



THE NAYLAND MEADOW PROJECT

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Nayland society wants to buy 17-acre field in village conservation area

Conservation group backs bid for land

by Pat Bray

A PROPOSAL by a village conservation society to submit a bid for a 17-acre field has received unanimous backing from members.

Nayland with Wisseton Conservation Society chairman John Alexander told last week's meeting the parish council had decided not to go ahead with buying the land despite £43,000 being pledged by the society towards its purchase.

In September when the society was asked by the council to help finance the project the response had been phenomenal with £35,000 being pledged in ten days.

"This demonstrated the degree of feeling among members to protect the land between the River Stour and Horkesley Road," he said.

The council had voted against the purchase apparently because the society's offer was conditional on the field being kept agricultural and taking out a loan would increase the parish project.

Mr Alexander added the field lay at the heart of the village conservation area and the society had an obligation to see it remained as it was. Allowing the land to fall into multi-ownership would destroy Nayland's southern landscape setting.

Members voted unanimously in favour of making an offer and Mr Alexander said he was optimistic about the outcome.

"I'm hopeful that by the time the money has to be on the table we won't need any loans," he added.



Fencing:

It was necessary to fence the meadow to protect the sheep and any grassland nesting birds from the users of the public footpath which borders the land on the west, north and eastern boundaries. Grants were applied for to fund the provision of gates and fencing and a small area of planting in the south west corner. The sum of £3,400 was obtained from the Suffolk Environmental Trust, with Babergh District Council (as a third party) contributing 10% funding to the Landfill Operator. Fencing took place in March/April 2005.

The Nayland Meadow Project

Background:

In September 2003 about 17 acres of land in Nayland was put up for sale by Rix Farms. The land is bordered to the north by the river Stour and to the south by Bunting & Sons' strip of land next to Horkesley Road (see plan above).

At first the Parish Council considered purchasing the land on behalf of the village and the Conservation Society, at their request, commenced a fundraising campaign for half the guide price of £70,000. However it was not found possible for the Parish Council to purchase the land and the Conservation Society took the decision to go it alone in October.

A vigorous campaign was launched to raise the necessary funds and through the generosity of over 90 individuals, assisted by Gift Aid when appropriate, the sum of £65,000 was raised which was the price agreed after negotiations between the Society's Chairman and the vendors. Completion took place in February 2004. This is by far the largest project ever undertaken by the Society and would not have been possible without the generous support and help of very many people. The Committee is extremely grateful to everyone.

The Nayland with Wisseton Land Company Limited (a company limited by guarantee) was formed in March 2004 to manage the Nayland Meadow Project under the auspices of the Conservation Society. There are four trustees.



February 2005: The Pond takes shape.

THE NAYLAND MEADOW PROJECT

Background

In March 2004, following an appeal for contributions, the Nayland with Wisseton 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 Wisseton 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.

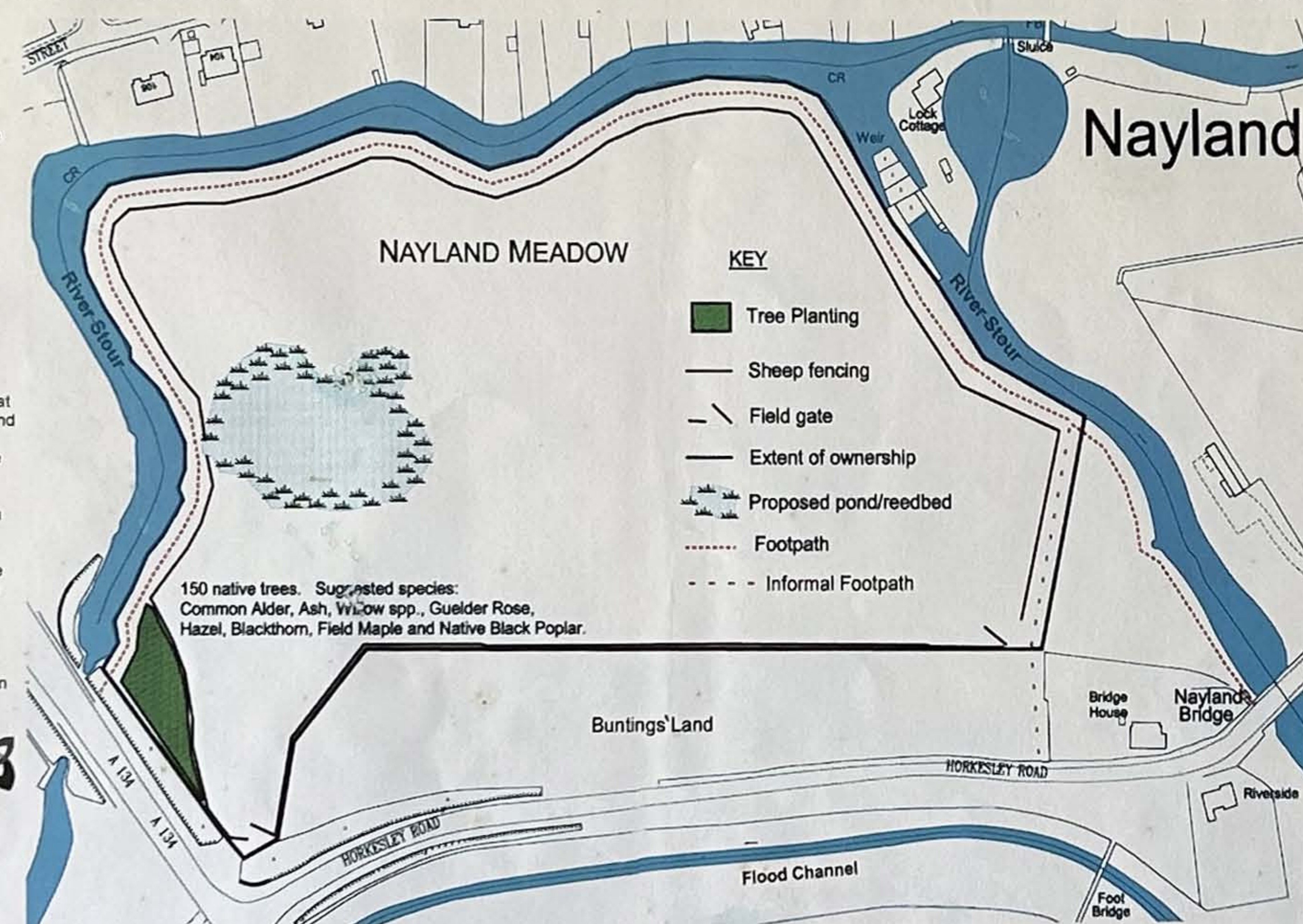
Fishing

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.

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September 2005: Reeds from elsewhere in the River Stour are transplanted into the Pond by Peter Ennis of the Dedham Vale Project



8pm Tuesday 23rd August 2005
The first flock of sheep arrive in the Meadow



The Wildflower Belt was created in 2006 following a generous donation to cover the cost of selected seeds

2012: Purchase of Lot 3, Thrift Farm in association with Exclusive Inns (owners of The Anchor Inn, Nayland)

The land, which adjoins the Nayland Meadow, is being grazed and 1/3rd is used for car parking by The Anchor on a seasonal temporary basis



April 2014: "Sheep may safely graze" on the two Meadows

East Anglian Daily Times, Friday, March 18, 2005 www.eadt.co.uk

Residents' cash effort saves riverside meadow

A FIELD in the heart of a picturesque Suffolk village has been transformed into a conservation area - thanks to the fundraising efforts of local residents.

More than 90 people supported an appeal launched by the Nayland with Wisseton Conservation Society to buy 17 acres of riverside meadow.

The land, which was put up for sale 18 months ago, was converted into an arable field at the beginning of Second World War.

But now the plot has been transformed back to its former glory, to be preserved for future generations of the village.

The conservation society launched its campaign to raise £65,000 amid concerns

'Everyone worked really hard to raise the money'

the village would lose the field if it was bought from someone outside of the area. A further £30,000 was then secured from local authorities, to seed and fence the land, plant trees, build a footpath and create a large pond and reedbed.

It is now hoped that new species of birds and insects will be attracted to the wetland, turning it into a conservation and wildlife area to be enjoyed by people in the village.

Society chairman John Alexander, from Nayland, said members became determined to save the field and banded together to raise the money.

"When the land was put up for sale, we thought how lovely it would be to turn back the clock and change it to the way it used to be and we just knew straight away that action had to be taken," he said.



GREENGOLD SAVIOURS: From left, Ray Peck and Adrian Pearl from the Environment Agency, chairman of the Nayland and Wisseton Conservation Society John Alexander and Andrea Carver are among the many people who supported an appeal to buy 17 acres of riverside meadow and return it back to its former glory for future generations

"It seemed like an impossible task but everyone worked really hard to raise the money." The Environment Agency has now started work on digging the area to provide a haven for wildlife.

Photo: LUCY TAYLOR

Defra - the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - and the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Countryside Project, have also helped to fund the project.

Nayland Conservation Meadow: Project highlights

