

Nature recovery guidance

Content

1. Introduction
2. The need for nature recovery
3. Relevant policy
4. Underpinning legislation
5. Local nature
6. Credit: Roadside Nature Reserve, Keith Evans.

Sensitive sites and how to avoid disturbance

7. Navigating nature requirements for planning
8. Green Infrastructure
9. A call to action
10. Case Studies

Introduction

Supporting the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (NCNL) Management Plan, this guidance is designed to empower those living and working within or around our protected landscapes to take positive action for nature. This document sets out why action is needed and what resources are available to support nature's recovery.

Purpose of this guidance:

- Raise awareness of the opportunities to support nature recovery around the Norfolk coast.
- Empower people to take action for the protection and recovery of nature around the Norfolk coast.
- Support the special qualities of the NCNL through the protection and recovery of nature.

Aimed at:

- Developers
- Planners
- Decision makers
- Public

The need for nature recovery

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, ranking in the bottom 10% of countries globally for how much of its original nature remains intact ([Natural History Museum, Biodiversity Intactness Index](#)). [The 2023 State of Nature report](#) highlighted that, across the UK, species have declined on average by 19% since the 1970's. These declines in wildlife are also found across the Norfolk coast. However, our protected landscapes can play a key role in nature recovery efforts to reverse the trend by expanding, buffering, restoring and managing habitats, both natural and those shaped by people.

Relevant policy

Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Norfolk is a collaborative plan for restoring nature across Norfolk. It includes a map showing areas that are already at the heart of nature recovery and the areas where it is best to locate new habitat creation and restoration activities to connect nature and maximise benefits for people and wildlife. The LNRS also identifies priority

habitats and species, with associated measures to help contribute to nature recovery. These are detailed in the Habitat Priority Profiles (Norfolk LNRS 2025, Table 4-23) and the 15 habitat-based assemblages that relate to groups of species within a habitat type, each represented with a flagship species (Norfolk LNRS p.114-129 tbc).

Norfolk's LNRS informs the delivery of the nature recovery section of the NCNL Management Plan and associated Action Plan, described below.

NCNL Management Plan

The NCNL Management Plan sets out the ambition to recover and enhance nature around the Norfolk coast in line with the LNRS and the aspirational work of the Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP). The goals and targets within the Management Plan are supported by an Action Plan that sets out the steps needed to be taken to achieve our ambition for nature recovery around the Norfolk coast.

PLTOF Targets

In 2024, the government established ambitious national targets for Protected Landscapes to deliver their potential for nature, climate, people and place. Targets are outlined in the [Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework](#) and are included within the nature recovery goals and targets section of the NCNL Management Plan.

Enhanced Biodiversity Duty

The Environment Act 2021 placed an enhanced Biodiversity Duty on all public bodies to which the Norfolk Association of Local Councils has published a [response](#). The Association has provided a model policy for biodiversity for its associated Parish Councils to use to help them fulfil their requirements in this respect. This includes commitments to protect biodiversity through the planning system and to manage land to promote biodiversity.

Underpinning legislation

The UK Government has important pieces of legislation that underpin nature recovery. These include (from oldest to most recent):

- [The Wildlife & Countryside Act \(WCA\) 1981](#): one of the primary mechanisms for protection of wildlife in the UK, it protects wild birds and a variety of other animals and plants and created nationally designated sites.
- [The Countryside and Rights of Way \(CROW\) Act 2000](#): strengthens the protection of national designations and threatened species and places a duty on Relevant Authorities to 'have regard' to the National Landscape designation.
- [Natural Environment & Rural Communities \(NERC\) Act 2006](#): created the 'biodiversity duty' for public bodies and listed the priority species and habitats that these organisations are required to have regard to.
- [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations \(Habs Regs\) 2010](#): protects internationally important species and sites.
- [The Environment Act 2021](#): commits the government to nature recovery targets and providing new instruments including Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies, Protected Site Strategies and Conservation Covenants as well as enhancing the Biodiversity Duty for Local Authorities.
- [The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act \(LURA\) 2023](#): this legislation covered a number of areas but, relevant to nature recovery, the act strengthened the duty on Relevant Authorities' to 'seek to further the purposes' of the National Landscape designation, embedded a requirement for Local Authorities to 'take account' of LNRS, and identified 'Sensitive Catchments' requiring consideration of the impact of planning on nutrient levels.

Local nature

Habitats and Species

Our protected landscapes boast some of the UK's largest and best kept saltmarsh, freshwater grazing marsh, and sand dune habitats. These, alongside other mudflat, shingle, wetland and grassland habitats, make the landscape a stronghold for coastal biodiversity. Additionally, semi-natural habitats such as fens, chalk grassland, heathland, and ancient woodland exist in small patches across the landscape but are critical as they support a high proportion of priority species.

An incredible 10,759 species have been recorded on the Norfolk coast since 1980, and over 1,200 of these are classed as priority species by the Norfolk Coast Biodiversity Audit due to them being locally important or of wider conservation concern¹². Among these, beach-breeding and wetland birds are considered some of the most sensitive species to habitat change and disturbance. Protecting, extending, connecting, and effectively managing habitats across the Norfolk coast is critical to support natural function and the species that rely on this land and seascape.

The following resources provide guidance on considering habitats and species as part of activities in the protected landscapes:

- The NERC Act provides a list of species and habitats of [principle importance in England](#) and should be considered by public bodies delivering their Biodiversity Duty and by landowners and developers in preparing proposals and planning nature recovery projects.
- A full list of protected species, where they are likely to be present and how to survey for them can be found on [GOV.UK](#).
- Norfolk's LNRS identifies habitats and habitat assemblages of particular importance locally and provides flagship species for habitat assemblages that can help to guide planning for nature.

Designated sites

At the core of nature recovery are the sites with legal protection, identified as having special value to biodiversity. Our protected landscapes have numerous sites with different levels of protection, from international to local, with protection given through the planning system and legislation. These include international statutory protected sites (Marine Conservation Zones, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites), national statutory protected sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves) and non-statutory or locally protected sites (County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, and Roadside Nature Reserves).

Non-statutory protected sites provide opportunities to further enhance and connect nature across our protected landscapes. Of particular relevance to the Norfolk coast are its network of County Wildlife Sites and Roadside Nature Reserves.

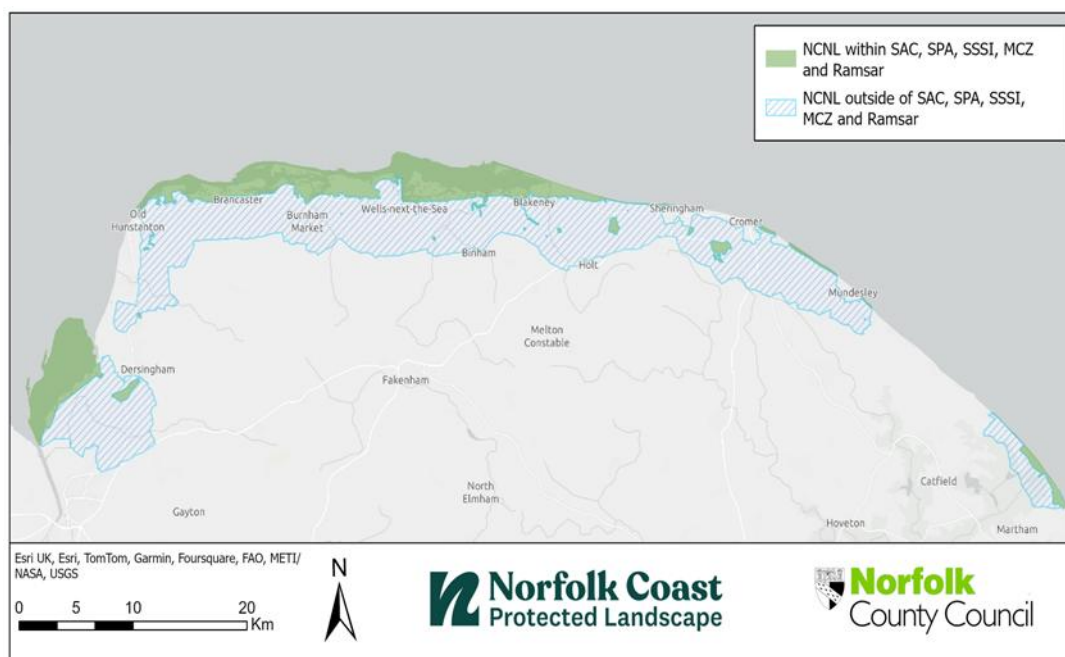


Figure 1. Map showing the area of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape that is designated a statutory protected site for nature in green and the area that is not designated a statutory protected site for nature in blue hatch.

County Wildlife Sites

County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) could be a tract of heath, a meadow, a copse or a village pond, but all are important for nature and protected through the planning system. Many CWSs are on private land and the designation does not mean there is public

¹ Crowther, L.P., Gilroy, J.J., Salliss, D., Hawkes, R.W., Dolman, P.M. (2022) *Biodiversity Audit of the Norfolk Coast –Phase 1*. School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich. ISBN 978-0-9567812-8-4

² Crowther, L.P., Gilroy, J.J., Rogers, F.S., Sayer, C., Dolman, P.M. (2023) *Biodiversity Audit of the Norfolk Coast –Phase 2 and 3: Farmed landscapes and the Eastern coast*. School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich. ISBN 978-0-9567812-9-1

access. Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) is the lead partner of the CWS Partnership which manages the CWS system, including identifying CWSs, monitoring condition, and engaging with landowners and local-decision makers to improve the management of CWSs for nature. NWT have published an [information leaflet](#) that explains the importance of CWSs for wildlife and details what support is available for owners, planners, and developers to appropriately manage them.

Roadside Nature Reserves

Norfolk's roadside verges are an integral part of the local ecological network, but it is easy to take them for granted. Many verges contain plant species that were once common but are now nationally rare or scarce. To help protect them, these special sites are designated [Roadside Nature Reserves](#) (RNRs) and are individually managed to benefit the plants and animals that live there. Many RNRs verges follow old routes that have changed little since they were laid down centuries ago and represent tiny fragments of the unimproved, semi-natural grassland that was once widespread throughout Norfolk.

From the mid-1990s Norfolk County Council in partnership with Norfolk Wildlife Trust and other organisations have designated over 300 RNRs, with a combined length of more than 100 kilometres. The reserves are cut in late summer or early autumn when flowering has finished and seed has been set, then the vegetation is raked up. This management is carried out by specialist conservation contractors on behalf of Norfolk County Council, while monitoring and identifying new sites is supported by volunteers.



Credit: Roadside Nature Reserve, Keith Evans.

Sensitive sites and how to avoid disturbance

The Norfolk coast is understandably a place many want to visit, but the wildlife and habitats can be sensitive to disturbance by visitors. Special features of the Norfolk coast that are considered to be especially sensitive to human disturbance are described in the following section.

Beach nesting birds

Beach nesting birds typically favour the same kind of areas visitors and residents enjoy. Around the Norfolk coast, ringed plover, oystercatcher and little tern are beach nesting birds of special concern, with sandwich tern and common tern also present. The areas these species use for breeding and sheltering can be negatively affected by disturbance. Therefore, visitors are requested to:

- respect signage and take care not to enter areas where sensitive species are nesting;
- keep dogs on leads where indicated.



Credit: Top left - ringed plover, Ed Hunter. Top right - oystercatcher, bramblejungle. Bottom - little tern, gailhampshire.

Non-breeding waders

The presence of non-breeding wader birds is a qualifying feature for some of the internationally designated sites around The Wash and Norfolk coast. At low tide, many of these non-breeding waders are feeding out on the mudflats, whilst at high tide, they gather at traditional 'high tide roosts'. Recreational disturbance at these feeding and/or roost sites presents a real threat; it can cause stress, a reduction in the time spent feeding and/or avoidance of suitable habitat.

Seals

Populations of grey and harbour seals can be found around the Norfolk coast. A decline in the harbour seal has been seen in recent years and is in part attributed to recreational disturbance. As a result, harbour seals are a protected species around The Wash and Norfolk coast. Large colonies of grey seals use the coast during pupping season attracting many visitors. Friend of Horsey Seals provide detailed guidance on protecting seals from disturbance and injury during this season on their [website](#).



Credit: Harbour seals, John Sargent.

Ground disturbance

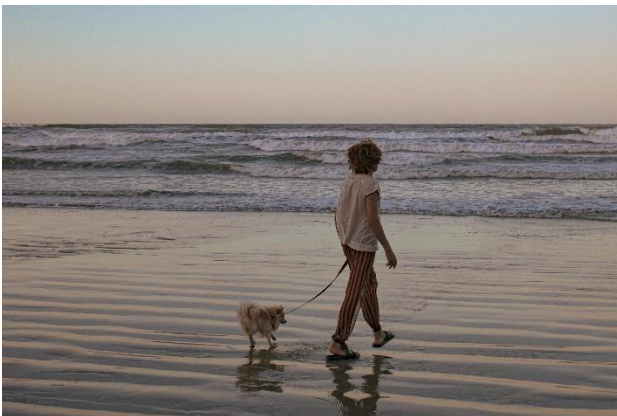
Due to the number of people visiting Norfolk each year, travelling around the coast can have a negative impact (whether that be from walking, cycling, riding or driving). For example, trampling and compaction destroys soil structures that can take years to accumulate. Therefore, it is recommended that visitors:

- review information about designated nature and geological sites before visiting and respect guidance;
- follow the Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape '[know before you go](#)' guidelines, particularly keeping to paths to minimise ground disturbance.

Dog walking

Around the Norfolk coast, there is support and guidance to help dog walkers enjoy nature in a responsible way. Notably, between 1st March and 31st July every year (the main breeding bird period for ground nesting birds) there are dog restrictions at certain sites, so it is important to [check access maps](#) and adhere to local signs. In accordance with the [Dog Walking Countryside Code](#), please:

- a. ensure your dog is under effective control;
- b. keep your dog on the paths or access land;
- c. don't let your dog chase wildlife;
- d. always bag and bin your dog's poo.



Credit: Left - Bruno Curly. Right - Luke Seago.

Navigating nature requirements for planning

In addition to Natural England, four different Local Planning Authorities support the work of NCP, all of whom work together to preserve and promote the area's natural beauty. When considering nature requirements within planning applications, it is important to note that each Local Authority has slightly different requirements and decision-making processes. Please refer to Table 1.1. for further information.

Table 1.2: Local Authority nature information

Local Authority	Website	Local Plan/policies	Biodiversity Net Gain guidance	Other documents/guidance
Norfolk County Council		https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/39049/Adopted-policy-documents	https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/55567/Biodiversity-net-gain	https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/environmentpolicy
North Norfolk District Council	https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/conservation/find-out-about-biodiversity/	https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/info/planning-policy/current-local-plan/policies/policy-en9-biodiversity-and-geology/		
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council	https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20082/trees_hedges_and_landscapes/281/biodiversity	https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20220/site_allocations_and_development_management_policies_plan/514/adopted_plan	https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/development-management/biodiversity-net-gain/	https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/31/biodiversity_documents
Great Yarmouth Borough Council.		https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/2489/Current-Local-Plan		https://docs.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/10768/Sustainability-Strategy

Though guidance and requirements may vary across Local Authorities, all require applications to have the necessary information clearly presented so that Officers can review whether an application is aligned with the requirements of their Local Plans and policies, and that impacts on protected sites, habitats and species are minimised.

For planning applications or advice for managing land for nature, ecological advice can be sought from a professional. The Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) are the leading professional membership body representing and supporting ecologists and environmental managers in the UK. They have a [directory of members](#) to help with sourcing advice. Other networks and bodies exist, such as Norfolk [Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group](#) (FWAG) and the [Wildlife Trust Consultancies](#) that bring together these professionals. In sourcing advice from individuals and organisations not belonging to CIEEM or similar, remember to check necessary credentials and experience prior to commissioning.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a tool to help leave nature in a better state than prior to a development. [DEFRA's Guidance](#) sets out qualifying developments that are required to demonstrate BNG as part of the planning application process. BNG involves assessing the habitats present on site prior to development, using the [Statutory Metric](#) to calculate the value of those habitats in 'units' and proposing habitat enhancements and creation to achieve at least 10% gain over 30 years.

At application stage all eligible applications should provide:

- a baseline assessment;
- an indication of how they intend to meet BNG requirements;
- a habitat baseline plan of the site.

Local variation is possible, however, the Government has detailed the process and mandatory information requirements in this [planning practice guidance](#). It is important to note that BNG is a post-approval planning matter, all eligible applications receive approval with a Biodiversity Gain Condition, requiring the preparation of a Biodiversity Gain Plan demonstrating how developers will deliver the necessary environmental gains.

When planning for enhancements or habitat creation an understanding of how the Statutory Metric works is important. Habitats and sites identified within the LNRS, and some habitats considered more distinctive, are scored favourably by the Statutory Metric. These medium or high distinctiveness habitats can normally only be replaced with the same habitats or others of higher

distinctiveness. The guidance recommends avoidance of any impacts on medium or higher distinctiveness habitats as a first step for all plan making. If avoidance is not possible, losses should be compensated for.

By aligning proposals for compensation with the LNRS, applicants can ensure greater gains for biodiversity, and their proposals will be scored more highly through the application of the 'strategic significance' multiplier. Gains can be delivered in the following ways:

- **On-site:** The priority for all developers is to satisfy requirements on-site wherever possible. The primary goal, however, should be avoidance of loss or impact. Whatever size and type of project, embedding biodiversity early into the design process is important. Trying to provide more for the local ecological network, whilst also providing sheltering, foraging and water needs of the local species, should yield the best results. Effective site selection and design can ensure the retention and protection of habitats. This is not only good for nature but also for reducing costs for developments, especially on projects that accord with the principles of 'bigger, better, more joined up'³.
- **Off-site:** 'Habitat banks' can be used to create off site gains in potentially larger areas with a lower risk of disturbance for nature. The Future Homes Hub hosts a free to use, non-commercial tool to help with those needing to [find available off-site units](#) and those looking to offer them. Other commercial providers of units can be found on the internet or through your local and national networks. Once purchased they should be registered on the [National Register](#).
- **Statutory credits:** If there is no other alternative, statutory credits can be purchased. This involves developers making a financial contribution which counts towards their mandatory BNG.

For on-site or off-site gains, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is normally appended to the gain plan, which outlines how the land will be managed over at least 30 years. It is important to consider how management will be delivered as well as the necessary skills, knowledge and equipment. When setting targets, make sure you consider the deliverability of the proposals including the who, how and when of management activities.

It should be noted that, where a development provides more than the required 10% BNG uplift, the additional units can potentially be sold to other developers aiming to meet their BNG requirements. Creating more biodiversity than is required (where it is possible to do so) can help generate more income as well as provide greater benefits for nature and people.

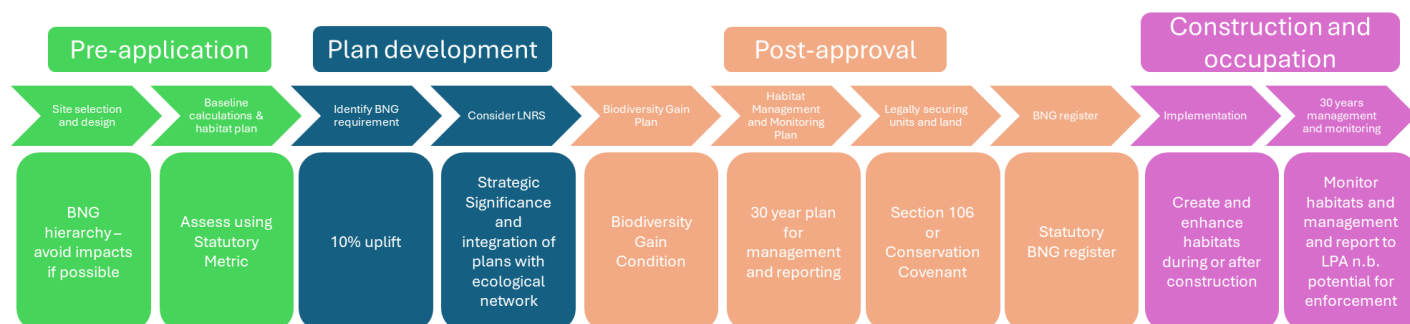


Figure 2: A flow diagram of the Biodiversity Net Gain process.

Small sites

Small sites can still contribute toward nature recovery, and sites less than 1ha (or developments with 9 houses or fewer) have their own Defra metric. Aiming to create pockets of scrub, ponds and planting individual trees will all help to contribute toward achieving BNG requirements. Retaining and enhancing grassland habitats can provide significant wildlife benefits. This could include altering grassland management or sowing wildflower seeds. BNG will also take account of green walls and roofs in calculations. Building in biodiversity so that it is intrinsic to the developments can go a long way to helping support local species.

BNG guidance

The table below signposts resources for additional BNG guidance.

³ The Lawton Review, Making Space for Nature, 2010

Table 1.2: BNG guidance

Source	Purpose of guidance
CIEEM	Best practice guidance for different stakeholders, which should be referenced by those involved in the delivery of BNG.
Future Homes and the Planning Advisory Service	BNG best practice process flow diagram to illustrate how BNG can be considered at all stages of the planning process.
Natural England	Introduction to the benefits of BNG.
UK Green Building Council	Infographics to help developers and planners to understand BNG.

Nutrient Neutrality

Several of the internationally designated sites around the Norfolk coast are particularly sensitive to the impacts of nutrients (especially phosphates and nitrates). Due to their level of protection, developments in identified 'sensitive catchments' need to ensure they are not negatively impacting aquatic ecosystems by adding more nutrients than are already present. Planning mechanisms exist to help reduce and mitigate excess nutrients entering the water environment (nutrient loading) from new development, but nature can lend a hand. Through habitat enhancements or creation, these impacts can be offset as well as contributing to nature recovery. Some examples of on-site nature-based mitigation to nutrient loading are provided below.

- Creating wetland habitats, or integrating wetland habitats into sustainable drainage systems, retains water in the area for longer so nutrients have the chance to settle prior to release into rivers and the wider catchments.
- Planting trees, using cover crops and converting arable land to semi-natural grassland helps to improve soil health, reduce soil erosion which holds nutrients, and helps to filter nutrients from water before release into rivers the wider catchments.

Several Local Authorities have partnered to create [Norfolk Environmental Credits](#). These credits are available for purchase to applicants needing to fulfil Nutrient Neutrality requirements in the area.

District Level Licensing

Great crested newts (GCN) are one of a suite of species in England that are afforded higher levels of protection due to their rarity and sensitivity. Where developments are likely to impact GCN populations, a strategic solution is available in Norfolk through [District Level Licensing](#). If a development is located within areas identified as having the potential to support significant GCN populations, developers can apply to the scheme and streamline their planning application. Developers make a conservation payment, which is used to create or restore new ponds in locations that will benefit the great crested newt. These are then secured, monitored and managed for 25 years.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) includes natural and semi-natural areas across all public spaces that support people's wellbeing and can provide wider environmental benefits. Whether you use it to walk the dog, play with your children or get some headspace, GI is vital to our health, wellbeing and communities. By designing GI with nature in mind, these spaces can also act as important stepping stones for biodiversity across the landscape, contributing to the nature recovery network. Furthermore, funding associated with legally secured BNG in public spaces could help to secure the management and improvement of these areas in the long-term, better supporting co-benefits for people and nature.

Planting

Planting in public spaces needn't just be ornamental. Incorporating locally native seed mixes provides greater uplift for wildlife, but BNG also takes into consideration well planned non-native mixes where plants have wildlife benefits (e.g. for pollinators). Projects should consider whether some ornamental planting can be replaced with native mixed scrub to provide further uplift.

Green walls and roofs can also be incorporated on all types of buildings and can provide uplift for BNG whilst enhancing the setting of a development.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) are not always designed with biodiversity in mind but, with some tweaks, they have the potential to provide benefits for flood risk reduction, wildlife and BNG requirements. For instance, adding species rich grassland mixes rather than amenity mixes in these areas, or incorporating more detailed designs through the creation of a rain garden can bring biodiversity benefits. If wetland creation or similar is being used to satisfy nutrient neutrality requirements, it can also be used in part to fulfil BNG requirements. Changes in land use from arable to green open space may also help in achieving nutrient neutrality requirements.

A call to action

Nature friendly homes

Everyone can help support nature's recovery at home. Even the once common hedgehog is 'vulnerable to extinction' in the UK, which highlights why we all should be taking action to help provide food, water, shelter and breeding opportunities for our native wildlife. All species need these essentials and, by providing some of these at home, you can help your local wildlife.

Examples of actions you can take include:

■ Food:

- Grow native fruiting and flowering trees/bushes for birds and invertebrates.
- Grow wildflowers for pollinators.
- Eliminate/reduce use of herbicides and pesticides, to allow more insects to flourish.

■ Shelter:

- Leave areas of long grass so that small creatures can move about.
- Reduce the cutting frequency of hedges and avoid cutting during summer months to allow birds to nest.
- Install bird and bat boxes.
- Build a log pile for over-wintering invertebrates and amphibians.

■ Water:

- Build/install a pond (it can be as small as a bucket, or as large as you can offer) or a bird bath to provide water for wildlife.

■ Breeding habitat:

- Allow your hedges to grow to provide nesting habitat for birds.
- Build a pond and put a water plant in it, to provide egg-laying habitat for amphibians.
- Leave/create some holes in fences so that hedgehogs can move between gardens and find a mate.

The following organisations have created extensive resources on how to make areas more nature-friendly to support local wildlife, from the home garden to communal spaces:

- [Norfolk Wildlife Trust \(NWT\) - Wilder Gardens resources](#)
- [RPSB - Give Nature a Home guide](#)
- [Norfolk Green Care Network - Connecting People with Nature](#)
- [The Royal Horticultural Society - Wildlife gardening advice](#)
- [Natural History Museum – Ways to help your local wildlife](#)



Credit: Left - LUC Open Asset. Middle - LUC Open Asset. Right - Pixabay.

Volunteering

Volunteering offers individuals the opportunity to learn about and connect with nature, stay active, and make a meaningful impact in their local community. The following list provides guidance for different groups interested in volunteering within Norfolk:

- General guidance for [conservation volunteering in Norfolk](#)
- [Parents or carers](#)
- [Young person or career changer](#)
- [School students](#)
- [Campaigners](#)

Additionally, there are volunteering opportunities with [The Conservation Volunteers](#).

Further information can be provided by the [Norfolk County Council Natural Environment Team](#) or your local council.

Case Studies

These case studies demonstrate best practice nature recovery efforts around the Norfolk coast and serve as a source of inspiration for similar initiatives.

Churchyard Conservation Scheme

With 650 churches across the county, and 45 across the NCNL, Norfolk's churches are recognised for their unique contribution to nature recovery networks. The older buildings provide nesting and roosting places for bats and birds, and the surrounding grounds are typically home to veteran trees and support some of the last remaining areas of undisturbed grassland. As such, Norfolk's churches are important refuges for wildlife and are featured in LNRS.

NWT run the [Churchyard Conservation Scheme](#) in collaboration with the Diocese of Norwich, which offers advice to communities on how best to manage churchyards for the benefit of wildlife. Since the scheme began, volunteers have visited over 300 of Norfolk's churchyards to record wildlife. A whole suite of advice has been made available which has helped local communities preserve nature alongside places for rest and reflection. Notably, this has included enhancing the species diversity of the relic grassland by planting rare grassland plant species and providing features for wildlife. The Churchyard Conservation Scheme is open to all communities with churchyards. NWT can provide free surveys and advice to help identify what is present and what action can be taken to preserve and enhance nature in these areas.



Saint Margarets Churchyard, Paston (Churchyard Conservation Scheme). Credit: Kolfor (Wikimedia).

The Dioceses of Norwich are also actively pursuing broader environmental goals through the [Eco Church Award Scheme](#). In November 2023, they were awarded the Bronze Eco-Diocese Award and are now working towards achieving the Eco Diocese Silver Award by the end of 2026. A key part of this effort is encouraging our church communities to embrace actions that promote and preserve the biodiversity of their churchyards and using these spaces to help local people connect with nature. The dioceses are also developing an environmental policy and a land management plan, which will promote biodiversity and the management of land for carbon reduction across the Diocese.



Credit: Diocese of Norwich.

Stiffkey Integrated Constructed Wetland

In 2022, [Norfolk Rivers Trust](#) in partnership with NCP, created 15 hectares of wetland in the Stiffkey catchment to provide a sustainable, low carbon, wastewater treatment system that will also boost biodiversity. Pollution is a key threat to the catchment with Water Recycling Centre effluent, intensive agriculture, sediment run-off and septic tanks all contributing.

The wetland provides natural filtration of liquid and sewage waste prior to it entering the Binham Stream. Furthermore, 400m of the stream has been re-naturalised and now meanders across its floodplain. Both initiatives together are providing more for biodiversity, water quality, and carbon sequestration. As such, they are considered an ideal nature-based solution for Norfolk. This work was part of the '[Norfolk's Two Chalk Rivers](#)' project funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Credit: Norfolk Rivers Trust

Thornham Jubilee Meadow

[Thornham Jubilee Meadow](#) was created to provide over seven hectares of wildflower meadow parkland. With funding and support from the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL⁴) programme and Norfolk Rivers Trust (on behalf of the WWF and Air Wick partnership), this project has provided habitat for a greater diversity of native insects and pollinators, whilst simultaneously providing a green space that can be accessed and enjoyed by the villagers of Thornham in perpetuity. NWT have hosted bioblitz events to record the biodiversity in the meadow and local contractors and farmers have provided labour and knowledge

⁴ FiPL is a government funded grant programme open to farmers and landowners to support delivery of environmental projects within their National Parks and/or National Landscapes.

on how to implement the plan. It is therefore an excellent example of a partnership project that delivers benefits for both people and place.



Credit: Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape.