

Greenprint Forum Newsletter winter 2025-26

2026 marks the year of the 30th anniversary of the Greenprint Forum. At this significant milestone, we plan to take the opportunity to hold a brace of activities during the year ahead to not only reflect and recognise the achievements and contributions by those who make up our Forum, but also to look ahead to 2030 to capture and articulate our aspirations for further progress towards our vision of seeing significant progress by 2030 towards each of these nine goals:

GREENPRINT FORUM VISION



Save the dates!

The first two of our 30th Anniversary-related activities will be held in the spring, with part of each of these initial events being held in workshop mode to explore and capture members' priorities and aspirations for future action. More details about precise timings, venues, and programmes will follow in the New Year, so in the meantime here are the dates to save (registration is already open via <https://bit.ly/46NpGr4>):

- **Thursday 09 April – afternoon.** Lowestoft (venue to be confirmed)
- **Wednesday 22 April (Earth Day) – evening.** Melton (venue tbc)

There will also be a main full Forum event in the summer - a date and details will be announced soon.

For those of you who have joined us more recently, a summary of our roots can be found in Appendix 1 of the [notes of our 20th anniversary celebration held in 2016.](#)

Update on Nature First grants

Since its relaunch in autumn 2024, a further 21 projects have been awarded grants totalling £19,488.37. A list of all recipients, shown on a map, together with a brief description of their project, is available via East Suffolk Council's ["Strategic Dashboard"](#) for the environment.

The fund is still open, and applications can be submitted at any time, there is no deadline as the Panel will convene approximately once per month (subject to the need) to consider applications on an ongoing, first come first served basis until the funding has all been allocated. For guidance and/or to make an application, visit [Nature First small grants.](#)





Celebrations ahead



The environmental challenges facing our local communities are growing each year. In Felixstowe, our Community Nature Reserve and Citizen Science Group have chosen to respond to these challenges by collaborating with like-minded organizations. Together, we can learn from each other and share resources, experience and ideas.

Shortly after Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve began in May 2015, our first collaboration was with Felixstowe Radio. Throughout the subsequent years, our local community radio station has been fundamentally important to the way in which we share what we do. In November, for example, Felixstowe Radio helped us to share our contribution to Our Earth Week.

The way our Community Nature Reserve and Citizen Science Group chooses their new partners is very simple. We listen to our members. When names of prospective new collaborative partners become repeated from local people, that is a sure sign that we have found a respected organisation to work with. A good example of that form of democratic approach to selecting new partners arose earlier this year when the name of Felixstowe's Indoor Market on Crescent Road seemed to feature in a lot of conversations. We therefore began to talk to the owners of the Felixstowe Indoor Market, and soon discovered a wealth of shared interests – all surrounding the ways in which art can express a love of the local natural environment. Today, Helen Newman and Janette Brightman, the owners of the Felixstowe Indoor Market, are Artists in Residence for the Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve. We help to promote their shop, while they create amazing new art which we share on our [Facebook page](#) to promote our projects.



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Celebrations ahead (*continued*)

The Felixstowe Citizen Science Group is also very enthusiastic about creating new collaborations. All their climate activism is shared through the UK government's strategy in sustainability and biodiversity. That includes our citizen scientists' Climate Action Plans and Methane Reduction Strategy. Our Citizen Science Group also regularly shares other new projects across the UK with the National Biodiversity Network - the nation's largest network of conservation groups. Our citizen scientists also share projects across the EU through the European Citizen Science Platform/ and the European Citizen Science Association. It is therefore very encouraging to see citizen science projects from our area being shared with some of the largest academic institutions in Europe.

At this year's Sustainable Communities Action Day, we had a team member in attendance to discuss the possibilities of new collaborations for 2026 and beyond. We will wait for more discussions to take place before making any major announcements.

However, we do have a new collaboration which we are happy to discuss openly. That is with Joe Underwood, Warden of the Trimley Marshes Nature Reserve. In mid-November, a group of our members volunteered to help Joe to plant 200 tree saplings in his Reserve. It was incredibly rewarding, and will be repeated when the time is right. We also discussed other ideas with Joe, including the possibility of holding guided walks across Trimley Marshes with a view to inviting walkers to make their own maps of the Reserve. Again, further details will be announced when the time is right next year.



Collaborations therefore offer local environmental groups the opportunity to grow our work while still maintaining individual identity and agendas. For Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve and the Felixstowe Citizen Science Group, collaborations will definitely be a focus for the future.

Dr Adrian Cooper

Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve
Felixstowe's Citizen Science Group



Discover Bonds Meadow

Nestled in the heart of the Oulton Broad community, Bonds Meadow is a 7-acre (approx. 2.8 ha) testament to the power of dedicated community participation. Its unique charm lies in its intimate size and remarkable variety. Visitors can wander through woodland, discover a diverse array of wetland dykes and ponds, and explore open grassland buzzing with insects and brimming with wildflowers. Trails provide dense shelter for birds and small mammals, creating a vital corridor and refuge for wildlife. This carefully managed mix is bordered by an urban residential environment.



Predominantly owned by East Suffolk Council, the site has been managed since 1988 by the self-funded not-for-profit Bonds Meadow Community Association and local volunteers. These volunteers meet every Tuesday at 9.30 am. Designated a County Wildlife site, the committee aims to protect a diverse range of habitats while providing a sanctuary for the neighbourhood to exercise and connect with nature.

The association is also delighted to partner with Lime Primary Academy to ensure every pupil experiences the changing natural world through site visits and activities each season. Learning through practical experience the importance of caring and protecting nature and seeding future volunteers, hobbyists and ecologists of the future.



Discover Bonds Meadow (*continued*)



With the ultimate goal of increasing the site's protection and security, the Association this year launched a long-term aspirational project known as "Identifying Bonds Meadow". This initiative empowers our volunteers and community to actively participate in determining, through observation and record, the biodiversity within its boundaries. Our supporters, volunteers and community members are encouraged to use the iNaturalist app to record their observations through events and long-term surveys. The use of smartphone identification apps can be considered a bit problematic, but their accuracy is increasing, and iNaturalist's validation process has been shown to reduce false reporting. Ultimately, these sightings contribute to global, national and Suffolk's Biological Data Centre.

Any professionals or hobbyists who may be interested and willing to assist in some way with our survey and recording, please get in contact through the volunteer page of our website or email bondsmeadownews@gmail.com

For more information, find us on:

Website: bondsmeadow.org

Facebook: [bondsmeadownews](https://www.facebook.com/bondsmeadownews)

Youtube: [bondsmeadow921](https://www.youtube.com/bondsmeadow921)

Tony Fokinther, Vice-Chair Meadow community Association

www.bondsmeadow.org – Bonds Meadow, Lowestoft



Nature at Work

Nature at Work is a district-wide campaign delivered by East Suffolk Council in partnership with environmental charity Groundwork East. Created in response to the climate and biodiversity emergency, the project aims to recognise, support and celebrate the essential work of nature while restoring habitats across East Suffolk. Throughout the year, the campaign has focused on giving natural processes more space to flourish, strengthening local ecosystems and helping communities reconnect with the wildlife on their doorstep.

A core part of the project has been to place new signage at 116 council-owned green spaces. These sites have been managed using a reduced-mowing approach, allowing plants to grow, flower and seed naturally. Improved signage helps explain why these areas may look different, highlighting the ecological benefits of “messier” landscapes. The campaign has also worked closely with parish councils, schools and community groups, encouraging them to adopt nature-friendly practices and understand the wider value of biodiverse environments.



One of the project’s key achievements this year has been the completion of native wildflower meadows and wildlife habitats in twelve East Suffolk schools. Groundwork East supported each school to design and create meadow areas that will provide food and shelter for pollinators, as well as inspiring outdoor learning spaces for pupils. Beyond these installations, seeds and materials were provided to additional schools, enabling many more young people to enjoy nature and understand its importance.



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Nature at Work *(continued)*

Parish and town councils have been supported with a dedicated toolkit that includes meadow-creation guidance, species information, funding opportunities and communications materials to promote their involvement.



Nature at Work is all about community involvement. Residents have been encouraged to explore the sites, share wildlife sightings online and use citizen science apps to help monitor local biodiversity. Families can use resources from organisations like the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and Plantlife to learn together, or try leaving areas of their gardens unmown through initiatives like 'No Mow May.'

The need for this work is significant. Since the 1930s, the UK has lost over 97% of its wildflower meadows, leaving species-rich grasslands covering just 1% of the land. This decline has had a profound impact on insects, birds and small mammals whose survival depends on these habitats. Pollinators, which are essential for producing around one in three mouthfuls of food we eat, are among the most affected. By restoring even small areas of grassland, Nature at Work is helping rebuild a connected network of habitats that can support these threatened species.



Nature at Work *(continued)*

A key message of the campaign is that nature thrives on complexity. Plants often dismissed as weeds, such as nettles and dandelions, are in fact vital native wildflowers that have co-evolved with UK pollinators. They provide nectar, pollen and nesting sites for bees, butterflies and moths. To protect these resources, Nature at Work sites are cut only twice a year, once in spring and once in late autumn, allowing plants to complete their natural cycles and supporting insects at each life stage. This varied vegetation benefits birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fungi, helping create rich ecosystems across the district. These naturalised grasslands also contribute to climate action. Diverse plant life improves soil health and increases carbon storage and meadows can hold up to 10% more carbon than frequently mown areas. As plants grow, they store carbon in their roots, where soil organisms help lock it away. More diverse habitats mean more effective carbon capture.

As the first full year of delivery concludes, Nature at Work has already made a meaningful impact, restoring habitats, inspiring communities and demonstrating that when we give nature space to work, we all benefit.

Fenella Corrin, Groundwork East

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/nature-at-work/>



Is Lowestoft ready for the future?

Use Your Voice Lowestoft welcomed the Town and Country Planning Association to Lowestoft on Thursday 4th December at the United Reformed Church. About twenty people came to the event, including Lowestoft Town Councillors and officers from East Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils along with members of the public.

Picture below left: TCPA



TCPA's Director of Policy, Hugh Ellis, and Senior Projects and Policy Manager, Celia Davis, were there to launch Practical Hope: Inspiration for Community Action, three new community guides spotlighting inspiring community-led projects tackling three of the most pressing issues facing communities in relation to climate change: flood risk, overheating and retrofit. By exploring a range of case studies from around the country, the guides highlight how local communities are putting sustainable planning principles into practice and making real change happen on the ground. The slides from their presentation are [here](#)

All three of the new Practical Hope guides can be downloaded [here](#).

Hugh and Celia also used the event to give a scathing analysis of Lowestoft's flood preparedness. The question 'Is the town able to cope with a reasonable worst case scenario?' was asked rhetorically. In their view, the answer is clearly 'No!' In the event of a storm surge equal to that of 2013, combined with a spring tide and strong onshore wind many of Lowestoft's current sea defences would be overtopped. And that's without accounting for sea level rises due to climate change. Put bluntly, Lowestoft is dodging a bullet.



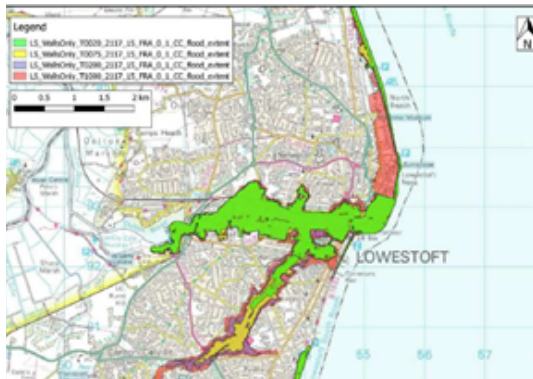
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Is Lowestoft ready for the future? *(continued)*

We were then taken through the history of the now abandoned project to construct a tidal barrier. This included map projections showing how little protection the recently-built flood walls afford our town when not paired with a tidal barrier. (The images below come from the 2019 Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Jacobs for East Suffolk Council.)

Flood projection with walls but no barrier, 2117



Flood projection with walls plus barrier, 2117



Lowestoft's recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan was given short shrift on the flood risk front, and candidly described as 'In our opinion, [it] is not fit for purpose.'

TCPA's presentation ended with a summary:

- Lowestoft is now England's largest urban centre most vulnerable to tidal flooding.
- A tidal barrier is fundamental to the town's resilience.

and a suggested way forward:

- Campaign for a barrier
- Seek a clear and honest appraisal of risk
- Raise awareness and build community resilience.



John Ellerby and Kate Stott, Use Your Voice <https://useyourvoicelowestoft.org/>



Environmental and Community Hub improvements to Walton Community Hall, Felixstowe IP11 7DS



With large thanks to East Suffolk Council's UKSPF Rural Business and Community Hub Fund, Walton Community Hall is undergoing several environmental and community improvements.

Recently, 42 x 525 watt Solar panels, 10.36 kwh Battery Storage, and a 2 x 10 kwh air source heat pump were installed. The positioning of the vents are changing to the wall which should provide a quicker and greater impact when the heating is initiated.

Wi-Fi is also being installed, which will be useful to hirers and will also allow more efficient use of the heating system and allow the Town Council to monitor energy usage and savings from the solar panels and battery storage.

The two remaining single glazed windows are planned to be replaced with double glazed windows like the rest of the hall.

Work will shortly follow on turning the room upstairs into a small cosy room to allow groups the opportunity to use it as more of a 1:1 or small meeting room.

80% of this work is being funded by the grant from East Suffolk Council and the remaining 20% is planned to be funded by our local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding. The work is due to be completed by March 2026.

Felixstowe Town Council named national finalist for Climate Response of the Year

Felixstowe Town Council has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Climate Response of the Year category of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Star Council Awards 2025/26 – national awards recognising innovation and excellence across England's parish and town councils. <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/support/star-council-awards/finalists.html>



Environmental and Community Hub improvements to Walton Community Hall, Felixstowe *(continued)*

The Council's nomination highlighted a range of practical, community-led and evidence-based initiatives that form part of its ongoing response to the climate emergency declared in Felixstowe in 2019. Recent projects include:

Transition to cleaner transport, including the acquisition of the Council's first electric van for operational duties, reducing emissions across day-to-day services.



Improving energy efficiency in Council buildings, such as the programme to upgrade and replace aging Town Hall windows, supporting better heat retention and reduced energy use.

Securing external funding to support community carbon reduction, including the Green Grant awarded for the refurbishment of Walton Community Hall, ensuring a more energy-efficient and sustainable community facility.

Responsible water use, such as the use of grey water systems for the Felixstowe in Flower programme, reducing demand on potable supplies during seasonal planting.

Partnership work on awareness and behaviour change, including the delivery of the Love Green Felixstowe event, bringing together community groups, young people and environmental organisations.

Biodiversity improvements across the town through **tree and hedge planting, new habitat zones** and support to volunteer groups engaged in environmental stewardship.

NALC noted the Council's wider work on single-use plastic reduction, its role as a partner in the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy, the support given to local organisations through its grant programme, and its ongoing engagement with young people through the Felixstowe Youth Forum – with a particular emphasis on environmental themes.



Environmental and Community Hub improvements to Walton Community Hall, Felixstowe *(continued)*

Cllr Corrine Franklin, Mayor of Felixstowe, said:

“To be recognised at a national level for our climate response is a tremendous honour for Felixstowe. This shortlisting reflects the consistent, practical steps we are taking, both as an organisation and in partnership with our community, to reduce emissions, improve biodiversity and support long-term environmental resilience. My thanks go to everyone involved, including our volunteers, councillors, staff team and partners, who are committed to making a positive difference for our town.”

**A PROUD
FINALIST
STAR COUNCIL
AWARDS
2025/26**

WWW.NALC.GOV.UK/STARCOUNCILAWARDS



Winners will be announced at NALC's Parliamentary Reception in the House of Lords on 24 February 2026, where finalists from across England will come together to celebrate excellence in the local council sector.



For more information on the Awards, visit: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/support/star-council-awards.html>

For information about Felixstowe Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan and current initiatives, visit: www.felixstowe.gov.uk

supplied by Debbie Frost, Deputy Clerk of Felixstowe Town Council



Help out hedgehogs this winter

Winter is upon us

For Hedgehogs this should be a time for finding a cosy, dry place to hibernate, yet many are still out and about looking for food. The increased extreme weather events we now have are very confusing for Hedgehogs, one day frosty and cold, the next mild and wet. This is not going to change anytime soon; in fact, it will undoubtedly get worse.

On the brighter side, Hedgehogs can thrive in gardens with help and support from us humans. Providing hedgerow, log and leaf piles and wild areas is a great way to encourage these wonderful creatures into our gardens. Making sure they can access your garden is of course the most important thing. Hedgehogs like to roam and can cover large distances at night looking for food such as beetles, caterpillars, and slugs etc. They will also eat small amounts of fallen fruit and even frogs and birds they may come across.

When natural food is scarce, providing a bowl of cat food, biscuits, or meat (poultry is best, never fish) could save a life, and always a shallow bowl of water throughout the year, especially when it's dry.



There are a variety of Hedgehog houses, feeding stations and food you can buy at pet shops/online and all this can be great, but providing the natural habitat they need for food and shelter is really the best thing you can do. Also please remember that a baby or injured hedgehog needs to go to the nearest Hedgehog carer or rescue centre, especially if they are out during the day. Always seek advice as soon as possible.

Help out hedgehogs this winter *(continued)*

So, plant some trees and hedgerow, make a safe pond with easy access out for hedgehogs, leave areas of grass to grow long, create log and leaf piles and ditch strimmer's and chemicals !!

Some useful contacts:

<https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/found-a-hedgehog/>

On Facebook:

- [Suffolk Prickles Hedgehog Rescue](#)
- [Wickham Market Hedgehog Help](#)
- [Hedgehog Haven Oulton Broad](#)

CLlr Sally Noble,

Cabinet Member for the Environment at East Suffolk Council and volunteer hedgehog carer



Charging into the future with Plug in Suffolk

The Plug in Suffolk team covers a wide range of electric vehicle infrastructure projects across the county, helping with the smooth transition to EVs.

Over the next few years, Plug in Suffolk will be installing over 6,000 chargepoints across the county. Suffolk County Council has received £5.3m from the Department for Transport as part of the Low Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Capital Fund (LEVI Capital Fund). This will support residents who cannot charge an EV at home (e.g. due to not having a driveway or parking) and provide them with reasonably priced, on-street chargepoints close to where they live. Works have started on the first batch of chargepoints, with installations continuing throughout 2026 and beyond to ensure every resident is within a 5-10 minute walk or wheel of a chargepoint.



The LEVI Capital fund is specifically designed to help residents without access to private parking, by providing convenient on-street charging options so residents can charge their car overnight. These installations are part of our commitment to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future. Predictions show that by 2040, Suffolk will need around 12,000 public chargers, so this project is about futureproofing residential areas ahead of demand, so generation after generation can benefit from this.



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Charging into the future with Plug in Suffolk (Continued)

Chargepoints will mainly be installed in areas to benefit the 25% of Suffolk residents who park on-street, as this is a huge barrier to obtaining an electric vehicle. Each site selected has met a strict criterion to assess suitability, and last year, residents were invited to nominate streets for the team to nominate. Through this process, we received hundreds of nominations, but additional streets have been selected as they meet criteria. Importantly, no parking spaces are being removed, spaces are simply being upgraded to support EV use. This helps improve local air quality, reduce carbon emissions, and ensure our communities are ready for the growing shift to electric transport, even if residents are not immediately looking to purchase an EV.

By installing chargepoints, Plug in Suffolk is ensuring that residents will be able to make the transition to an electric vehicle when they are ready to.

To find out more about the project, visit pluginsuffolk.org

Izzy Millen, Plug in Suffolk



How the Carbon Charter is tackling greenwashing and helping businesses on their sustainability journey

New research reveals greenwashing concerns have nearly doubled amongst consumers since 2023

- A recent report by the [Capgemini Research Institute](#) highlights a sharp rise in public scepticism around corporate sustainability claims. The number of consumers who believe companies are engaging in greenwashing has nearly doubled, from one-third in 2023 to over half in 2024, and now reaching two-thirds. This means six in ten consumers now suspect brands of exaggerating their environmental efforts.
- Other report findings show more than three-quarters of consumers believe corporations should do more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Whilst 82% of organisations plan to invest more in environmental sustainability, only 21% have detailed plans for how they'll transition to meet these goals.
- 95% of UK organisations had not altered the timeline of their net-zero commitments and 54% of UK organisations believe they are currently underprepared for the impacts of climate change.

'Greenwashing' is presenting misleading information to the public or stakeholders to suggest an organisation is doing more to protect the environment than it actually is, either by promoting false solutions, or distracting from or delaying credible climate action. Read the [full report here](#).

How the Carbon Charter is tackling 'greenwashing'

The Carbon Charter is a business accreditation and membership scheme that provides guidance, support and recognition to small and medium businesses throughout Suffolk and Norfolk, as they take positive action to reduce their environmental impact.

The award helps businesses to demonstrate their carbon conscious credentials and supports organisations to become more environmentally sustainable. The Carbon Charter provides an independently assessed environmental award and a sustainable business network to help strengthen your reputation as a sustainable business.



How the Carbon Charter is tackling greenwashing and helping businesses on their sustainability journey *(continued)*

Running for over 15 years with over 1,000 awards approved across Suffolk and Norfolk, the Carbon Charter helps businesses prioritise environmental action, measure progress and communicate environmental commitments to customers.

The Carbon Charter demonstrates credibility, helps avoid 'greenwashing', attracts environmentally-minded consumers and builds connections with like-minded businesses.

The scheme is managed by the environmental charity, Groundwork East, on behalf of Sustainable Suffolk, the partnership between all of Suffolk's public sector organisations which aims to lower carbon emissions in Suffolk. This work is funded by the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders. Groundwork East's sustainability consultants work with Carbon Charter members to calculate a carbon footprint and develop a clear action plan with concrete, practical and achievable steps.

Amy Coulter, Sustainable Business Team Manager at Groundwork East said:

"We support local businesses to gain recognition for the important actions they are taking to reduce their environmental impacts and to understand their next steps. The award, which is approved by a panel of independent experts, allows them to communicate their achievements to their customers and stakeholders without the fear of 'greenwashing'. And our networking events are a great place to develop new contacts with like-minded local businesses."

supplied by **Peter Frost, Suffolk County Council**



Contributors

Thanks as ever are due to all of our stellar contributors:

Dr Adrian Cooper, Debbie Frost, Fenella Corrin, Izzy Millen, John Ellerby, Kate Stott, Peter Frost, Cllr Sally Noble, and Tony Fokinther.

Downloadable icons available for your use!

Downloadable icons relating to our vision are available for free from our webpage - you are more than welcome to download and use these for events and activities that are clearly taking forward the vision of the Greenprint Forum in East Suffolk. These icons come in the form of each individual hexagon that make up our vision (shown on the right). They are in the format “.png” and are on a transparent background. They can all be downloaded from this webpage: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum/useful-links/downloadable-icons-relating-to-our-vision/>

GREENPRINT FORUM VISION



New members welcome!

If you are already a member please share this newsletter with and encourage others in your network to join, and if you have received or found this newsletter and are not yet a member why not join us, membership is free and open to anyone, anywhere, who wishes to contribute to and/or benefit from our knowledge share network. The easiest way is to go online and register via:

[https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Greenprint Forum membership application](https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Greenprint%20Forum%20membership%20application)

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

