

THE NAYLAND MEADOW PROJECT



Background

In March 2004, following an appeal for contributions, the Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society purchased 16.98 acres of land bordered to the north by the River Stour and to the south by a strip of land owned by Bunting & Sons adjacent to Horkesley Road.

The Nayland with Wissington Land Company Limited, now a registered charity, was formed to own and manage this water meadow in perpetuity. The sum of £65,000 was raised to purchase this land and grateful thanks are due to the more than ninety individuals and organisations who supported the appeal.

Fishing

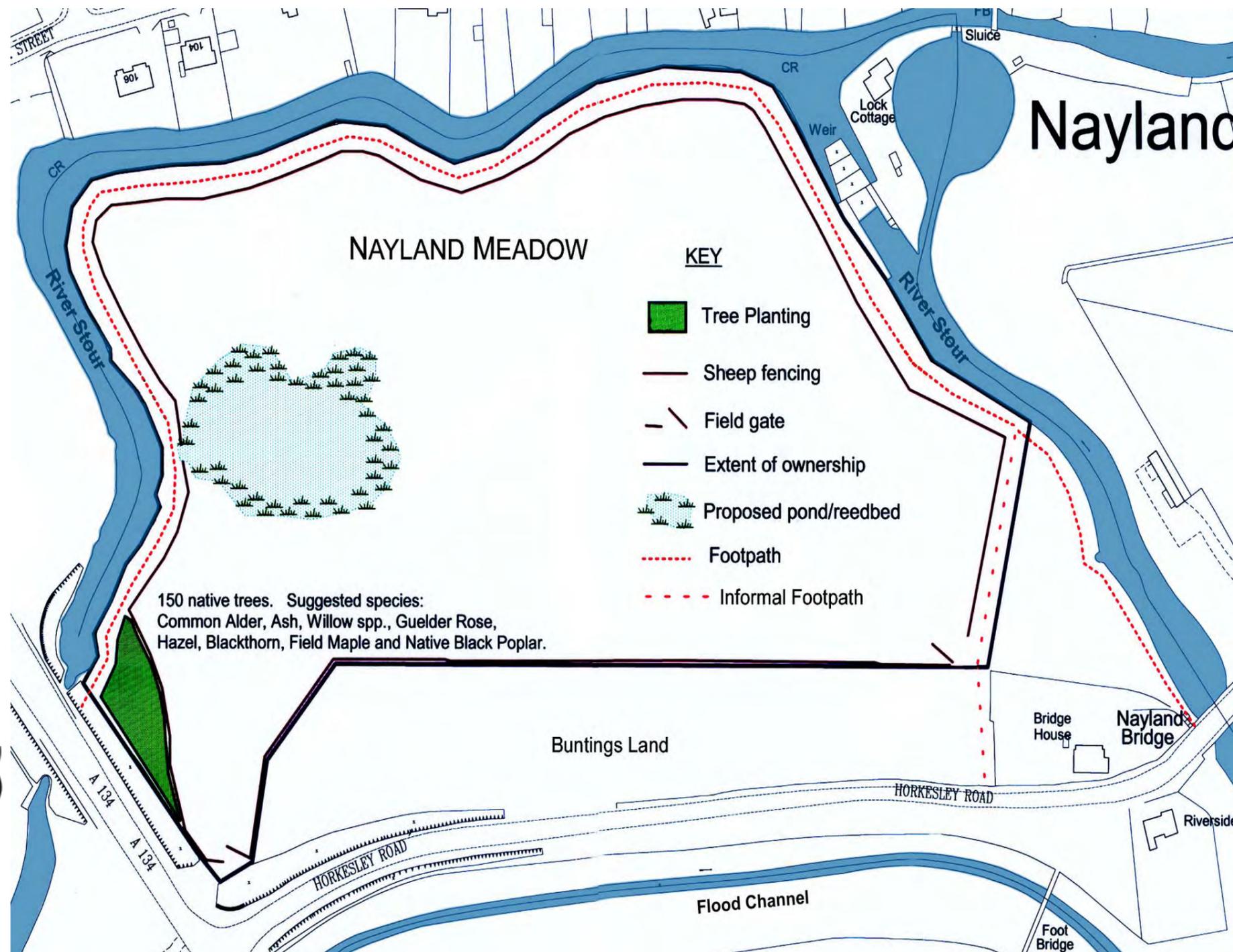
The fishing, which now belongs to the Land Company, has been made exclusively available to all residents of the parish of Nayland and Wiston.

Arable Reversion

After discussion it was decided that the land should revert to grassland under the Defra Suffolk River Valleys Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme.

This will involve seeding with a suitable grass/conservation mix, a single hay cut followed by sheep grazing annually.

Grants for fencing the land, on the inside of the public footpath, were obtained from Defra and the Suffolk Environmental Trust assisted by Babergh District Council, who have also funded a small area of planting as shown on the plan.



Pond Scheme

The Environment Agency approached us with a view to creating a permanent wetland habitat and pond. This "back water" habitat is identified by the Environment Agency as important for maintaining fish stocks.

Planning permission has recently been granted for this work, which is expected to commence in early February, weather permitting. The proposed shallow pond will be linked to the River Stour by a short channel (culvert beneath the footpath) and surrounded by reedbeds. (Plants sourced locally.)

The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project will also be involved in habitat improvement work. To compensate for the loss of flood plain capacity a shallow scrape will be created on the opposite side of the meadow (beside the weir). The spoil will be used to widen the footpath along the riverbank but not to raise it. This £30,000 scheme will be jointly funded by Defra and the Environment Agency at no cost to us. Maintenance will be carried out by the EA assisted by the Dedham Vale Project and local volunteers.

The Future

By next year, we hope that a wonderful new wetland habitat will be attracting birds, insects, and amphibians to enrich our local environment, and this land will have reverted to its original nature as a water meadow in the Stour Valley.

Should anyone wish to make a donation towards ongoing costs of the project, please contact the Hon Treasurer, 16 Fen Street. Contributions which attract gift aid will give us an extra 28 pence in the pound. We would be grateful for your support.