

Environment - Objectives and Supporting Evidence for NPSG Objective 1

Make Halesworth an environmentally friendly town: revitalising the waterways, enhancing biodiversity and protecting, improving and expanding our green spaces.

Summary of Evidence Gathered

Evidence theme	Reference in Supporting Evidence below
Expanding community recycling and plastic free principals.	<p>Primary School Consultation with year 5 and 6 children. Summary document from the consultation, in section 3a.</p> <p>East Suffolk Council non-recyclable via weekly bin collection list, in section 3b.</p> <p>Terracycle Halesworth information, in section 3c.</p>
Revitalising the waterways and improving biodiversity	<p>Consultation and discussions with the Environment Agency (EA) and Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT). Discussions with both were about river restoration, biodiversity projects and riparian tree planting.</p> <p>SWT evidence is in section 4a. EA Evidence in Section 4b.</p> <p>Correspondence with a member of Halesworth in Bloom, Name Redacted Evidence in section 4c.</p> <p>Heritage Tree evidence in section 4d.</p>
Consultation on flooding issues with the Environment Agency	Meeting minutes and town specific flooding fact sheet, in section 5 .
Improve, protect and expand green spaces.	<p>Community consultation summary. See section 6a.</p> <p>Edgar Sewter Community Primary school consultation, July 2019, see section 3a as the document supports multiple topics.</p> <p>Additional open spaces for Halesworth, evidence in section 6b.</p> <p>Nature Reserve proposal, section 6c.</p> <p>Waveney Local Plan specific policies on local green spaces / designation, see section 6d.</p>

	<p>Millennium Green Survey to see if there was local support for LGS designation, or not, see section 6e.</p> <p>Edgar Sewter Community Primary School consultation, September 2021, see section 6f for consultation evidence from the children to support the Town Park designation as a Local Green Space.</p> <p>Local Green Space Designation, a matrix to show NPPF criteria being met by both sites, section 6g.</p>
Climate Emergency.	<p>https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Environment-Guidance/Environmental-Guidance-Note.pdf</p> <p>For Evidence see section 7a</p> <p>Green Suffolk information, section 7b.</p>

1. Initial ideas following the first consultation

Objectives we wish to achieve	People / Organisations / Docs we need to consult
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protect the pieces of land around the Millennium Green so development cannot spoil the open space. ● Ensure green spaces built into new housing developments, this must include future management plans for space by the developer ● Designate existing spaces to be protected from development. ● Identify any other small local green spaces to designate. ● Develop circular walks in the surrounding countryside accessible from the town. ● Facilitate Halesworth being an “environmentally friendly town” ● Identify significant views of open countryside that contribute to the sense of containment in the countryside (AECOM site specific assessment)Moved to Objective 5 ● Planting along the river and Reach ● Opening up the river for walking ● Can we develop any leisure activities on waterways while protecting wildlife and biodiversity (Environment Agency and Wildlife Suffolk are against) ● Explore creation of a river trail within information boards at key points in town including Bridge, New Reach etc ● Creation of green corridors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Millennium Green ● Environment committee of HTC. ● Residents about small green spaces in their area ● Suffolk Wildlife Trust ● Halesworth in Bloom ● Landowners ● Interest groups (walkers etc) ● Environment Agency ● Suffolk Wildlife ● Millennium Green Trust ● Halesworth Tourism Group ● ESC ● Residents (V&O consultation Oct 2020) ● Waveney Open Space needs assessment 2015 ● SHELAA ● Waveney Green Infrastructure Strategy 2015 |
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2. Objectives following Evidence Gathered

a) **The NPSG wishes to make Halesworth an environmentally friendly town through the following measures:**

b) **The NPSG wishes to increase biodiversity and to improve habitats for wildlife throughout the town by:**

- Ensuring the town's rivers and waterways are managed in ways that bring better water quality, greater biodiversity and improved habitats for wildlife. In collaboration with the Environment Agency (EA) and Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) biodiversity improvement projects and riparian tree planting schemes will be understood and supported.
- Ensuring floodplains and rivers are professionally managed and contribute to increasing biodiversity and improving habitats. Halesworth Town Council will collaborate with the EA to better understand flood risks and local floodplains.
- Establish maintenance arrangements for the river and provide up to date information to residents, in collaboration with the EA.
- Supporting and encouraging appropriate provisions in all new developments for wildlife and natural habitats, for example bee corridors and owl boxes, should be integral to new developments. Other ideas include, more wildlife-friendly planting (particularly in and around SuDS provisions), wildlife friendly features on buildings such as swift boxes, hedgehog fencing, more planting of disease-resilient native species of trees and appropriate planting along verges to reduce the impact of air pollution.
- The management and maintenance of green spaces, including grass verges, to be done in ways that support biodiversity and wildlife.

c) **The NPSG wishes to improve, protect and expand the green spaces in the town.**

- The Millennium Green will be designated a "Local Green Space" under National Planning Policy Framework legislation. **Local Green Space designation** is a way to provide special protection against development for **green areas** of particular importance to **local** communities. This designation is to protect the green for years to come.

- Establish a robust mechanism for long term management and maintenance of the open spaces in new developments ensuring they remain accessible, open for all, safe, contribute to biodiversity and are pleasing spaces for residents.
- To protect the 36 heritage trees in Halesworth as noted on the map and seen in the Heritage Trees walk.
- The community consultation highlighted people's desire to have more green and open spaces in the town, in addition to preserving existing ones. The WLP has designated a number of these in policy WLP8.23. The Neighbourhood Plan would like to add to this.
- To establish a nature reserve on the banks of the River Blyth close to the Bramfield Road, A144 exiting Halesworth to the South East of the town. Thereby increasing the green space and adding a rich biodiverse habitat for many wildlife species flora and fauna.

Evidence gathered

3. Expanding community recycling and plastic free principals.

a) Feedback from Edgar Sewter Primary School consultation held 16th July 2019 with years 5 & 6 children, 10 -12 year olds.

The following is a list of the things the children said they would like to see in Halesworth in the next 20 years:

- Make Halesworth plastic free / an ECO town
- More trees being planted
- More open spaces
- Build fewer homes, the children were concerned about the loss of fields, proposed building and its effect on the town, including the lack of infrastructure e.g. GP provision
- Pedestrianisation of the Thoroughfare
- More cycle lanes / routes
- Parking issues in town

- Upgrade the skate park, it is good for younger children but not older kids. The children would like a zip wire, football pitch, and a smoking area.
- Bigger shops, in terms of their size, want more shops to be accessible to pushchairs and wheelchairs.
- Banks...cash points need to be made available for 24 hours, possibly at Coopers. (this may have changed post Covid).
- Traffic concerns, specifically Wissett Road and Norwich Road by the Primary school. The children said they would like a safe crossing nearer school, traffic calming measures near the school. Designated School parking along Norwich road, where the road has already allocated parking (facing the Bungay route out of town) opposite the Police station. This should be restricted to short term use, i.e. for school collection and drop-offs only, not for all day parking. This would be primarily for safety but also traffic reduction reasons.
- ALL said the Youth Club should still be around with its own purpose built building.

b) Additional recycling need

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/features/recycling-in-suffolk/>

The list below is all the things that ESC say cannot be placed in blue bins to be recycled:

“The below items should NOT be placed in your recycling bin as they may contaminate recyclable waste. Some of these items, such as glass and textiles, can be recycled at your nearest Suffolk Recycling Centre or a local bring bank. Cartons, batteries, metal pans and electrical items can all be recycled at your nearest Recycling Centre.

glass

food and drink

textiles (clothes and shoes)

nappies

plastic bags and film

small items under 4cm (shredded paper, loose bottle tops)

cartons and Tetra-paks

crisp packets

pet food pouches

polystyrene
 gas cylinders
 mobile phones
 batteries
 electrical items
 needles / medical waste

c) Halesworth Green Party supporters are working in association with Edgar Sewter Primary School to run a public monthly Terracycle collection. (Pre-Covid)

“All monies raised will be used to run the Forest School and other Green initiatives at the school. At the same time all materials collected are recycled rather than going to landfill or incineration. We currently collect pre-sorted waste as follows for Terracycle.

1. All crisp, hula hoops, and similar savoury snack packets.
2. Cake/bar/biscuit/crackers wrappers
3. Old toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, old electric toothbrush heads, flossing containers.
4. Disposable contact lenses
5. Baby food pouches
6. Cosmetics packaging eg old mascara, lipstick, compacts, face creams, etc
7. Flexible packaging from dishwashing, fragrance cleaners, and cleaning.
8. Carex, Imperial Leather and Baileys soap pumps and their refill pouches. The Carex programme is collecting the pumps from hand soaps and refill pouches. It is not the actual hard plastic bottles but these can be recycled in Council recycling. Nor is it other brands of pump.

Due to Tetrapaks no longer being allowed in the blue recycling bins we are also collecting these (rinsed out, squashed and with plastic lids on please) and we take them en masse to the dedicated Tetra Pak containers at Leiston or Lowestoft in order to save mileage. However, apologies but we are getting so many that we request this service to be for those who cannot arrange their own transport to the tips. We, as a group, are also researching and campaigning for better recycling”.

4. Revitalising the waterways

Revitalising the waterways involves looking at both water quality and other improvements that could be made, such as additional Riparian tree planting, biodiversity enhancements and river maintenance programs. To focus on this area of work the NP made contact with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) and the Environment

Agency (EA). [Name redacted] from the SWT and [name redacted] from the EA both shared details of the work currently being carried out to address these areas.

a) Details of the email correspondences with SWT are shown below.

Email correspondence dated: 17th November 2020. [name redacted]'s replies are shown in red:

Dear [name redacted],

I am a colleague of Keith Greenberg working on the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan.

Keith and I have both been working on the river and flooding issues Halesworth and the surrounding area has.

I wondered if I could follow up your email dated 13th October 2020, with some further questions please.

1. *Where are the 7 key sites being targeted by the River Blyth Catchment Restoration Project (RBCRP)?*

Without naming specific farms, there were two sites in Wenhaston and one in Bramfield for the in-channel restoration and one site in Thorrington for the invasive species control. There were two other sites in the pipeline for this autumn but both owners dropped out unfortunately.

2. *Where are the pollution hotspots in the areas you are working on? and how are you resolving these?*

The aim of our catchment walkover surveys have been to identify hotspot areas of diffuse pollution, mainly sediment input. Whilst we haven't pinpointed specific sites, it is clear that stopping sediment in the upper reaches of the catchment, will reduce the impact downstream. Aside from the in-channel restoration projects in Wenhaston and Bramfield, which will help to trap sediment. We have advised site managers on a number of things, including fencing parts of the channel to prevent poaching, buffer strips and cover crops etc.

3. *What are the specific requirements for planting Riparian trees, what sites are most suitable? Is this something you would welcome Halesworth Town Councils (HTC) support and contribution on?*

The aim of the catchment-wide tree planting is to improve the river habitat and/ or to slow the flow of water getting into the channel. We have mainly been focussing on riverside tree planting i.e. the occasional tree planted on the river banks. The occasional tree will improve the river habitat by suppressing the growth of excessive in-channel vegetation, regulating water temperatures and providing shelter and food source for fish and invertebrates. Larger areas of tree planting in a river catchment can help to slow the flow of water by acting like a sponge. We have 4 sites in the pipeline for tree planting this winter, which have all been finalised. However, if you had a site abutting the river in mind, we could consider it for planting in the new year.

4. *How do you reduce sediment pollution along the river? We are mindful that the river does not recognise town boundaries so we know we need to look at the wider area, up and down stream.*

It is natural for some sediment to enter the river, through runoff and erosion but it is true that certain land management practices can increase the amount of sediment entering our rivers. We provide advice to land managers on measures like buffer strips, cover crops over winter, changing the direction of ploughing on slopes, planting trees or hedges on slopes to slow the surface flow of water. Its best to prevent the sediment at the source rather than dealing with it downstream, as the problem will just continue.

5. *This is more a question for the EA but I thought I would also ask you. Halesworth has been identified as having poorly supported banks, which appear to be contributing and exacerbating the flooding pinch points in the river, through the town. Would maintenance / improvements to these banks (and removal of the washed in silt) reduce the flood risk? Would it be worth doing small scale projects like this, or do we need a more strategic wider area of work? If so is this something the EA should do or someone else, yourselves for example?*

Our work on rivers focuses on wildlife and habitats improvements, so that would be a question for the EA. We are not the experts on flooding so are unlikely to be able to advise on this but happy to give advice on any project regarding wildlife or water voles etc.

6. *I would really appreciate any link or copy of the EA report on Natural Flood Management, if you have it please? Or any relevant reports that you might have please. EA flood prevention engagement is much needed in Halesworth and I would really welcome the opportunity to speak to someone who knows about Halesworth from there. I will have to call them and try to locate a person that way*
7. *Through our discussion with Halesworth Town Council Environment Committee we are beginning to think that the river and flooding issues need a collaborative overview involving a range of parties including: yourselves, EA, Anglian Water, Suffolk County Council, Halesworth Millennium Green Trust (MGT), landowners and HTC. Is this something you would be willing to consider, and do you feel this would be appropriate? The aim being to ensure a long term action plan was written to manage the river appropriately and to reduce the flood risk.*

Yes, I agree but these issues tend to need a catchment-wide approach so any group should focus on the wider catchment, rather than just the river in Halesworth. I would certainly be willing to advise or be involved in any group. However, please be aware that the River Blyth Catchment Project that I am currently working will end in September 21 and I will no longer be working specifically on The River Blyth. However, Suffolk Wildlife Trust will still be involved in river restoration work and may still be able to advise. There is already the East Suffolk Catchment Partnership group, so you wouldn't want to rehash what is being done there but a group focusing on the Blyth specifically may be helpful.

8. *Finally, If the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG) were able to designate an area of land as a nature reserve in Halesworth, would SWT be willing to consider the management of this? It is a dream of ours but one we need to sound you out over in order for it to become a reality, hopefully.*

I did forward your colleagues email regarding a nature reserve to my colleague, name redacted, who is our Conservation manager but she may not have responded. I will chase her on this.

I appreciate this is a lot of questions, some perhaps you may not be able to answer. However anything you can reply to would be gratefully received.

Many thanks,

*Charlotte Slater
HNPSG*

Email to Keith Greenberg from [name redacted], of SWT dated: 13th October 2020. [name redacted]'s responses are shown in red in the email.

Hi Keith,

Thanks for your email. I can certainly help with some of your questions about the river and I have answered them in red below. I have also forwarded your email to our Conservation Manger, [name redacted] who will be able to help with the questions that are out of my remit and she might get back to you regarding the nature reserve. I think it's best we wait until I hear back from [name redacted] before organising a zoom meeting.

- *Details of your 2-year River Blyth Catchment Restoration Project. We would like to know its objectives, when it started, what has happened to date and what hopes SWT have for it in the future. While our Neighbourhood Plan is limited to the town's boundaries, rivers don't recognise that so what happens beyond Halesworth matters. A key element of your project must involve developing relationships with landowners and any information on this (without breaching any issues of confidentiality) would be very helpful. The Catchment Scale Restoration Project is Funded by a Water Environment Grant. The project started in March 2019, but I was not in post as the Project Officer until June 2019, when the bulk of the work begun. It was originally a two-year project but it was granted a 6-month extension last year so the project will end in September 2022. The objectives of the project are:*
 - to undertake river restoration work and habitat improvements at 7 key sites across the catchment*
 - to undertake Himalayan balsam control across the catchment.*
 - to undertake walkover surveys of the catchment, engage with landowners in pollution hotspots and identify measures to reduce sediment pollution*
 - to plant up to 1000 riparian trees*
 - to recruit, train and support a group of volunteer River Wardens who will undertake monitoring of water quality.*
- So far, we have completed the habitat improvement work at 5 of the 7 key*

sites, including in channel improvements on the Wenhaston tributary: <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/news/river-blyth-restoration-update>. We have had two seasons of Himalayan balsam control with our volunteers. We have also planted roughly 400 riparian trees in the catchment, including on the Halesworth Millennium Green.

Looking forward, we plan on continuing the riparian tree planting this winter and we are still looking for planting sites, so please let me know if you have any in mind. We will also continue to work with our River Warden volunteers on the catchment monitoring and Himalayan balsam control and I will continue to engage with landowners across the catchment. Before the end of the project, we hope to have identified and developed new habitat improvement projects that could potentially be taken on by ourselves or other organisations in the future when more funding becomes available and we hope to identify some sites upstream of Halesworth. We will also ensure that the River Warden volunteer monitoring work can continue after the project ends. In terms of our engagement with landowners, we have had mixed success. The key challenge has been engaging with landowners upstream of Halesworth, particularly on the Spexhall and Wissett tributaries where Suffolk Wildlife Trust has not worked before. We sometimes get a poor response to our letters, particularly this year with Covid-19 being on most people's minds. I am happy to talk more about the project in a zoom call if it helps.

- The data developed by your river wardens, including information on wildlife. I appreciate that this covers the whole of the Blyth, but perhaps there might be information which can be identified as being relevant and / or related to the town and its immediate surroundings. Whatever the case, I am sure the information will be helpful.

I have attached some maps of the river warden survey findings last year. Hopefully this is helpful. The river wardens have just started collecting aquatic invertebrate and chemical water quality data but there is not enough to collate yet.
- The EA contact person would be really useful. We need that in order to ask if the EA is willing to share its report on natural flood management opportunities upstream of Halesworth. We would also like to talk to them about the condition of the river and New Reach. I must say, the link you sent us made for grim reading. There seems to be a noticeable decline in quality both in the town and outside too. In the current political climate, I can only see it getting worse but any positive angle on it from you would cheer me up!

[name redacted] is the best person to contact or he can pass you on to the correct person.
- If you have any specific contact in the Blyth Otter Group, it would be helpful. Otherise, we can try and make contact va their website

It might be best to use the contact form on their website first.

Hope that helps.

Best wishes,

[name redacted]

Additional details of the SWT Blyth Catchment project can also be found here:

<https://www.blythweb.co.uk/features/blythrestoration/index.php>

b) Riparian tree planting guide from (name redacted) at the EA

Quick guide to riparian tree planting in East Anglia

This document summarises information about the planting and aftercare of native trees and shrubs along rivers, streams and other watercourses in East Anglia. It is intended to provide a quick reference guide which can be used by both individuals and groups planning projects to improve tree cover along rivers. The guide provides an outline of the benefits of riparian trees, and lists things to consider when deciding what to plant and where to plant. It also discusses options for tree protection and aftercare, and what permissions may need to be sought before projects can be implemented on the ground.

1. The benefits of riparian trees

Many stretches of river throughout East Anglia are largely denuded of tree cover. The reasons for this include historical removal of trees to enable access for river maintenance, as well as grazing pressure from livestock which prevents the establishment/re-establishment of trees. Tree cover along river corridors is important for the following reasons:

- Trees provide physical habitat diversity that in turn supports a diverse range of animal and plant species.*
- They provide underwater root systems of value to fish and invertebrates, for example by providing spawning sites and cover from predators.*
- Tree root systems stabilise river banks and protect them from erosion, especially on the outside of bends.*
- By providing shade, trees suppress growth of aquatic vegetation and moderate extremes in water temperature.*
- In the longer term, tree cover can provide a natural source of in-channel woody material, a key component of river systems that is lacking in many lowland watercourses.*
- Tree planting can enhance local landscape quality.*
- Trees provide nesting sites for birds, roosting sites for bats, potential holts for otters and a food source for mammals, birds and invertebrates.*

2. What species to plant

- The aim should be to plant native species of trees and shrubs that are appropriate to the area and suited to the environmental conditions (soil type, wetness of site etc.). Native species will maximise the benefits for biodiversity and preserve local landscape character.*
- Avoid planting too great a diversity of trees, as the objective should be to create a naturalistic planting scheme that blends easily into the landscape. However, planting a number of species will provide resilience in the event of future outbreaks of tree disease.*

- A first step should be to visit the site and see what species are already growing along the river. This will provide information on what grows well in the locality and so what will be appropriate to plant. If a particular tree disease is locally prevalent (e.g. Phytophthora disease in alder, or willow watermark disease) alternative species should be planted.
- In very wet sites alder and willow may be the only viable species to plant. However, most sites will have areas of dryer ground (e.g. spoil banks from past dredging) that allow a wider range of species to be planted.
- Suitable species for planting along rivers in East Anglia include the following:

Alder *Alnus glutinosa*
 Crack willow *Salix fragilis*
 White willow *Salix alba*
 Goat willow *Salix caprea*
 Grey willow *Salix cinerea*
 Black poplar *Populus nigra*
 Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*
 Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*
 Field maple *Acer campestre*
 Hazel *Corylus avellana*
 Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*

- Think about how big the trees will grow (and hence how much space they will need) and what future management might be required (e.g. trimming back of “bushy” willows that have the potential to extend across the channel, especially in smaller rivers).

3. Where to plant/planting patterns

- For maximum benefit trees should be planted very close to the river’s edge (keeping safety considerations in mind). This will allow the trees to have maximum influence on the river, once fully established, for example by shading the watercourse, extending roots into the channel, and promoting a meandering planform.
- Bear in mind that trees planted right at the river’s edge will be subject to flooding and so any tree protection (see below) will need to be sufficiently robust to withstand this. Planting at different heights (in relation to “normal” water level) will help ensure that at least a proportion of the trees will be planted in optimal conditions.
- Planting on the river bank will minimise the impacts on adjacent areas of productive agricultural land, be that arable land or pasture.
- Avoid planting under or in close proximity to power cables, on top of buried services, on sites of archaeological interest or close to flood defence structures or other infrastructure. In areas with known military activity an unexploded ordnance assessment should be completed. If machine access is required to maintain the channel then the trees should be spaced far enough apart to allow this maintenance to continue in the future.
- Most schemes are likely to comprise the scattered planting of individual trees or small groups of trees along the river bank, rather than dense blocks of planting. However, there may be an opportunity to create small copses, for example in field corners or in the inside of meanders. Such areas could include a greater variety of species, including spindle *Euonymus europaea*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, crab apple *Prunus sylvestris* and disease resistant elm *Ulmus sp.*

- Try and design the scheme so that, once established, the trees form a natural part of the landscape and do not appear obviously planted. The best way to do this is to vary the number of trees at each location and to vary the spacing between trees.
- As a very rough guide, aim for 50% of the river surface to be open to sunlight, with the remainder covered by dappled shade.
- There will be more freedom to plant where the river channel is already fenced, or on sites where there is no grazing by livestock. For sites where new fencing is required the distribution of planting is likely to be influenced by the extent of fencing that is affordable, or acceptable to the landowner.

4. Sizing, sourcing and planting of trees

- All plants should be derived from seed of native (British) provenance, and where possible locally sourced stock should be used. The Forestry Commission have produced a useful map showing Regions of Provenance and Seed Zones in Great Britain. East Anglia falls within Region of Provenance 40. Most of Norfolk and Suffolk lie within native seed zone 406, and most of Essex lies within native seed zone 405.
- In practice it is surprisingly difficult to track down suppliers who can guarantee to supply native stock, particularly for some of the species that form significant components of riparian planting schemes. For alder it is usually possible to obtain stock from Region of Provenance 40. For willows, it is best to use cuttings taken directly from trees already growing at the planting site. These cuttings root readily when planted into damp soil.
- It is recommended that bare root stock is used for planting. This is typically available in size classes of 60-90cm or 90-120cm. Planting can be undertaken at any time between November and March inclusive. Avoid planting during periods of severe weather, especially when the ground is frozen.
- Stock is best planted by digging individual pits, spreading the roots of the tree, carefully backfilling with soil and firming the soil to remove any air pockets. Each tree should be well watered at the time of planting (a bucket attached to a rope provides a good way of safely obtaining water from the river to undertake this activity).

5. Protection and fencing

- It is recommended that newly planted trees and shrubs are protected with tree shelters and mulch mats. These will reduce competition from other plants, reduce the risk of damage by hares, rabbits and deer, and provide a microclimate that promotes plant growth.
- We typically use biodegradable mulch mats 50cm by 50cm in size. Tree shelters need to be 1.2m high to adequately protect plants from muntjac and roe deer. These can either be solid Tubex type shelters, or more open mesh shelters. A disadvantage of mesh shelters is that side shoots can grow through the mesh, requiring them to be cut free at a later stage. The guard should be attached using cable ties to a treated softwood stake (1.8m by 32mm) driven into the soil so that its top is below the top of the shelter. Long stakes are advisable in order to ensure the shelters remain in place during periods of flooding.
- Smaller shelters (and correspondingly shorter stakes) may be used in situations where it is certain that damage from deer or livestock will not be an issue.
- In locations where there is grazing by livestock (e.g. sheep, goats, cattle and horses) fencing will be required to prevent damage to the trees. A post and 4 strands of barbed wire fence is most suitable for cattle. Stock netting and barbed wire will be required for sheep. Post and rail fencing may be most appropriate for horses. If just a few trees are being planted it may be more efficient to erect fencing enclosures around individual trees. Fencing

needs to be robust. It is a false economy to erect a sub-standard fence that breaks down and results in damage to or loss of the planted trees. Consideration should be given to providing stiles to allow easy access to the trees for future maintenance.

- Trees should not be planted closer than 2m from the fence in order to reduce the risk of damage from livestock leaning over the fence (remember that the trees will grow closer to the fence line as they become established).*
- For larger (deeper) watercourses, fences can consist of a single line of fencing, with the ends angled in to the edge of the river channel. Post and rail should extend from the end of the fence into the river channel to prevent livestock from walking round the end of the fence and accessing the trees. For smaller watercourses, a complete (four sided) fence line will be required to adequately protect the trees.*

6. Aftercare

- Periodic visits should be made to check how the newly planted trees and shrubs are faring. Some hand clearance of encroaching vegetation within and around the tree shelters may be required to reduce competition and smothering. We do not recommend the use of herbicides to reduce competition around planted trees.*
- Any trees that die during the first few years of establishment should be replaced.*
- Once the trees have become established the tree shelters and stakes should be removed. In our experience this is typically 3-5 years after planting.*
- Once the trees are established, ongoing responsibility for any maintenance will lie with the landowner.*

7. Consents and permissions

- Landowner agreement will be needed before any trees can be planted.*
- In most cases (e.g. in rural areas with low flood risk) an Environmental Permit for Flood Risk Activities will not be required from the Environment Agency for tree planting beside a Main River. It is recommended that the local Environment Agency Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology Team or Catchment Delivery Manager is contacted to discuss each proposal for tree planting. We will obtain clarification from our Environment Agency Partnerships and Strategic Overview Team on whether a permit is required.*
- Fencing along river banks does not need an Environmental Permit for Flood Risk Activities provided it is set back from the bank and consists either of post and rail, post and wire mesh of at least 100mm spacing, or post and wire strands.*
- Where tree planting falls outside registered land parcels the landowner does not need to notify the Rural Payments Agency. Where scattered trees are planted within the registered land boundary, there is no need to notify the RPA as long as the total area of trees is less than 0.01ha (100m²).*
- Where the area of tree planting exceeds 0.01ha, or where fencing is erected to exclude livestock from parts of registered land parcels, then consultation with RPA is recommended.*
- Consultation with Natural England is recommended where tree planting will affect land entered into Environmental Stewardship or Countryside Stewardship schemes, or if the land is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area.*
- Consultation with the County Wildlife Trust is recommended if the planting site falls within a County Wildlife Site.*
- The holder of the fishing rights should be consulted prior to planting trees or fencing off sections of river bank.*

· Depending on location, consultation with the relevant Parish Council may be advisable.

[name redacted] Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology Team
Environment Agency, East Anglian Area
August 2016

Information about water quality was obtained from [name redacted] from the EA, see his email below dated: 15th December 2020.

Dear Charlotte and Keith

I hope you are both well. I asked colleagues for some information on our work with water companies in the Blyth catchment, and specifically about water recycling centres (sewage treatment works) where phosphate stripping technology was being installed to improve water quality in the Blyth. They have provided the following information that I hope is useful.

A 'pathway to good' scheme means that we have used SAGIS (Source Apportionment GIS) modelling to see what discharge permit limit at the relevant water recycling centre would achieve Good Ecological Status (as required by the Water Framework Directive) in a particular waterbody. We have then set this as the permit limit (or as close to this as is feasible) to try and get this waterbody to Good Ecological Status. This will be done with the installation of new phosphate stripping technology at the water recycling centres.

Halesworth water recycling centre has a pathway to good scheme and the phosphate permit limit will be set at 0.5 mg/l. This will be in place by the end of March 2024.

Wenhaston water recycling centre, which is located in Wenhaston Watercourse (a tributary of the Blyth), also has a pathway to good scheme and the phosphate permit limit will be set at 0.8 mg/l. This will also be in place by the end of March 2024.

Our SAGIS models predict that 80% of the phosphate load in the river Blyth comes from sewage discharges so once these schemes are in place, we should see improvements in water quality downstream of the discharges.

It is important to note that all the water recycling centres in the Blyth catchment already work to tight permit limits in their existing discharge consents that are regulated by us. This work is about further improving water quality.

I hope this is useful.

Kind regards

[name redacted]

[name redacted] Catchment Delivery Manager-Suffolk, Environment Programme team

Email from [name redacted] EA on 18th June 2021, following the site meeting held at the possible Nature Reserve on the South edge of Halesworth.

Dear Keith and (name redacted)

It was good to meet you both yesterday and to look at this stunning section of the Blyth on the southern edge of Halesworth. I'm glad we had our meeting yesterday and not today weather-wise!

I have checked our Catchment Planning System (CPS) for information on this section of the Blyth. CPS holds information on the Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of rivers/water bodies. The WFD status of a waterbody is classified as being at either High, Good, Moderate, Poor or Bad Ecological Status. It is a very stringent assessment and looks at a wide range of ecological, physical and water quality elements and is a 'one out all out' system of classification. This means that if just one individual element assessed (e.g, dissolved oxygen level) is not itself at Good status then the overall status of the river is pulled down to the lower status level of this individual element.

It can be more complicated than this but this is how the classification system works. Looking at the Blyth it is currently at Moderate Ecological Status. We need our water bodies to be at Good Ecological Status overall but Moderate Ecological Status is much better than it might sound and most rivers in Suffolk are also currently at Moderate Ecological Status. To give you an idea of how hard High Ecological Status is to reach, this really refers to something like a healthy remote Scottish or Welsh mountain stream.

In terms of individual elements assessed in the Blyth then the picture is really positive:

Invertebrates-High Ecological Status

Ammonia-High Status (this means ammonia levels are low which is good!)

Dissolved oxygen-Good Ecological Status

Phosphate-High Status (this means phosphate levels are low which is good!)

Temperature-High Status (this means water temperature is where it needs to be)

The overall status of the Blyth is brought down to Moderate Ecological Status overall by the presence of minute traces (sometimes below the limits of detection) of a group of now banned fire retardant chemicals that were used in textiles, furniture and electronics that are present in all watercourses. There is therefore no particular issue that is affecting the Blyth alone.

Even without being able to walk the site it was clear that there are high quality wetland habitats present throughout that will support a wide range of priority species.

I have added an update from [name redacted] from East Suffolk Council who I mentioned yesterday. Name Redacted's contact details are at the bottom of the Green Issues update.

[name redacted] is the East Suffolk Rivers Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer working for Natural England. She works closely with farmers and land managers and can be contacted at [contact details redacted]

I hope this helps.

Best wishes

[name redacted]

[name redacted] Catchment Delivery Manager-Suffolk, Environment Programme team
Environment Agency | Icen House, Cobham Road, Ipswich, IP3 9JD

Waveney Local Plan, March 2019.

WLP 8.34 encourages the provision of features within developments which can support biodiversity and ecological networks. Such features could include roosting or nesting spots on trees and buildings for birds and bats, features which enable permeability for hedgehogs and water features such as ponds.

c) Halesworth in Bloom (HIB) consultation with [name redacted] member of HIB

Email from 11th November 2020.

Hello Charlotte

First of all, apologies for my slow response. Like so many others I do seem to have a lot going on at the moment!

To answer some of your questions: we began Halesworth in Bloom volunteer gardening in 2013, under the irreplaceable leadership of the late Tamsyn Imison. We are all volunteers, funded by our own fundraising; by, usually, an annual contribution from the Town Council towards a particular project we nominate and agree with them. (We chose to forego this year in view of other greater needs in the Community); with sponsorship from local businesses and individuals.

We look after the Thoroughfare floral planters, the Memorial Garden at St Mary's, the three Town Park Entrance borders, the border in the town car park, planters at Hooker House, in front of the old Sorting Office, the roundabouts, two recesses in London Road, planters up at the Boarding House, two (currently rather neglected)

borders at the cemetery, Holton Road. We are this week continuing the annual narcissus planting that Tamsyn began back in 2013 and which you will be aware of from the daffies all along verges on all approaches to the town and along Saxons Way and in the Town Park, and we have started getting neighbourhoods to plant bulbs themselves (we are gifted one or two sackfuls of bulbs annually by DC Norse.) This week and last week we have been planting Narcissus around bus stops! And before that we were planting wildflower plugs in the Town Park and sprucing up the Memorial Garden ready for Remembrance Day Sunday and reducing weeds in the Thoroughfare with environmentally safe spray.

Choosing and approving projects:

Members of HiB have in the past identified areas for improvement and checked that TC have no objections, and in the case of tree planting, seek their/DC and CC permissions, as appropriate. This last year we have been busy maintaining existing planting projects, with the addition of a wildflower circle in the Town Park.

We would be more than happy for you to support and strengthen our role in your literature and in any other way. Personally speaking I am particularly interested in the Neighbourhood Plan's ideas for improved linkage of the Thoroughfare to the Town Park and Millenium Green, given the potential to enhance access to the Town River as a public green space and also to introduce new green spaces in any development of the overflow car park / PrintWorks, etc area.

I am writing to you informally as the longest standing volunteer, since 2013. Our formal structure has suffered through Lockdown as a result of poor health, need to isolate, or simply through committee members' own changing family or Community priorities. It is of course hoped that this can be revived in the future, but in the meantime we have continued to garden throughout (adhering of course to social distancing rules). Our website at www.halesworthinbloom.com but I would add that it does need some updating to include 2020 activity.

I think it is very useful for us to communicate. On behalf of all our volunteers, thank you for getting in touch and do let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Kind regards

[name redacted] on behalf of Halesworth in Bloom

d) Halesworth Heritage Trees

<https://kaliwood.wordpress.com/2019/09/19/halesworth-heritage-trees-a-walk-2019/>

“A heritage tree is typically a large, individual tree with unique value, which is considered irreplaceable. While it is not necessarily ancient, the major criteria for heritage tree designation are age, rarity, and size, as well as aesthetic, botanical, ecological, and

historical value. Typically these trees are found where they have been protected from the ravages of mankind and our rapacious needs for habitation expansion. They are typically found in our native woodlands, historic park lands including cemeteries and estates, along roadsides in particular boundaries, along railways and in hedgerows, agricultural fields and very occasionally as isolated specimens in the middle of housing estates or development sites”.

Halesworth Heritage Tree Register, 2014. Source [name redacted], Halesworth in Bloom Tree Warden.

Halesworth’s Heritage trees are those that are important for wildlife, landscape or cultural reasons.

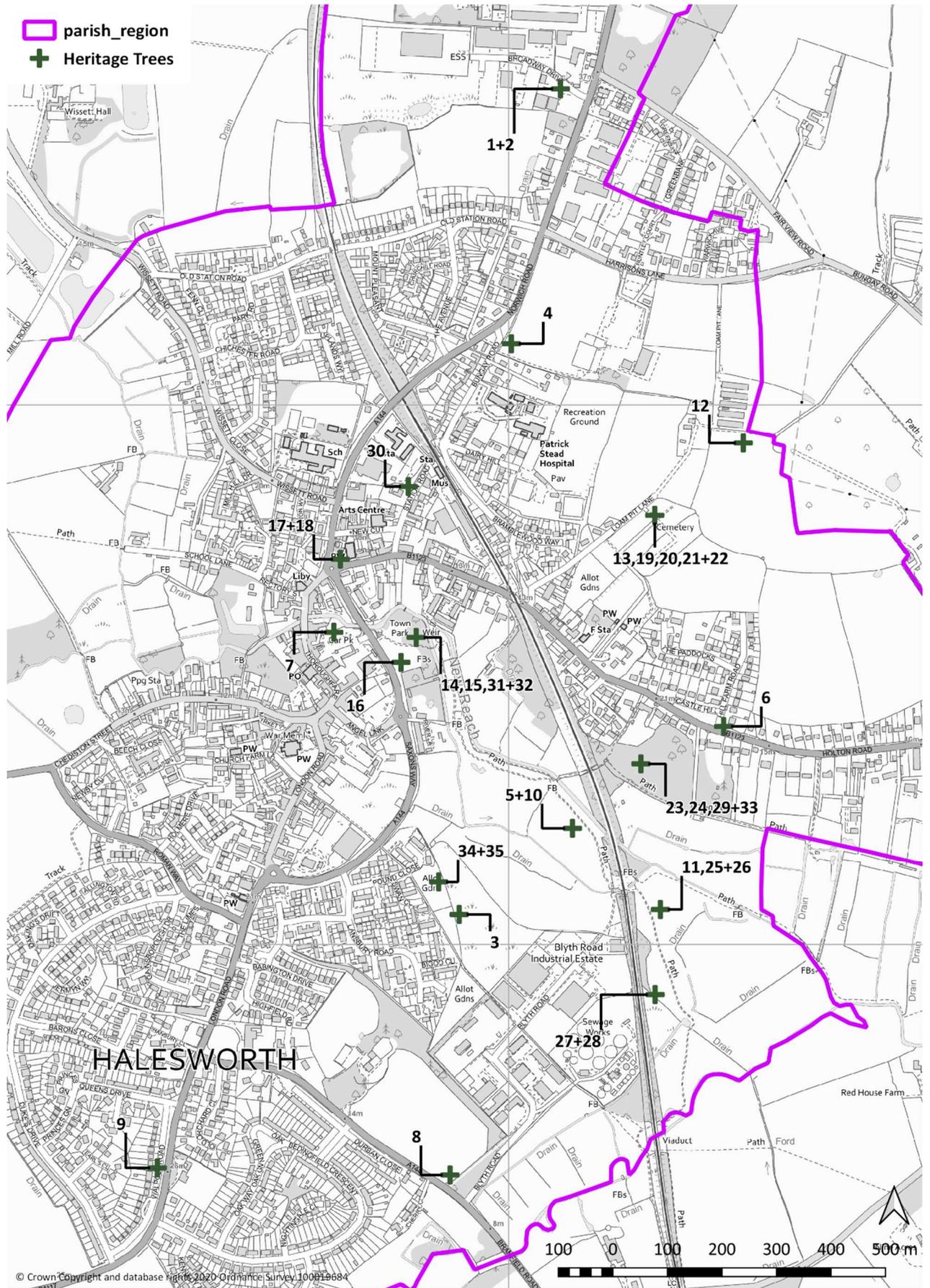
Ancient trees are living relics that inspire in us feelings of awe and mystery. Many of them have been features of the landscape for hundreds of years and provide a direct link with the history of the area.

Over the centuries they have inspired artists, writers, poets and scientists and are mentioned in sacred texts.

Old and veteran trees contain features such as hollowing with associated decay fungus, hole wounds, and large dead branches that support wildlife that cannot live anywhere else.

Some trees have been important landscape features for many generations and others may not be old but have been planted to commemorate a person or anniversary.

This register is intended to record these trees in Halesworth so that they can be protected.



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Please note the locations of the Heritage trees is an approximate guide, not a precise location.

Halesworth Heritage Trees list: as of March 2022

1. Oak. Location: Edge of field between Old Station Road and Broadway Industrial Estate off Norwich Road.
2. Oak. Location: Broadway Industrial Estate off Norwich Road.
3. Oak. Location: Bigod Close / Swan Close / Swan Lane.
4. Ash. Location: Old Halesworth Middle School Site off Norwich Road.
5. Horse Chestnut. Location: Millennium Green, Chestnut Meadow.
6. Oak. Location: Hill Farm Road / Holton Road junction.
7. Horse Chestnut. Location: Thoroughfare / Town car park, beyond de Argentines Bistro / Toy Shop.
8. Oak. Location: Boundary of grounds of South Lodge and Blyth Road industrial estate.
9. Oak. Location: Between access road and West side of Walpole Road. opposite side of access road near house number 22.
10. Willow. Location: Halesworth Millennium Green (previously pollarded but collapsed now regrowing from fallen branches).
11. Alder. Location: Blyth Meadow, adjacent to the River Blyth on Millennium Green.
12. Ash. Location: Town Farm, adjacent to the public footpath near parish boundary.
13. Hornbeam. Location: Halesworth Cemetery, on the bank above the access road.
14. Weeping Willow. Location: Town Park left of the main path near the play area.
15. Oak. Location: Town Park in grassed area (planted to celebrate the new Millennium)
16. Hawthorn. Location: Town Park in grass near the hedge on Saxons way.
17. Unknown species. Location: Quay Street opposite Hooker House near the United Reformed Church.
18. Unknown species. Location: Quay Street to the left of the entrance to Blyth Mews.
19. Beech. Location: Halesworth Cemetery.
20. Scots Pine. Location: Halesworth Cemetery.
21. Wellingtonia. Location: entrance to Halesworth Cemetery.
22. Holm Oak. Location: entrance to Halesworth Cemetery
23. Oak. Location: Folly in the old pit. Millennium Green
24. Oak. Location: Bird's Folly track to AW compound.
25. Willow. Location: Blyth Meadow, on the bank of the town river.
26. Willow. Location: Blyth Meadow, on the bank of the town river.
27. Oak. Location: Blyth Meadow. Halesworth Millennium Green, adjacent to railway and sewerage treatment works.
28. Oak. Location: Blyth Meadow. Halesworth Millennium Green, adjacent to railway and sewerage treatment works.
29. Black Poplar. Location: Folly Meadow. Halesworth Millennium Green.
30. Copper Beech. Location: Magnolia House, Station Road, Halesworth.
31. Narrow leaved Ash. Location: Town Park
32. Oak. Location: Town Park.
33. Scots Pine. Location: Bird's Folly, edge of disused gravel pit adjacent to railway.
34. and 35. Two Ash. Location, possibly one tree joined at base. Location: Swan Lane footpath.

All the Halesworth heritage trees have been catalogued with detailed information on each tree in the Tree Register. This document has been attached to the evidence paper as Annex 1.

5. Collaborative work on flooding with the Environment Agency and Halesworth Town Council.

The NP met with the Environment Agency (EA) to discuss and evaluate the flooding situation in Halesworth, this was a widely raised concern by local residents. As biodiversity, floodplain habitats and water quality are intrinsically linked to the river this was also a matter for discussion. It also features in the evidence above in section 5 also.

The evidence below shows the agendas and minutes of the meetings between the EA and HNPSG:

Environment Agency / Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Zoom meeting 3rd March 2021, 13:00.

Meeting Agenda

- *[name redacted] to present the EA's recent flood risk assessment and findings for Halesworth / River Blyth and local watercourses.*
- *Discuss flood prevention strategies and future management opportunities, including natural flood defences / mechanisms. (all)*
- *Proposal of a 3 tiered / joint funding approach to flood protection schemes in town. (Keith Greenberg)*
- *Discuss future / planned development near the river and local watercourses, consequences and safeguarding the town. (Charlotte Slater)*
- *Impacts on floodplain habitats and biodiversity ([name redacted])*
- *NPSG Wildlife / Nature Reserve adjacent to the over Blyth near Kennedy Close. (Keith Greenberg)*
- *HTC clerk questions for EA (Nick Rees)*

Environment Agency
Halesworth Flooding fact sheet 2021 (long version)

Introduction

We have produced this factsheet to provide you with information about flood risk in Halesworth. We have included information on other issues including; flood warnings, river maintenance, river habitat enhancement, and development in the floodplain.

- New flood modelling shows that the **risk of property flooding is lower** than previously thought, with an annual probability of less than 1% (1 in 100 years). The **historic flood** in 1993, flooded 43 properties in Halesworth, had an annual probability of 0.03% (1 in 350 years).
- The open countryside and wildlife areas to the west and east of the town, including Millennium Green and countryside north of Chediston Street, are at **high risk of flooding**, and are classed as functional floodplain as they flood with a 5% annual probability (1 in 20 years). It is natural for rivers to flood open floodplains in times of high rainfall.
- Maintenance - We annually **maintain** the rivers in Halesworth to clear overhanging or obstructing vegetation. But we do not remove the **silt** from New Reach as it does not reduce flood risk, and will build up again within three years.
- DEFRA will not provide funding for **flood risk management projects** in Halesworth to manage the flood risk from the River Blyth as the risk to people and property is too low.
- We provide **Flood Alerts** and **Flood Warnings** for Halesworth, which you can sign up to.
- A **Permit** is required for any work or structures within the main river itself or within 8m of the banks of the main river.
- We are a consultee on **planning applications** for proposed developments in the flood zones, and recommend that they are only approved if they are appropriate, will be safe from flooding and not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- Channel and floodplain **restoration** work can provide environmental benefits.

Flood Risk

Floods can range from small frequent events which only flood small areas of adjacent land, to larger rare events which cover a wide areas.

We have recently updated the flood modelling of the River Blyth catchment, including Halesworth. These models are reviewed periodically to ensure they are up to date. This revised model uses the best available information about the Blyth catchment and computer software calculates the depth and area of flooding for given river channel conditions and specified river flow rates.

The latest modelling shows that flood risk to properties in Halesworth is low, with no residential or commercial properties at risk of flooding in a 1% (1 in 100) annual probability flood, which is equivalent to Flood Zone 3 on the flood map for planning available at <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>.

In an extreme 0.1% (1 in 1000) annual probability flood, equivalent to Flood Zone 2 on the flood map for planning, there would be approximately 60 properties at risk of flooding (33 commercial and 26 residential).

Below is a table showing the number of properties at risk of flooding in a range of flood events:

Flood Event – annual probability of flooding	No. of Residential Properties	No. of Commercial Properties
5% (1 in 20) – Flood Zone 3b	0	0
1% (1 in 100) – Flood Zone 3a	0	0
0.1% (1 in 1000) – Flood Zone 2	26	33

The height of the internal floor level of each property threshold was determined by undertaking a GPS survey which uses observations from a network of satellites, or from LIDAR estimation which estimates the height of the land using an airborne laser profiling system and is generally accurate to +/- 0.15m.

Flood zones published on GOV.UK will be amended to reflect the extent of flooding in these different flood events. These are smaller than previous flood zones, due to improved hydrology and modelling, and could be advantageous in future discussions with insurance providers. Information on flood risk, including results of the modelling, and any threshold survey data we hold, can be obtained from ourselves free of charge.

Maps showing the extents of the flood outlines, and what will become the new flood zones, are at the end of this factsheet. Areas of open space to the west and east of the town are at risk of more frequent flooding, in the 5% (1 in 20) annual probability flood event, which includes footpaths and small foot bridges.

This area of open countryside, is classed as Flood Zone 3b 'functional floodplain', and is defined as '*land where water flows and is stored in times of flood*'. It is natural that in times of high flows the river will overtop and flood low-lying land, and it is particularly beneficial that in Halesworth this land is predominantly open countryside and wildlife sites, such as Millennium Green, which are naturally designed to flood, rather than properties. Nature is very resilient and winter floods are natural events, so the vast majority of species living in these areas quickly bounce back.

Every 10 years we review the modelling, and amend it based on the latest information and methods. This will ensure that the impacts of climate change on flood risk are taken into account over time.

These results are corroborated by the fact there has not been flooding of property in Halesworth for many years, despite other locations having flooded. During the heavy rainfall experienced in December 2020 and January 2021 for example, hundreds of properties flooded across Norfolk and Suffolk, but none were recorded in Halesworth.

Government Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management funding is allocated to projects in order to protect people and property, and enhance the natural environment. It also considers the economic, social and environmental benefits projects can deliver. In Halesworth, given the limited number of properties at risk of flooding from the River Blyth, there is limited justification for capital investment to reduce flood risk from this source. These can range from conventional hard engineering approaches such as concrete walls, storage of flood water upstream of a community in times of flood, through to natural flood management which works with natural processes to help reduce the risk of flooding in smaller flood events. In all cases, the benefits provided by the flood risk management measures must be greater than the costs, and the project must be affordable.

In Great Yarmouth for example, there are thousands of people and property at risk of flooding, and concrete flood walls provide protection in extreme events. In more rural catchments the use of natural flood management may be more appropriate, including measures such as land management, planting of trees, reconnecting the natural floodplain and in-channel leaky barriers to delay flood peaks. However, installation of measures across a whole catchment are required to have measurable

benefits, and these benefits are likely to be in smaller flood events, so other flood risk management measures are likely to be required in parallel with natural flood management.

Historic Flooding

The last serious flooding in Halesworth was in October 1993 with reports of 46 properties flooding. The latest flood modelling, and analysis of the rainfall records and hydrology, has shown that the 1993 flood had annual probability of approximately 0.03% (1 in 350 years). This was, therefore, a more extreme flood event than previously thought based on earlier flood modelling.

Current Maintenance

Our routine maintenance work is carried out in November and December each year. Work begins between School Lane and Chediston Street, through to the Thoroughfare and Town Park and ends next to the Millennium Green railway bridge.

We cut and clear all sections of overhanging and obstructing vegetation from the channel using hand tools. All fallen trees in the channel are removed. Any blockages that could potentially increase flood risk are removed. All clearance works are undertaken in accordance with our environmental standards, and the illustrations below show the requirements for tree and bush management and weed control.

All material is left onsite with branches, weed cuttings etc. placed away from the channel to provide habitat and naturally decompose as per the U13 waste exemption - 'Spreading of plant matter to confer benefit'.

We intend to re-introduce a herbicide application to the vegetation along approximately 215m length of the New Reach section of the watercourse. We'll apply the herbicide on alternate banks following the path of natural flow to create a meandering pattern where possible. The Glyphosate herbicide that we are licenced to use is a systemic treatment that has to be sprayed onto green, live vegetation, preferably young emergent vegetation as this transfers the herbicide to the root / rhizome much better, this means application is best at the plants emergent stage which is usually in March – April.

We are also responsible for the maintenance of Environment Agency owned structures in the river. This includes the gauging station at Mells, which is used to monitor and record the flow and level of water in the river at all times.

Siltation of the New Reach

The latest flood modelling looked at the impacts of a variety of siltation scenarios, and the results show that removing all the silt from New Reach has no effects on the flood outlines and very minimal effects on the flood depths. As a result, the presence of the silt does not result in an increase in the number of properties flooding in the 5% (1 in 20) annual probability flood event.

Flood model shows that desilting New Reach has minimal effect on flood risk and there are no properties at risk in a 1% annual exceedance probability flood event, therefore we have no current plans to de-silt the New Reach section of the Blyth in Halesworth. We always focus our river maintenance work where it will demonstrably reduce flood risk to people and property.

Our flood risk management specialists have confirmed that when the New Reach was last de-silted it re-filled with sediment in approximately 3 years. This sediment is predominantly soil from arable fields in the catchment. This demonstrates the importance of reducing to a minimum across the whole Blyth river catchment the input of sediment to help reduce the likelihood of this happening. Reducing sediment inputs to a minimum will also help improve the water quality and ecology of the river system.

River Floodplain Habitat Enhancement

Water quality in the Blyth and its tributaries is generally good, but as is the case with most rivers in England, there is further work to be done to enhance water quality and restore river habitats. This work is vital to ensure our rivers and floodplains support as much wildlife as possible and they are able to adapt to our changing climate. Floods and droughts are inevitable but we need to work with landowners and managers across the country to enable our wildlife to become more resilient to the effects of floods and droughts.

Taking action to restore our rivers and functioning floodplains helps people as well as wildlife, because such restoration will encourage the recharge of aquifers, storage of carbon and better management of floodwaters, as well as providing more varied habitats in a better condition for wildlife to thrive.

There is the potential for channel restoration work to be carried out in the catchments upstream of Halesworth to improve the water quality and provide wider environmental benefits. We can only do this work with landowners interested in these projects and so are always looking to work with landowners who own sections of the Blyth and its tributaries to deliver river habitat and water quality improvements.

Flood Warning

The flood zones in Halesworth are covered by Environment Agency flood alerts and flood warnings. Flood alerts inform you when flooding is possible, while flood warnings will be issued when flooding is expected. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> to sign up to receive them. It is possible that the flood alert and flood warning areas may be reduced in size in future to reflect the reduced flood risk shown in the revised flood modelling.

Property Flood Resilience

Property flood resilience measures can help reduce the amount of water from entering a property, using waterproof doors, flood barriers and air brick covers for example, or help reduce the consequences of the flooding once water has entered, tiled floors and raised electrical sockets. These measures are normally only recommended for properties that flood frequently. However individual property owners could still choose to install such measures, if they wanted to further reduce the flood risk to their property.

Further information including case studies can be found at this link.

https://www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/sites/default/files/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf

Development in the Floodplain

Planning applications for proposed development within the flood zones are required to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Policy Guidance on Flood Risk and Coastal Change. This requires the Environment Agency to be consulted on the planning applications by the local council, and we provide comments on whether the proposed development is suitable, designed to be safe and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Residential and commercial developments are not allowed in Flood Zone 3b functional floodplain which is a 5% risk of flooding (1 in 20 year flood event), as this needs to remain open space and able to flood. Residential development in Flood Zone 3a has a 1% risk of flooding in each year so anything

built would need to be designed to be above the flood levels as well as taking into consideration of climate change increases. It would not be able to take up current flood storage capacity or increase flood risk elsewhere.

Development is only allowed in flood zones 2 or 3 if it has first passed the sequential test, which requires development to be located in flood zone 1 wherever possible and to only be located in flood zones 2 or 3 where there are no alternative sites at lower flood risk.

As part of a planning application for a new development, a surface water drainage scheme must be designed. This is required to demonstrate that the surface water generated from the development will be adequately managed to ensure the flood risk to surrounding land and properties and nearby watercourses is not increased, and preferably decreased. This will include directing the surface water to ground using infiltration where feasible, and limiting the runoff to watercourses to below the existing greenfield runoff rate. Sufficient surface water storage will also need to be provided on the site to store the amount of surface water generated in a 1% (1 in 100) annual probability rainfall event including climate change over the lifetime of the development. Suffolk County Council are the Lead Local Flood Authority and will be consulted by the Local Planning Authority to enable the LLFA to check that the proposed surface water drainage scheme is correctly designed and so ensure there will be no increase in flood risk on-site or elsewhere.

Watercourse Maintenance

It is the landowners' responsibility to maintain their watercourse, to allow the free flow of water, and so ensure that flood risk is not increased. It is also the landowners' responsibility to ensure that any works to a watercourse are carefully designed and undertaken in a sensitive way and at the right time of year to ensure river habitats and legally protected species (including breeding birds, fish, water vole and otters) and their habitats are not damaged. Please contact the Environment Agency for free advice and guidance when you are considering undertaking watercourse management work and before any work begins on site. Some works can be undertaken without any permissions required, while other works will need a Flood Risk Activity Permit.

Under the Environmental Permitting Regulations, works in, under, over, or within 8m of main rivers, such as the Chediston Watercourse and Wisset Watercourse, require a Flood Risk Activity Permit from the Environment Agency. The type of permit required will depend on the nature of the works. Further information on how to apply for a permit can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>. A bespoke permit application can take up to two months to determine, so you should aim to apply in plenty of time before you want to carry out the works. There is a fee for the permit application, the cost depending on the type of works proposed. Anyone carrying out these activities without a permit, where one is required, is breaking the law.

Contacts

To discuss water quality and river habitat opportunities please contact: [name redacted], Catchment Delivery Manager Suffolk at [contact details redacted].

To discuss flood risk issues please contact: [name redacted], Flood Risk Management Advisor at [contact details redacted].

To report an incident contact the Incident Hotline 0800 807060.
Customer Service line 0370 8506506. Floodline 03459 881188.

Environment Agency (EA)
 Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG)
 Halesworth Town Council (HTC)
 1st Meeting

Zoom meeting 3rd March 2021 at 1pm.

Those present:

[name redacted] (EA)
 [name redacted] (EA)
 [name redacted] (EA)
 Nick Rees (HTC)
 Keith Greenberg (HNPSG)
 Charlotte Slater (HNPSG)

Summary of key points discussed:

EA Halesworth fact sheet:

[Name redacted] presented the EA fact sheet for Halesworth 2021, based on assessments taken in 2020. The findings of their investigations were found through using the most up to date hydrology predictors and modelling.

[Name redacted] highlighted that this factsheet demonstrates a reduced flood risk to Halesworth than was previously stated in past assessments. Fewer homes and commercial properties are now at high risk of flooding. 2 maps were also shared with the group showing the 3 different levels of food risk in Halesworth mostly based on Chediston Street, School Lane, The Thoroughfare, the Town Park, New Reach and Millennium Green. It must be noted that climate change calculations have been taken into account with these new findings. In addition the EA wanted to be clear that this is the picture of Halesworth “now”.

[Name redacted] described the 1993 flood event as an “exceptional event” due to unusually high rainfall. They now believe that this is a 1 in 350 year likelihood of happening again.

We discussed the factsheet and its use etc with the EA. [Name redacted] and [name redacted] said they welcomed feedback from us on the factsheet and that they had produced it “for the town” to be used as we wish. Lengthy discussion was had on how to effectively disseminate this information and how to make it as accessible as possible. KG/CS/NR/HTC to jointly develop proposals and share with the EA.

[Name redacted] highlighted an area in the fact sheet that mentions routine river maintenance that should occur annually. It also set out the timings for this work. It was also confirmed that desilting the river was not going to have any demonstrable impact on reducing flood risk, as there was already a low risk to people and property. This work was therefore not recommended. The wider context of this type of decision is DEFRA’s hierarchy of priorities:- Firstly, risk to people (ie. life and limb), followed by risk to property and then, the environment.

Flood prevention:

We went on to discuss the possible use of flood prevention measures. [Name redacted] explained at length that as the new modelling shows the risk of flooding to “people or property” was low in Halesworth, Given limited budget availability, and the hierarchy noted above, the EA cannot justify carrying out any flood defence or flood risk management strategies in Halesworth.

[Names redacted] both emphasised key parts of the factsheet where it explains that de-silting the river is not necessary. [Name redacted] expanded the point, noting that undertaking this work makes almost no difference to flood outlines or river depth, contrary to widely held beliefs in the town. He also wanted to be very clear that works undertaken without full EA consultation and approval are also illegal. It is vital that nobody goes off “half cocked” and digs out the silt as this could potentially destroy wildlife habitats and important flora and fauna. This must never be done, under any circumstances.

Biodiversity / floodplain habitats and water quality improvements:

[Name redacted] spoke about potential future projects in the Halesworth area (upstream) that would enhance biodiversity and the river. He explained that these projects could also have a secondary gain in that they may also impact positively on slowing down water, as they would be similar to “natural flood defences”. All concerned were interested in this as a way of addressing Halesworth’s concerns about flooding while also having a positive effect on the environment. [Name redacted] went on to explain that this is often dependent on landowners engaging with the EA on these projects, and that is not always easy. However, as the ELMS scheme is introduced under the Agriculture Bill, some landowners may be encouraged to work with the EA and other groups on related land / river management.

Discussion was had about joint funding of projects and [name redacted] said the EA typically don’t fully fund projects but look to collaborate with relevant others. This matched funding approach is a clear principle within DEFRA.

General Issues

[Name redacted] and others spoke about the main need re. Flood prevention in an area such as Halesworth was to inform the residents and ensure they had the most up to date information, to reassure them. [Name redacted] asked for our advice on how to present the information from the Factsheet to Halesworth. An example of informing the community could be information on a noticeboard near the river and the Millennium Green to explain that it is officially floodplain and that it is designed to flood, and this is what gives the Green its unique value. In addition, there are social media and press options that can be used to inform people. Other tangible ideas included looking at a permanent and alternative route to and from the town park over Saxons Way, (ie a controlled crossing). This would augment the underpass from the Thoroughfare car park which is prone to flooding. It would need to be closer to the town park entrance than the current one which is located at the roundabout near Quay Street. Funding is potentially available through Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council and HTC.

The group went on to talk about the factsheet and how to use it effectively for the town. It was agreed that initially Keith / Charlotte / Nick Rees will discuss it and get back to the EA with comments and feedback.

EA all agreed that they would consult with their community engagement team to come up with some ideas re information sharing, “historical myth busting” and informing the local residents of the reduced risk of flooding and the natural floodplain habitats that need to flood, as that is what they are designed to do etc. All agreed that moving forward in this direction was the right course of action.

HTC Concerns

Nick Rees sought clarification on two issues.

- There are sluice gates at Mells which are believed to be the responsibility of the EA. There are also some people in the town who believe that a lack of their effective management has been the cause of floods in the past. Nick asked the EA to investigate and advise accordingly.
- There are wooden sluice gates in the New Reach and again, there is a belief in some quarters that these are a cause of flooding. [Name redacted] said that these gates were, as far as he knew, installed by the Millennium Green trustees to improve the habitat for water voles. He said that the gates would have no negative impact and would not cause flooding. Water would simply flow over / through them. Similarly, there is a bund which is also considered to enhance the flooding risk but [name redacted] said this was highly unlikely.

ACTION:

1. EA to consult their community engagement team regarding ‘myth busting’, information sharing projects etc.
2. HNPSG and NR to have a further discussion concerning the factsheet and feedback to the EA on its content and use.
3. EA to check on the sluice gates at Mells – whether it is responsible for the gates and if so, what the management arrangements are.
4. EA / Nick R & HNPSG to consider whether there are specific projects in / around the town that might meet the criteria for environmental improvement, while also providing some flood mitigation.
5. It was agreed that once all the information above has been collated, a further meeting should be arranged. It was agreed that the EA’s [name redacted] (Flood Resilience Engagement Team) should also be invited.

Second EA meeting minutes:



Environment Agency (EA)

Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG)

Halesworth Town Council (HTC)

Zoom meeting 15th July 2021 at 9.30am.

Those present:

[Name redacted] - EA

[Name redacted] – EA

[Name redacted] – EA

[Name redacted] - EA

Jill Reece - HTC Environment Committee Chair (JR)

Nick Rees - HTC Town Clerk (NR)

Keith Greenberg – HNPSG (KG)

Charlotte Slater – HNPSG (CS)

Summary of key points discussed:

Pictures of the underpass adjacent to the town park

NR shared some recent pictures he had taken of the river where it flows adjacent to the Saxons Way underpass / river. These showed bank slippage, vegetation and silt / sedimentation restricting the river to a very narrow channel, close to the town park toilets.

EA colleagues commented on the pictures and assured the group that the vegetation was not a problem as it would simply wash down in the event of high river flow / rainfall.

[Name redacted] said that there can be a big difference between perceived flood risk and actual risk of flooding. [Name redacted] said that the vegetation is unlikely to increase the flood risk.

Group discussed the bank slippage at this site and EA advised seeking land ownership details for this as restoration works may need to be carried out. The EA said they were happy to advise on works and permits required etc.

KG asked if it was possible for the EA to take a look at this, on site. EA said they would review the photographs and [name redacted] would discuss with the relevant EA flood management team. If the flood management team doesn't think there is an issue, [name redacted] would talk to colleagues in the EA Fisheries and Biodiversity team. Whatever the outcome. KG asked [Name redacted] to liaise with NR.

Discussion was had over the need for permits from the EA for works on the river. [Name redacted] also mentioned timings of work and to ensure nesting birds and water voles were not affected, typically undertaking any works between the end of August (after bird breeding and fish spawning season) and the end of October (before the winter rain and higher river flows).

[Name redacted] spoke about the need for "natural rebuilding" of the bank so securing it was "sympathetic" to the surrounding areas. The EA can advise on this.

Sewage and discoloured water at a location in Halesworth.

JR mentioned discoloured water and sewage in a location in Halesworth on the river. [Name redacted] said this sounded concerning and advised HTC to report this and any environmental incident where watercourses are affected to the EA Hotline on: 0800 80 70 60. [Name redacted] said this was staffed 24/7, 365 days a year. Calls to the EA Hotline are answered by specially trained staff to ensure all necessary information is gathered in the correct way. This is required if there is any future legal case associated with a pollution incident or case of environmental damage.

Logs / saplings in the river upstream of Halesworth

Councillor Jill Reece (JR) also mentioned a collection of logs / cut down saplings on the Chediston watercourse upstream of Halesworth and how they are not lodged across the river (which would act as a potential natural dam) but that they are parallel to the river and causing an obstruction.

[Name redacted] responded saying that this was the landowners responsibility and that their best advice was to contact them to inform them of the issue as the first action. The EA does have enforcement powers but it would be preferable to resolve the matter directly with the landowner before escalating the issue to the EA for formal action.. [Name redacted] said EA enforcement officers could step in and investigate if removal was necessary were the logs to be increasing flood risk, but informing the landowner initially of the concerns is always preferable in these matters.

[Name redacted] said that we do need woody material in our rivers, but we need to ensure they are not blocking the river flow. Natural flood measures need very careful planning, design and installation. They also need to be fixed to prevent being washed away. Therefore, having "informal" leaky dams is not a good idea in sections of watercourse where there are properties close by that could be affected in the event of high flows in the watercourse. Informal leaky dams of woody material in the wider countryside, away from properties, are hugely important environmental features for a range of fish and invertebrate species and should be left in place. KG said it may be that having this material in the river

might be beneficial in slowing the flow down at the Chediston Street stage of the tributary, having a positive effect on flooding at times of high rainfall. He also asked whether the EA would look at the obstruction, at the same time as looking at the narrowed river section in the town. [Name redacted] agreed regarding the slowing effect and summarised by saying first contact the landowner to look at the obstruction, then if further assessment is required, the EA can come and do a site visit to assess whether it is likely to be a problem, or not.

Factsheet, draft 2 sent out by EA July 2021

The group fed back to [Names redacted] on the latest version of the Halesworth flooding factsheet. KG made a couple of comments on wording that [Name redacted] said she would resolve. He also mentioned whether or not the factsheet should possibly include reference to the ELMS (Environmental Land Management scheme) for landowners as an incentive to participate in works. It was felt that as the scheme will not be on stream until 2024 it was better to not mention it specifically but to reference it in more general terms in the factsheet.

CS said she felt the new factsheet was very good and that the EA had made changes following the previous meeting which was good.

[Name redacted] (EA Community Engagement Officer) talked through the process of engagement with regards to the factsheet and posed the following questions and points:

- How will we share the factsheet?
- Where will we share it? social media / community newspaper (HCN) / HTC website / HTC noticeboard?
- Who to share it with? A summary document with affected property owners e.g. Chediston Street homes on the northern side of the road and those living in a flood risk area.
- The length of the 2nd version is too long for a document posted directly into affected homes (it is 6 pages long). She felt there needed to be a summarised version for residents which would provide a link to the detailed factsheet. Name redacted said she would work with name redacted to develop the summarised factsheet.
- [Name redacted] felt community engagement by way of drop-in EA sessions would be better than a "presentation" of the factsheet. However, it would be sensible to see the level of reaction to the fact sheet before committing to this type of communication.

HTC / HNPSG said they were clear as to the various media outlets that can be utilised. In addition, (subject to Councillors approval) a link will be provided on the HTC website

[Name redacted] is currently working with Beccles and Bungay as they suffered property flooding and damage in the Christmas / New Year flooding event in 2020. She said the flooding situation in Halesworth was not classed as "high risk" in comparison and so explained that resources need to go to those communities who have experienced flooding in their homes and to support them. All understood this.

[Name redacted] said she felt that the community needs to be informed that some areas are supposed to flood in high rainfall, e.g. the Millennium Green floodplain and the floodplain on

the Chediston watercourse, and that it needs to happen to direct water away from people and property.

HTC Environment Committee (EC) River assessment project

[Name redacted] informed the group that HTC Environment Committee (EC) will be starting a one year river assessment project headed up by [Name redacted], Vice Chair of the EC. [Name redacted] said they will be looking at rainfall and river levels on a bi-monthly basis for a year, the aim being to look at the effect of climate change.

[Name redacted] said the Met office has detailed information on rainfall and statistics that may help with this. There is also information on river levels and flows from Environment Agency gauging stations which may be of interest. He went on to say the EA have just concluded a national project looking at the role Natural Flood Management measures can play in helping reduce flood risk and enhancing the natural environment. As part of this the EA has been gathering time lapse photography of some of the NFM measures, to see how they perform during higher flows. [Name redacted] went on to say that the EA would be happy to loan one of these time lapse cameras for a year, for the HTC's river project. He advised that it should be placed on private land and in a discreet place to avoid theft or damage. JR said they would be very grateful for the loan of the equipment.

[Name redacted] said it is possible to access the river flow stats in "real time" if needed: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/ecb1ccc7-c5a9-4f94-98e6-dcf85b9598ba/realtime-flood-data-river-flow>

He went on to say that the results will not show long term change, which is what is seen in climate change but said the pictures would be interesting to see throughout the year and how they change over the year.

JR said the EC would gladly share the pictures and information gathered with the EA if they thought it helpful. EA agreed they would be interested to see the information.

Farming and ploughing

JR mentioned local farming and ploughing directions in relation to water run-off and silt / sediment washing into the river systems locally. [Name redacted] advised that HTC needs to contact Natural England, [Name redacted], Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer. She works with landowners and supports work on farming with least detrimental impacts.

New developments

JR spoke of the new housing developments provided for in the Local Plan, in particular the one off Chediston Street. This is adjacent to the floodplain there, and will potentially exacerbate flooding there. [Name redacted] explained that there are strict guidelines on new developments so that surface water run-off rates have to be carefully managed. [Name redacted] said that no new developments are approved unless there is an effective and approved "surface water drainage scheme". She said that it may be wise to include details from Suffolk County Council, as lead flood authority in the Halesworth flooding factsheet.

Actions:

- *The full factsheet, once amended and finalised, will be placed on the HTC website (subject to approval).*
- *NR to place information about, and links, for the factsheet on Facebook and Twitter and also utilise local newspapers such as the Halesworth Community News and Halesworth Hoot magazine.*
- *NR to send [Names redacted] the flooding pictures via email for their opinions and visual assessment to decide if any action is required from, firstly a flooding, and then a riparian / vegetation perspective. EA to discuss this and liaise with NR on the underpass matter.*
- *[Names redacted] will liaise on writing a shortened summary flooding document to post through affected homes, and to possibly reformat the full version so it is as accessible as possible.*
- *HTC / NR to consider how to inform local people about the necessity of rivers flooding into floodplains. (Should this be included in the factsheet or is it already clear on this point?)*
- *[Name redacted] will add the EA pollution hotline contact details to the factsheet, with the other contact details provided in it*
- *KG to share [Name redacted]'s contact email with NR at HTC to contact re local farming practices.*
- *[Name redacted] to liaise with HTC / NR regarding the loan of the time-lapse camera.*
- *JR / NR to investigate the Chediston blockage further, liaising with the EA if necessary.*
- *[Name redacted] to speak with SCC regarding the new developments in town and include a short section on the final draft of the factsheet, along with a section on landowner riparian responsibility for the maintenance of watercourses..*
- *The HNPSG will now be stepping back from the liaison between HTC and the EA as lines of communication have been established with key staff at both the EA and HTC, and all agreed it has been positive.*

6. Improve, protect and expand green spaces

a) NPSG consultation summary

What you told us at the Edgar Sewter Primary School Consultation event 27th September 2018.

You like

The Thoroughfare

Millennium Green

The Cut and the art galleries

Town Park

Library

Historic buildings

The shops, pubs and restaurants

Voluntary groups

The school

The train service

Living in Halesworth!

Your Concerns

Will the town be able to cope with the planned new houses and are there enough affordable homes

Will the current infrastructure support them – roads and car parking and buses.

Will there be enough employment

Community and leisure facilities need improvement

Are we ready for the Green Revolution - flooding, electric cars, sustainable development

Walking and cycling needs to be easier and safer

The heritage and sensitive landscapes of the town need protecting

The NPSG has turned what you told us into

The Vision - how Halesworth should look and feel in a few year's time

The Objectives – the goals we need to set ourselves to get us there

b) Additional Open Spaces in Halesworth.

Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment, July 2015, states that: “amenity green spaces are public open spaces whose primary purpose is to improve and enhance the appearance of the local environment and the wellbeing of local residents”. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) identified additional amenity green spaces, or “open spaces” (as they are called in the New Local Plan, March 2019) it was agreed that these should be added to the existing ones in Halesworth in policy WLP 8.23.

Three potential open spaces were identified (by map and site viewing) by the NPSG that had not been included in the *Waveney Green Infrastructure Strategy*. As such, they are currently not protected as green spaces by Local Plan Policy WLP8.23. It is considered that, whilst they offer limited opportunities for informal activities because of their size, they make an important contribution to the green aspect of Halesworth’s townscape. In this regard they should be classified as open spaces and protected in the same way that existing identified spaces are.

The additional open spaces are: Princes Green, Aldergrove Close and Rectory Road.

Grass verges

The AECOM Design Codes assessment, carried out for the NPG, identified the roads out to the west as: “*needing consideration and conservation*”. The grass verges on Roman Way and Walpole Road both lead out of town into the open countryside. As such these verges act as a green buffer between town and the rural landscape. These are mindfully maintained (by Waveney Norse) and managed; in the summer, to allow grass and wildflowers to grow which actively encourages wildlife and improves biodiversity. These borders are also planted with spring flowering bulbs (by Halesworth in Bloom) and contain native trees. The grass verges warrant protection as they form a key part of the green character of the unique market town.

Another significant grass verge is the one on Holton Road. It is an example of a verge with planted trees and bulbs which is adjacent to the road on one of the main routes into the town from the east.

c) Proposed Nature Reserve, adding open spaces in Halesworth.

Full details and evidence on this are in the Infrastructure section of the NP, by KG, they cross over as it is additional green space, which is both an environmental and infrastructure topic. *Evidence for a nature reserve is detailed in the Community Infrastructure section of the plan.*

d) Local Green Space Designation

Waveney Local Plan | Adopted March 2019 | District-Wide Strategic Planning Policies www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/localplan

Protection of Open Space 8.

124 Protecting and promoting the improvement of existing open spaces is important for the well-being of local communities. Quality open spaces which are easily accessible and support uses for a wide cross-section of the community are essential to support the physical and mental health of the population. Open spaces also help support biodiversity, the aesthetic quality of the public realm and built environment and mitigate flood risk.

8.125 The National Planning Policy Framework places strong emphasis on the need to protect existing open spaces and other community facilities. The Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment (2015) identifies existing open space provision and its condition and the Waveney Playing Pitch and Outdoors Sports Facilities Assessment (2014) assessed the need for outdoor sports facilities to support people living in the District. These assessments highlight existing issues and the types of open space shortfalls which exist in different locations.

The Waveney Green Infrastructure Strategy (2015) sets out a comprehensive approach to delivering open space and improving the green infrastructure network by improving connectivity and the provision of the right types of open space in the right locations.

8.126 Policy WLP8.23 protects open space identified on the Policies Map from development, unless the development is ancillary to the open space, it is surplus to requirements, or will be replaced by equivalent or better provision. Any open space that falls within the Broads Authority Executive Area has been protected through the Broads Authority Local Plan and will be subject to its policies.

8.127 To demonstrate whether an open space proposed for development is surplus to requirements, applicants are expected to undertake an open space needs assessment. This should follow the approach taken in the Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment (2015) and consider the provision of open space with the same use within the site catchment area, alternative open space uses and how the site relates to existing provision for each respective type of open space use in the locality. The contribution an open space makes towards local amenity, public realm, biodiversity and the wider green infrastructure network should be considered as part of an open space needs assessment.

8.128 The Framework allows local communities through local plans and Neighbourhood Plans to identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities are able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. This is a stronger test than the requirements of Policy WLP8.23. The Council does not have enough evidence to designate Local Green Spaces across the District in the Local Plan but will encourage Parish and Town Councils to consider designating green areas which are demonstrably important to them as Local Green Spaces in Neighbourhood Plans. District-Wide Strategic Planning Policies | Waveney Local Plan | Adopted March 2019 240 www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/localplan

Policy WLP8.23 – Protection of Open Space There will be a presumption against any development that involves the loss of open space or community sport and recreation facilities. Open spaces are identified on the Policies Map. Proposals for the development of open spaces will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where:

- *The proposal is ancillary to the open nature of the area and will enhance local character, increase local amenity and be of greater community or wildlife benefit;*
- *An open space assessment demonstrates the site is surplus to requirements including its ability to be used for alternative open space uses; or*
- *The loss resulting from the proposed development will be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity, quality and in a location that is equally or more accessible to the community.*

e) Evidence for the Millennium Green LGS designation.

The HNPSG undertook a survey in August 2021 (between 7th and 23rd at a range of different times, including morning afternoon and early evening) to speak to users of the Millennium Green to ask them the questions below:

Survey document:



Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG)
Millennium Green Survey

The Millennium Green is of major importance to Halesworth, in terms of its significant biodiversity, as a large open green area providing a range of leisure activities close to the town, and as a natural floodplain.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be proposing additional formal protection for the Millennium Green for future generations to enjoy. This involves designating it as a “local green space” (LGS), which is embodied in English planning law. Our planning authority’s Local Plan (previously Waveney, now East Suffolk Council) encourages the seeking of LGS status through Neighbourhood Plans, and specifically notes that an LGS is “[a stronger test than the requirements of Policy WLP8.23](#)” Its effect is similar to that provided for by Green Belt status.

On this basis, the HNPSG believes an LGS's legal basis will provide greater protection than that currently provided by the minimal reference to the Green in the Local Plan, the Millennium Green Trust's charitable status, or the love people have for this unique resource.

In order to do this the HNPSG need to evidence how important the Millennium Green is to users and so we want to hear your views.

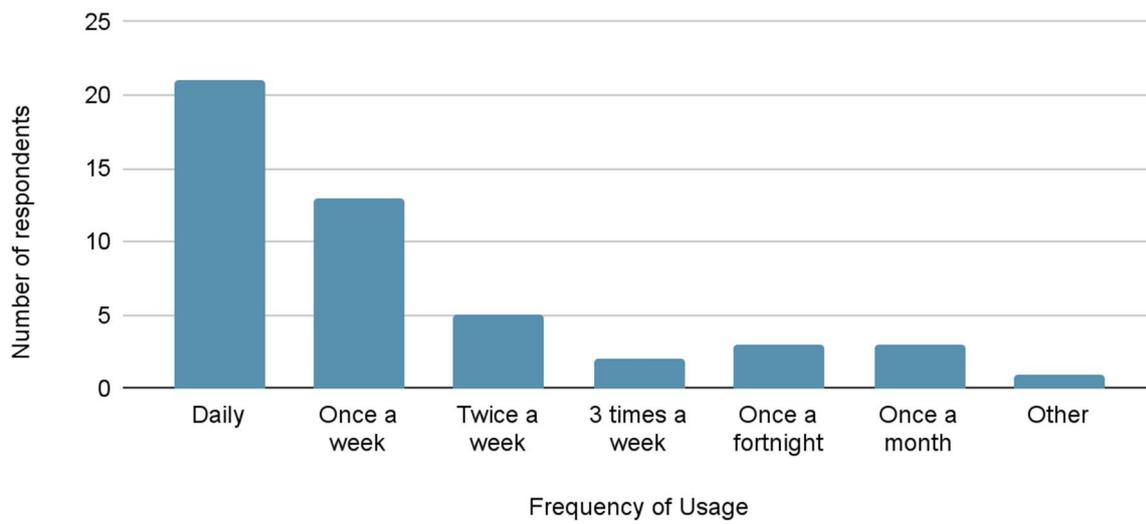
1. Do you live in or around Halesworth? YES / NO
 If not, where do you live?
2. On average how often do you use the Millennium Green?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Once a week
 - c. Once a fortnight
 - d. Once a month
 - e. Other – please describe:-
3. Why do you visit the green? Please tick all boxes which apply
 - a. Walking (incl. dog walking)
 - b. Cycling
 - c. Bird watching / wildlife / flora and fauna
 - d. Exercise
 - e. Tranquility
 - f. Other – please describe below:-
4. If there was only one thing you could say was special about the Green, what would it be? Please describe below:-
5. On the basis of our introduction and your views about it, do you think formally designating the Millennium Green is a good idea? YES / NO

The HNPSG managed to get 49 responses to the above survey, and the results are depicted below in a range of formats:

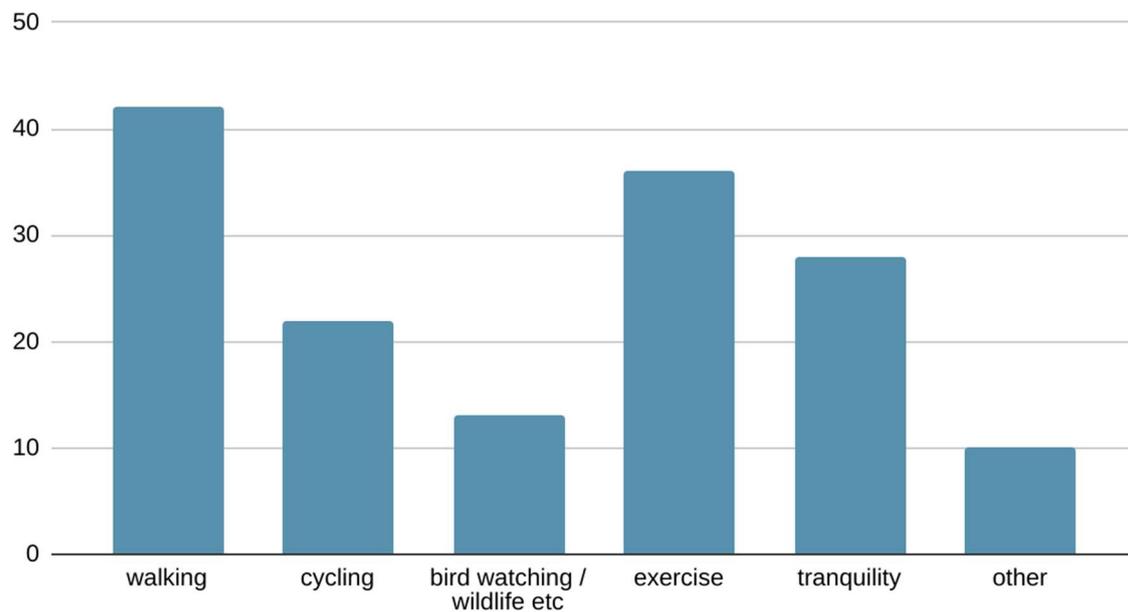
Question 1: 48 responses were from local people, only 1 person surveyed was here on holiday.

Graph showing question 2 responses:

Millennium Green Usage

**Chart showing question 3 responses below:**

Use of the Millennium Green



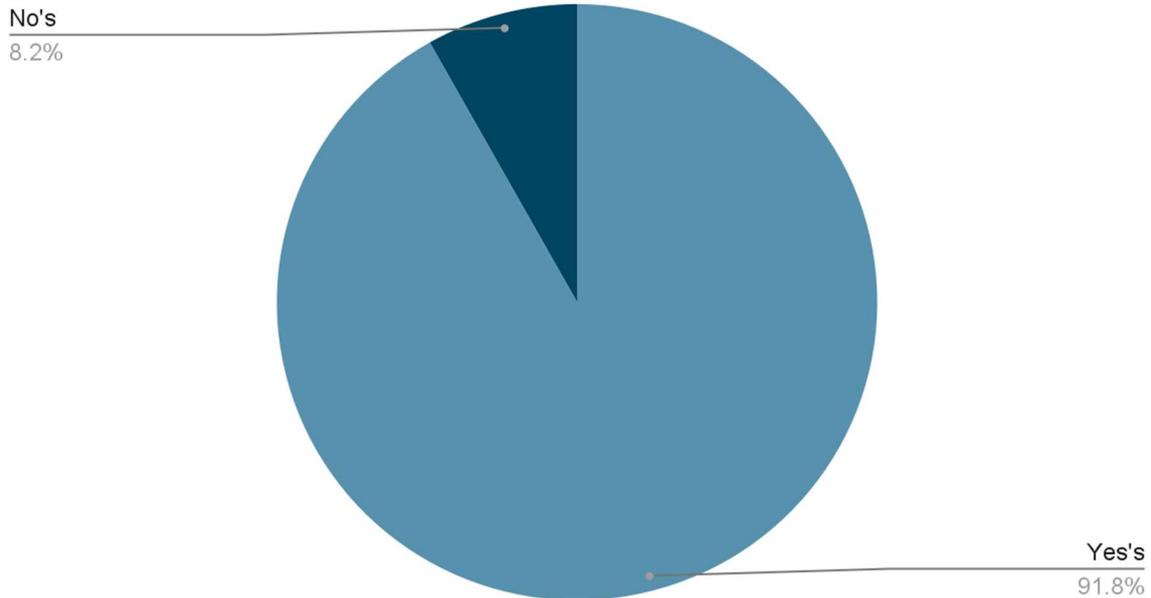
Word cloud for the range of responses given to question 4:



The word cloud above shows a range of comments people made to describe why the Millennium Green is demonstrably special to them

Graph showing question 5 responses:

Those in favour of local green space designation



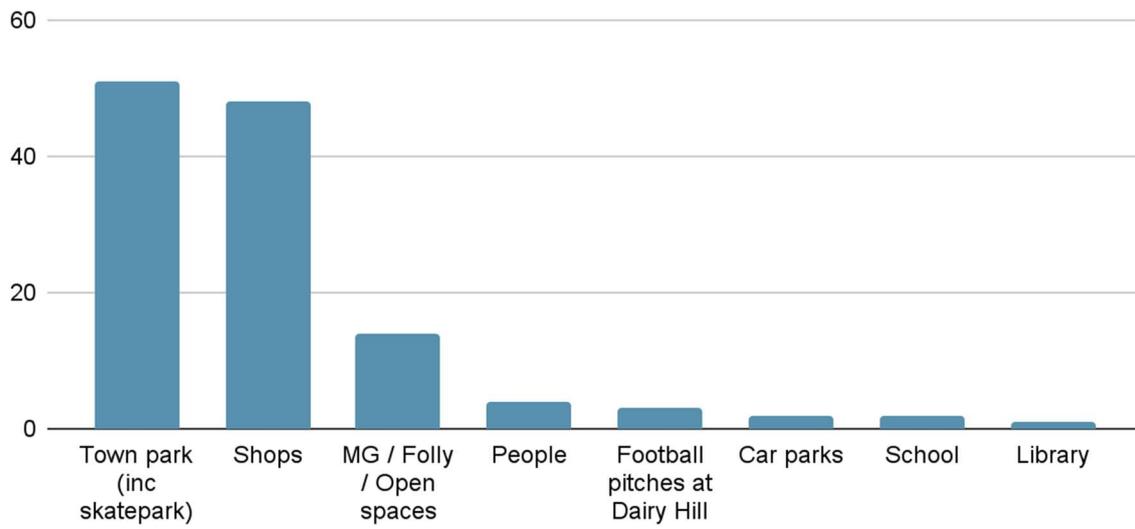
The pie chart above shows that the majority of people surveyed, 91.8% agreed that getting local green space designation was a good idea.

f) Evidence for the Town Park Local Green Space designation

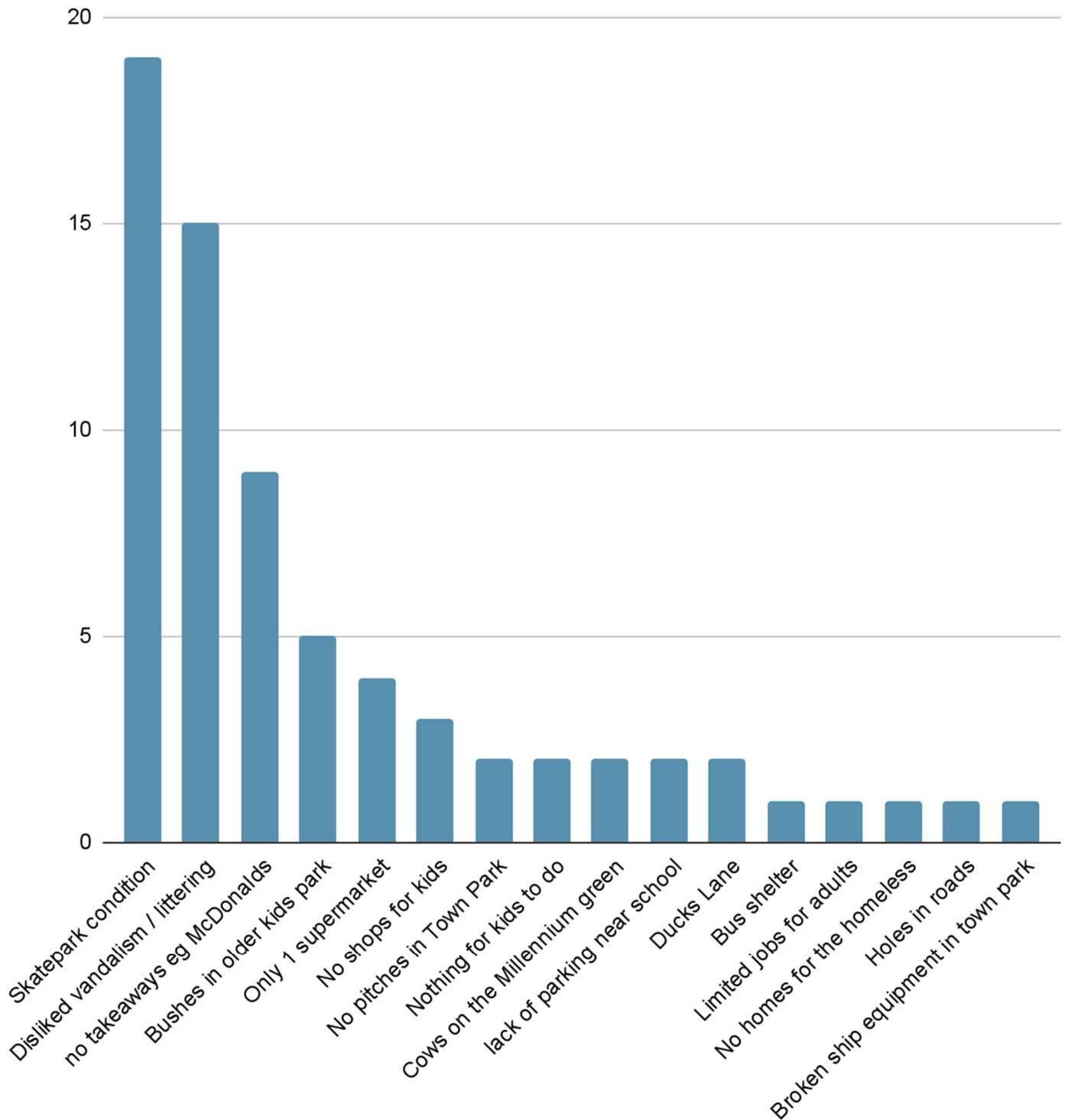
The HNPSG carried out a second consultation with the years 5 & 6 children at Edgar Sewter Community Primary School. This was to ask the same questions of a new cohort of children and to ensure the plan targeted areas they were concerned about or that things they liked and treasured were protected or improved if necessary. The children were asked the same questions as the 2019 survey: Q1, what do you like about Halesworth? Q2, What don't you like about Halesworth? And Q3, what would you like to see in Halesworth in 10 years time?

The responses have been inputted into a chart format for ease of reading and analysis.

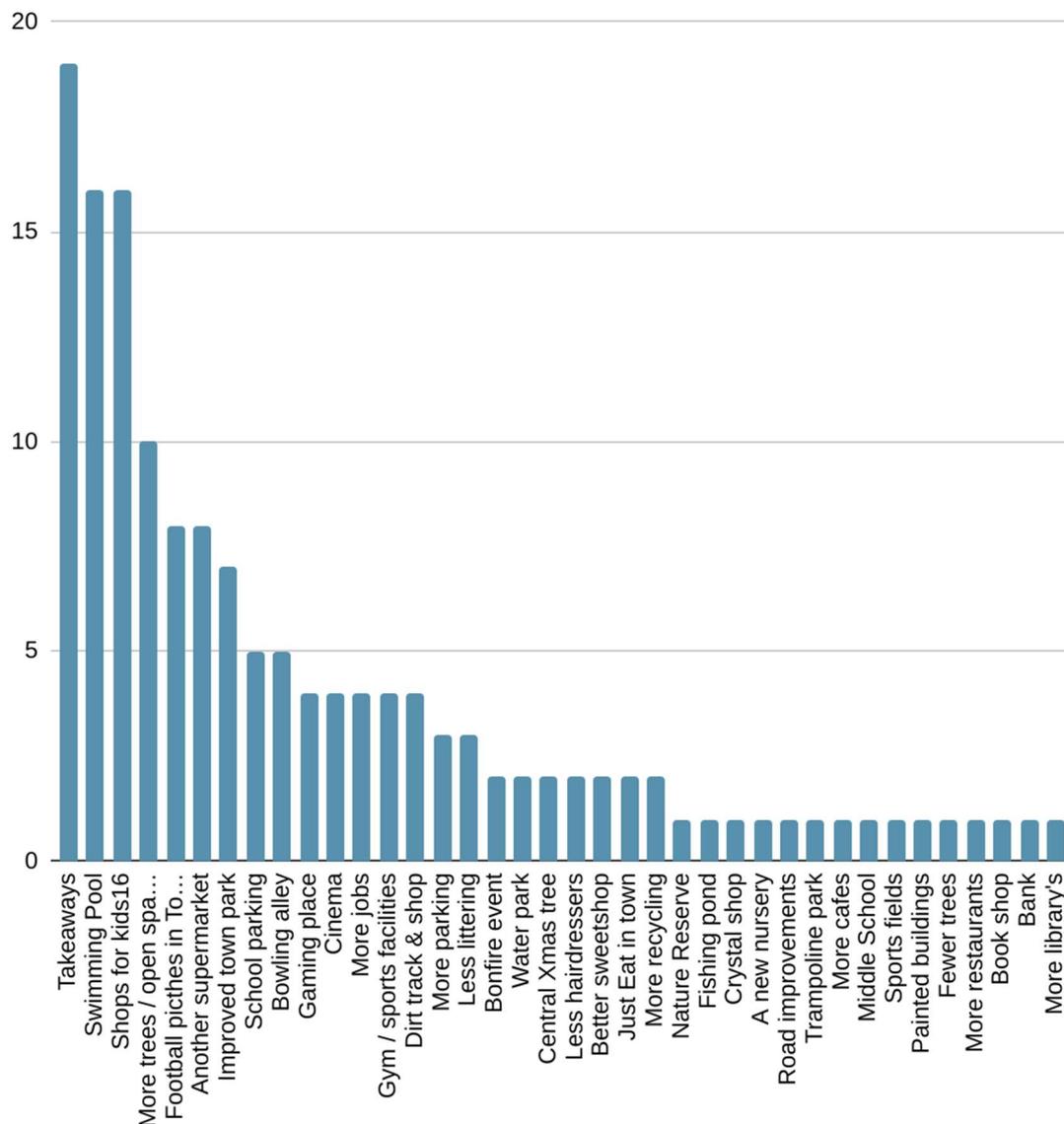
Q1. What do you like in Halesworth?



Q2. What don't you like about Halesworth?



Q3, What do you want in Halesworth in 10 years time?



The children clearly identified the Town Park as “special” to them, as seen in the Q1 chart, the next most popular things in Halesworth were the shops and then the Millennium Green, which is also being designated as a Local Green Space (LGS).

This data also mirrors some of the consultation feedback from the 2019 cohort at school, regarding more green spaces and improvements being needed at the skatepark. The fact that the 2 separate consultations (with different children) crossover strengthens the policies in the Environment and Community Infrastructure sections.

This data also highlights interest in:

- Improving parking for school users
- More trees and open spaces

- Nature reserve
- Recycling improvements
- More sports facilities / football pitches
- Improving the skatepark

g) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria for Local Green Space (LGS) designation

Paragraph 102 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

1. In reasonable close distance to the community it serves
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
3. Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

The table below shows how both proposed locations meet the NPPF, paragraph 102, Local Green space criteria.

	Millennium Green (MG)	Town Park (TP)
NPPF criteria		
1.	<p>- The MG is well located for community access as it is a very short walk from the town centre, approx 400m from the Thoroughfare via the underpass (at the far end of the main town car park, or over Saxons way) to the start of the MG. There are also alternative routes to access the MG from the Blyth Road Industrial Estate to the South East and via Quay Street, from the North of the town, and from the east including Holton. There are two public rights of way and a further permissive footpath off Holton Road that give access to the Green via Bird's Folly and Rails' End.</p> <p>See figure 4.2 in the NP for map as evidence of proximity and accessibility for residents.</p>	<p>- The TP is well located for community access as it is a very short walk from the town centre, approx 200m from the Thoroughfare via the underpass (at the far end of the main town car park, or over Saxons way). It can also be accessed from Quay Street via the footpath there adjacent to the town river and park.</p> <p>See figure 4.3 in the NP for map as evidence of accessibility and central location.</p>
2	<p>- The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group carried out an in person survey at the MG in August 2021 to ask</p>	<p>-The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group carried out an in person survey at the local school, Edgar</p>

	<p>people about the MG, specifically the frequency of use, whether they agreed with it being designated a LGS and why they felt it was demonstrably special. Detailed evidence from this survey is shown in this document in section 6e.</p> <p>- The MG is the largest of its kind in England. It was created in 2000 with further areas subsequently added. It has a range of meadows, woodlands, rivers, ponds, heathland and orchard, following the historic route of the old railway and the even older navigation.</p>	<p>Sewter Community Primary School in July 2019 & again in September 2021. The children were asked what they like most about living in Halesworth and the highest scoring response was for the town park, including the skate park.</p> <p>The children also said that in the next 10 years they hoped to see improvement to the town park, with it being 7th top of the list of 38 things they wanted to see.</p> <p>The town park has been used to host popular music and cultural events, such as: "Gig in the Park" and other community activities.</p> <p>- The town park has also been recognised as one of the best in the country for the second year running (in 2020). It was awarded the Green Flag award which recognises the best parks and green spaces in the country. The flag is a sign to the public that it boasts the highest possible environmental standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities.</p>
3	<p>The Millennium Green is 20.97 hectares in total. It is however made up of 10 smaller constituent areas, these are: Arthur's Wood, Community Orchard, Folly Meadow, Angel Meadow, Chestnut Meadow, Lester's Piece, Blyth Meadow and Two Acres. These are collectively known as the Millennium Green.</p>	<p>Town Park is 0.86 hectares and is located in a central location near the town centre.</p> <p>The TP acts as a local green space for the purposes of play, community activities and leisure. This addresses the needs of the community in Halesworth.</p>

7 . Climate Emergency

- a) *The ESC Environmental Guidance Note, 2020, is an interactive document that provides advice on how to help address the issue of climate change in relation to new development. The guidance can be used by anyone looking to undertake new development or renovate existing buildings at any scale. Each page provides a snapshot of information about each topic and it is encouraged that users refer to the section titled 'Key sources for further information' which provides a list of links that can be clicked on to access more information on that topic. Whilst not a planning*

requirement, the Guidance Note can be used to inform design and access statements, Neighbourhood Plans, comments made on planning applications, general household maintenance and much more.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Environment-Guidance/Environmental-Guidance-Note.pdf>

b) Green Suffolk.org

The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) consists of Suffolk's Local Authorities and the Environment Agency, working with other organisations locally including Groundwork East and the University of Suffolk. We have a shared interest in supporting Suffolk's communities, businesses and residents to reduce carbon emissions, realise the economic benefits of reducing energy consumption and adapt to the future impacts of climate change.

Our Vision is that Suffolk wants to be an exemplar in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing its natural environment and to be the county with the greatest reduction in carbon emissions". In 2019 our Local Authority members each declared a 'climate emergency'. As part of this, we are working together with partners across the county and region towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.

An ambitious target to meet in 9 years. It is incredibly important to ensure good environmental principles are adopted with regards to planning requirements. HTC should continue to encourage developers to take these measures when building new homes, in particular new large scale developments.

Annex 1 Halesworth Heritage Tree Register

Provided under separate cover