

Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2016 – 2020

FOREWORD

Consultations with the community since 1993 have consistently shown that there is 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. This strategy not only sets out to try to safeguard existing known sites of interest, but also to encourage the development and improvement of new sites. The strategy also seeks to preserve the existing links between wildlife sites and to establish new links to allow the spread of 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 also reflects an environment that is good for humans, improving our physical and mental health. Properly pursued, the strategy will benefit not only those who live and work in Rushcliffe now, but also future generations.

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 builds on previous strategies produced in 2003 and 2010. The strategy has been developed by the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG), which brings together statutory agencies and voluntary bodies, with the Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust playing leading roles, but encompassing the results of wide-ranging consultations with individuals, groups and organisations. 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 and changes in legislation all emphasise the importance of effective environmental protection and wildlife conservation for meeting the aims of sustainable development, and the need to provide a good quality environment in which people can live and work.

The major organisations shown below commend this strategy to everyone who reads it. We will do our bit, so please join us and do yours.

Rushcliffe Borough Council



Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust



Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group



Nottinghamshire County Council



KS/GIN/04

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
CONTENTS	2
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	3
1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2) OVERVIEW OF RUSHCLIFFE'S WILDLIFE	5
3) SUCCESSES OF THE STRATEGY UPTO 2015	6
4) PRINCIPAL HABITATS FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE	7
5) NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (LBAP)	9
6) DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES	11
7) NATURE RESERVES	12
8) RUSHCLIFFE'S LANDSCAPES	12
9) GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	15
10) CLIMATE CHANGE	15
11) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	16
12) PLANNING POLICIES AND THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND HABITATS	16
13) OTHER POLICIES DRIVERS	18
14) NATURE CONSERVATION AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	20
15) KEY TARGET INDICATORS	22
APPENDIX 1 - RUSHCLIFFE FOCAL AREAS	23

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN DOCUMENT

BG	British Gypsum
BTC	Bingham Town Council
TCV	The Conservation Volunteers (Previously BTCV)
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
BuC	Butterfly Conservation
CA	Countryside Agency
CLA	Country Land & Business Association
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England
CRT	Canal & River Trust (Previously British Waterways)
CTC	Cotgrave Town Council
CE	Crown Estate
DEFRA	Dept. of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
FoG's	Friends of Groups
FoRCP	Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park
IWA	Inland Waterways Association
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site (Previously SINCs)
MFDS	Manor Farm Donkey Sanctuary
NBAG	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group
NBGR	Nottinghamshire Biological & Geological Records Centre
NCC	Nottinghamshire County Council
NE	Natural England
NFU	National Farmers Union
NFaW	Nottinghamshire Farming and Wildlife
NBW	Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
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
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STW	Severn Trent Water
TRT	Trent River Trust
TVIDB	Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Vol's	Volunteers
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WT	Woodland Trust

1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The object of this strategy is to protect and enhance Rushcliffe's wildlife resources, thereby contributing towards local and national biodiversity targets, to 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 and wetland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough. This will be achieved through a partnership of key organisations, local special interest groups and individuals.

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 an important area 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 issues surrounding a variety of habitats, and considers opportunities for community involvement and the role of the planning system in conserving our natural heritage. Land management constraints, plus the small size and isolation of the wildlife sites, are major factors limiting wildlife in Rushcliffe. There is great scope for enhancing the Borough for wildlife with appropriate funding, in the long-term, but 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 the past decade, progress has been made on developing nature conservation projects in a co-ordinated way, but prior to this was largely ad-hoc; hence the fragmented distribution of nature reserves in Rushcliffe. The aim of this strategy is to continue to develop an approach to nature conservation that targets specific areas, 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.

Full and up to date knowledge of what we have in the Borough is a continuing problem, we have improved our understanding by updating and digitising the Phase 1 survey data for Rushcliffe, 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 continuing surveying, monitoring and reporting of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.
- Raise awareness of nature conservation.
- Seek to influence the impact of development on wildlife.
- 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 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.

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. Fragments of semi-natural habitats within the farmed landscape support plants such as cowslip and orchids, whilst otters are recolonising Rushcliffe's watercourses and badgers are widespread. 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.

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 is, in wildlife terms, currently a series of narrow lakes and ponds. Wildlife has readily colonised mineral workings and disused railway lines, whilst a wealth of species are also found in urban areas.

Many species have suffered due to modern lifestyles. Special efforts to conserve species, such as barn owls and schemes such as Countryside Stewardship are reducing 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), previously called Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's), with an area of around 2,000 hectares, represents Rushcliffe's wildlife hotspots. It is notable that whilst approximately 8% of Britain is designated as SSSI's, only 0.15% of Rushcliffe is similarly designated and the coverage of LWS is around 5%, making conservation effort all the more important.

3) SUCCESSES OF THE STRATEGIES UP TO 2015

The Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) is a partnership set up 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 steer and implement the 2016-2020 strategy, which is built on previous strategies.

Previous strategies have led to advances in the protection and enhancement of Rushcliffe's wildlife resources and successes supported by this group include:

- ✿ In 2004 there were twenty two sites across the borough managed predominantly as nature reserves, thirteen of which had current management plans. As of April 2014 there are forty four nature reserves, thirty of these sites have current management plans (77%). Five sites have management plans in preparation. The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has acquired extra land to extend its Skylarks reserve from 10 hectares to 47 hectares.
- ✿ Ongoing management has been introduced on borough council nature reserves at Sharphill Wood; Meadow Covert, Edwalton; The Green Line, West Bridgford; Meadow Park, East Leake and The Hook, Ladybay. This work is supported by 'friends of' groups involving local people in the management of these sites.
- ✿ Rushcliffe nature grants, since 2004 have supported 71 projects and with a value totalling £37,363.
- ✿ Volunteer nature conservation work across the borough has increased from an estimated 3138 hours for the year 2004, to 8378 hours in 2014. This volunteer work was valued at £156,585 for 2014, based on Volunteering England guidance.
- ✿ Work we have directly carried out or financed as a partnership since 2011 has led to the following habitat being created, restored or brought under active conservation management. Wildlife Grassland: 16.3ha; Woodland: 22.6ha; Wetland: 38ha; Ponds: 465m²; Hedgerows: 2025m. Partners will have also carried out their own work not included in these figures.
- ✿ The extent of wildlife in Rushcliffe has been digitally mapped. Analysis of this mapping shows opportunities to improve or extend biodiversity in Rushcliffe. This Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping will be used for future strategies, to guide planning, for developing new projects and making grant applications.
- ✿ A leaflet showing publically accessible green spaces in Rushcliffe has been published and can be downloaded from www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/greenspaces
- ✿ Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trusts education officer has worked with 6 schools each year on behalf of the partnership, leading group activities and advising on improvements to school grounds for wildlife
- ✿ An indicator of the ecological health of the borough is shown by the population of Barn Owls in the borough, Barn Owls can only survive where there is plenty of places for it to roost and plenty of wild habitat for it to hunt its prey and plenty of prey living in that habitat. The exact number of owls is not known, but the number of owls in artificial Barn Owl boxes can be used as a proxy measure. In 2002, 16 young owls were raised from 88 available owl boxes; by 2014 this had risen to 182 owls raised from 160 available owl boxes.

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

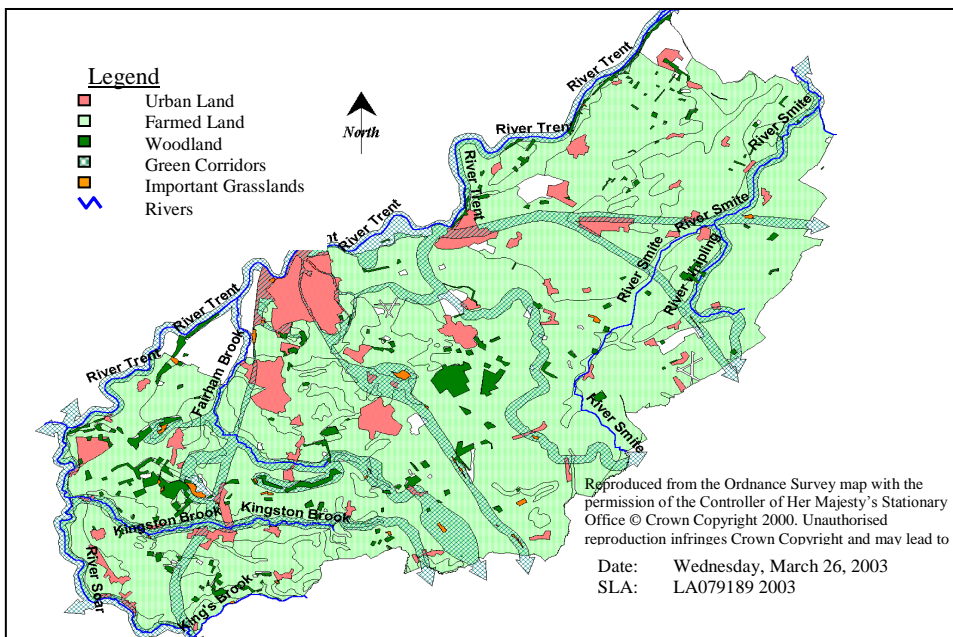


Figure 1: Main Habitats in Rushcliffe

commitments, including water quality and biodiversity.

We will seek to: Encourage landowners and farmers to develop sympathetic management practices and increase the take up of schemes that support this. Protect and develop the edges of arable farm fields, farm ponds, ditches, streams and rivers, encourage farmers to retain traditional pasture and meadows, autumn arable stubble and promote the value of hedgerow trees and seek to support their planting and maintenance. Support the National Pollinator Strategy.

4.2) Woodland and trees

Woodland covers 1.04% or 5.75sq km of Rushcliffe. We have seven ancient woodlands (woodlands that have existed since at least 1600 AD). 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.



Figure 2: Bunny Wood

Trees and woodland provide many ecosystem services, including supporting wildlife, visual benefit, providing benefits for recreation and mental health; counteract climate change, alleviating flooding and trap pollutants, having a positive impact on asthma sufferers. They prevent soil erosion, produce fuel and other wood products supporting the rural economy. The Woodland Trust recommends no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of 1ha accessible woodland. Tree preservation orders protect trees and woodlands which add public enjoyment.

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

Local planning authorities can make a Tree Preservation Order if it appears to them to be 'expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area.



 **We will seek to: Promote appropriate new native tree and woodland planting, particularly where linked to existing woods; develop tree-planting schemes; carbon offset schemes and community orchards. Promote sympathetic woodland management. Use Tree Preservation Orders for threatened valuable amenity trees as appropriate. Promote tree wardens where appropriate.**



Figure 3: The Green Line

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 lizard, grass snake, harvest mouse 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. Support the County Notified Road Verge scheme and ensure road verges receive appropriate mowing regimes and are protected from excessive winter salting.**

4.5) Rivers, Standing Water and Marsh

Wetlands feature strongly in Rushcliffe; with 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 pollution from sewage, agriculture or industrial processes (see section 13 WFD). The Grantham Canal and farm ponds are at risk due to drying out and lack of management. Invasive species such as himalayan balsam and mink present difficulties. Wetlands support endangered species such as water voles and great crested newts, they are also important for dragonflies, grass snakes and wading birds and kingfishers.

4.3) Urban

Urban areas are small but are important for wildlife. Gardens can be particularly important, supporting many birds and butterflies, although larger urban wildlife sites do exist. Buildings also support wildlife such as bats and birds (including house martins swallows and swifts). Temporary sites and derelict industrial sites often develop as important wildlife habitats.

 **We will seek to: Raise awareness of urban wildlife, protected species and invasive non-native species. Protect and enhance urban wildlife sites and encourage recreational use where possible. Encourage wildlife-friendly gardening and identify opportunities for wildlife in new and existing buildings. Support the National Pollinator Strategy.**

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. 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



We will seek to: Protect the remaining marshland fragments and encourage the development and management of wetland sites. Liaise over the future redevelopment of the Grantham Canal and its surroundings. Promote farm and garden pond maintenance and creation. Work to stop the decline of water voles and to support the return of the otter. Control invasive non-native species. Seek the good ecological status of our rivers, streams and watercourses.



Figure 4: Wilwell Cutting



Figure 5: Meadow Park, East Leake

4.6) Hedgerows

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 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 hedgerows is provided by the Hedgerow Regulations. Trees in hedgerows add wildlife value.



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

4.7) Amenity Land

There are significant areas of parks, recreation grounds and school playing fields in Rushcliffe. Appropriate management can support a range of grassland plants as well as invertebrates, small mammals, foxes and birds of prey.



We will seek to: Ensure all amenity land is sympathetically managed and continue to 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' (HMSO, 1995) and 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' (DEFRA, 2011) sets 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. Many 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).

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, Sharpill 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, Stamford Hall

IMPORTANT LBAP SPECIES FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

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

NB. This species 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.

In 2013, work began to produce a map showing where opportunities exist to enhance biodiversity within Rushcliffe; as part of a county wide project delivered by the BAG. This Biodiversity Opportunity Map (BOM) required the digitising of previous paper based data and updating this data in consultation with the wide range of amateur and professional experts in the area. The output of this process is maps identifying where the most likely opportunities are found within the borough (see appendix 1). This work should help to guide where future work is focused and will be used to in preparing this nature conservation strategy, guide planning and for developing new projects and making grant applications.

For more details of Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets visit the Biodiversity Action Group's, Action for Wildlife 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 through the development control system. Encourage the use of local provenance planting. Continue to audit the Borough's natural capital and look to maintain the Biodiversity Opportunity Map.

6) DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES

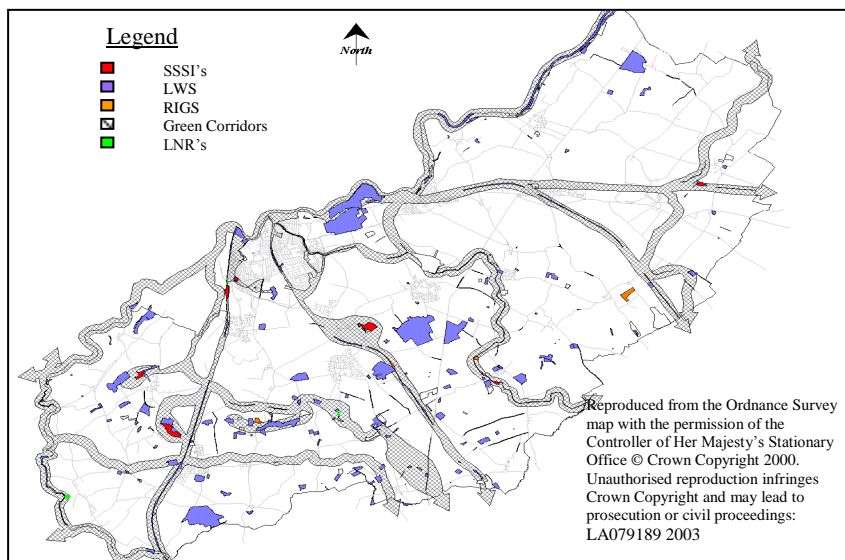


Figure 6: Protected sites in Rushcliffe

In Rushcliffe (in 2015) there are 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), 214 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS – previously called SINCS) and eight designated Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

These are important sites that could not easily be restored once lost. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 imposes strong duties for Local Authorities to further the conservation and enhancement of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). National Planning Policy Framework - Part 11 – 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' makes specific reference to the need for appropriate protection

of 'locally designated sites', which includes Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

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.

A series of green corridors linking sensitive wildlife areas and towns and villages has been identified. Some of these sites are publicly owned and some are privately owned.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) In Rushcliffe(2015)

Type of Habitat	Number of Sites	Total Area (hectares)	Average Size (hectares)
Grassland	90	518	6
Woodland	30	604	20
Ponds & Lakes	45	272	6
Streams, Rivers, Canals & ditches	17	83	5
Ex Industrial, including quarries	21	388	19
Fen & Marshland	7	28	4
Hedgerow	3	3	1
Ruderal	1	7	7
Total	214	1903	9

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

We will seek to: Ensure protected sites are properly managed; this may require 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. Review the green corridor network. Aim to create a new large reserve in Rushcliffe.

7) NATURE RESERVES

There are 44 sites (in 2015) in Rushcliffe that are managed as nature reserves, with an area of over 460 hectares. The majority of them are designated as LWS or SSSI's and around two thirds have some form of community involvement, whether this is wardening, reserve work parties and Friends Groups. Ownership and management is very varied - privately owned, companies, Parish Councils, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Rushcliffe Borough Council - although in some cases, sites are owned by one organisation and managed by another. When you compare the area designated as nature reserves with the total coverage of LWS (1,900 hectares) or of Rushcliffe (41,000 hectares) as a whole, it is clear that the management of nature reserves, whilst important cannot be regarded in isolation – wider 'Green Infrastructure' linking reserves, LWS and SSSI's is essential to long term sustainability.

Ideally 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. The majority of these sites have recent management plans. However a management plan is only as good as the resources available to make it happen and as always such resources are thinly stretched. Some of these resources are provided by professional staff (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Rushcliffe Borough Council), but much of the work (and site management) is carried out by volunteers – although they are supported by help and advice from professional staff.

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, with a minimum of paperwork and fuss (see www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/environmentandwaste/countryside/grants).

As 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

We will seek to: Ensure that reserves have current management plans and seek sufficient resources (both financial and volunteer) to support implementation of the plans. Seek to build the capacity of the nature conservation sector (both professional and voluntary) in Rushcliffe.

8) RUSHCLIFFE'S LANDSCAPES

8.1 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 developing grasslands, farm hedgerows and margins, stubble and 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.

We will seek to: Update and maintain the Green Corridor map, clearly defining important corridors. Protect existing green corridors. 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 reduce fragmentation and isolation of sites.

8.2 Mature Landscapes

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

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

8.3 Landscape Character

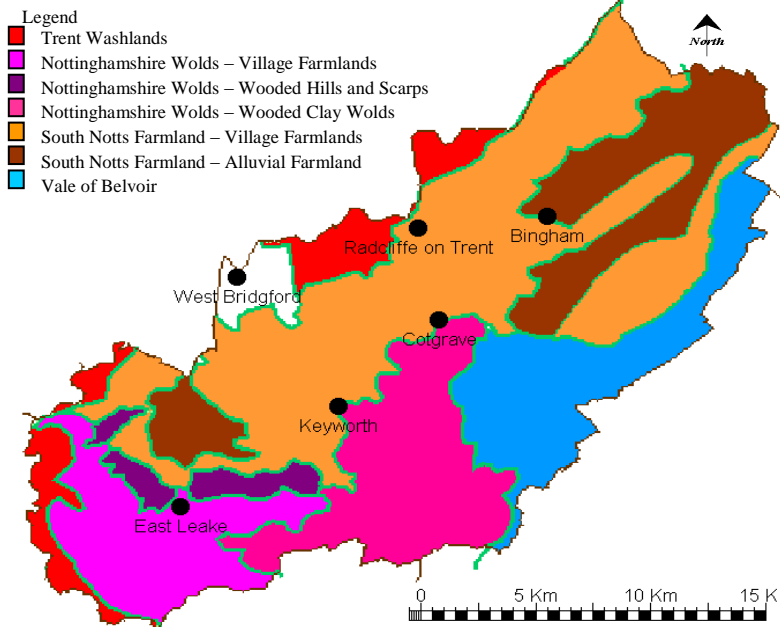


Figure 7: Simplified Regional Character of Rushcliffe's, after Notts CC, 2009

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. See <http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/landimprovements/landscapecharacter.htm> for more details.

8.3.1 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.

8.3.2 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. Seek good ecological status for the Kingston Brook, encourage riparian habitats and trees (especially willow pollards) and shrubs along with grassland and discourage arable farming to the brook edge.

– 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.

8.3.3 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.

– 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.

8.3.4 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). Protect and enhance parkland habitats. Protect and enhance the Grantham Canal

9) GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green Infrastructure 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 Infrastructure Guidance).

Components of Green Infrastructure can include; woodlands, hedgerows, playing fields, parks, gardens, old railways, rivers and streams, ponds, allotments, cemeteries and graveyards etc. If these are managed in an appropriate way, they can meet a range of environmental, social and economic needs and help support the natural environment.

The benefits to society potentially include improved health and mental wellbeing, reduced crime, reduced fear of crime and antisocial behaviour, opportunities for exercise, sport, recreation and spiritual well-being, informal educational opportunities, increased land values and attraction for house buyers and businesses and opportunities for community involvement and cohesion. In addition these areas can help to prevent flooding, reduce air pollution, maintain economic land value and help to maintain biodiversity by providing habitats for wildlife to live and move through. These benefits are known as ecosystem services.

By looking at the Green 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 GI. Small size and habitat fragmentation has long been recognised as one of the major problems facing wildlife in the UK and a coherent GI strategy would help reduce the problem. The pressure for new housing developments in Rushcliffe highlights the importance of planning our GI.

We will seek to: maintain an inventory of our Green Infrastructure, develop a strategy on managing and enhancing this resource and develop projects to improve the Green Infrastructure of Rushcliffe. Work with the planning authorities and developers to ensure wildlife friendly Green Infrastructure is included in all new developments.

10) 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 fortnight earlier than 50 years ago, species that are dependent on oak trees which cannot adapt to this change will struggle to survive. Similarly butterflies are moving northwards, species once found only in the South of England can now be found in our area, but species that lived in the north may be forced to retreat into limited refuges with nowhere else to go.

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. 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.

We will seek to: maintain as diverse an environment as we can to support the widest opportunities for our biodiversity to survive. 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, including the use of wildlife to act as carbon 'sinks', for example by tree planting. Follow and promote best practice / government advice to address invasive species and diseases.

11) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Public bodies and various community organisations carry out valuable nature conservation work in the Borough, but individuals (especially landowners) often 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, part of Nottingham City Council's Museum Service, undertakes much botanical and other wildlife survey work. The NBGRC is responsible for holding, interpreting and updating all data associated with the LWS system.

Access to nature conservation sites and the wider countryside develops awareness of our natural heritage, while also providing other ecosystem service benefits, appropriate access needs to be encouraged and managed, without putting too much pressure on these sites. Natural England advocates 'Access to Natural Greenspace Standards' (ANGSt) 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

Friends of Groups are valuable community groups that care for particular sites, Friends of Groups already exist for many sites in Rushcliffe. They 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

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 and 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.

12) PLANNING POLICIES AND THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

A new National Planning Policy Framework was published by HM Government in 2012, setting out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. A principle set out in the NPPF is of "pursuing sustainable development" which includes moving from a

net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution".

(online at http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/11-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment/#paragraph_117)

There is major pressure at a national and regional level for significant housing development to occur along the southern edge of Nottingham, thus Rushcliffe's wildlife sites in both urban and rural areas will come under increasing pressure from development in the coming years. A degree of protection is provided by planning regulations and policies. The local planning policy documents created by the local planning authority set out where and how development will be allowed, they also 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.

It is important to ensure that where development is permitted, not only are valuable sites (SSSI, LWS and LNR) and other hard to replace sites protected from direct development, but a 'mitigation hierarchy' is followed that seeks to avoid ecological harm, and where necessary mitigates or compensates for losses (Section 118, NPPF). Buffering local sites and including Green Infrastructure in developments reduces the threat of isolation and brings wildlife into new developments. Where practicable developers will be required to provide at least an equal number of trees to those lost as a result of the development

In terms of nature conservation, there are major contradictions inherent in development planning. Firstly, between the use of brownfield and greenfield sites for development. 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.

Similarly with the status of greenbelt, which was originally created as a mechanism to control (not prevent) urban sprawl. Assuming development will go ahead, is it better to lose greenbelt along the urban fringe or allow development to leapfrog into the wider countryside? Resolving such contradictions is not easy and needs to consider where there will be net biodiversity gain.

Neighbourhood Plans gives local communities the opportunity to plan for their local areas.

See <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/biodiversity-ecosystems-and-green-infrastructure/> for more details on planning issues.

A number of the partner organisations are involved in the planning process in Rushcliffe through administrating, monitoring, commenting on or enforcing the process.

Where levels of pollution (including light 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: Include wildlife issues in planning policies e.g. in the Rushcliffe local development documents. Ensure planning approvals meet wildlife protection regulations. Follow good practise on planning and biodiversity, particularly following the 'mitigation hierarchy' where compensation for habitat loss should be a last resort. Encourage developers to minimise the impact of their development and encourage eco-friendly building design. Where practicable developers will be required to provide at least an equal number of trees to those lost as a result of the development. Minimise the need to use important nature conservation sites for development. Keep nature conservation on the agenda at county, regional, national and European levels. Use biodiversity opportunity maps to guide planning policy to improve biodiversity in the area. Work with Parish and Town Councils to promote the inclusion of wildlife friendly policies with Neighborhood Plans and support their implementation. Ensure appropriate authorities enforce and monitor planning processes are carried out by according to legislative requirements. Encourage individuals and companies to adopt safe and sustainable practices. Enforce pollution regulations and support policies to reduce environmental pollution, for waterbodies seeking to achieve good ecological status.

13) 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 legislation is intended to raise the profile and visibility of biodiversity within public authorities and to clarify their existing commitments with regards to biodiversity. The duty should make biodiversity a natural and integral part of policy and decision making for all public bodies. See www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/40 for more detail

'**Making space for nature**' (sometimes called 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.

The reports key points for establishing a strong and connected natural environment, are:

- 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, if thought about creatively this, could help deliver a more effective ecological network. See www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today for more details.

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 (see section 5 above), a review of planning (see section 12 above), a review of the Common Agricultural Policy agri-environment schemes (see section 4.1 above), establishing a voluntary Biodiversity Offsetting scheme, river and marine protection, support for the green economy and action on people and nature - health and education. To see progress visit 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 a river basin management plan

The status of waters in Rushcliffe can be found at <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/4> 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. See <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1373> for more details.

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. See <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1374> for more details.

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 (see also section 4.5 above). See <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm> for more details

14) NATURE CONSERVATION AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC AIM: To protect and enhance Rushcliffe's wildlife resources, thereby contributing towards local and national biodiversity targets, 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 and wetland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough. This will be achieved through a partnership of key organisations, local special interest groups and individuals.

OBJECTIVES:

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

a.	Using the Focal Areas identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping exercise to target action for landscape scale nature conservation projects (Partners: RNCSIG, NWT, RBC)
b.	Seeking opportunities for creating at least one large area for wildlife of at least 40 hectares in extent. (Partners: RNCSIG)
c.	Identify and liaise with organisations whose land holdings or interests have a significant role in nature conservation in Rushcliffe. (Partners: NWT, RNCSIG, RBC, NCC, GCR, CRT, NBAG, TVIDB)

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

a.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have a current Management Plan to conserve and enhance the habitats and interest of the site (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, WT, Friends Groups)
b.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have sufficient resources available to deliver the management plan. (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, WT, Friends Groups)
c.	Encouraging local community involvement in the management of nature reserves (Partners: NWT, RBC, Friends Groups, PCs, TCV, SNG, WT)
d.	Using Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping as an aid to making nature reserves bigger, better and more connected. (Partners: NBAG, NWT, RBC, Friends Groups)

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

a.	Promoting the sympathetic protection and management of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). (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 as appropriate for their sites. (Partners: NFaW, NWT, NFU, RuBOP, CLA, NE)
c.	Encouraging wildlife friendly management of buildings, corporate landscaping, public open space, school grounds and private gardens. Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, CRT, EA, PCs)
d.	Supporting programs to increase the numbers, size, quality and range of relevant Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan 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 and designation of Notified Road Verges where appropriate. (Partners: NCC, RBC, NWT)

4) Support continuing surveying, monitoring and reporting of Rushcliffe's biodiversity, by:

a.	Supporting the work of the Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre and the Local Wildlife Sites survey and monitoring programme. (Partners: NBGRC, NWT, NCC, RBC)
b.	Supporting species survey programmes, as well as encouraging local initiatives to record wildlife. (Partners: NBGRC, NWT, RBC, specialist wildlife groups)
c.	Supporting the work of the Notts Biodiversity Action Group and reporting against LBAP targets. (Partners: All)

5) Raise awareness of nature conservation issues by:

a.	Publicising the work of local nature conservation groups, as well as wildlife related issues. (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 and Adult Education. (Partners: NWT, RBC)
c.	Promoting contacts amongst groups and organisations associated with nature conservation locally. (Partners: RBC, NWT, SNG, NBAG, Friends Groups, PCs)
d.	Promoting access to wildlife and countryside, specifically promoting disabled access where appropriate. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT)

6) Seek to influence the impact of development on wildlife, 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 both in terms of protection and mitigation. (Partners: RBC, NWT, CPRE, NCC, NBAG, EA)
b.	Ensuring that opportunities are taken to benefit people and wildlife through the design of buildings and green infra-structure and seek to Implement Natural England's ANGSt standards and the Woodland Trust standard where appropriate. (Partners: RBC, NCC, CPRE, CLA, NE, WT)
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, NCC, EA, CPRE, NWT, TVIDB, TRT)
e.	Seeking to influence Regional, National and European decision making to promote wildlife friendly policies. (Partners: NCC, RBC, NE, NWT, CPRE, EA, NDLNP)
f.	Promoting the use of native local provenance planting (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.	Developing a marketing plan to promote the issues and outputs of the strategy (Partners: RNCSIG)
d.	Reviewing the strategy during 2020, or sooner if appropriate. (Partners: RNCSIG)

15) KEY TARGET INDICATORS

The following criteria are to be used as an indicator of how much progress has been made in the various sections of the Aims and Objectives. They are intended to be measurable and achievable, but are not intended to cover every possible measure.

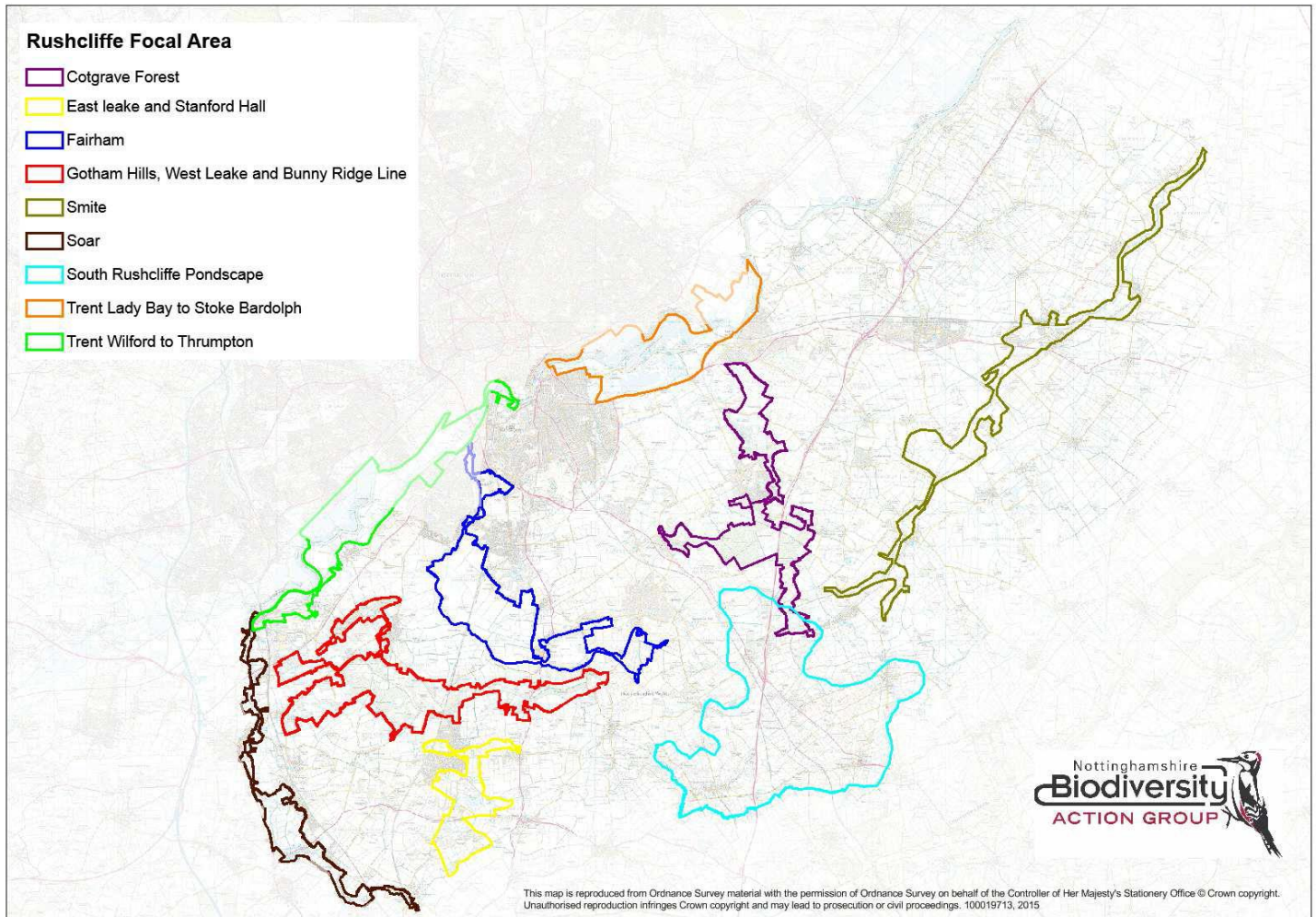
1. % of nature reserves (as listed in our 'Nature of Rushcliffe Annual Reports') with current management plans. Target = 100% sites (Objective 2)
2. Hours of practical work carried out on nature reserves by volunteers. Target = Maintain or increase year on year across the Borough (Objective 2)
3. Increased proportion of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) managed in an appropriate manner. Target = Increase year on year from a base of 32.1% at March 2015 (Objective 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 (Objective 3/6)
6. % of nature reserves with wildlife related public events (at least one per year). Target = 70% of sites with at least one event per year (Objective 5)
7. % of Parishes / WB Wards with publicly accessible natural green spaces (currently 39% in 2015). Target = 3 more parishes/wards with at least one accessible natural green space by 2020. (Objective 6)
8. No of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Target = No net loss of Local Wildlife Sites (Objective 1/2/3/4/6)
9. No. of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Target = maintain or increase number as appropriate (currently 261) (Objective 6)
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 2016 and 2020 (Objective 1/2/3/4)

Indicator managed outside the partnership relating to Rushcliffe

1. % of SSSI units in favourable condition. Natural England is responsible for notifying SSSIs, ensuring they are managed appropriately and assessing and monitoring their condition. There is a target of 95% of SSSI in favourable or recovering condition, set out in the England Biodiversity 2020 Strategy. In 2015 in Rushcliffe 25% of SSSI's are in favourable condition and 70% in recovering condition, with 5% in unfavourable condition. Further details are available online at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk> (Objective 2/3)

Appendix 1

Areas identified within the Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping exercise (2015) with good opportunities for enhancement and creation of linkages



The full Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping Report is available online at http://www.nottsbag.org.uk/pdfs/RushcliffeBOMReport2015_V3.pdf

 <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 open spaces in the area. This includes a number of wildlife sites (including Wilwell Cutting, Wilford Claypits, Meadow Covert, Sharpill 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 Civic Centre Pavilion Road West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 5FE</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

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.