the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape?

In response to the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan (2023) and the National Landscapes Colchester Declaration (2019), the National Landscape is working in partnership with landowners and organisations to achieve significant, and measurable, benefits for nature.

Ambitious targets have been set out for each National Landscape and National Park by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for a range of targets covering the following:

- Restoring/creating wildlife rich habitats
- Increasing tree canopy and woodland cover
- Planting hedgerows
- Enabling natural regeneration
- Creating ponds and wetlands



We are looking for landowners/land managers to help us deliver the work to meet these targets. If you have land and want to improve its biodiversity potential or change the way it is used e.g. by planting trees or sowing a wildflower meadow, we would love to hear from you.

This would enable us to record your project, including it in demonstrating nature recovery across the National Landscape. In return we may be able to help support you and the successful delivery of your project, by providing:

- Informal advice from experienced conservation staff
- Volunteer support to turn your vision for nature into reality
- Signposting towards further guidance and/or potential funding



For information and to register your interest, please email coastandheaths@suffolkandessex-NL.org.uk or phone 01394 445225

Climate and our health – get involved and help spread the word

Have you ever thought about how Suffolk's weather conditions could be affecting your health or the health of someone you know?



Often conversations about climate change focus on the environment but Suffolk County Council's Public Health Team want to start the conversation about climate and our health.

If you live in Suffolk, please spare 5 minutes to tell the team what you think. Your response to the survey will help them to understand what people know about health and climate change and will help direct some of the work in Suffolk going forward. It is open until 31 July.

<https://www.letstalksnee.co.uk/suffolk-county-council-climate-and-health-project/surveys/survey>

Please also share with friends, family and work colleagues as they want to hear from as many people as possible. If you have any questions, please email rosie.welch@suffolk.gov.uk.





Power Up!

Transition Woodbridge marked Earth Day 2025 with stalls, talks and demonstrations exploring the future of energy on the theme “Our Power, Our Planet”. This was kindly supported by Woodbridge Town Council.

Creative toy-making activities, story-telling by Simon Hooton and our EcoWoodbridge Board Game were some of the day’s activities for families. The Town Crier read the latest news and Declaration of the Rights of the River Deben. Virtue Electric Bikes, Climatech, Deben Climate Centre, Woodbridge Repair Café and Suffolk Repair Shed, Greenpeace East Suffolk, SEAS and SAND Campaign groups, The Boathouse, The Woodyard, Woodbridge Museum, The Longshed, Hopsters, Woodbridge Tide Mill helped to add value to the event highlighting a range of ways that people can take action to reduce their carbon footprint and move away from fossil fuels. You could find out how easy it is to own an EV car and how to electrify your bike at Hasnips. And a wonderful performance from the Rabble Chorus to encourage us all to take action!!

Jane Healey, Chair of Transition Woodbridge (and Chair of Greenprint Forum)



The Way to go Suffolk Team!

We are The Way to Go team! As the days grow brighter and longer, we believe this is the perfect time of year to consider making a change in how you travel. Why not walk to the shops or dust off your bike and cycle to work?

At Suffolk County Council, we want to offer our residents more choices when it comes to getting around. Whether it’s walking, cycling, or wheeling* for short trips or as part of a longer journey, we hope to support you in making the switch to more sustainable modes of travel. Even doing this once or twice a week is a fantastic start!

To coincide with the longer days, we’ve introduced a range of new FREE walking and cycling activities. Currently, we offer 43 weekly groups suitable for all levels, from beginner meet-ups to more advanced walking and cycling sessions.



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Our new groups include walks designed for those living with memory loss and dementia, parent and child walks, and a regular Wednesday evening 'easy-cycling' group in both Ipswich and Lowestoft.

If you'd like more information about our activities, please visit our website at <https://walkingandcyclinginsuffolk.org.uk/>. Alternatively, you can contact us via email at thewaytogosuffolk@suffolk.gov.uk or call 01473 260060, Monday to Friday.

We look forward to helping you enjoy the benefits of active travel!

Best wishes,

Jamie Besford, The Way to Go Suffolk



The Bee Café Project incorporating the North Ipswich Bee Pass

From our humble beginnings in 2021, the original Woodbridge Bee Pass has developed and expanded becoming the 'Bee cafe CIC' in October 2024.

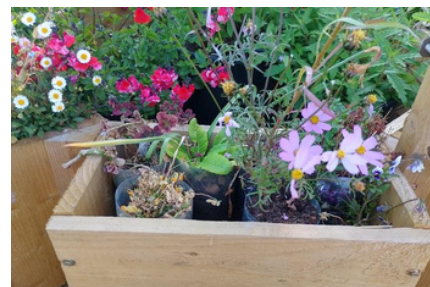
The original vision of creating a pollinator corridor that links the existing Northern Ipswich Buglife B-Line to the Rendlesham B-Line is well underway. The original 10 cafes commissioned by Woodbridge Town Council have been more successful than we could have anticipated. They have provided much needed food stations to allow the bee and insect population to move freely across urban areas. Further Bee Cafes have been commissioned by Wickham Market Parish Council and most recently Rushmere Parish Council.



We now have established Bee Cafes on Woodbridge Market Hill (3), Kingston Playing Field (1), Whisstocks (1), The Cannon (1), Elmhurst Park (1), The Deben Seal (1), Wickham Market Square (2) and most recently Woods Lane in Melton (4). Currently we have further construction close to Foxwood Ceramics in Rushmere.

Not only have the Bee cafes provided food stations for insects but they have become community hubs. Each Bee Cafe has an adopter, who is responsible for keeping an eye on their café and reporting any problems to Paul Martin at Bee Cafe HQ. We have an army of wilt watchers, dead headers and waterers who have all contributed to the success of the project.

The Bee Cafes encourage conversation and the opportunity for education. A Bee Café volunteer will always be happy to talk to passers-by, educate children and explain some of the tech we installed on each café. Some will be happy to discuss the planting and some are happy to be instructed by people who have a wealth of gardening information to share. The Bee Cafes themselves are mostly raised up from the ground making them accessible for people with mobility issues and disabilities.



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We would like to think that most people could access a bee café and interact with the planting if they wanted. If you see someone tending a Bee Café do come and say hello.

What exactly is a Bee Café? Each Bee Café is constructed from natural materials such as wood and hessian. The actual growing containers are made from recycled 2L fizzy drinks bottles that have been donated by the community, and each café contains it's own tiny solar driven automatic watering system. Blooms are supplied by Katie's Garden Plant Centre and are the showy bee friendly plants that make the planters attractive. This year we are pleased to have been joined by Maple Farm, Kelsale who are providing rare and endangered native wildflowers, which are not quite so showy but contribute to biodiversity and of course are very appetizing to bees.



The planting has been chosen not only to be 'Bee Friendly' but also to last through the active Bee Season from the beginning of April to the end of October depending on weather conditions. During the season the plants are given optimum growing conditions and much tender loving care.



Consequently, they grow, mature and develop healthy root systems which allows them to be successfully rewilded into the local environment.

For 2025, we have enlarged the Elmhurst Park Bee Café and introduced satellite baby Bee Cafes, that are more of a permanent planting fixture and are in sight line from the parent Bee Café. It is hoped that this plan can be extended across the town filling in gaps ensuring that pollinators are available every 80 metres or so. This will take in to account private pollinator provision for example; you and I having bee friendly plants in our gardens, garden centres such as Notcutts, and sensory gardens in care homes. We have also added shrubs to some of the cafes. However, only 'The Cannon Bee Café' currently contains a tree and that is definitely worth watching.

Most recently we have also installed four new Bee Cafes on Woods Lane in Melton with the help of Bee Café Volunteers and local school children who will incorporate Bee Café study in to their 'Forest School'.

Currently we are trialling some additional tech that should be able to monitor how many flying visitors we attract to each Café and we have a student volunteer onboard for research purposes. So you might see some interesting gizmos amongst the planting.



Talking of volunteers...Our volunteers are wonderful. Without them the Bee Café project could not have been so successful. However, we are always on the lookout for volunteers to help in all aspects, from being an adopter, to offering advice or even providing hose access during hot weather when we may need to top up the tanks that keep the Bee Cafes hydrated. If you are interested do not hesitate to make contact we would love to hear from you.

You can join us on our [Facebook Group Bee Café](#), where you can keep up with developments and follow our mini video series or alternatively on Instagram at [Beecafeproject](#).

Jo Whight, Bee Cafe



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Introducing Nature at Work

Spring has well and truly arrived, and with it, some exciting developments in the Nature at Work initiative, delivered by East Suffolk Council in partnership with community and environmental charity Groundwork East. Since its launch in late February, the team have been busy installing signs across the district to mark small areas of council-owned land where nature will be able to take the lead.



Grass in these areas are being left to grow during the spring and summer to support wildlife, especially pollinators. Each sign includes a QR code that takes you to the [Nature at Work](#) webpage, where you can find a map of all the sites, discover how to get involved, and even share photos of your own nature-friendly efforts.

Schools across the district have also been keen to get involved and the Groundwork East team have been lucky enough to get out and see their hard work and lend them a helping hand.

In April, the Groundwork team visited St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School in Lowestoft, where pupils from the Eco Club rolled up their sleeves to create a brand-new wildflower meadow. They tackled some very tough ground—but their hard work paid off, and together they created a brilliant new space for nature right in the school grounds. As the children said, 'now we just have to watch the flowers grow!'

The team also visited Sandlings Primary School, where soldiers from Rock Barracks kindly lent a hand with meadow planting, and Trimley St Mary Primary School, where Year 5 and 6 pupils helped bring a new wildflower area to life. These meadows won't just brighten up the schools—they'll also provide vital food and shelter for pollinators like bees and butterflies.

But it's not just schools embracing the project. The Nature at Work team received a lovely message from a Felixstowe resident who created a wildlife haven in their garden, including bug boxes, bird feeders, a rockery and two ponds. Already, they're seeing bees on the dandelions, birds at the feeders, and a hedgehog or two stopping by. They told us, "It might encourage others to do the same in their gardens." Whether you're planting wildflowers, letting the grass grow, or creating a little wild corner in your garden, every contribution helps!

The Nature at Work team are currently creating a toolkit to help parish and town councils create their own 'Nature at Work' areas – keep an eye on the website for more details.

Fenella Corrin, Groundwork East





Stories for a Changing Planet

Four tales for young people to stream and watch
that explore the climate emergency

Teller: Simon Hooton Video: Mario Olmedo



Visit vimeo.com/changingplanetstories



Grant aided by the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape
through the DEFRA supported Sustainable Development Fund
and the Suffolk Climate Partnership



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Stories for a Changing Planet are designed to share knowledge and ideas about the way our climate is changing and the impacts that has on us.

Storytelling has been used for thousands of years to convey ideas while providing entertainment and food for thought. In this series, storyteller Simon brings these stories to life on video, enhanced with simple graphics to spark the imagination and inspire discussion.

Aimed primarily at 10–14-year-olds, the stories are told in a way that will also engage younger viewers (from around age 7) and adults alike. Each story is about nine minutes long, and four are available to watch online.

The videos are hosted on **Vimeo**, meaning they can be viewed at any time via a unique web address (subject to platform availability). Thanks to funding from the **Sustainable Development Fund of the Suffolk and Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape** and the **Suffolk Climate Change Partnership**, along with volunteer support, the stories are free to access for a year.

To reinforce the ideas explored, viewers are encouraged to discuss what they've heard and take action. This could involve creating your own stories, imagining what happens in the next 'chapter', or researching further on websites such as the **BBC** or the **Met Office**, which offer excellent information on climate change. Families, schools, and youth groups may also wish to explore actions they can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to a more sustainable future.



Simon is available for in-person storytelling sessions, and Mario, the video maker, can be commissioned to help groups create their own high-quality videos to share with others.

For enquiries, please contact:

Simon Hooton: s.hooton@phonecoop.coop

Mario Olmedo: marioaolmedo@yahoo.com



Investing in biodiversity with first registered habitat banks

An area of farmland is helping to benefit local wildlife by hosting one of East Suffolk's first two Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) habitat banks.

Alongside Bridge Farm, in Brandeston – and following legal agreement with East Suffolk Council – Darsham Old Hall has been added to a national register of sites available to help developers meet net gain biodiversity commitments.

Working with consultants Nature Based Farming, landowners Julian and Hannah Young established the 20-hectare 'habitat bank' to promote long-term biodiversity management while securing a reliable source of additional income.



The initiative provides a ready-made, strategically located bank of 58 units for developers to meet their statutory planning obligation to provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain by funding habitat creation and enhancement.

The mandatory 10% minimum requirement was brought into force last February as a condition to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development goes ahead. It can be delivered via habitat creation on a development site – through green spaces such as woodland and wildflower meadows – or via local off-site banks of units like Old Hall.

Located on former arable farmland, the BNG habitat bank has been taking shape at Old Hall since 2023 as part of a programme of habitat restoration and enhancement, including the creation of significant new habitat by adding a mile of hedging and 3,000 native trees, allowing other areas go to scrub, and introducing three longhorn cattle to open up previously dense tracts of woodland to natural light and improve biodiversity.



Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk Council's Cabinet member for the Environment, said:

"We always support and advise developers on delivering the required 10% BNG on site. Due to various reasons, it's not always possible, and that's where off-site BNG comes in.

"This approach allows us to create a bank of habitats before the loss of any nature caused by development. If developers are unable to create or enhance wildlife on-site, they can still support biodiversity in the district through a habitat bank, where the land can be restoratively farmed and actively managed over the long term.

"It's an innovative way of collaborating with local landowners to play a key role in achieving sustainable development goals by helping to ensure that developments contribute positively to our environment."

Cllr Mark Packard, Cabinet member for Planning and Coastal Management, said:

"I'm delighted that we have been able to secure Section 106 agreements to secure delivery of biodiversity requirements and allow our first two habitat banks to be officially listed on Natural England's national BNG register.

"We need to build 916 homes a year in East Suffolk to catch up with current demand and it's important that any development contributes positively to the local environment."

Julian Young, of Darsham Old Hall, said:

"People need houses. Nature needs unspoilt space. Those two facts cannot – and must not – be mutually exclusive.

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“As we build houses, we have to carve out space for the natural world, and this can only happen if the economics work. Biodiversity net gain sites like Darsham Old Hall go some way to making this possible.”

Nature Based Farming founder, Pete Thompson said:

“Nature recovery and food production does not have to be a binary choice. Nature Based Farming uses a complementary approach that restores habitats while continuing to produce food. Darsham Old Hall is an excellent example, combining the production of walnuts and cobnuts with the return of large herbivores to the land to support our habitat management approach.”

If you are developer looking to purchase Biodiversity Units for your development, or a landowner interested in setting up a BNG Habitat Bank, please contact the ESC Ecology team at ecology@eastsuffolk.gov.uk for more details.



‘Kittiwake Champions’

A ground-breaking community project by Nature Play CIC has already taken huge steps forward since it was launched earlier this year.

The project aims to raise awareness about these endangered seabirds that make their home in Lowestoft for a few months every year, returning from their journey to the arctic to nest on tall buildings in Lowestoft and rear a new generation.

Despite their gentle nature and global conservation status, kittiwakes are often mistaken for other gulls and there are many misconceptions about them, such as they raid bins or swoop down to steal chips. ‘Kittiwake Champions’ aspires to change perceptions and correct mistaken beliefs as well as give an insight into the challenges faced by kittiwakes.



Nature Play offers hands-on educational events, hosts craft sessions for children, and are developing public information boards as one of the long-term legacies of the project. The project is designed to inform visitors and residents about this important conservation story and build local pride in the nationally significant role Lowestoft plays in kittiwake conservation. Lowestoft is one of only two inshore nesting sites in the whole of the UK and plays a vital role in helping a group of birds whose population has declined by 40% in the last few decades.

The project will provide interactive stalls at a number of public events, including Lowestoft’s popular First Light Festival, which is attended by visitors from all over the UK. Nature Play’s ‘Kittiwake Champions’ events will feature activities like nest-building with beach-combed materials and clay kittiwake crafts.

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'Kittiwake Champions' recently received a welcome boost when Cllrs Graham Parker and George King, ward members for Gunton and St Margarets, granted £5,000 from their Enabling Communities Budgets to help fund the ongoing work.

Lyndsey Moore, Founder and Community Officer at Nature Play CIC, is keen for more young people and families to come forward to become Kittiwake Champions, helping to spread the word and to build a community of coastal conservation stewards.

You can find out more about their work by visiting their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/natureplaycentre> or contact them through their website <https://www.natureplay.uk/>



Supplied by **Amy Duran, Kittiwake Partnership Project Officer, East Suffolk Council**

Contributors

Thanks as ever are due to all of our stellar contributors: **Amy Duran, Dick Dolan, Fenella Corrin, Jamie Besford, Jane Healey, Jo Whight, Kerry Stranix, Rebecca Horton, Rosie Welch, Simon Hooton, Sue Kentish**, and the team from the **Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape**.

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Downloadable icons available for your use!

Downloadable icons relating to our vision are available for free from our webpage - you are more than welcome to download and use these for events and activities that are clearly taking forward the vision of the Greenprint Forum in East Suffolk.

These icons come in the form of each individual hexagon that make up our vision (shown on the right). They are in the format ".png" and are on a transparent background.

They can all be downloaded from this webpage:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum/useful-links/downloadable-icons-relating-to-our-vision/>

GREENPRINT FORUM VISION



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The easiest way is to go online and register via:

https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Greenprint_Forum_membership_application

You are very welcome to share this newsletter. The editor makes no claims or promises about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of this newsletter and expressly disclaims liability for errors and/or omissions. Editor – *Daniel Wareing, Environmental Sustainability East Suffolk Council; Secretary of Greenprint Forum*



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