

# Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

## Planners' Update

**Spring 2020**

**Issue 11**

### Inside this issue:

[East Anglian Planning & Biodiversity Seminar 2019](#) 1

[Environment Bill update](#) 2

[Natural Capital tool launched by Defra](#) 2

[New licence to manage and control alien invasive species](#) 2

[Less than half of local sites in positive conservation management](#) 2

[UN publish draft plan to halt biodiversity crisis](#) 3

[Green Infrastructure Partnership](#) 3

[Potential restrictions for green walls](#) 3

[Healthy weight in women and green space](#) 3

[Derry & Strabane Green Infrastructure Plan](#) 3

[Emergency tree plan for the UK](#) 4

[Planning for green infrastructure](#) 4

[UK-wide: lottery fund for natural landscapes](#)

[Training - embedding the natural capital approach in planning and development](#) 4

## Welcome to the SBIS 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 [SBIS Planners' Page >](#)

### East Anglian Planning and Biodiversity Seminar 2019

14<sup>th</sup> November, University of Suffolk, Ipswich

This popular annual event aims to provide practical solutions to support decision-makers, whilst ensuring that legal obligations are met. It also provides a rare and much-needed forum for East Anglian planners and ecological consultants to exchange ideas. The day focused on planning issues related to wetlands, rivers and streams and was more than fully booked, with 150 people attending.

The speakers presented innovative and inspiring ideas, including a wet woodland planned into a Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme in Bramford (Scottish Power Renewables) and the exciting Integrated Constructed Wetland projects driven forward by the Norfolk Rivers Trust. This was vividly presented as a case study of Norfolk's River Ingol.

The species-themed slots are ever popular, enabling planners to take away practical ideas for incorporating enhancements. Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the UK Water Vole Steering Group and the Bat Conservation Trust effectively demonstrated how developments can realistically be improved for Otters, Water Voles and Bats.

In the months to come, it will become essential to understand Biodiversity Net Gain (leaving biodiversity in a better state after development than it was before), so the user-friendly presentation by the Environment Agency on the rivers and streams metric was most welcome.

The Association of Local Government Ecologists presented a national update and, for the first time, there was a regional update by SBIS on issues specific to our area.

SBIS described how they are creating a range of ecological network tools for use by landowners and parishes, in neighbourhood plans and for district and county-level strategic planning; and Natural England updated the audience of the roll out of the Great crested newt District Licensing in our region.

All of the presentations can be downloaded from the [SBIS Planners' page >](#) See photos of the speakers on p.2

[Raynsford review of planning](#) 5

[Garden cities - a guide for planners](#) 5

[Training - understanding the garden city approach](#) 5

[Priority species focus - Shepherd's needle](#) 6

[Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group & collaborative members](#) 6



**Left to right:** Michael Hotze & Emma Browning (Scottish Power Renewables), David Diggins (Norfolk Rivers Trust), Jan Collins (Bat Conservation Trust), David White (Norfolk County Council), Sarah Jane Scott (Environment Agency), Simone Bullion (Suffolk Wildlife Trust), Sue Hooton (Association of Local Government Ecologists), Martin Sanford (SBIS), Gareth Dalglish (Natural England), Darren Tansley (UK Water Vole Steering group), Gen Broad (SBIS). Photos: Hamish Jackson

With thanks to the Chartered Institute for Environmental Management for the following news items

## Environment Bill update

The Environment Bill has now returned to Parliament with some notable additions: a commitment to a two-yearly review of significant developments in international legislation on the environment, a requirement for current and future Ministers to make a statement to Parliament identifying environmental impacts of all new environmental primary legislation and the introduction of powers to stop the exports of polluting plastic waste to developing countries. This follows confirmation by Lord Gardiner of Kimble that the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) would be operational immediately following the transition period We will be setting out our response to the Bill shortly. [Read more at Gov.uk >](#)

## Natural capital tool launched by Defra

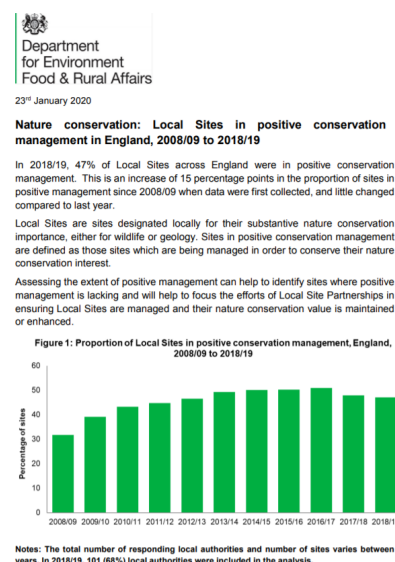
A new online resource has been launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to help policy makers, businesses, landowners and public sector organisations make better planning decisions in order to protect and to boost natural capital. [Read more at Gov.uk >](#)

## New licence to manage and control invasive alien species

Natural England has introduced a new licence to manage and control certain non-native species. This licence covers the invasive alien animal and plant species of Union concern which are widely spread in England. [Read more at CIEEM >](#)

## Less than half of local sites in positive conservation management

Defra has published the annual report on the proportion of local sites in positive conservation management which show that just 47% reach the criteria. This is a slight decline in proportion from the previous two years. [Read more at Gov.uk >](#)



## UN publish draft plan to halt biodiversity crisis

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has published a draft version of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which aims to reverse biodiversity decline and increase resilience of ecosystems. The proposal aims to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and achieve recovery of at least 20% of natural ecosystems by 2050.

[Read more at CIEEM >](#)



Emerging results from the [Valuing Nature](#) research projects provide powerful evidence that ordinary elements of green infrastructure hold immense significance, and underpin wellbeing. For older people especially, trees and parks can embody memories: the destruction of local green spaces can undermine mental health. Ordinary green spaces are not well protected by the planning system. Nor is their contribution to wellbeing fully captured by natural capital accounting, helpful though it can be. [New techniques](#) for expressing these important subjective values are now being created and should be used widely. As the appalling destruction in Australia has demonstrated, the landscapes we live in are immeasurably important to all of us.

---

## Potential restrictions for green walls

A government ban on using combustible materials in external walls of high-rise residential towers, in response to the Grenfell disaster, may lead to restrictions on green walls. [Read more at futurebuild>](#)

---

## Healthy weight in women and green space

A recent study, by the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), of more than 2,300 inhabitants in seven Spanish provinces has found that women who live less than 300 metres from a green space may be at lower risk of excess weight or obesity. [Read more at ISGlobal Barcelona Institute for Global Health >](#)

---

## Derry & Strabane Green Infrastructure Plan

Derry City and Strabane District Council have launched a pioneering Green Infrastructure Plan. This is the first local authority Green Infrastructure Plan with an associated GI Action Plan in Northern Ireland, which will be delivered with the Community Plan partners. The Green Infrastructure Plan 2019 - 2030 follows an extensive consultation process with local people, organisations and experts. It is linked to the Local Development Plan and the Strategic Growth Plan (Community Plan) and aims to deliver benefits to the public, the local economy and the environment. The Green Infrastructure Plan 2019 - 2030 and a video highlighting key projects can be viewed on the [Derry City and Strabane District Council website >](#)

GI

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

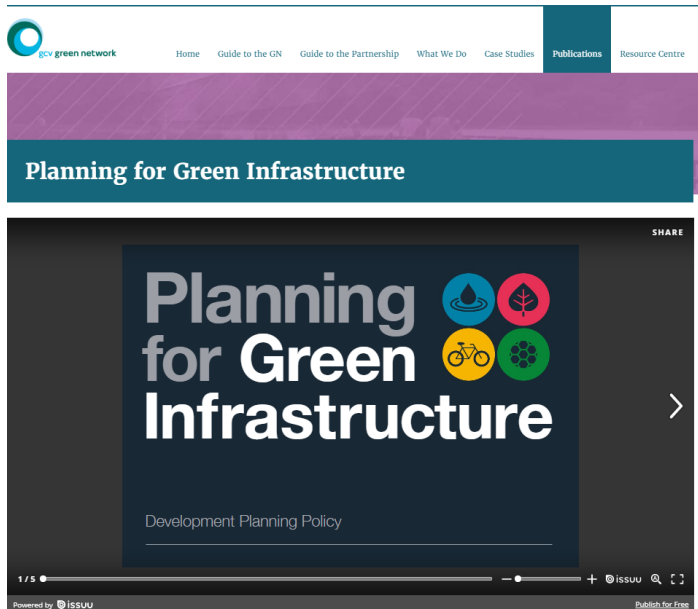
Derry & Strabane's Green Infrastructure Plan 2019-2032

Derry City & Strabane District Council and its Green Infrastructure (GI) partners have developed a GI Plan for the district that aims to improve its green and blue spaces. It outlines a new approach that requires a change to the way we think about and value these spaces. It highlights that these areas provide a range of benefits including helping mitigate the impact of climate change, improving public parks, play areas, food growing opportunities and the development of greenways as well as protecting biodiversity and providing a range of ecosystem services.



## Emergency Tree Plan for the UK

The Woodland Trust has published an Emergency Tree Plan for the UK which sets out key recommendations for national and local governments across the UK to increase tree cover and address the nature and climate emergency. [Read more at the Woodland Trust >](#)



### Planning for Green Infrastructure

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley (GCV) Green Network Partnership, together with the Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT), have launched a Planning for Green Infrastructure brochure, providing a guide to exemplar green infrastructure planning policies.

[Download the GCV brochure here >](#)

## UK-wide: Lottery fund for natural landscapes

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is offering grants of £10,000 to over £250,000 to help fund access to nature and 'natural and designed landscapes'. Applications are ongoing. [Read more at Heritage Fund >](#)

## Training event: Embedding the natural capital approach in planning and development

**When:** 26 February 2020

**Where:** Leeds

The Ecosystems Knowledge Network is holding training sessions on how to embed natural capital principles in planning and development.

### Course content

- Public policy background, recent changes and direction of travel (including biodiversity net gain and environmental net gain), links to the place-shaping agenda and sustainable development.
- Natural capital in policy planning – integration into local policy, infrastructure and investment planning, delivery methods and approaches to guide spatial planning.
- Creating a natural capital evidence base – an overview of assessment approaches, including metrics, mapping, and accounting, existing tools and standards.
- Natural capital in development management – using natural capital approaches to improve delivery and enhancement on site, measuring and delivering biodiversity and environmental net gain.

[Read more at Ecosystems Knowledge Network >](#)



## 21st century slums? Raynsford Review of planning

The Town and County Planning Association (TCPA) has taken stock of how the English planning system has evolved since the launch of the Raynsford Review of Planning one year ago. More practical action is needed in six priority areas of planning, the new report, Planning 2020 'One Year On' finds, including addressing the continuing delivery of poor quality homes. The photo below is a permitted development rights scheme for 14 homes in a former industrial unit: in too many places real harm is done to people, the report concludes. Among the key actions that need to be taken in 2020 are the introduction of a new statutory purpose for planning focused on health and wellbeing and implementing minimum basic design standards through a Healthy Homes Act.

[Read more and download the report on the TCPA website >](#)

[To find out more about the TCPA's Healthy Homes Act, click here >](#)

---

## Garden City Opportunity - a Guide for Councils (TCPA)

Across the UK there is a chronic shortage of affordable housing, and this housing crisis is damaging people's life chances. At the same time, much of the new housing being delivered is badly designed and in places which lack the basic social infrastructure needed to make healthy and vibrant communities.

How can we meet the shared ambition to build the number of homes we need in places we can be proud of – places that will enhance people's health and wellbeing?

As communities and councils, we have a clear choice. Do we want people to live in soulless housing estates and – as has resulted from recent changes to permitted development rules – converted flats with no windows? Or do we want our legacy to be one of quality and inclusion in communities we can all be proud of?

[Download the guide on the TCPA website >](#)

---

the garden city  
opportunity  
a guide for councils



## Training event: Understanding the Garden City approach - seminars for councils

**When:** February 2020

**Where:** Letchworth (4th), York (6th), Exeter (13th), London (25th) and Manchester (26th)

**Cost:** FREE

To help councils use the Garden City approach to accommodate housing growth, the TCPA is running a series of free seminars. New guidance on the opportunities and challenges of this approach to creating sustainable new communities will be shared. Seminars will take place across different regions of the country. Speakers from Homes England, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, LDA Design, Countryside Properties and local authorities will share their experiences.

[Find out more and book a place \(London\) >](#)

## Priority Species focus - Shepherd's needle *Scandix pecten-veneris* (Representing rare arable plants)

### Key facts

- Critically Endangered, but has stronghold in Suffolk.
- Member of carrot family Apiaceae (previously Umbelliferae).
- One of the declining arable plants on field margins and in disturbed soil on waste ground.
- Annual plant of chalky clay soils.
- Seed is long lived.
- Threats: modern agricultural practices e.g. herbicides and fertilisers and loss of field margins.
- Benefits of rare arable plants: shelter for insects, source of food for small mammals and birds, nectar and pollen for bumblebees, butterflies and other beneficial insects.



Shepherd's needle growing on a disused airfield, Sudbury, Suffolk. Photo: Stuart Read

### Undertake detailed botanical surveys if:

- Distribution and historical records suggest Shepherd's needle (and other rare arable plants) may be present.
- The development will affect field margins.

*Surveys should be done by a suitably experienced surveyor.*

Useful reference: [Plantlife's England Farmland Report 2013 >](#)

### Mitigation and compensation measures include designs that:

- Preserve populations of rare arable plants when possible.
- Provide space for the seeds still in the soil to germinate.
- Consider location of paths / routes through a site to take into account arable plant populations.
- Include rare arable plants in any management plan for the site.
- Consider Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities.
- Plant nectar strips and create grassland on-site.

### How the Planning System can help rare arable plants

- *Ensure the results of ecological surveys are submitted to the Local Record Centre.*
- *Ensure the designs of paths and roadways take into account the location of populations of rare arable plants.*
- *Highlight the conservation benefits of arable plant populations*

## Gen's Retiring

At the end of February, I'll be retiring from SBIS after almost 12 years as Biodiversity Officer. I've worked with many wonderful people over that time, inspiring me with their commitment to wildlife conservation and willingness to share innovative ideas. In particular, I am grateful to the Suffolk Planning and Biodiversity Group and members from Norfolk and Essex who've opened my eyes to the dedication of many planners to doing their very best for wildlife.

Thank you to everyone for their support of the work of the Planning Group, such as the annual seminar and the Planners' Update.

I wish you all well and look forward to celebrating your wildlife successes!

*Gen*



Gen at the Planning and Biodiversity seminar Nov 2019. Photo: Hamish Jackson

*Please send information about any relevant biodiversity and planning issues that should be highlighted to Martin Sanford. The update is published twice a year and goes to a wide audience in East Anglia. He looks forward to hearing from you!*

### Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group members

Sarah Barker, Ipswich Borough Council (Chair)  
Ed Boyle, Natural England  
Simone Bullion, Suffolk Wildlife Trust  
Cameron Clow, Suffolk County Council  
Clare Dawson, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils  
Jaki Fisher, West Suffolk Council  
Jack Haynes, Natural England  
Beverley McClean, Suffolk AONBs  
James Meyer, East Suffolk Council  
Jacqui Miller, RSPB  
Ben Wright, East Suffolk Council

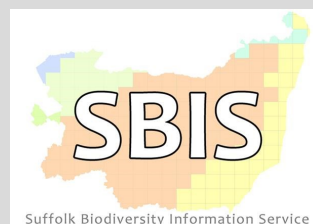
### Collaborative members

Sue Hooton, Place Services Essex County Council  
Martin Horlock, Norfolk County Council  
Charlotte Robotham, Norfolk County Council  
Emma Simmonds, Place Services, Essex County Council  
Amanda Wilkin, Braintree District Council  
David White, Norfolk County Council  
Kerys Witton, North Norfolk Council

## Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

Contact: Martin Sanford  
c/o Ipswich Museum  
High Street  
Ipswich  
Suffolk IP1 3QH

Phone: 01473 433547  
E-mail: [martin.sanford@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:martin.sanford@suffolk.gov.uk)



Visit us at [www.suffolkbis.org.uk/biodiversity/statutoryobligations/plannerspage](http://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/biodiversity/statutoryobligations/plannerspage)