



Spring 2015

Issue 4

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Welcome to the SBP Planners' Update!

We aim to provide accessible information about biodiversity issues in relation to planning. If we can help with training events, factsheets or in any other way, please do contact us and we'll do our best to provide what you need. Previous Updates are available on the SBP [Planners' Page >](#)

***Demystifying Green Infrastructure* report urges property industry to take lead in protecting natural environment**

The UK-Green Building Council has called on the property industry to play a leading role in protecting and enhancing natural features and biodiversity in urban areas in their new report *Demystifying Green Infrastructure*. The report presents the business case for "green infrastructure", the term used to describe natural and semi-natural features such as street trees, parks and woodlands. Introducing green infrastructure into the built environment offers a number of business opportunities, including a potential increase in the value of land and property, as well as social and environmental benefits. The business risks resulting from failure to incorporate adequate green infrastructure into building projects include delays in planning, increased costs and damage to reputation with clients.

Find out more - [UK-GBC >](#)

Suffolk Planning and Biodiversity seminar November 2014

The 10th annual Planning and Biodiversity seminar was a great success attended by more than 60 planners and ecological consultants from Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Bedfordshire. A range of inspiring and thought-provoking presentations on the latest national and county-level developments and best practice in spatial planning, development management and biodiversity led to detailed questions and discussion. The event also provided an excellent forum in which to exchange practical experiences. The event, hosted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, was organised by SBP and the Association for Local Government Ecologists and was generously sponsored by Taylor Wimpey. The presentations on Green Infrastructure, CIL, Turtle Doves, Reptiles, Stag Beetles, the Dorset Protocol and Natural England update are available to download on the [SBP website >](#)

***The Value of the Natural Environment* conference**

Natural England and Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

This event on 17th March explored the value of the natural environment and distinctive landscapes in supporting economic development and health and wellbeing for Suffolk, Norfolk and the East of England as a whole. It also considered the challenges we face for nature to be truly recognised as the keystone of a prosperous economy and healthy society. The RSPB, Adnams and Countryside Properties made the case for how valuable nature reserves are to the local economy and how they use green credentials as part of their USP. Presentations now available on the [CPRE website >](#)

[Read the Ipswich Star article - Don't take nature for granted](#)

SBP's Gateway to Priority (BAP) Species in Suffolk - update *Meeting the Biodiversity Duty*

Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan comprises those species on the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats 2007 which have been recorded in Suffolk over the past 50 years. There are 303 species and 23 habitats. Click [here >](#) to find out which they are. Click [here >](#) to see what they look like.

Check the SBP website to find out which BAP Species are associated with particular BAP habitats >

- ◆ 2 species added to Suffolk BAP in Jan 2015:
 - ◇ Tiny Earthstar - found at Sizewell Nov 2014
 - ◇ Polecat - several sightings summer 2014
- ◆ First SBP Species Factsheets available on our website:
 - ◇ [Turtle Dove >](#) and [Tassel Stonewort >](#)

***People, Politics and the Planet* debate**

The Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), in partnership with the British Ecological Society and the Sibthorp Trust, held a pre-election debate on the environmental policies of the UK's major political parties in London on 9th March. The event was well attended by over 300 people, who questioned representatives of the UK's major political parties on their environmental commitments. The event was chaired by the broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby.

[A report of the debate is now available >](#)

One of CIEEM's key issues for the next parliament is that biodiversity considerations – and the ambition to achieve net biodiversity gain – must be integrated into all planning, infrastructure development and relevant public subsidies (e.g. CAP payments) decision-making in order to reverse the ongoing, long-term decline in species and habitats.

Building development creates the majority of Bat Crimes

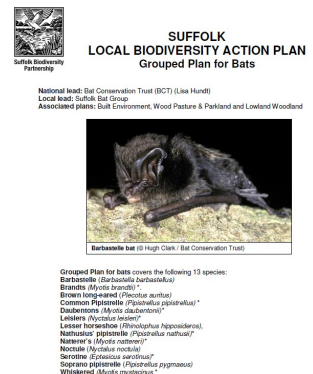
The 2013 Bat Crime report released in February 2015 shows that the overall number of bat crime allegations referred to police from the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) was down by 13 cases from 2012 to 121. The majority of these crimes were as a result of building development activity, with damage being caused to roosts identified as the most frequent offence. BCT's Investigations Project works towards preventing bat crime, and during 2013 worked closely with the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

Many bat species use houses, churches, barns and other man

-made structures for roost sites. Bats are most active during March to October, the peak building construction times, so this makes them particularly vulnerable to any redevelopments.

[Visit BCT website to find out more about the report >](#)

The [Suffolk Grouped BAP for Bats](#) provides information and guidance about bats in our county.



Infrastructure Act implemented

The cross-departmental Infrastructure Act became law on 12th February 2015, aimed at facilitating more efficient delivery of major infrastructure projects. The most relevant section of the Act for biodiversity in Suffolk is the introduction of new provisions to control non-native invasive species. The Act contains new powers to compel landowners to take action on invasive and non-native species and permit others to enter the land and carry out works for their eradication. These species have a huge economic impact particularly on agriculture and the construction, development and infrastructure sectors. Their eradication has previously been reliant on voluntary agreements between landowners and DEFRA to undertake works and gain access.

To find out more visit [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk) >

Environmental Management Guidance live on Gov.UK

This includes:

- Guidance on general species protection and licences
- Detailed species guidance for developers and their ecologists
- Advice for how planning authorities should consider protected species when assessing planning applications

The content is in GOV.UK's beta mode which means that they are actively reviewing and improving the guidance. CIEEM is working with Defra and Natural England to help make sure advice on good practices to support planning and licencing is available and accessible. Of particular interest to planners, the site includes information on: *Protected species and sites: How to review planning proposals and Construction near protected areas and wildlife.*

[Visit Environmental Management Guidance Wildlife and Habitat Conservation on Gov.UK >](#)

Biodiversity Auditing - Government POSTnote 490 published

Biodiversity supports the ecosystem services humans rely on for well-being and economic resources. Areas that have had an audit can make more effective use of ecological data to meet planning and conservation objectives for biodiversity. This POSTnote summarises the data sources used and the advantages of the audit approach for addressing biodiversity loss. This includes a section on Planning and Biodiversity Audits.

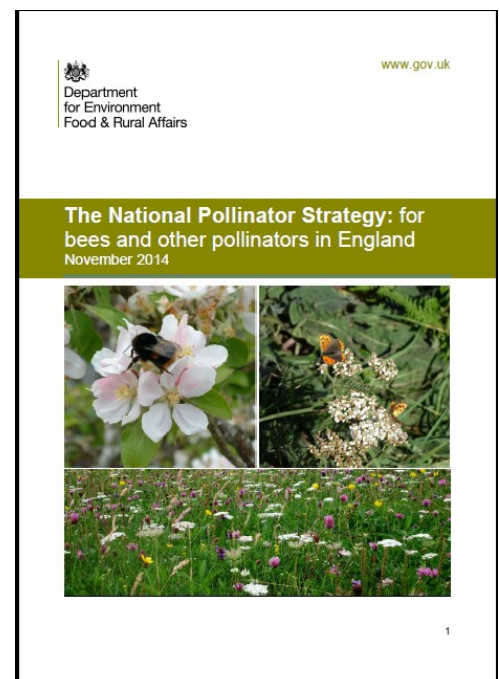
Visit www.parliament.uk >

National Pollinator Strategy

Defra launched the [National Pollinator Strategy](#) on 4th Nov 2014, a 10-year plan to deliver more and better flower-rich habitats across the country supporting a healthy, resilient population of bees and other insects, and thereby pollination services.

The strategy includes initiatives to work with landowners, managers and gardeners to promote simple land management changes and developing a long-term pollinator monitoring programme. In response to the Strategy, Buglife have launched the B-lines Project to which Suffolk Local Authorities and communities will be able to contribute in the future. Watch for updates!

Find out more about B-lines - [Buglife](#) >



Permitted Development Rights

CIEEM have reported that there are increasing concerns as to how some LPAs are interpreting the amended Permitted Development rights that came into force in 2014 in respect of agricultural buildings, especially with regard to protected species. There appears to be considerable divergence as to how this order is being applied, with the risk that some LPAs are failing to have due regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.

Government Planning Update March 2015 - Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles

Steps the government are taking to streamline the planning system, protect the environment, support economic growth and assist locally-led decision-making. Includes Solar energy: protecting the local and global environment; Brownfield land: increasing support for councils; Green belt: protecting against inappropriate development; Planning guidance: making the planning system more accessible (includes a response on [speeding up Section 106 agreements >](#)); Change of use: supporting brownfield regeneration.

Visit [Gov,UK website >](#)

Priority Species focus

Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus* : much larger than rabbits, they can be recognised by their very long black-tipped ears and large powerful hind legs. Usually seen in open grassy meadows and arable fields, they rely on speeds of up to 45 mph to evade predators. The population has declined over the past 100 years, mainly due to agricultural intensification and changes in farming practices. Brown Hares are widespread in Suffolk and particularly numerous on the east coast and in the Brecks.



Photo: Charles Cuthbert

Please send me information about any relevant biodiversity and planning issues that you think should be highlighted. The update is published twice a year, in spring and autumn and goes to a wide audience, mainly planners in Suffolk and Norfolk. I look forward to hearing from you!

Gen Broad

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Please send us your feedback!

Is this newsletter helpful?

What topics would you like to see covered?



Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership

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Visit us at

www.suffolkbiodiversity.org/planners-page.aspx