

Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021 – 2025

FOREWORD

On 28 September 2020, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister of the UK, signed the Leaders Pledge for Nature, at the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity along with 64 other countries, seeking to reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030. The pledge states: “We are in a state of planetary emergency: the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and climate change”.

The Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) states “that the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked and must be addressed together. Restoring biodiversity has the potential to ... mitigate against the effects of climate change, through enhancing carbon-storing habitats”. CIEEM called for “action ... through nature-based solutions”.

The community have a great deal of interest in the natural environment of Rushcliffe, when residents are aware that sensitive wildlife sites are threatened, they are quick to show their concern. Public interest must be translated from words to action. Everyone has a responsibility to do their bit and this strategy outlines actions that statutory and voluntary organisations, businesses and individuals working together can implement.

This strategy not only sets out to try to safeguard existing known sites of interest, but also to encourage the creation of new sites, while seeking to address the Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis. The strategy also seeks to preserve the existing links between wildlife sites and to establish new links to allow the spread of wild native plants and animals.

The objective of the strategy is not only to benefit wildlife; visitors and residents will also benefit through the opportunities to observe and enjoy nature. A wildlife-rich environment has been shown to provide health benefits and economic benefits. Properly pursued, the strategy will benefit not only those who live and work in Rushcliffe now, but also future generations.

This strategy replaces previous strategies produced in 2003, 2010 and 2015. The strategy has been developed by the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNC SIG), which brings together statutory agencies and voluntary bodies, with the Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust playing leading roles, in partnership with a wide group of groups, organisations and individuals. This strategy supports the work of the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, implementing the county Biodiversity Action Plan at the borough level.

Changes in government guidance on sustainable development, biodiversity and planning, climate change and changes in legislation all emphasise the importance of avoiding harm and providing environmental gain, meeting the aims of sustainable development, and the need to provide a high-quality environment in which people can live and work.

The major organisations shown below commend this strategy. We will do our bit, please also do yours.

Rushcliffe Borough Council



Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust



Nottinghamshire
Biodiversity Action Group



Nottinghamshire County
Council



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN DOCUMENT

BG	British Gypsum
BSI	British Standards Institute
BTC	Bingham Town Council
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
BuC	Butterfly Conservation
CE	Crown Estate
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CIRIA	Construction Industry Research and Information Association
CLA	Country Land & Business Association
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England
CRT	Canal & River Trust (Previously British Waterways)
CTC	Cotgrave Town Council
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
ESO	Environmental Sustainability Officer
FC	Forestry Commission
FoG's	Friends of Groups
FoRCP	Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park
FWAC	Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committees
GBI	Green Blue Infrastructure
GCP	Grantham Canal Partnership
GNPP	Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership
GPC	Gotham Parish Council
HE	Highways England
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IWA	Inland Waterways Association
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
KPC	Keyworth Parish Council
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site (Previously: Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation)
MFDS	Manor Farm Donkey Sanctuary
MHCLG	The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's
NBAG	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group
NBGRC	Nottinghamshire Biological & Geological Records Centre
NBW	Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers
NCC	Nottinghamshire County Council
NE	Natural England
NFU	National Farmers Union
NFaW	Nottinghamshire Farming and Wildlife
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NRN	Nature Recovery Network
NRV	Notified Road Verges
NU	University of Nottingham
NWT	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

PCs	Parish/Town Councils
RBC	Rushcliffe Borough Council
RCAN	Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire
RNCSIG	Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RuBOP	Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project (A project of Notts Birders)
SBPC	Sutton Bonington Parish Council
SNG	South Notts Group (of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust)
SNRG	South Notts Ringing Group
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STW	Severn Trent Water
TCV	The Conservation Volunteers (Previously BTCV)
TVIDB	Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Vol's	Volunteers
WT	Woodland Trust
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this strategy is to protect and enhance nature conservation in Rushcliffe, help mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife and provide ready access to wildlife rich green spaces. There will be a particular emphasis on species-rich grassland, wetland, trees and woodland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough such as grizzled skipper butterflies, great crested newts and brown hare. This will be achieved through forming effective partnerships, brought together through the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG).

The strategy identifies a wide range of issues that affect Rushcliffe's wildlife. It identifies that Rushcliffe's most important wildlife is found in a scattered network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Rushcliffe is important for some species: Black poplar, barn owls, water voles and great crested newts are found in Rushcliffe but are scarce in certain areas of Nottinghamshire.

The strategy considers the importance of the wider countryside (not just nature reserves) and urban areas in supporting our wildlife. It examines the variety of habitats and species and seeks opportunities for community involvement. The role of the planning system in conserving our natural heritage is considered. There is scope for enhancing the Borough for wildlife with appropriate long-term funding, and whether it is the creation and management of a nature reserve or the construction of a garden pond, every action has a value in enhancing Rushcliffe's wildlife resource.

Over recent decades, progress has been made on developing nature conservation projects in a co-ordinated way. Land management constraints, plus the small size and isolation of the wildlife sites, are major factors limiting wildlife in Rushcliffe. The aim of this strategy is to develop an approach to nature conservation that targets specific areas, habitats and species, to gain maximum benefit.

The strategy proposes action to promote good management of sites, habitat creation and improved green infrastructure. Such projects are not only beneficial for wildlife but provide an impetus for greater community involvement in nature conservation and improved quality of life.

Ongoing monitoring of wildlife is very important and in recent years the Phase 1 ecological survey data for Rushcliffe has been updated and digitised, however we cannot effectively protect what we do not know about, therefore continuing to survey and monitor the borough's wildlife is vital.

The principal objectives for this strategy are to:

- ✿ Promote 'Landscape Scale Conservation' to create a more resilient natural environment.
- ✿ Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves.
- ✿ Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas.
- ✿ Support monitoring of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.
- ✿ Raise awareness of nature conservation issues.
- ✿ Seek to ensure positive impact (Biodiversity Net Gain) of development on wildlife and biodiversity whilst eliminating negative impact.
- ✿ Support and develop Nature Conservation in Rushcliffe.

The role of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) is to ensure that the strategy becomes more than a list of good intentions; it produces an annual report on the progress made towards improving nature conservation in Rushcliffe. Progress requires the co-operation of a variety of organisations, groups and individuals.

2) OVERVIEW OF RUSHCLIFFE'S WILDLIFE

The Borough of Rushcliffe is largely rural, with a diverse landscape. The rivers Devon, Trent, Soar and Smite form much of the Borough's boundaries, with the Leicestershire Wolds and the Vale of Belvoir running along the southern edge of the Borough. Alluvial soils, with significant sand and gravel deposits, as at Holme Pierrepont, characterise the areas of flood plain, whilst sand and gravel deposited by glaciers lie around East Leake. Much of the soils in Rushcliffe are the slightly calcareous clays of the Mercia Mudstones; but a thin band of hydraulic limestone outcrops along the escarpment from Gotham to Bunny; with heavy boulder clay in the south-west of the Borough, whilst more calcareous Lias clays typify the extreme south-east of the borough.

As a result of this varied geology and topography, overlaid by the heavy influence of mankind over millennia, Rushcliffe contains a rich diversity of wildlife. Recording in Rushcliffe has identified 843 species of flora (Pinder, 2020), however Rushcliffe lacks many of the plants adapted to the acidic and sandy soils, found further north in the county; 261 species of birds have been recorded in Rushcliffe and 33 mammals. Otters are recolonising Rushcliffe's watercourses; brown hare are found and badgers are widespread.

Agriculture has shaped much of Rushcliffe and fragments of semi-natural habitats within the farmed landscape support plants such as cowslip and orchids. There are large woodland areas on the hills above Gotham and West Leake, but most of the semi-natural woodland habitat is contained within small copses scattered across the Borough, with trees also retained in countryside hedgerows and urban streets.

Small pockets of species-rich grassland are dotted around Rushcliffe, often on post-industrial sites or the limestone hill tops between Gotham and Bunny. Road verges provide a useful supplement, particularly in the south of Rushcliffe.

There are no natural lakes in Rushcliffe, but excavation and gravel extraction has provided several large water features and the Grantham Canal corridor is, in wildlife terms, currently a series of narrow lakes and ponds, with marginal/reed fringe, unimproved grassland and hedgerow - made accessible by its towpath. Wildlife has also readily colonised mineral workings and disused railway lines, whilst a wealth of native species are also found in urban areas.

Many species have suffered due to modern lifestyles. Special efforts to conserve species, such as the Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project and The Grizzled Skipper Project, along with government funded agri-environment schemes which support farmers, are working to reduce these losses. Wider influences, such as climate change, will add to the pressure on our local wildlife. The principle of good stewardship demands that we must protect our natural heritage, for the sake of ourselves, our children and for the generations to come.

Whilst wildlife is found throughout Rushcliffe's 41,000 hectares, the network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) covering 62 hectares and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), with an area of just under 2,000 hectares, represents Rushcliffe's wildlife capital. It is notable that whilst approximately 8% of Britain is designated as SSSI, only 0.15% of Rushcliffe is similarly designated and the coverage of LWS is around 5%, making conservation effort all the more important.

A more in depth look at species found in Rushcliffe is available online at <https://rushcliffewildlife.co.uk/>

3) SUCCESSES OF THE STRATEGY 2016 - 2020

The 2016 – 2020 strategy built on the previous strategies, leading to advances in the protection and enhancement of Rushcliffe's wildlife resources. The Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) was set up as a partnership in 2003 to implement the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy and consists of a range of organisations and groups with an interest in Rushcliffe's wildlife. The Group continues to be active and will help progress the aims outlined in the updated 2021-2025 strategy

Delivering the Nature Conservation Strategy has seen:

- ✿ The total of number of sites across the borough managed predominantly as nature reserves, increase from twenty-two in 2004 to thirty-three in 2019, these cover 458.04 hectares of habitat, which is still only a very small proportion of the Boroughs total area. These include sites in the ownership of public bodies, charities and private ownership and are managed in a variety of ways including a significant number of Friends of Groups.
- ✿ Volunteer practical nature conservation work across the borough has increased to an estimated 12,591 hours in 2018 (up from 8,378 hours in 2014 and 3,138 hours in 2004). The estimated value for this work is £233,980 (based on Volunteering England guidance 2014, equating to £18.69 per hour). However, this does not include all the wildlife survey work, guided walks, children's groups, publicity & promotion and basic administration that also goes into supporting a thriving volunteer wildlife engagement community in the Borough.

Successful activities carried out over the period of the last strategy include the following:

- ✿ Cotgrave Forest Focal Area was identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping project led by Nottinghamshire BAG as an opportunity to make things Better, Bigger and More Connected. The strategy group has worked within the Cotgrave Forest Focal Area due to changes in ownership in Cotgrave Forest and the presence of the rare Purple Emperor butterfly. Ecological Research has been undertaken and training provided for land owners. We are seeking to encourage woodland friendly management and improve woodland connectivity by working with local farmers and landowners and to work with the Highways Agency on habitat improvements on the A46 corridor.
- ✿ Costock Pond, Dewberry Hill and Lily Ponds are now managed as nature reserves through the local parish councils, supported by the partnership.
- ✿ The Grizzled Skipper Project (Notts BAG) has worked to enhance habitats for one of the most northerly populations of this important butterfly. The project has successfully attracted large volunteer groups and engaged organisations like the Great Central Railway (Nottingham). Grizzled Skipper, records have increased from 148 sightings in 2015 to 198 in 2019, the project has also enhanced areas of habitats for other species.
- ✿ Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Skylarks nature reserve has been enhanced with the lake habitat being made more varied (islands, shallows, reed beds) and the introduction of grassland management. An enhanced visitor experience (including archeologically activities) is provided and is also the base site for the Rushcliffe Rangers, a young people's wildlife group.
- ✿ Rushcliffe Borough Council have promoted tree protection and enhancement, Tree Wardens have been recruited across rural Rushcliffe to promote and protect tree issues in their parishes.

Additionally, by 2019, 5329 free trees have been given to the public and 363 trees to parishes and communities, further trees are to be provided in 2020.

- ✿ A Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme run by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has been running since 2015 in the Cropwell Bishop dairy/cheese making area. Partly funded by DEFRA it aims to vaccinate the majority of the Badger population in the area, against TB, to the benefit of the badgers, the dairy farms and the local cheese industry. At least 222 badgers have been vaccinated to date, with the highest level of landowner engagement of any NWT project, plus a great deal of support from volunteers prepared to go out tracking and tracing.
- ✿ Grassland sites across the borough have been supported with scrub control, provided through the provision of a remote-controlled flail mower hire.
- ✿ 40 projects between 2015 and 2020 have been supported with RBC grants, providing £16,459.11
- ✿ Barn Owls populations are an indicator of the ecological health of the borough. Barn Owls can only survive where there are plenty of places for them to roost and plenty of wild habitats for them to hunt their prey, and with plenty of prey living in those habitats. The exact number of Barn owls, within the borough is not known, but the number of owls using artificial Barn Owl boxes, can be used as a proxy measure, this is monitored by The Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers. Barn Owl chicks ringed in Rushcliffe in 2019 totalled 126 chicks (4 in 2000 and 47 in 2015).

Most of these activities will continue into the 2021 - 25 period. The range of wildlife related projects, both big and small, has extended considerably since 2003. We need to ensure that existing activities are maintained and that new initiatives are encouraged. This must encompass both the practical nature conservation management, wildlife recording and the support of educational activities, in its broadest sense, for both adults and children. Actions of this type contribute in some way to all the Strategic Objectives.

Further details of our achievements are available in the annual reports published by RNCSIG and published online at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation

4) PRINCIPAL HABITATS FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

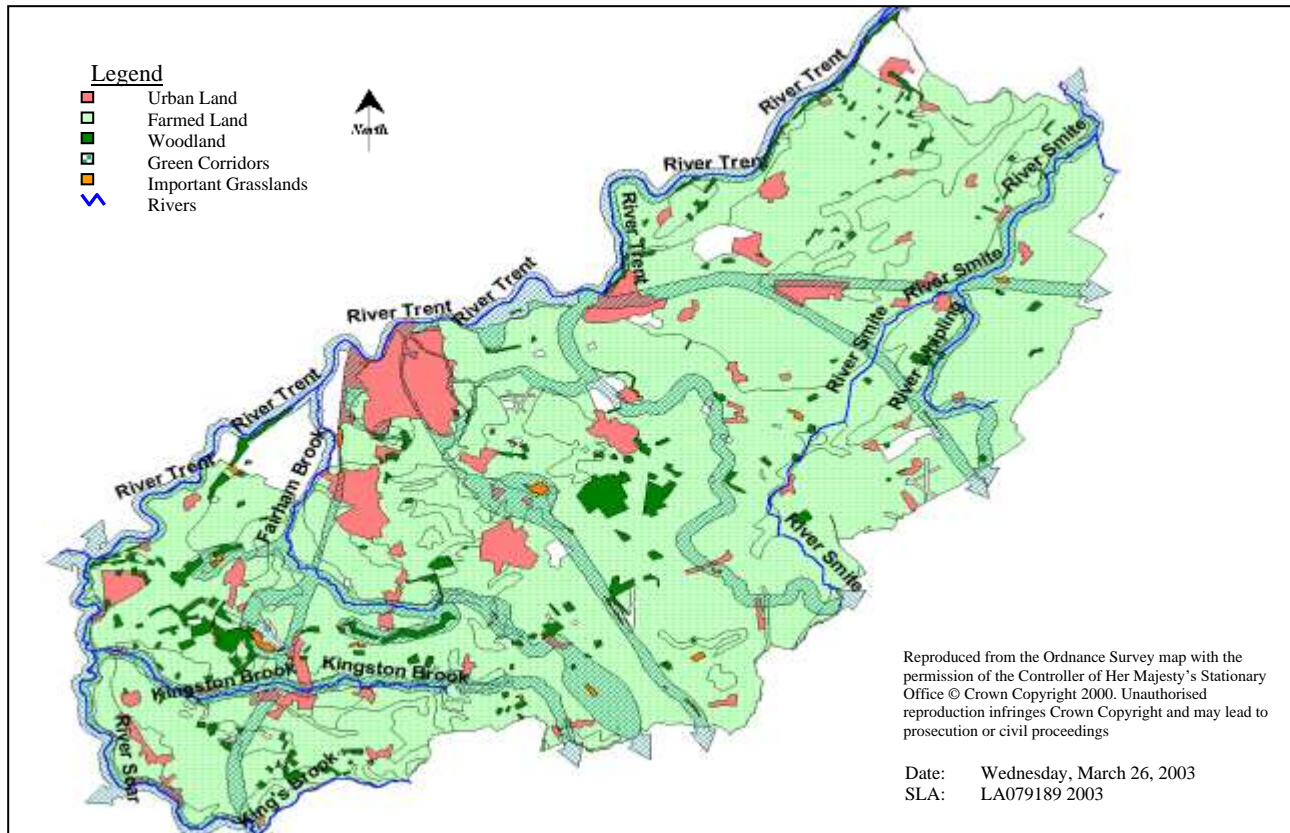


Figure 1: Main Habitats in Rushcliffe

4.1) Farmland

Farming is the principal land use in Rushcliffe, covering 31,412 ha (MHCLG, 2020) or 77% of Rushcliffe's total area. Arable farming is the main farm type, however grazing pastures are found near streams and rivers, on the gypsum ridges and in the Stilton Cheese producing area around Colston Bassett and Cropwell Bishop. Farmland can have a high wildlife value when managed sympathetically. The government funded Agri-environment schemes help farmers and land managers deliver against a wide range of environmental commitments, including water quality and biodiversity.

We will seek to: Encourage farmers and other landowners to develop sympathetic management practices and increase the take up of schemes that support this. Protect and develop farm ponds, ditches, the edges of arable farm fields and other habitat enhancements. Encourage farmers to retain traditional pasture, meadows and autumn arable stubble. Support the National Pollinator Strategy. Reduce agricultural pollution.

4.2) Woodland and trees

Woodland covers 2212 ha or 5.4% of Rushcliffe (MHCLG, 2020). We have eight (64ha) ancient woodlands (woodlands that have existed since at least 1600 AD and are irreplaceable) and one plantation on ancient woodlands (3.2ha) (Natural England, 2020) and (Pinder, 2020). Woodland has a big visual impact and supports a wide variety of wildlife. Woods require long-term management to maintain and enhance their wildlife interest.

Total tree cover in Rushcliffe (which includes Street trees, garden trees, highways trees, field and hedge trees and parkland trees in addition to woodlands) covers 11.1% of Rushcliffe or 3728ha, this



Figure 2: Bunny Wood

varies across the borough from 4.8% tree cover in the Cropwell Ward, up to 18.8% tree cover in Edwalton in 2020 (RBC, 2020).


Trees and woodland provide many ecosystem services, including supporting wildlife, visual benefit, providing benefits for recreation and mental health; counteracting climate change and absorbing carbon, alleviating flooding and trapping pollutants (having a positive impact on asthma sufferers). They prevent soil erosion and produce fuel and wood products, supporting the rural economy.

Veteran or mature and dead trees in woods, hedges, gardens, fields, and along watercourses are particularly important for wildlife.

The UK government has set a target for increasing the area of woodland in England to 12% of land by 2060 (Forestry Commission, 2020). The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network (FWAC, 2018) recommends a minimum target is set locally for urban tree canopy cover of 20% tree cover.

The Woodland Trust - Woodland Access Standard recommends that everyone should live within 500m of an accessible woodland of at least 2ha and within 4km of an accessible 20ha wood (WT, 2015).

See Appendices 3-7 for additional guidance and the policies in the Rushcliffe Local Plan.

 **We will seek to: Work forwards achieving the national targets for woodland and urban tree cover and woodland access. Promote appropriate new woodland planting and / or regeneration, particularly linked to existing woods. Ensure planning policies on trees and woodland are implemented and work toward national targets. Develop schemes to establish new trees, carbon offset and community orchards. Promote sympathetic woodland management. Use tree preservation orders for threatened valuable amenity trees. Enable Rushcliffe tree wardens to protect and enhance trees. Achieve at least 20 hectares of new woodland cover (approx. 20,000 trees) within this plan period. Encourage use of locally sourced and locally native trees. Protect veteran trees.**

4.3) Urban

Gardens collectively cover a large area and are important, supporting many birds and butterflies; larger urban wildlife sites also support lots of wildlife. Buildings support wildlife such as bats and birds (including house martins, swifts and swallows). Temporary sites and derelict industrial sites often contain rare important wildlife habitats.

To find out more about encouraging wildlife in gardens, visit the Wild About Gardens website, at www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk


 **We will seek to: Raise awareness of urban wildlife, protected species and invasive non-native species. Protect and enhance urban wildlife sites, including valuable 'brown-field' sites. Encourage recreational use where appropriate. Encourage wildlife-friendly gardening and try to enhance the potential of both new and existing buildings for use by wildlife.**




Figure 3: Green Line, West Bridgford

4.4) Species Rich Grassland

Traditional flower-rich meadows are rare, almost 99% having been lost in the UK in the last 100 years, however, some remain along with old pastures. In Rushcliffe designated Local Wildlife Sites containing grasslands, cover 466 hectares, a further 26 ha are designated for their meadow community, providing a total of 492 ha of designated sites containing important grassland (NBGRC, 2019).

Roadside verges are another refuge for grassland species especially the wide verges of the old drove roads. There are four 'Notified Road Verges' (NRV), in Rushcliffe and these receive special management. Sensitive managed graveyards are also important. Lime-rich habitats exist where there are old gypsum works and around hill tops in the Nottinghamshire Wolds. Grasslands support fauna including butterflies, common lizards, grass snakes, harvest mice and badgers.

 **We will seek to: Protect and manage remaining fragments of species-rich grassland. Encourage sympathetic management of other grassland and examine options to create/extend species rich grassland. Work proactively with land owners / managers in the borough to develop and implement wildlife sensitive management plans. Encourage the public to develop wildflower grasslands through provision of appropriate wildflower seed. Support the enhanced management and extension of the County Notified Road Verge scheme and other important roadside verges. Ensure road verges receive appropriate mowing regimes and are protected from excessive winter salting. Raise awareness of the need to use local species / sub species seed, especially in rural areas and on sensitive wildlife sites.**

4.5) Rivers, Standing Water and Marsh

Wetlands feature strongly in Rushcliffe, of the 225 Local Wildlife sites in Rushcliffe 70 contain wetland features (NBGRC, 2019); including the River Trent, River Soar, its tributaries, catchments and floodplains; however most of the rivers are classed as in poor or moderate ecological condition due to the impact of pollutants from sewage, agriculture or industrial processes; the Grantham Canal and farm ponds also provide wetland habitat, however these are at risk due to drying out and lack of use. Wetland can help store water, reducing flooding.

Invasive species such as Himalayan balsam and mink, present difficulties. Wetlands support endangered species such as otter, water voles and great crested newts. They are also important for dragonflies, grass snakes, wading birds and kingfishers.


 **We will seek to: Protect the remaining marshland fragments and encourage the development and management of wetland sites. Carefully consider and liaise over the future redevelopment of the Grantham Canal and its surroundings. 'Work with the CRT, riparian authorities, landowners and local groups to address water loss and improve the ecology along the Grantham Canal. Promote farm and garden pond creation and management. Work to stop the decline of water voles and to support the return of the otter. Control invasive, non-native species. Achieve 'good ecological status' of our rivers, streams and waterbodies. Encourage riparian owners to slow water ingress to water courses by use of Natural Flood Management techniques where appropriate.**



Figure 4: Wilwell Cutting

4.6) Hedgerows



Figure 5: Meadow Park, East Leake

Hedgerows both provide useful habitat and link wildlife sites. Many of the hedges in Rushcliffe date back to the Enclosure Acts of the 18th century and consist of predominantly hawthorn and elder. Older hedges exist along ancient lanes and parish boundaries, these are usually more diverse. Hedgerows can be at risk from removal or neglect; protection for important hedgerows is provided by the Hedgerow Regulations.



We will seek to: Promote conservation, replanting and appropriate management of hedgerows. Use the Hedgerow Regulations as appropriate

4.7) Amenity grassland

There are significant areas of parks, recreation grounds and public and school playing fields in Rushcliffe, including the 85 ha Rushcliffe Country Park, with 26.5ha of amenity grassland, but also 18.6ha of wildflower meadow. These sites may include habitats mentioned above, but often contain large areas of close mown grass, managed as a virtual monoculture, with use of fertilisers, herbicides, and mowing

regimes that deter diversity.

Appropriate management can support a range of grassland plants along with trees, shrubs and hedgerows, these may be restricted to the edges of the sites for example on playing fields, as well as invertebrates, small mammals, foxes and birds of prey. Forestry research advocates that grasslands offer a very versatile and practical means of expanding the social and economic benefits offered by greenspace, including increased biodiversity (Forestry Commission, 2020)

The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust "Blue Butterfly Scheme" promotes better management of grassland, to local authorities, private landowners and businesses to manage, restore and create wildflower meadows.



We will seek to: Ensure grasslands owned by public authorities are managed as wildflower rich grasslands wherever appropriate. Ensure all amenity land is sympathetically managed. Develop 'Blue Butterfly' sites.

5) NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (LBAP)



Biodiversity includes the variety of plants and animals around us and the places in which they live. The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 was the first international agreement to protect the planet's biodiversity. 'Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report' (JNCC, 1995) and 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' (DEFRA, 2011) set clear objectives for the conservation of biodiversity to which Local Authorities and their partners are encouraged to subscribe.

In 1998 the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, a partnership of over 50 organisations working to protect and enhance biodiversity across Nottinghamshire, launched their local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The plan identifies rare, important and threatened habitats and species in Nottinghamshire and provides action plans for their conservation. Several of these habitats and species occur in Rushcliffe. Rushcliffe Borough Council is a signatory to the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan and an active partner organisation within the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG).

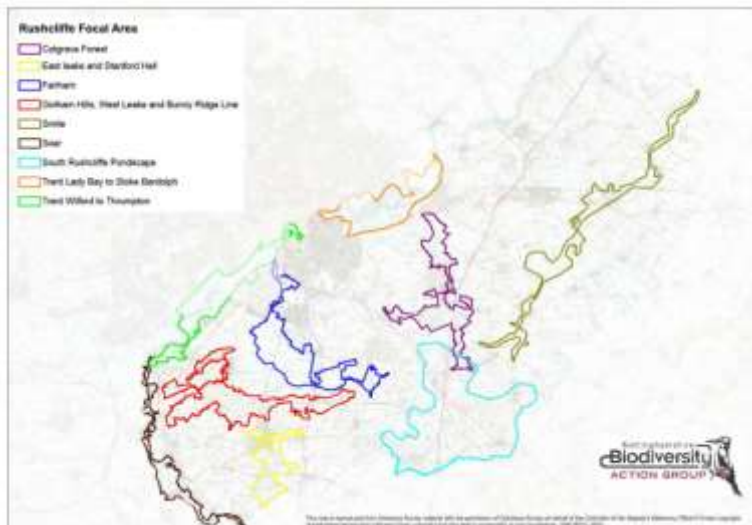


Figure 6: Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity Focal Areas, 2015

In 2013, work was undertaken to identify and map the best opportunities to enhance areas of existing biodiversity value within Rushcliffe. This was part of a county wide project being delivered by the BAG. This Biodiversity Opportunity Map (BOM), used existing biodiversity data alongside local amateur and professional ecological knowledge to identify locations where opportunities existed in Rushcliffe to enhance biodiversity. These enhancements included improvements to existing sites, creating buffers around these sites, creating links between these sites and creating new sites. Where a concentration of biodiversity opportunities existed, these were identified as Biodiversity Focal areas. This work

will guide where future work is focused, guide planning policy, assist in the development of new projects and grant applications; it was used in preparing this nature conservation strategy.

The full Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping report is available from the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group website www.nottsbag.org.uk

IMPORTANT LBAP SPECIES FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

Atlantic Salmon	Green Hairstreak
Autumn Crocus	Grass Snake
Barn Owl	Great Crested Newt
Bats	Harvest Mouse
Black Poplar	Hedgehog
Corn Bunting	Otter
Deptford Pink	Slow Worm
Dingy & Grizzled Skippers	Water Vole

NB. This list includes many LBAP species found in Rushcliffe for which there is a Species Action Plan. It is not a comprehensive list of UK BAP or LBAP species found in the borough.

LBAP HABITATS FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

LBAP habitat	Example Sites
Arable field margins	Many sites
Canals	Grantham Canal
Ditches	Many sites
Eutrophic & mesotrophic standing waters (including ponds)	Wilford Claypits, Skylarks Nature Reserve, Kinoulton Marsh, Gresham Marsh, Barnstone Pits, Holme Pierrepont
Hedgerows	Many Sites
Lowland calcareous grassland	Gotham Hills Pastures
Lowland fen	Kinoulton Marsh
Lowland neutral grassland	Wilwell Cutting, Wilford Claypits, Gresham Marsh, Keyworth Meadow, Normanton Pastures, Bingham Linear Walk
Lowland wet grassland	Wilwell Cutting
Marsh and Swamp	Gresham Marsh, Kinoulton Marsh
Mixed ash-dominated woodland	Bunny Wood, Sharphill Wood, Meadow Covert, Wilford Hill Wood, West Leake Hills, Cotgrave Wood
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land	Cotgrave Colliery
Reedbed	Skylarks Nature Reserve
Rivers & streams	Trent, Soar, Smite, Devon, Fairham Brook, Kingston Brook
Traditional orchards	Many sites
Urban habitats	many parks and open spaces
Wet woodland	Skylarks Nature Reserve
Wood pasture and parkland	Flintham Hall, Stanford Hall

For more details of Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets visit the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group website at www.nottsbag.org.uk.

For more details on DEFRA's biodiversity work visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services

We will seek to: Identify and promote projects that contribute to the Nottinghamshire LBAP and increase awareness of the LBAP in the Borough. Monitor LBAP related works and report back to the Biodiversity Action Group. Promote LBAP species found in Rushcliffe and the habitats in which they live. Ensure that due weight is given to the importance of LBAP species and habitats through the development control system. Encourage the use of local provenance planting. Continue to audit the Borough's natural capital and look to develop the Biodiversity Opportunity Map and its opportunities and focal areas.

6) DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES AND NATURE RESERVES

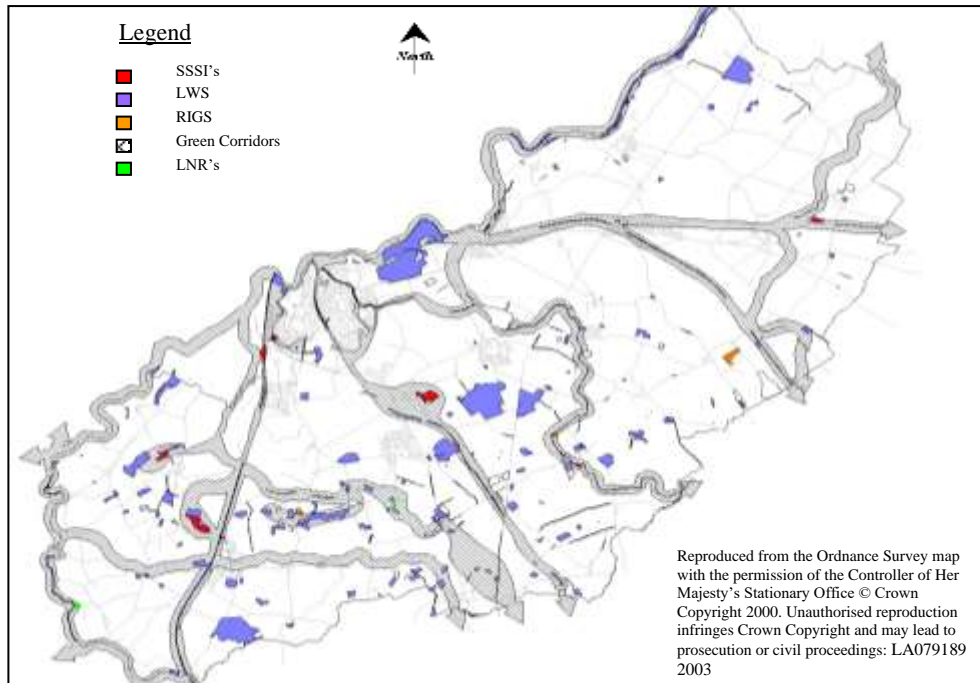


Figure 7: Protected sites in Rushcliffe

In Rushcliffe (in 2020) there are 8 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), 225 countywide important Local Wildlife Sites (LWS – previously called SINCs), mostly privately owned and eight locally designated Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

LWS are usually not designated as nature reserves.

These are important sites that could not easily be restored once lost.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 imposes a duty

for public authorities to show regard for conserving biodiversity in all their actions including the conservation and enhancement of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). National Planning Policy Framework (2019) - Part 15 – 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' makes specific reference to the need to safeguard 'locally designated sites', which includes Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) In Rushcliffe (Oct 2019)		
Total	225 sites	1903 ha
Type of Habitat (sites may contain more than one habitat)	Number of Sites in which the habitat is found	
Grassland	98	
Woodland	37	
Ponds & Lakes	41	
Streams, Rivers, Canals & ditches	18	
Ex Industrial, including quarries and railways	17	
Fen & Marshland	7	
Hedgerow	2	
Ruderal	1	

SSSI's in Rushcliffe
Barnstone Railway Cutting - geology
Gotham Hill Pastures - grassland
Kinoulton Marsh – marsh
Normanton Pastures - grassland
Orston Plaster Pits - grassland
Rushcliffe Golf Course - grassland
Wilford Claypits - marsh / grassland
Wilwell Cutting – marsh / grassland

Designated Local Nature Reserves	Bingham Linear Park LNR
	Keyworth Meadow LNR
	Meadow Covert LNR
	Rushcliffe Country Park LNR
	Sharphill Wood LNR
	Sutton Bonnington Spinney & Meadows LNR
	The Hook LNR
	Wilwell Cutting LNR

All of these sites are important and need protecting. Targeting the areas with the greatest numbers of important sites can help to protect them, ensuring their long-term survival and development.

There are around 40 sites (in 2020) in Rushcliffe that are being managed as nature reserves with wildlife as a primary use. These sites cover an area of over 450 hectares, the majority, but not all are designated as LWS or SSSIs and around two thirds have some form of community involvement, whether this is wardening, reserve work parties or Friends of Groups. Ownership and management are very varied – some are privately owned; others are owned by companies, Parish Councils, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Rushcliffe Borough Council - in some case sites are owned by one organisation and managed by another.

Nature reserves should be actively managed to preserve and where possible improve their wildlife value. Fundamental to good management is the existence of an up to date management plan, to guide the work on the site and resolve contradictions between various requirements. Most of these sites have recent management plans. However, a management plan is only as good as the resources available to make it happen and such resources are often thinly stretched. Some of these resources are provided by professional staff (NWT, RBC), but much of the work (and site management) is carried out by volunteers – although they are supported by help and advice from professional staff.

Because many reserves are set up to be reasonably accessible, they are also particularly useful in giving people formal (guided walks, or species-specific studies) and informal access to wildlife. A leaflet showing many publicly accessible nature reserves can be downloaded from www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/greenspaces

Finance can also be an issue; obtaining grant funding can be difficult and time consuming. Rushcliffe Borough Council provides grants to provide small amounts of money, simply.

Comparing the area managed as nature reserves with the total coverage of LWS (1,900 hectares) or of Rushcliffe (41,000 hectares), shows that management of nature reserves, whilst important, cannot be regarded in isolation – wider management of sites and networks linking reserves, LWS and SSSIs are essential.

Some sites are publicly owned, and some are privately owned, nature conservation may be a secondary purpose or in some cases of little interest to the owners.

Nature Recovery Network (NRN)

The concept of Nature Recovery Networks advocates making more space for nature in both our rural and urban environments, with nature being accessible wherever people live. Whilst Nature Reserves,

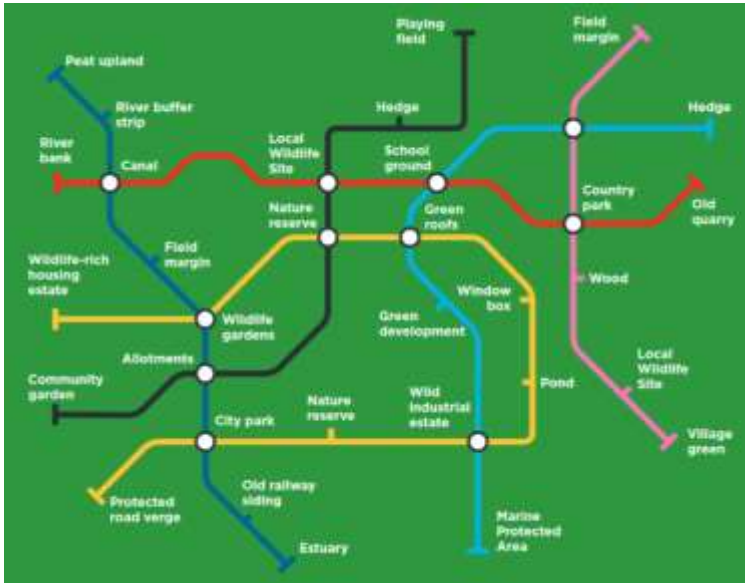


Figure 8: Components of a Nature Recovery Network (The Wildlife Trusts, 2018)

create NRN`s across England. This “will be a national network of wildlife-rich places” connected “across our towns, cities and countryside” (DEFRA, 2020).

The NRN is a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan and part of the Environment Bill (see Appendix 9), which proposes that NRN Plans must be developed for every area of England.

We will seek to: Ensure protected sites and reserves are well managed; with management agreements and plans, advice and grants. Identify and designate new sites. Extend existing sites to provide buffer zones and reduce isolation. Monitor sites to prevent degradation, using regulations where necessary. Support the development of Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Network Plans. Review the green corridor network. Ensure sufficient resources are available (both financial and volunteer) to support implementation of plans. Seek to build the capacity of the nature conservation sector in Rushcliffe (both professional and voluntary). Develop large (landscape scale) sites and reserves in Rushcliffe.

Local Wildlife Sites and Wildlife Corridors are central to the NRN philosophy, the linkages (hedgerows, road verges and stepping stone habitats) allowing wildlife to move and filter into urban areas are crucial. Much of this has been implicit in the thinking behind the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy for the last 20 years. But the scale envisaged for NRN`s are ambitious and delivery will be a key issue.

The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust report ‘Wilder Nottinghamshire’ (NWT, 2019) demonstrates this approach at a county level and Fig 7 above demonstrates the basic building blocks for the NRN in Rushcliffe.

Defra and Natural England are bringing together partners, legislation and funding, to

7) RUSHCLIFFE'S LANDSCAPES

Landscape Ecology

Landscape affects species viability, of particular concern is the ability of species to move through the landscape and the size of wildlife sites and habitat within the particular landscape.

Landscape ecology suggests the greatest value for wildlife can be gained by developing further similar habitats to those already present. Woodland planting is best concentrated into areas of existing woodland; in Rushcliffe, this would be the Nottinghamshire Wolds and in the Cotgrave area. In the South Nottinghamshire Farmland and the Vale of Belvoir it would be more important to improve farmland habitats by for example developing wildflower rich grasslands, native farm hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field corner plantations, field margins, beetle banks, overwinter stubble, lapwing lawns, barn owl boxes and farm ponds.

Areas that allow wildlife to move through the Borough are known as green corridors (shown in Figure 6). Green corridor maps help to focus efforts to reduce fragmentation (see also Green Infrastructure).

We will seek to: Update and maintain the Green Corridor map, clearly defining important corridors. Protect existing green corridors. Seek appropriate farmland enhancement. Pursue opportunities to enhance the corridor network and encourage land managers to improve connections between habitat sites. Identify clusters of wildlife sites and seek to improve connection and reduce fragmentation and isolation of sites.

Mature Landscapes

Areas with landscape features that have been long established tend to be better for wildlife. Nottinghamshire County Council's Mature Landscape Survey, reviewed in 1997, identifies landscapes considered to be amongst the most precious and relatively unchanged since the mid-19th century.

We will seek to: Protect mature landscape areas as far as possible from adverse development.

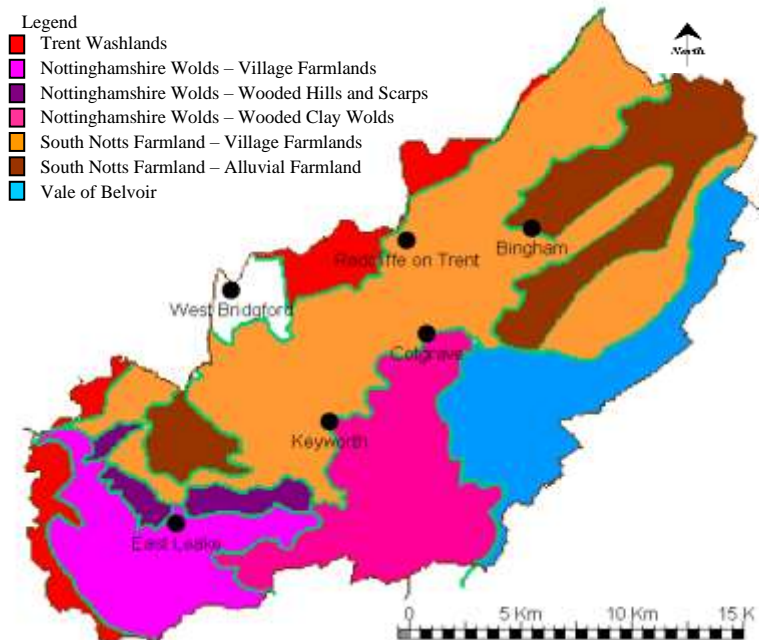


Figure 8: Simplified Regional Character of Rushcliffe's, after Notts CC, 2009

Landscape Character

Nottinghamshire County Council produced landscape character assessments of Nottinghamshire in 1997 and updated them in 2009. These appraisals can be used to identify the key parts of our countryside and to identify the priority for nature conservation work in each area. The Borough has been divided into character areas based on its geology, topography and land use. For each area we can identify key actions.

Wildlife including tree species varies accordingly and use of the most appropriate species for planting schemes in the area should be used wherever possible. Suggested tree planting species are provided in Appendix 3.

See <http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/landimprovements/landscapecharacter.htm> for more details about the landscape character assessment.

Trent Washlands

These are the valleys formed by the River Trent and River Soar, it is an area of pebbles overlain with soils deposited by the river (alluvium). These are rich soils and have supported farming for a long time. Hedgerows and riverside willow pollards are important features. Some pasture and meadows have survived, but arable farming has replaced the grasslands in many places. Woodlands are not common except around Kingston Hall and on the steep outcrops or bluffs on the edge of the Trent.

We will seek to: Encourage the protection and restoration of mixed hedgerows and field margins, hedgerow and riparian habitats and trees including willow pollards. Protect pastures and meadows where they survive. Consider recreating grassland (especially wet pasture) and marsh. Protect the parkland landscape around Kingston Hall. Maintain and develop woodlands on steep bluffs and create small wet woodlands within the river valleys.

Nottinghamshire Wolds

– Village Farmlands

This is an area of good farmland, with frequent large villages. Gypsum extraction has heavily influenced this area. There are low amounts of woodland except around Stanford Hall. Strong field systems exist with improved grassland and arable farming. Kingston Brook is an important feature. Country lanes with good verges and hedgerows are noteworthy.

We will seek to: Encourage field hedgerows and trees. Develop grasslands on gypsum. Protect woodland and veteran trees in the parkland landscape at Stanford Hall. Encourage riparian habitats and trees (especially willow pollards) and shrubs along with grassland along the Kingston Brook corridor and discourage arable farming to the brook edge. Install natural flood defences and livestock control measures on stream headlands.

– Wooded Hills and Farms

Woodlands, pastures and rough grass define this area. Calcareous grassland is important in areas of gypsum. Ancient Woodlands are found to the south and west of Gotham and Bunny. Hedgerows are important around fields.

We will seek to: Maintain alternating pattern of pasture and woodland. Protect and develop pasture and rough grassland. Maintain and extend ancient woodlands, Create new native woodlands on hilltops and escarpments.

– Wooded Clay Wolds

Traditionally an area of enclosed grassland with hedgerows and trees, now often converted to arable farmland. Lanes are prominent features. Small broadleaved woodlands are common and large conifer plantations exist at Cotgrave Forest and Borders Wood. Ridge and furrow grasslands are found around Willoughby on the Wolds and Wysall.

We will seek to: Increase broadleaved woodland cover especially on hilltops using field patterns as a guide. Look to diversify the woodland around Cotgrave. Encourage hedgerow management. Protect remaining grasslands especially ridge and furrow.

South Nottinghamshire Farmland

– Alluvial Farmland

This is the area near the rivers Smite and Devon and the area of Ruddington Moor (once an extensive area of grass moorland). This is mainly an arable area where the field structure has largely broken down, forming large expanses perhaps reminiscent of the pre-enclosure moorlands. Trees are contained in occasional copse and riparian corridors. The River Smite has been partly canalised.

We will seek to: Seek improvements to the River Smite (re-profiling and encouraging aquatic and emergent vegetation). Improve riparian structure along the rivers Smite and Devon. Consider enlarging copse and repairing remaining hedgerows. Consider the creation of wet grassland especially within Ruddington Moor. Encourage the creation of beetle banks, game cover strips, headlands and maintenance of winter stubble on arable farmland. Encourage pond creation and management to help support wetland species. Install natural flood defences and livestock control measures on stream headlands.

– Village Farmland

A strong, largely arable, agricultural landscape dominated by hedgerows. The Grantham Canal and disused railways in this area form important habitats. Parklands are found at Whatton Manor, Flintham, Tollerton, Bunny and Ruddington.

We will seek to: Protect and develop hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Encourage the creation of beetle banks, game cover strips, headlands and winter stubble on arable farmland. Encourage ponds creation and management. Protect and enhance parkland habitats. Protect and enhance the Grantham Canal and disused railway habitats.

Vale of Belvoir

An area of mixed farming, hedgerows and lanes. The Hickling area is rich in unimproved pasture, ridge and furrow and species-rich hedgerows with trees. Wooded parkland is found at Colston Bassett and Staunton. The Rivers Smite and Whipling have important riverside habitats with good trees.

We will seek to: Promote pasture and hay meadows especially along the river edges, grass headlands, hedgerows, hedgerow trees, riparian buffer strips and trees. Encourage wood planting on escarpments. Seek improvements to the River Smite (re-profiling and encouraging aquatic and emergent vegetation). Install natural flood defences and livestock control measures on stream headlands. Protect and enhance parkland habitats.

8) GREEN-BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Green-Blue Infrastructure (GBI) is used to describe the land around us which has not been built on or cultivated. This may be recreational, landscape and ecological in nature, but in the same way as roads and electricity wires are called infrastructure because they benefit people, these areas can also provide a range of benefits. This includes aquatic or blue infrastructure features.

Natural England defines Green Infrastructure as “a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high-quality green spaces and other environmental features”. It identifies key benefits as “able to deliver multiple environmental functions, and to play a key part in adapting to and mitigating climate change” and “support healthier lifestyles by providing green routes for walking and cycling, and green spaces for exercise and play” (Natural England, 2009).

Green and Blue Infrastructure covers a wide variety of open spaces, including water and wetland environments. There is a clear overlap between GBI and ecological networks which seek to prevent the ecological isolation of sites through the creation of wildlife corridors and stepping stones. These provide habitats for species and enable their migration.

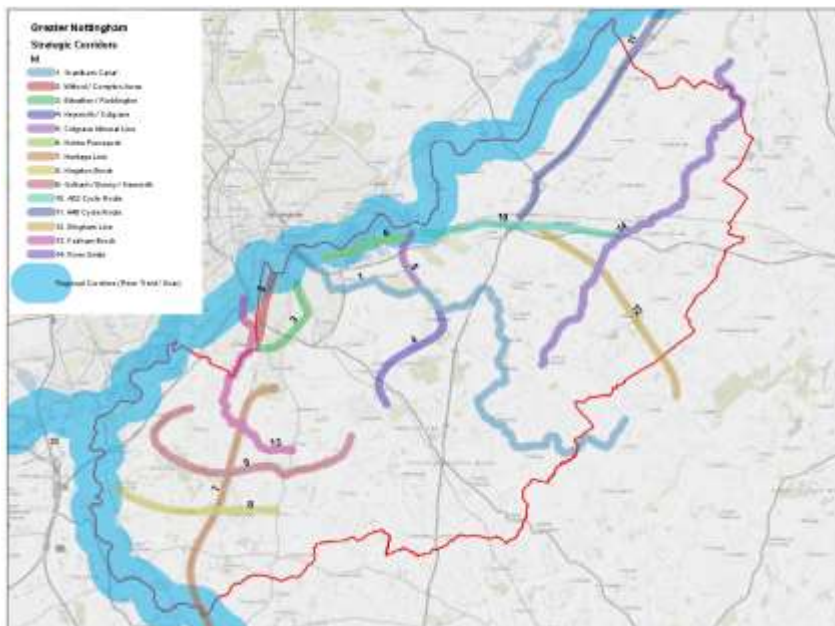


Figure 9 - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure in Rushcliffe

Green-Blue infrastructure can range from small green spaces, such as domestic gardens and street tree avenues, to playing pitches and recreation grounds, river corridors, canals and lakes, cycle routes, local nature reserves and woodlands.

Multi-functionality is a key element of Green and Blue Infrastructure... providing accessible sport and recreational opportunities, wildlife habitats and an ecological corridor, reduces local temperatures, and offers non-motorised transport opportunities... provide flood water storage during periods of heavy rainfall, reducing risks of flooding. (GNPP, 2020)

By looking at the Green-Blue Infrastructure we already have, it is possible to identify what needs to be maintained and enhanced, as well as identify where there are gaps and opportunities to improve our GBI. A coherent GBI strategy would help reduce biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation. The pressure for new housing developments in Rushcliffe highlights the importance of planning our GBI.

See <http://www.gnplan.org.uk/evidence-base/> for the Greater Nottingham Green Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2020

We will seek to: Maintain an inventory of our Green-Blue Infrastructure. Implement a strategy on managing and enhancing this resource and develop projects to improve the Green-Blue Infrastructure of Rushcliffe. Work with the planning authorities and developers to avoid development that destroys or damages GI and to ensure wildlife friendly Green-Blue Infrastructure is included in all new strategies and developments.

9) CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate of our world is changing due to man's activities and this will impact on both our society and the natural world. For example, in the UK oak trees are opening their leaves up to a fortnight earlier than 50 years ago, species that are dependent on oak trees which cannot adapt to this change will struggle to survive. Similarly, it has been shown that "Britain's climate zones are moving northwards by up to five kilometres a year due to climate heating" ... "according to the IPCC, carnivorous mammals can disperse at 6km/year (median estimate), while split-hoofed mammals (like deer) can shift their ranges at 9 km/year. Rodents are less mobile, however, generally shifting at less than 1km/year... butterflies in North America and the UK have shifted at 2-4 km per year" (Rewilding Britain, 2020) .

We all have a responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment, but we must also help our wildlife to adapt to the changing climate. This means there needs to be a range of good quality and varied habitats for species to live in, supported by good linkages to allow movement where required – a coherent GI strategy. "Enhancing the scale, quality and connectedness of our native habitats would enable more species and communities to adapt and adjust their ranges as climate zones shift, by the creation of core rewilding areas across at least 5% of Britain and the establishment of 'natural dispersal corridors' across at least 25% of Britain. This could save... Britain's species from climate-driven habitat loss, species decline or even extinction (Rewilding Britain, 2020)".

We must also seek to minimise the stresses on wildlife which when added to climate change could lead at the very least to local extinctions or worse. But we must also be prepared for new species to become part of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.

Mitigation of climate change needs to take place in the built environment in existing and new developments to achieve net zero emissions. Climate change mitigation in buildings includes very high standards of insulation, micro and community renewable energy and infrastructure to encourage walking, cycling and the use of low carbon public transport.

It is likely however that carbon emissions will still be produced, ecosystems can absorb carbon, known as carbon sinks, allowing emissions to reach net zero. Carbon sinks include trees and woodlands, hedgerows, long term diverse grasslands and some wetlands, rewilding is one method for increasing these habitats.

Rewilding

"**Rewilding** is the large-scale restoration of ecosystems to a point where nature can take care of itself. It seeks to reinstate natural processes and, where appropriate, missing species – allowing them to shape the landscape and the habitats within... rewilding can provide a cost-effective solution for the mitigation of climate heating with its ability to draw down millions of tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere"

CIEEM states rewilding is part of a wider 'conservation toolkit' that can be used alongside traditional management techniques (CIEEM, 2020). Opportunities are limited in Rushcliffe due to the intensity of land use, but agricultural land and riversides may provide possibilities.

We will seek to: maintain as diverse an environment as we can to support the widest opportunities for our biodiversity to survive. Find opportunities to create rewilding areas. Increase linkages between habitats to allow movement of species. Be prepared to adapt our efforts as the climate changes. Support efforts to mitigate climate change, by all partners, including the use of wildlife to act as carbon 'sinks', for example by tree planting and rewilding. Support the aim to meet Net Zero emissions before 2050 as a borough.

10) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Public bodies and various community organisations carry out valuable nature conservation work in the Borough, but individuals (especially landowners) also carry out large scale work which benefits wildlife in the wider countryside. It is vital to include farmers in nature conservation as they manage most of the land and there are many examples of good stewardship in Rushcliffe.

Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre (NBGRC) maintain records of survey work and undertakes much survey work. The NBGRC is responsible for holding, interpreting and updating all data associated with the LWS system. Charities like Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation are also active in the area, along with Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group.

Access to nature conservation sites and the wider countryside develops awareness of our natural heritage, while also providing other ecosystem service benefits, appropriate access should be encouraged and managed, without putting too much pressure on these sites. Natural England advocates 'Access to Natural Greenspace Standards' (ANGSt) (Natural England, 2003) so that that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace.

Education, both formally (where taught) and informally (for example using information panels on nature reserves, walks and talks), helps to raise awareness of nature conservation issues. It is important to educate as widely as possible, addressing both adults and young people and by publicising conservation issues and activities locally.

Community involvement in nature is important; nature conservation work improves our natural heritage, our social wellbeing, health and economy. Public involvement is limited by the availability of organisers (voluntary and professional) and funding. Although there is already much community involvement in Rushcliffe, there is potential for engaging with new individuals and groups. Examples of such engagement include Friends of Groups, South Notts Local Group, Forest Schools, Rushcliffe Wildlife WATCH and Rushcliffe Rangers.

Friends of Groups are valuable community groups that care for particular sites and carry out a large range of activities, from practical habitat management, survey and monitoring, educational activities, fundraising, through to leading guided walks and encouraging new members of the community to become involved with activities on these sites. In addition, groups such as Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project (part of Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers) and the South Notts Ringing Group carry out more specialized activities.

The widest possible variety of media and communications methods, including social media platforms helps to reach as many residents as possible. Appendix 8 provides the communications plan for the strategy group.

The nature strategy has contributed to a steady growth of local community action by committed groups and individuals over the years and we must continue to support existing local action, as well as the development of additional initiatives, both big and small. We will also continue promoting volunteer involvement in county based and national projects that will benefit our local wildlife. Actions in this area particularly contribute to Strategic Objectives 2, 4, 5.

We will seek to: Support community involvement in nature conservation in Rushcliffe, through voluntary conservation work, wildlife surveying and awareness raising, this requires funding to be sought; training and interpretative material to be provided and activities to attract the public. Support existing 'friends of groups' and seek to develop new groups. Provide access to wildlife sites and support initiatives that care for the environment. Implement Natural England's ANGSt standards. Take care that activity is carried out on sites across the whole Borough, not just popular areas.

11) PLANNING POLICIES AND THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018 and 19 February 2019 (MHCLG, 2019a). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. A principle set out in the NPPF is that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment" which includes "minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures". (MHCLG, 2019b)

There is major pressure at a national and regional level for significant housing development to occur, In order to meet the housing needs of Nottingham and outlying settlements, it is likely that pressure for significant development within Rushcliffe will continue including 13,150 homes to be sited across Rushcliffe by 2028, thus Rushcliffe's wildlife sites in both urban and rural areas will come under pressure from development in the coming years. A degree of protection is provided by national and local planning policies. National regulations also require additional environmental assessments for those developments likely to have a significant environmental impact. The local planning policy documents created by the local planning authority set out where and how development will be allowed, they also identify areas where certain developments are restricted, legally protected species and important trees, woodlands and hedgerows. These documents also include policies relating to planting schemes that emphasise appropriate local species. In accordance with national policy, the Local Plan also identifies important ecological networks (based on Biodiversity Opportunity Maps). Within these areas developments must ensure the network of habitats is maintained and enhanced.

The Rushcliffe Local Plan (<https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planningpolicy/localplan/>) forms the statutory development plan for the Borough, Part 1 covers the core strategy (RBC, 2014). and Part 2 - Land and Planning Policies (LAPP), including details of identified sites. The Part 2 document also states, "Policies in this Local Plan Part 2 regarding nature conservation should be read alongside ... Rushcliffe's Nature Conservation Strategy". (RBC, 2019)

The concept of **Biodiversity NET Gain** is a key part of both NPPF and Rushcliffe Local Plan policy documents, which commit to "Protecting and improving natural Assets" including ensuring an increase in biodiversity, enhancing and developing the network of green spaces, protecting ancient and veteran trees and replacing any lost trees". The documents set out where and how development will be allowed, identify protected areas, legally protected species and important trees, woodlands and hedgerows. These documents also include policies relating to planting schemes that emphasise appropriate local species. New developments are expected to contribute to green infrastructure networks and open space provision.

It is important to ensure that where development is permitted, in addition to Biodiversity Net Gain, valuable sites (SSSI, LWS and LNR) and other hard to replace sites, habitats (including ancient woodland and traditional meadows) and species are protected from direct development and the a 'mitigation hierarchy' is followed, that seeks to avoid ecological harm, and where necessary mitigates or compensates for losses (Section 175, NPPF).

Biodiversity Net Gain is development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Biodiversity net gain complements and works with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy set out in NPPF paragraph 175. It does not override the protection for designated sites, protected or priority species and irreplaceable or priority habitats set out in the NPPF. Local planning authorities need to ensure that habitat improvement will be a genuine additional benefit and go further than measures already required to implement a compensation strategy.

CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA have jointly published guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain for UK construction and developments, which should be followed (online at <https://cieem.net/biodiversity-net-gain-guidance-published/>), additionally the BSI is developing a new British Standard - BS 8683 A process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain (BSI, 2020), which developers should be encouraged to comply with.

In addition to habitat gains, it is expected that developments should usually include built enhancements including artificial bird nests (including for swifts and swallows and house sparrows and where appropriate barn owls) and bat roosts; these should be permanent or long-life enhancements, either built into the fabric of the development or of a woodcrete type fabric. Hedgehog gates should be included in fences and hibernacula created where appropriate for reptiles and amphibians. Insect boxes / hotels are also recommended. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment> paragraph 23 and section T2.10 of the Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development (online at <https://cieem.net/biodiversity-net-gain-guidance-published/>)

Local Sites should be buffered from developments Green Infrastructure should be included in developments reducing the threat of isolation and bringing wildlife into new developments. Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes (SUDs) where required should be designed to provide ecological benefit.

Care is required in determining the importance of habitats. Brownfield sites can in some cases be valuable wildlife habitats (i.e. disused railways and pitheads). Green field sites may be intensively managed arable and pasture with limited current wildlife value, however they may also have an important visual landscape role and considerable potential for wildlife habitat creation.

The government attaches great importance to **Green Belts**. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (MHCLG, 2019c). A large part of the Borough (40%) falls within the defined Nottingham-Derby Green Belt that encircles Greater Nottingham. Greenbelt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and make as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land, except where this would cause harm to designated sites of importance for biodiversity. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries and removal of further land from the greenbelt, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development, including explicit consideration of the factors outlined in paragraph 137.

Local communities are encouraged to consider producing a **Neighbourhood Plan** for villages that don't yet have one. Once finalised these are material planning considerations and allow local insights into the biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and local, ecologically valuable sites, they can also highlight appropriate sites for development. National guidance (MHCLG, 2020) sets out what Neighbourhood Planning is and what it can do. Rushcliffe Borough Council publishes Neighbourhood Plans on its website at <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planningpolicy/neighbourhoodplanning/>

Developers should be encouraged to meet the highest standards of development for nature conservation, for example British Standard 42020, *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development* (BSI, 2013) or the Building with Nature standards and accreditation scheme. (Building with Nature, 2020).

Developers should always provide an ecological construction method statement incorporating reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs)

The use of external lighting (during construction and post construction) should be appropriate to avoid adverse impacts on bat populations, see <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2018/09/new-guidance-on-bats-and-lighting> for advice and a wildlife sensitive lighting scheme should be developed and implemented.

It is recommended that developers check their sites using the free online tool (<https://www.biodiversityinplanning.org/wildlife-assessment-check/>) for **householders** and **small to medium-scale developers** to check whether they will need expert ecological advice *before* submitting a planning application, the report produced by this tool can be used to support the planning application. (This tool is *not* intended for large development projects where formal Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are required according to EIA regulations).

See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment> for national guidance on planning and environmental issues.

Where levels of pollution (including light and noise pollution) may be detrimental to wildlife, sources should be traced and if possible reduced to acceptable levels. Various organisations have specific roles in controlling levels of environmental pollution, principally the Environment Agency and Rushcliffe Borough Council.

We will seek to: Ensure wildlife issues in planning policies are updated as required and implemented, with appropriate guidance and supplementary documents. Support the use of biodiversity opportunity maps to guide planning policies to improve biodiversity in the borough. Ensure planning approvals meet wildlife protection regulations and policies. Follow good practice on planning and biodiversity, particularly following the 'mitigation hierarchy' where compensation for habitat loss should be a last resort. Include measurable Biodiversity Net Gain in all new developments. Minimise the need to use important nature conservation sites for development. Keep nature conservation on the agenda at county, regional, national and international levels. Work with Parish and Town Councils to promote the inclusion of wildlife friendly policies with Neighbourhood Plans and support their implementation. Encourage developers to use the highest nature conservation standards. Enforce pollution regulations and support policies to reduce environmental pollution, including seeking to achieve "good ecological status" for waterbodies. Encourage individuals and companies to adopt safe and sustainable working practices to avoid harm to wildlife.

12) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC AIM: To protect and enhance nature conservation in Rushcliffe, help mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife and provide ready access to wildlife rich green spaces. There will be a particular emphasis on species-rich grassland, wetland and woodland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough such as grizzled skipper butterflies, great crested newts and brown hare. This will be achieved through forming effective partnerships, brought together through the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG).

OBJECTIVES:

1) Promote Landscape Scale Conservation to create a more resilient natural environment, by:

a.	Continue using the Focal Areas identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Matching Mapping exercise to target action for landscape scale nature conservation projects. (Partners: RNCSIG, NWT, RBC)
b.	Seeking opportunities for delivery of aspirational large-scale projects, with particular emphasis on improving connectivity across the landscape or catchments. (Partners: RNCSIG, NWT, RBC, PCs)
c.	Provide advice and support to organisations whose land holdings or interests have a significant role in nature conservation in Rushcliffe. These might be private landowners, businesses, parish councils, Friends groups and other organisations. (Partners: NWT, RNCSIG, RBC, NCC, CRT, NBAG, TVIDB)
d.	Support the development of the holistic Nature Recovery Network concept and plans for Rushcliffe and the county in order to make our wildlife sites better, bigger and more connected. Partners: NWT, NCC, RBC, RNCSIG, Friends Groups)

2) Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves, by:

a.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have a current Management Plan. (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, Friends Groups)
b.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have sufficient resources available to deliver the management plan and assist with provision of resources wherever possible. (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, Friends Groups)
c.	Encouraging local community involvement in the management of nature reserves. (Partners: NWT, RBC, Friends Groups, PCs, TCV, SNG)

3) Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas, by:

a.	The sympathetic protection and management of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) through provision of advice and/or signposting to useful resources. (Partners: NWT, NFaW, NFU, DEFRA, NBW, CLA, NE)
b.	Encouraging farmers to develop sympathetic management practices and increase the take up of agri-environment schemes through provision of advice or signposting to useful resources. (Partners: NFaW, NWT, NFU, RuBOP/NBW, CLA, NE)
c.	Encouraging wildlife friendly management of buildings, corporate landscaping, public open space, school grounds and private gardens by provision of advice or signposting. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, CRT, EA)
d.	Supporting programmes to benefit national priority species and habitats and Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species and habitats (especially neutral and calcareous grasslands, native woodlands and wetlands) as appropriate. (Partners: NWT, NBW, RBC, EA, NBAG, TVIDB)
e.	Promoting the management of the existing Notified Road Verges and work with partners to maintain existing habitat and create additional habitats alongside our transport corridors. (Partners: NCC, Via East Mids, Highways England, Network Rail, RBC, NWT, CRT, TRT)
f.	Protect enhance and expand appropriate tree and woodland cover in Rushcliffe working towards achieving the national targets for woodland and urban tree cover and woodland access. (Partners: RBC, NWT, Tree Wardens, PCs, Friends Groups, EA and Landowners)
g.	Supporting projects that benefit our freshwater environment (rivers, ditches, ponds, lakes, canals and reservoirs), tackling water quality issues and benefiting aquatic habitats and species. This will involve

working on a catchment level, engaging with relevant catchment partnerships (Partners: RBC, EA, CRT, GCS, STW, NCC, NWT, TRT, PCs, Friends Groups and Landowners)

4) Support monitoring of Rushcliffe's biodiversity, by:

a.	Liaising with and working in closer partnership with NBGRC in relation to species monitoring and the Local Wildlife Site network. (Partners: NWT, RBC, NCC, NBGRC, Friends groups)
b.	Promoting participation in species survey programmes, as well as encouraging local initiatives to record wildlife, ensuring that records are submitted to the relevant recorders or groups. (Partners: NBGRC, NWT, RBC, specialist wildlife groups)
c.	Supporting the work of the Notts Biodiversity Action Group by promoting BAG activities and reporting against LBAP targets. (Partners: NWT, RBC, SNG, NCC, NBAG)

5) Raise awareness of nature conservation issues by:

a.	Publicising the work of partners and local nature conservation groups, as well as wildlife related issues through news releases and social media posts. (Partners: NWT, RBC, RCC, NBW, NCC, TCV, Friends Groups)
b.	Extending wildlife education opportunities by supporting youth wildlife groups and enhancing wildlife education programmes in schools, colleges, universities and Adult Education. (Partners: NWT, RBC, NCC, educational providers, uniformed groups)
c.	Promoting contacts, exchange of knowledge and resource sharing amongst groups and organisations associated with nature conservation locally by running events such as the Conservation Volunteer's Forum. (Partners: RBC, NWT, SNG, NBAG, Friends Groups)
d.	Promoting access to wildlife and countryside, specifically promoting disabled access where appropriate by circulating promotional materials and maintaining relevant websites. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, SNG)

6) Seek to ensure positive impact (Biodiversity Net Gain) of development on wildlife and biodiversity whilst eliminating negative impact, by:

a.	Ensuring that local planning policies relating to biodiversity and environmental issues are based on the principles set out in the National Policy Planning Framework and national best practice both in terms of protection and mitigation. (Partners: RBC, NWT, CPRE, PCs, NCC, NBAG, EA)
b.	Ensuring that opportunities are taken to benefit people and wildlife through the design of buildings and green blue infrastructure and seek to implement Natural England's ANGSt standards and national best practice. (Partners: RBC, NCC, CPRE, CLA, NFU, NE)
c.	Using Hedgerow Regulations and Tree Preservation Orders to help protect important features. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, CPRE)
d.	Implementing policies to reduce levels of environmental pollution; seek to achieve good ecological status for rivers; and to mitigate and adapt to climate change. (Partners: RBC, Catchment partners, NCC, EA, CPRE, NWT, TVIDB)
e.	Seeking to influence Regional, National and International decision making to promote wildlife friendly policies by commenting on relevant consultations. (Partners: NCC, RBC, NE, NWT, CPRE, EA, NDLNP, TRT)
f.	Promoting the use of native local provenance planting by signposting to current best practice guidelines (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT)

7) Supporting the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy, by:

a.	Continued support for the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) in helping deliver the strategy's objectives. (Partners: RBC, NWT, NBAG, Friends Groups)
b.	Producing an annual report on what has been achieved to progress nature conservation in Rushcliffe and the deficiencies that need to be addressed. (Partners: RNCSIG)

c. Reviewing the strategy during 2025, or sooner if appropriate. (Partners: RNCSIG)

13) KEY TARGET INDICATORS



The following criteria are indicators of progress made in the various sections of the Aims and Objectives and are intended to be measurable and achievable,

1. Percentage of nature reserves (as listed in our 'Nature of Rushcliffe Annual Reports') with current management plans. Target = 100% sites (Obj 2).
2. Hours of practical work carried out on nature reserves by volunteers. Target = Maintain or increase year on year across the Borough (Obj 2).
3. Increased proportion of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) managed in an appropriate manner. Target = Increase year on year towards 100% from a base of 23% at March 2018/19 (Obj 2/3.)
4. Number of schools in Rushcliffe engaged in NWT related education activities. Target = 6 schools each year (Objective 5).
5. Number of barn owl boxes installed and available for use and number of barn owl chicks raised in boxes. Target = maintain number of boxes available for use and sustain the number of barn owl chicks raised (Obj 3/6).
6. Percentage of nature reserves with wildlife related public events (at least one per year). Target = 70% of sites with at least one event per year (Obj 5).
7. Percentage of Parishes / WB Wards with publicly accessible natural green spaces (from a base of 48% in 2018). Target = 3 more parishes/wards with at least one accessible natural green space by 2025. (Obj 6)
8. Number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Target = No net loss of Local Wildlife Sites (Obj 1/2/3/4/6).
9. Percentage of Tree cover in Rushcliffe. Target = increase up to 20% from a base of 11.1% in 2020 (Obj 3).
10. Area of BAP habitat created, restored or bought under active conservation management in order to link or buffer existing wildlife habitat. Target = 30 ha`'s grassland, 10 ha`'s woodland, 10 ha`'s wetland between 2020 and 2025 (Obj 1/2/3/4).
11. Management of SSSI units to achieve a favourable condition according to Natural England assessment. Target = 95% of SSSI`s managed to a favourable or recovering condition. (Obj 2/3).
12. Percentage of available Rushcliffe Biodiversity Support Grant allocated each year. Target = 100% of grant (Obj 1/2).

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 <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	 <p>Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust</p>
<p>The Borough Council first published a Nature Conservation Strategy in 1995 and published an updated strategy in 2003 and 2010. This strategy seeks to further protect and enhance our natural environment, building on the work that has already been done. The borough council is committed to working towards the objectives in this strategy.</p> <p>The Borough is a significant landowner of public open spaces in the area. This includes several wildlife sites (including Wilwell Cutting, Wilford Claypits, Meadow Covert, Sharphill Wood and Rushcliffe Country Park). The Borough is also the Planning Authority for the area.</p>	<p>Part of a national network of county-based Wildlife Trusts, NWT exists to protect the biodiversity of the county. It is a charity with a professional staff and a lot of voluntary effort from its 11,000 members. It manages over 2,200 hectares of habitat and is a key player in many nature conservation activities across the county.</p> <p>In Rushcliffe, the Trust owns or manages 5 nature reserves. The South Notts local members group, whose activities are purely voluntary, drives much of the activity in the area. Local members manage nature reserves, organise walks and talks, monitor planning applications and are involved in a wide range of projects.</p>
<p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Rushcliffe Arena Rugby Road West Bridgford NOTTINGHAM NG2 7YG</p> <p>(0115) 981 9911 environmentalissues@rushcliffe.gov.uk www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation</p>	<p>Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust The Old Ragged School Brook Street NOTTINGHAM NG1 1EA</p> <p>(0115) 958 8242 info@nottswt.co.uk www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org</p>
<p>Contact: Environmental Sustainability Officer</p>	<p>Local group website: www.southnottswildlife.org.uk</p>



Published on behalf of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (www.facebook.com/RNCSIG)

Please see www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation for our 'Nature of Rushcliffe' Annual Reports, which includes current nature reserves, current projects, achievements and key indicator monitoring.

APPENDIX 1 - RUSHCLIFFE SITES REGARDED AS NATURE RESERVES 2020

For the purposes of the strategy nature reserves are described as sites with a reasonable wildlife value that are managed with nature conservation as a major priority and generally with some degree of public or education access.

Reserves deliver Obj 2 + Obj 5 of the Strategies Aims & Objectives

Site	Ownership (Management)	Area Ha`s	Desig.	Habitats	Mngmt Plan (last update)	Public Access	
1	Bingham Linear Walk	Bingham Town Council (Friends Group)	12	LWS LNR	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
2	Bridgford Street Wildflower Meadow, East Bridgford	East Bridgford Parish Council (East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group)	0.5		Grass	Yes	Yes
3	Bridgford Street Copse, East Bridgford	Southwell Diocese of the Cof E (East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group)	0.5		Wood	Yes	Yes
4	Bunny Old Wood	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust	16	LWS	Wood	Yes (2019)	Yes
5	Collington Common, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	1.4		Grass	Yes	Yes
6	Costock Pond	Costock Parish Council	0.8		Pond Grass	Yes	Yes
7	Cotgrave Country Park	Nottinghamshire County Council (Friends Group)	60	LWS	Grass Pond Lake Wood Reedbed	Yes	Yes
8	Dewberry Hill, Radcliffe-on-Trent	Nottinghamshire County Council (Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council / (Radcliffe on Trent Conservation Group))	8.6	LWS	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
9	Gotham Railway Path	Gotham Parish Council	0.9		Wood Grass	?	Yes
10	Gotham Sandbanks Nature Reserve	British Gypsum (Gotham Nature Reserve Trust)	1.05	SSSI, LWS	Grass, Wood	Yes	Yes
11	Grantham Canal	Canal & River Trust	25	SSSI/ LWS	Pond Marsh Reedbed	Yes	Yes
12	Green Line, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	1.4	LWS	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
13	Gresham Marsh, West Bridgford	Environment Agency	8.8	LWS	Grass Marsh Reedbed	Yes	Yes
14	Greythorne Dyke Open Space, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	2.67		Grass Marsh Wood Reedbed	In prep.	Yes

15	Holme Pierrepont Country Park	Nottinghamshire County Council (Holme Pierrepont Leisure Trust /Serco)	109	(part LWS)	Grass Wood Pond	?	Yes
16	Keyworth Burial Ground	Keyworth PC	1.05		Grass	Yes	Yes
17	Keyworth Meadows	Keyworth PC (Friends Group)	1.25	LWS, LNR	Grass Pond	Yes	Yes
18	Langar Community Wood	Naturescape	4.7		Wood	Yes	Yes
19	Langar Village Pond	Langar Parish Council	0.02		Pond	?	Yes
20	Lily Ponds, Radcliffe-on-Trent	Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council (Radcliffe on Trent Conservation Group)	4.7	Part LWS	Grass Pond	Yes	Yes
21	Meadow Covert Wood, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	2	LNR	Wood	Yes	No
22	Meadow Park, East Leake	Rushcliffe Borough Council (ELPC / Friends Group)	18		Grass Stream	Yes	Yes
23	Orston Millennium Green	Orston PC	1		Grass Pond	Yes	Yes
24	Orston Plaster Pits	Girl Guides	4.72	SSSI	Pond Grass Woodland	Yes	Guides
25	Queens Wood	Aslockton PC	0.3		Woodland	Yes	Yes
26	Rushcliffe Country Park, Ruddington	Rushcliffe Borough Council	36	LWS, LNR	Grass Wood Lake Pond Reedbed	Yes	Yes
27	Sharphill Wood, Edwalton	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Friends Group).	9.6	LWS, LNR	Wood	Yes	Yes
28	Sheldon Field, Cropwell Butler	National Playing Field Association (Sheldon Field Management Committee)	10.4		Grass	Yes	Yes
29	Skylarks, Holme Pierrepont	Notts Wildlife Trust	47	LWS	Grass Lake Wood Reedbed	Yes (2026)	Yes
30	Springdale Wood, East Bridgford.	Woodland Trust (Friends Group)	1.4		Wood	Yes	Yes
31	Stone Pit Wood, Gotham	Rushcliffe Scout District	3.1	LWS	Wood Grass	Yes	Scouts
32	Sutton Bonnington Diamond Wood	Nottingham University / Woodland Trust	19		Wood	In Prep.	Yes
33	Sutton Bonnington Diamond Wood	Nottingham University / Woodland Trust	10		Wood	In Prep.	Yes
34	Sutton Bonnington Spinney and Meadow	Sutton Bonnington Parish Council	2.5	LNR	Grass Wood	Yes	Yes
35	The Hook, Lady Bay	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Friends Group)	15	LNR	Grass Stream	Yes	Yes
36	Upper Saxondale Community Nature Reserve	Upper Saxondale Resident Association	3.2		Grass Wood	Yes	Yes

37	Wilford Claypits, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Notts Wildlife Trust)	4.3	SSSI/ LWS	Pond Marsh Grass Wood Reedbed	Yes (2013)	Yes
38	Willoughby Wood, Willoughby on the Wolds	Woodland Trust	2.5		Wood	Yes	Yes
39	Wilwell Farm Cutting, Ruddington	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Notts Wildlife Trust)	7.5	SSSI, LNR	Grass Marsh Wood Reedbed	Yes (2013)	Yes
		Total Area in hectares	458.04				

APPENDIX 2 - NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES 2020

(items underlined pre date start of NCS in 2003)

(Obj relate activities to the Strategic Aims & Objectives)

Area Based Conservation (Obj 1, Obj 3, Obj 4, Obj 5)

- Cotgrave Forest Focal Area (RNCSIG)
- Trent Valley Living Landscape (NWT, RSPB)
- Trent Gateway (EA)
- East Bridgford Wildlife Project (EBWG)

Strategic Wildlife Friendly Sites (Obj 3)

- Silver Seal Mine, Bunny - 2.6 ha`s (St Gobain)
- Holy Cross Convent grounds, Costock - 10 ha`s (Convent)
- Stanford Hall Parkland - circa 80 ha`s of grassland, woodland and lake
- Wheatcroft (Rosebush) Plantation, Radcliffe - 58 ha`s of woodland (privately owned)
- Owthorpe Fishpond - 4 ha`s woodland and ponds - LWS (private)
- Wilford Hill Wood - 7.8 ha`s woodland - LWS (private)
- Logans Trail, Gotham - 4 ha`s woodland
- Gypsum Way road verge - 0.3 ha`s grassland
- Notified Road Verges (Notts CC):
 - Station Road, Widmerpool (LWS) - 0.9 ha`s grassland
 - Bridegate Lane, Hickling LWS) - 1.3 ha`s grassland
 - Hose Lane, Colston Bassett (LWS) - 3.2 ha`s grassland
 - Langar Lane, Colston Bassett LWS) - 0.2 ha`s grassland

New Major Sites from Planning Gain (example of sites which have received planning permission, which contain significant GBI, many other sites will also provide GBI) (Obj 2, Obj 6)

- Fairham Pasture Housing development - creation of 21 ha`s of wildlife habitat, including grassland and wetland + 83 ha`s of park & open space (developer)
- Ruddington, Wilford Road, 12.5 ha open space including 9.8ha`s of grassland (developer).
- Lings Farm Gravel Pit, East Leake – 31 ha`s of lake and grassland (CEMEX)
- Sharpill Community Park – approx. 10 ha`s of grassland and woodland
- Newton Airfield – approx. 20 ha's of grassland and woodland habitats, including 7.5ha of woodland(developer)
- Bingham, Chapel lane – approx. 31ha of public open space, including 10.8ha of lake and grassland (developer)

Habitats & Species (Obj 3 + Obj 4)

- Blue Butterfly Scheme (NWT)
- Bird Bed & Breakfast Scheme (NWT)
- Grizzled Skipper Project (NCC / Butterfly Conservation / NBAG)
- Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme (BEVS) (NWT)
- Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project (Notts Birders)
- Promoting Grassland and Road Verge Management (RNCSIG)
- Rushcliffe Tree Scheme (RBC)
- Monitoring Local Wildlife Sites (NGBRC)

Species Recording (Obj 4)

- South Notts Ringing Group
- Butterfly Transects (Butterfly Conservation)

- Moth Recording (vols)
- Bird Recording (Notts Birders)
- Bat Recording (Notts Bat Group)
- Wildflowers (vols)

Invasive Species Control (Obj 3)

- Grantham Canal Azolla Control - RCT / NBAG / NE
- River Soar floating pennywort removal – EA
- Himalayan Balsam pulling The Hook & Trentside (NBAG/EA/NCC/RBC)

Wildlife Educational Activities (Obj 5)

- Rushcliffe Wildlife Watch Group – Vols/NWT
- Forest Schools at
 - Sharphill Wood,
 - Manor Farm Park, East Leake
 - Meadow Park, East Leake
 - Meadow Covert, Edwalton
 - Gotham Woods
 - Cotgrave Forest
- School Wildlife Education Visits – NWT
- South Notts Local Group (Walks, talks, summer fetes, web site etc) – Vols/NWT
- U3A Wildlife Sections
 - Soar Valley - Nature & Bird Groups (Vols),
 - West Bridgford - Bird Group (Vols),
 - Cotgrave - Nature Group (Vols),
 - Keyworth - Wildlife & Conservation Group (Vols)

Miscellaneous

- Rushcliffe Tree Warden Scheme (RBC/Vols) **(Obj 3)**
- Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Service Level Agreement (RBC/NWT) **(Obj 2, Obj 3, Obj 5)**
- Rushcliffe Biodiversity Support Grant **(RBC) (Obj 2)**
- Celebrating Rushcliffe Awards – environment category (RBC) **(Obj 5)**
- 'Rushcliffe Wildlife' Web Site (<https://rushcliffewildlife.co.uk/>) – (Vols) **(Obj4 + Obj5)**
- Rushcliffe Volunteer Forum & Training Days (NWT/RBC) **(Obj2 + Obj 5)**
- Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) **(Obj 1, Obj 2, Obj 3, Obj 4, Obj 5, Obj 6)**

APPENDIX 3 - RECOMMENDED TREES AND SHRUBS FOR PLANTING IN RUSHCLIFFE.

The trees should be, as far as is reasonably possible locally sourced and of appropriate local provenance (preferably grown from locally collected seed or as defined by Forestry Commission Practice Note [1999] Using Local Stock for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs) [Local Provenance Regions 402 or 403].

Nottinghamshire Wolds

A sparsely settled and remote rural region, characterised by rolling clay Wolds, mixed farming, small red brick villages and narrow country lanes.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the Nottinghamshire Wolds are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Black Poplar (*Populus nigra* subsp. *Betulifolia*) – Particularly suitable for wet areas
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.) - Generally, only found in woodlands
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- Small leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) - Generally only found in woodlands
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Medium size tree
- Wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) – Woodlands on clay and lime-based soils
- Yew (*Taxus baccata*) - Generally only found in woodlands.

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

Hedgerows

Hedge species suitable for planting in the Nottinghamshire Wolds are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*) - Useful in wet areas
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Purging Blackthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Treat as hedge
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

South Nottinghamshire Farmlands

A prosperous lowland agricultural region with a simple rural character of large arable fields, village settlements and broad alluvial levels.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) - Suitable for woodlands and wet areas
- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.) - Generally only found in woodlands
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- Small leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) - Generally only found in woodlands
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Medium size tree.
- Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*)

Hedgerows

Hedge species suitable for planting in the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) - Useful in wet areas
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*) - Useful in wet areas
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Osier (*Salix viminalis*) - Useful in wet areas
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Treat as hedge
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

Trent Washlands

A varied low-lying region characterised by sparsely settled carrlands, levels and rolling sandlands with village settlements.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the Trent Washlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)-suitable for wet sites
- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Black Poplar (*Populus nigra* subsp. *Betulifolia*) – Particularly suitable for wet areas
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) - Useful small hedgerow tree
- Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing.

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

Hedgerows

Hedge species suitable for planting in the Trent Washlands are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*)
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxycanthoides*)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Purging Blackthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

Consider - Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) on wet soils

Vale of Belvoir

A low-lying clay vale with a strong tradition of dairying characterised by large hedged fields, small rural villages and wide views to rising ground.

Trees

Trees suitable for planting in the Vale of Belvoir are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- [Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Oak – **planting not currently permitted due to Ash Dieback controls**]
- Aspen (*Populus tremula*) - Plant in close groups
- Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) – Medium size tree, tolerant of many conditions

- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) - Small hedgerow tree
- Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Large size and fast growing
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) - Small hedgerow tree
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.) - Usually only in woodlands
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree, co-dominant with Ash
- White Willow (*Salix alba*) - Only suitable for wet areas. Medium size and fast growing
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Medium size tree.
- Wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) – Woodlands on clay and lime-based soils

Hedgerows

Hedgerows suitable for planting in the Vale of Belvoir are listed below by their common and Latin names:

- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Large tree species but can be grown in a hedge
- Purging Blackthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

APPENDIX 4 - GOOD PRACTICE FOR MANAGEMENT OF NEW TREES

The trees should be, as far as is reasonably possible, be of variety as shown in Appendix 3 (also at <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/conservation/treeshedgesandlandscaping/landscapingandtreeplanting/plantingguide/#d.en.5678>) and locally sourced and of appropriate local provenance (locally collected seed (preferably) or as defined by Forestry Commission Practice Note [1999] Using Local Stock for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs) [Local Provenance Regions 402 or 403].

Tree stakes should be used to support newly planted whips, boarded by bio-degradable tree guards to protect during establishment where there is a potential for predation (or strimming). Where possible natural mulch materials should be used around the base of trees.

Trees should be watered during the growing season during prolonged dry periods, saturating the ground, if practicable - it is unlikely to be possible for large planting schemes. They should not be watered unnecessarily as this can promote shallow rooting.

Formative prune during winter where necessary establishes a strong central leader on trees. Trees should be assessed annually during years 3–5 removing and reducing problematic side shoots. This work should be ongoing until the tree is considered to be established (see table below).

Any dead or dying plants should be removed and replaced during the next available planting season

Thinning and coppicing will allow trees and shrubs to develop diversity of form and different types of nesting, feeding and foraging habitat and extend the potential life of individual plants and should be considered later.

Management Prescriptions	Timing of works	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Newly planted trees and specimen shrubs / hedgerow											
Check guards and tree supports until established	Unrestricted	✓	✓	✓							
Remove stakes and tree guards and non-decomposable mulch mats	Unrestricted			✓							
Weed by hand as required to maintain a 1.2m diameter vegetation free area	Apr/May		✓	✓							
Water in prolonged dry periods. Monthly or fortnightly as required.	Mar - Sept	✓	✓								
Formative prune where necessary	Prior to growing season			✓		✓					
Safety checks and tree condition assessment (5 yearly on rotation)	Unrestricted					✓					✓
Prune shrubs to a bud or node, by no more than 30%, to encourage thickening where necessary	Nov –Feb			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Replace any dead or dying plants	Nov - Mar		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

See <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/care/> for more information

APPENDIX 5 – PROTECTED TREES

Correct at time of publication, for the latest information please see the webpage:

<https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/conservation/treeshedgesandlandscaping/protectedtreesandhedges/>

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

Councils can make Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) for individual trees, groups of trees, areas containing trees, or woodland.

For trees to be made protected they must make a significant visual contribution to their local surroundings. This means that they should be important when seen from public places or a significant number of private premises. Other factors include the extent of any threat to the trees and their condition. Owners and third parties can make representations at the time an Order is made.

If you know of trees which need protecting in Rushcliffe contact Rushcliffe Borough Council, giving the precise location and the reason why a preservation order is necessary. If you would like to check if a tree in Rushcliffe is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, please contact Rushcliffe Borough Council.

The need for consent

You must apply to the Council for consent to prune or fell protected trees. Details of what does or does not need consent may vary according to the precise wording of each order. Consent may be granted with or without conditions or refused. There is a right of appeal against conditions or refusal. It is an offence to carry out work to a protected tree without first obtaining consent unless special circumstances apply. These include:

- removing dead branches from a living tree
- cutting down or pruning a tree:
 - which presents an urgent and serious safety risk – you must tell the Council (by letter or email) of the proposed work as soon as practicable after the work becomes necessary
 - which is dead – you must notify the Council (by letter or email) at least five working days before the proposed work
 - which is directly in the way of development that is about to start for which detailed planning permission has been granted
 - in a commercial orchard, or pruning fruit trees in accordance with good horticultural practice
 - to prevent or control a legal nuisance (you may find it helpful to check first with a solicitor about the interpretation of legal nuisance)
 - in line with an obligation under an Act of Parliament
 - by or at the request of certain organisations listed in the regulations.
- cutting down trees in accordance with one of the Forestry Commission's grant schemes, or where the Commission has granted a felling licence (see below).

Trimming of hedges does not require consent, though work to a protected tree in a hedgerow does. Some statutory bodies such as the highway authority and organisations like utility operators also have exemptions. The work should however be done in accordance with an agreed code of practice.

If you think a tree may be causing a legal nuisance it may be helpful to check first with a solicitor. If it is dead, dying or dangerous please tell us before doing any work. You must prove that the tree meets one of the above exemptions.

Penalties

Anyone who cuts down or destroys a tree and breaks a TPO is guilty of an offence and could be liable to an unlimited fine, depending on the financial benefit which could result from the removal of the tree. Unauthorised lopping can incur a fine of up to £2,500.

Trees in conservation areas

Conservation areas are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Trees often make an important contribution to the special character of such areas.

Notification

Trees in conservation areas may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) but where they are not, there is a duty to give the Local Planning Authority six weeks' notice in writing before carrying out any work.

This is not an application for consent and the Council cannot refuse or impose conditions on the work. The purpose of notification is to give the opportunity to consider whether a TPO should be made. If no order is made within six weeks the work can proceed. We will normally respond in writing within six weeks even if we do not propose to make an order.

The Council has a standard notification form, but there is no obligation to use it and we will accept any written notification as long as it clearly specifies the trees involved and the extent of the proposed work, this should include a simple sketch plan identifying the location of the tree.

Exemptions

Notification is not necessary for trees having a stem diameter less than 75mm, measured at 1.5m above ground level, or 100mm for thinning operations to benefit the growth of other trees. Other exemptions from the need to notify are similar to those which apply to works to trees protected by a TPO which may be carried out without consent. There is an obligation to replant a tree which is removed in these circumstances.

Penalties

Penalties for non-compliance are similar to those which apply to TPOs.

Wildlife

When planning any work to trees or hedgerows it should be remembered that they often support wildlife, particularly birds and bats, which are protected by law especially when they are breeding or raising young. Further advice is available from [Natural England](#).

Felling Licence

To help protect Britain's trees and woodland, a felling licence from the Forestry Commission is required to fell most trees. It's an offence to fell trees without a licence if an exemption does not apply.

Everyone involved in the felling of trees (the owner, agent and timber merchant or contractor) must ensure that a licence has been issued before any felling is carried out, unless they are certain that one of the exemptions apply. If there's no licence or other valid permission, or if the wrong trees are felled, anyone involved can be prosecuted.

For more details please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-licence-when-you-need-to-apply>

APPENDIX 6 – IVY ON TREES

It is a common misconception that ivy "damages" trees.

Ivy provides a valuable habitat for small mammals (including bats), birds and insects (bees, hoverflies and butterflies). It's woody structure and evergreen nature provides safety, roosting, hibernation and nesting opportunities all year round. Whilst it's berries provide an important food source for birds during winter, and it's long flowering season is an important source of late season nectar for bees and other invertebrates. It can also provide all year-round ground cover and reduces the effect of frost hardening the ground in winter months, which means animals can continue to forage in the leaf litter during extreme cold weather (WT, 2020).

The Woodland Trust's states "Ivy uses trees and walls for support, allowing it to reach upwards to better levels of sunlight. It is not a parasitic plant and has a separate root system in the soil and so absorbs its own nutrients and water as needed. Ivy does not damage trees and its presence doesn't indicate that a tree is unhealthy, and it doesn't create a tree-safety issue." (WT, 2020).

Another misconception is that ivy blocks the tree from photosynthesising. An already weakened or dying tree might appear to be failing because of the ivy; the ivy being more obvious than any fungal, bacterial or viral infections that may be blighting the tree.

Ivy may help create a sort of sail effect in some trees, if it is old, declining or a disease weakened tree that is vulnerable to structural damage in strong winds. The ivy is only marginally increasing that effect.

Action to remove ivy from trees would negatively impact on a valuable wildlife resource, without meaningfully reducing any risk of tree damage; Indeed, there have been instances locally where poorly executed ivy removal has actively damaged trees.

Where there is a tree safety management issue an assessment should be made if the tree is safe. If it represents a risk, the tree should then be dealt with appropriately and whilst the presence of ivy might marginally increase the risk, it is the health of the tree and its core structure that is the problem.

RNCSIG would recommend that tree condition be monitored by land owners and farmers to prevent damage, loss or danger irrespective of the presence of ivy. Removal of ivy is unlikely to represent a solution. Where there is concern for tree safety, remedial advice should be sought.

APPENDIX 7 – DEAD WOOD

Dead wood is a valuable part of healthy woodland and parkland habitats. Standing dead wood provides valuable habitat for some of our rarest invertebrates and a source of food for birds such as woodpeckers. Fallen dead wood is also a valuable habitat and should be retained in situ where possible. Arisings from tree work may be formed into habitat piles.

"Given the high ecological value of deadwood, the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) makes recommendations for deadwood management as part of its certification standards for sustainable woodland, namely:

- The owner/manager shall plan and take action to accumulate a diversity of both standing and fallen deadwood over time in all wooded parts of the woodland management unit, including felled areas.
- The owners/managers shall identify areas where deadwood is likely to be of the greatest nature-conservation benefit and shall plan and take action to accumulate large dimension standing and fallen deadwood and deadwood in living trees in those areas". (WT, 2019)

Where possible, and where health and safety constraints permit, standing dead wood and lying dead wood should be retained to maximise biodiversity. It may be necessary to reduce the canopy of standing dead wood, too reduce the weight and reduce the risk of failure.

Dead wood habitat can be created by ring barking trees and by cutting branches and leaving jagged ends – a practice known as veteranisation. A specialist contractor should be used for this work.

APPENDIX 8 - RUSHCLIFFE NATURE CONSERVATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (RNCSIG) COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



Introduction

This plan seeks to enhance communication within the group and to external key audiences. The plan is for partners and officers.

The plan recognises the limited resources available to the RNCSIG group and seeks to improve existing working practices and prioritise methods of communication whilst minimising funding needs. The annual key action points help to direct communications requirements over the year.

Background

The Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021-2025 seeks to raise awareness of Nature Conservation in Rushcliffe and highlights the importance of working with partners and the community of Rushcliffe. This requires good communication, education, awareness raising and encouragement.

Objectives

Raise awareness of nature conservation issues by:

- a. Publicising the work of partners and local nature conservation groups, as well as wildlife related issues through news releases and social media posts. (Partners: NWT, RBC, RCC, NBW, NCC, TCV, Friends Groups)
- b. Extending wildlife education opportunities by supporting youth wildlife groups and enhancing wildlife education programmes in schools, colleges, universities and Adult Education. (Partners: NWT, RBC, NCC, educational providers, uniformed groups)
- c. Promoting contacts, exchange of knowledge and resource sharing amongst groups and organisations associated with nature conservation locally by running events such as the Conservation Volunteer's Forum. (Partners: RBC, NWT, SNG, NBAG, Friends Groups)
- d. Promoting access to wildlife and countryside, specifically promoting disabled access where appropriate by circulating promotional materials and maintaining relevant websites. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, SNG)

Additional objectives include:

- Promote 'Landscape Scale Conservation' to create a more resilient natural environment.
- Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves.
- Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas.
- Support monitoring of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.
- Seek to positively influence the impact of development on wildlife and biodiversity
- Support and develop Nature Conservation in Rushcliffe

This communications plan seeks:

- To encourage the ongoing commitment and support from partners of the RNCSIG to implementing the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy.
- To improve communication of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy to the wide variety of stakeholders taking action for nature in Rushcliffe (who may or may not be partners).
- To seek to engage with new audiences that currently may be undertaking work for nature conservation within the borough but are not currently engaged with the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy process.
- To publicise and promote the work of the group to the wider public who may currently be unaware of or not involved in the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy process.

- Support community involvement in nature conservation in Rushcliffe, through voluntary conservation work, wildlife surveying and awareness raising, this requires funding to be sought and training and interpretative material to be provided and activities to attract the public.

Public marketing messages should be worded/created according to the intended audience, avoid jargon and abbreviations. For further information see: http://staging.futerra.co.uk.php53-17.dfw1-2.websitetestlink.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Branding_Biodiversity.pdf

Action Plan

	Actions	Who By	When
Internet presence / social media	Develop and maintain an internet presence to demonstrate RNCSIG and partner action in Rushcliffe and encourage further action by partners and the wider community. Ensure this is kept up to date publications, news, and how others can get involved. Provide links to and from partner websites and links to other relevant websites.	Env Sust Officer (ESO)	Ongoing
Document Store	Provide a store for the group documents accessible by partners and the community	ESO	Ongoing
Partners websites	Partners to provide links and statement of support for the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy on their website	Partners	Ongoing
Partner publications	Use partner publications including Rushcliffe Reports and 'Nottinghamshire Wildlife' magazine to promote action in Rushcliffe and encourage readers to take action	Partners	Ongoing
RNCSIG Meetings	Ensure minutes of steering group and other meetings are distributed to relevant members and uploaded to the Document Store.	RNCSIG Chair / ESO	Ongoing
Annual Report	A summary of the group's activities, successes and monitoring to be published annually	ESO	March annually
Annual Forum Event	The RNCSIG annual showcase event. We will seek to develop this event to provide, learning and networking opportunities for partners.	RNCSIG Chair	Autumn annually
Other Events	We will look to host and support other events were appropriate (for example Bioblitz and training workshops), to engage with partners and the wider public and to increase our knowledge of biodiversity in the Borough.	Partners	As required
News and Information updates	We will seek to keep partners up to date with news and information, updates may be provided as emails, social media bulletins or as e-newsletters as appropriate. Partners are requested to share newsworthy items and encouraged to share news via the group.	ESO / RNCSIG Chair	Ongoing
Talks and presentations	Partners are encouraged to offer to provide talks and requested to promote the work of RNCSIG within their own talks and presentations.	Partners	As required
Wildlife Surveys	We will use public surveys of wildlife as appropriate, guided by the Steering Group, to encouraging more widespread participation in nature conservation; increase the general public's knowledge about wildlife issues and to increase our understanding of biodiversity in the borough. We will publish results where appropriate for our surveys and share with the biological records office.	ESO, NWT, NBAG and Partners	As required
Leaflets and Publications	Leaflets and publications are produced for a range of audiences (e.g. gardening leaflets, site leaflet etc.), to share knowledge, encourage participation and promote the group. Further documents will be developed as appropriate. Documents will be made available at RNCSIG and partners events and published electronically for use on the RNCSIG and partner websites	ESO	As required
Press releases and other media	Press releases will be issued where appropriate e.g. for the Annual Forum and other events. RNCSIG partner press releases should refer to 'work contributing towards the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy and Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets.	ESO and Partners	Ongoing

APPENDIX 9 - OTHER POLICY DRIVERS

In 2006 the **NERC Act (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act)** came into force. Part of the act (Section 40), known as the biodiversity duty states that 'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. The duty should make biodiversity a natural and integral part of policy and decision making for all public bodies.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/40>

'**Making space for nature**' (the Lawton Review) was published by DEFRA in 2010, this reviewed England's wildlife sites and the connections between them, with recommendations to help achieve a healthy natural environment that will allow our plants and animals to thrive.

It recommends establishing a strong and connected natural environment:

- That we better protect and manage our designated wildlife sites;
- That we establish new Ecological Restoration Zones;
- That we better protect our non-designated wildlife sites;

These recommendations are often summarised as ensuring our wildlife sites are bigger, better and more connected.

The paper recognised society's need to maintain water-quality, manage inland flooding, deal with coastal erosion and enhance carbon storage and help deliver a more effective ecological network.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today>.

Natural Environment White Paper - recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally. It set out 92 specific commitments for action.

Including a Biodiversity Strategy update, a review of planning, a review of agri-environment schemes, establishing a voluntary Biodiversity Offsetting scheme, river and marine protection, support for the green economy and action on people and nature - health and education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-environment-white-paper-implementation-updates>

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) - was adopted and came into force in December 2000. The purpose of the Directive is to protect inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater. It was to ensure that all aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands meet 'good status' by 2015. It required establishing river basin districts and for each of these to have a river basin management plan.

The status of waters in Rushcliffe can be found at <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody> and <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk>

The **Birds Directive** provides a framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe. It sets broad objectives for a wide range of activities; in the UK this is delivered through several different statutes. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1373>.

The **Habitats Directive** was adopted in 1992. The main aim of the Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In applying these measures Member States are required to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics; in the UK this is delivered through several different statutes. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1374>.

The Invasive Non-native Species Framework Strategy, launched on 28th May 2008 seeks to meet the challenge posed by invasive non-native species in Great Britain.

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm>

In January 2018 the government published '**A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment**'. This drew together many existing governmental environmental targets as well as extending ambition in some areas. Alongside the plan, the government has published technical annexes and an outcome indicator framework.

The plan seeks to achieve ten overarching environmental goals; including Thriving plants and wildlife; Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment and Mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Defra has published its first progress report covering January 2018 to March 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (as amended) (the "**Withdrawal Act**")". The aim of the Withdrawal Act is to preserve, as far as possible, the domestic effect of EU legislation as it applied to the UK immediately before the 31 December 2020, following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU).

Under the Withdrawal Act, EU-derived domestic legislation (such as existing environmental regulations that implement EU Directives, including those listed above) and Direct EU legislation (such as EU regulations and decisions) which were in force immediately prior to the end of the transition period will continue to form part of UK domestic law after 31 December 2020.

Going forward after 31 December 2020, however, Parliament will be at liberty to introduce future changes to the existing legislation since, after 31 December 2020, the UK will no longer be bound by EU legislation.

The **Agriculture Act 2020** makes provision about payments for agricultural and rural development including Agri-Environment schemes and setting standards and requirement in agriculture and food production and supply following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/agriculture.html>

The Environment Bill 2019-21, makes provision for targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment; for monitoring environmental protection; establishing an Office for Environmental Protection; improving waste and resource efficiency and air and water quality; and regulation of chemicals. The bill proposes strengthening duties of Local Authorities to establish nature recovery plans and networks; enables conservation covenants and introduces a mandatory requirement for built developments to achieve biodiversity net gain.

It is expected this bill will become law during the life of this strategy.

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/environment.html>