

Suffolk Coast & Heaths

# newsletter

Autumn 2011

Suffolk Coast  
& Heaths  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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## [£1m awarded for pioneering 'Touching the Tide' project](#)

We're delighted to report that our project 'Touching the Tide – living with cultural and natural change on Suffolk's Heritage Coast' has received a stage 1 pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).



Touching the Tide will inspire and engage people with Suffolk's Heritage Coast, enabling them to play an active and informed role in shaping the future of this exceptional landscape. The project will focus on the past, the present and the future to improve understanding and appreciation of the area,

capturing and telling stories about the changing coastal landscape.



The total project value is just under £1 million over 4 years, with the full 90% of the HLF grant set aside. 10% of this grant is available now to undertake a one-year project development phase towards a phase 2 submission which, if approved, will enable us to draw down the full grant.

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## We need your vote! AONB shortlisted for Natwest Community Force Award



The AONB has been shortlisted to receive up to £6000 of funding as part of the Natwest Community Force Award. If successful, the AONB plans to use the funding to reinvigorate and revitalise its volunteer activities, providing volunteers with much-needed equipment and increasing the number of Coast and Estuary Wardens and Beachwatch volunteers.

However, which organisations receive funding is down to you – only the top three projects voted for in each Community Force area will win the award.

Please show us your support and [vote for us!](#)

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## National Improvement Area Application

Following the launch of the Government's [Natural Environment White Paper](#), a number of organisations from the AONB partnership met to discuss applying to become one of 12 pilot [National Improvement Areas](#) (NIAs). NIAs are large, discrete localities where organisations come together to deliver a shared ecological vision.

All organisations who met were in favour of applying, and Suffolk Wildlife Trust will be drafting and submitting an NIA stage 1 application. The area of focus will be from the South Sandlings to the fringes of Ipswich. Priorities include community engagement activities, habitat management and targeted farm advice, amongst others.

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## UK National Ecosystem Assessment

A significant amount of the evidence base for the Natural Environment White Paper came from the [UK National Ecosystem Assessment](#) (NEA), launched in June this year. The NEA is the first ever analysis of the benefits that the UK's natural environment provides both to society and our economic prosperity. The results from the NEA strengthen arguments for protecting and enhancing our natural environment, and will be used by Government to direct future policy.

You can see Professor Bob Watson, Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor, explaining the UK NEA [here on YouTube](#).

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## National Planning Policy Framework proves controversial

As you may be aware, the Government are looking to reduce 1000 pages of national planning policy down to just 60. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is currently available [in draft](#), and is open to consultation until 17 October 2011.

Whilst existing national Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) policy has made its way into the NPPF, there are some questions around the extent to which the NPPF favours 'sustainable development'. A [challenge document](#) has been created in response to the framework by the South East and East of England Protected Landscapes, highlighting the importance of an effective planning system to the preservation and conservation of protected landscapes.

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### Inspiring future generations – new AONB coastal fact sheets for 7-11 year olds

Outdoor education can inspire young individuals for a lifetime, so we're getting together with our conservation partners in Suffolk to encourage teachers to get children out and about. As part of this initiative we're launching our new AONB coastal fact sheets for 7-11 year olds. For a sneak preview of these fact sheets please visit the [AONB website](#).



The Outdoor Learning Event for Primary Schools will be held April 16<sup>th</sup> 2012, bookings are to be made by contacting Suffolk Wildlife Trust on 01473 890089 or by email at [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org) by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012. There are limited places available, so book now!

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### Wires go underground in Chillesford

Work to remove nearly a mile and a half of power lines from the landscape between Chillesford and Butley is now complete thanks to a project worth £342,000. Engineers have installed replacement underground cables, allowing the overhead power lines to be switched off and removed, along with 25 wooden support poles between the two villages. BT Openreach have also played an important part by switching some of their overhead wires and poles and taking them underground.



The cable undergrounding scheme is being funded by a special allowance, granted by electricity industry regulator Ofgem, to enable the removal of power lines in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Unit has been working closely with UK Power Networks to deliver this project.

Meanwhile, plans continue to underground more wires and the next project scheduled to commence late 2011 has been proposed by Erwarton Parish Meeting. This scheme will see 3.8km of 11kV line buried underground and will not only benefit to the visual amenity of this part of the Shotley peninsula, but will

really help wildlife too. The site, on the valley slope of the Stour estuary is an important wildlife corridor for birds, making use of a nearby reservoir and permanent grassland on the valley slopes. Sadly, the lines have been responsible for a number of bird strikes over the years; particularly involving swans and so, taking the lines underground will remove this hazard permanently.

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## Estuaries Update



If you've walked along Orford Quay during September, you'll have seen an exciting new project underway to strengthen the river wall and improve the footpath surface. This innovative solution is a first for the UK and has been developed with the community and Hawes Associates using design features used in New Orleans and Holland. Our Estuaries Officer has coordinated this partnership approach with support from Suffolk County Council, The Internal Drainage Board, Environment Agency and Alde and Ore Futures. In a parallel development, the Alde and Ore landowners have commissioned a wildlife audit of the estuary hinterland to

inform future discussions about the management of the river valley.

During a recent flurry of work on river walls being progressed by the Deben Estuary Partnership, a wildlife survey in Martlesham Creek has identified one of Britain's rarest snails, the Narrow-mouth Whorl Snail (*Vertigo angustior*) in the area, as well as water voles and reptiles. Wall work is still going ahead with great care and supervision to ensure the safeguarding of its wildlife and habitats.

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## Volunteers Update

Numerous events have taken place over the past few months, including an opportunity for our volunteers to learn about vegetated shingle at Shingle Street from two of their fellow volunteers, Laurie Forsyth and Brian Johnson, who shared their wealth of knowledge about the area and its habitat. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, volunteer wardens also had the opportunity to attend our 'September Birds' training at Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Trimley Marshes Reserve in conjunction with Mick Wright.

At least 20 Suffolk teams (almost 500 volunteers) took part in the Beachwatch Big Weekend 2011, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> September. Detail about the various events will follow in due course. Beachwatch activities in general have continued, including our summer and autumn surveys at Bawdsey, both of which were well supported by volunteers. Reports of paraffin wax along the Suffolk coast have subsided since June, however, large quantities have been found along the Norfolk coast. Frustratingly, the mystery remains unsolved, but in conjunction with other organisations we are continuing our investigations, and are now compiling a list of all reports.



We've also published our [Coast and Estuary Volunteer Wardens Annual Report 2010](#), summarising the incredible achievements that have been made since the launch of the volunteer wardens scheme in June 2009.

Volunteer recruitment in all areas of our work has continued to increase, but we're still looking for more people to get involved. If you're interested in volunteering opportunities with the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, please contact Nick Marsh, 01394 384948 [nick.marsh@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:nick.marsh@suffolk.gov.uk)

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### **AONB has a new team member**

We're pleased to welcome Jemima Thompson to the AONB team. Jemima is our new Communications Officer, and brings with her particular knowledge on social media, which she'll be using to develop the AONB's digital engagement methods. Watch out for us on Twitter in the near future!



Jemima lives in Ipswich and has been a National Management Trainee at Suffolk County Council for the past two years. She's undertaken a number of placements across the organisation, including an external role as Recruitment Manager at the Eastern Enterprise Hub. Jemima will be working part-time at the AONB unit whilst continuing with her role at the Hub.

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### **Contact the AONB unit**

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If you have not received this newsletter directly and would like to, please [email us](#).