

GENERAL ELECTION 2024



Norfolk Nature, Who Cares?



The
Wildlife
Trusts

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Norfolk Nature, Who Cares?

Why do you love Norfolk? Most of us love to live here because our county feels wild and special. Even today, Norfolk is rich in important but fragile habitats, including Broadland reedbeds, West Norfolk fens, North Norfolk saltmarshes, Breckland Heaths, wild spaces in our villages and towns and globally significant chalk streams. And many iconic but threatened species – barbastelle bat, swallowtail butterfly, stone curlew, bittern, northern pool frog, fen orchid, crane and more – live here in nationally important numbers.

Norfolk is a farming county too. More than three quarters of our land is farmed. For generations, Norfolk families have tended and depended on our soils, our water and our climate – on nature itself – for their livelihoods and for all our food.

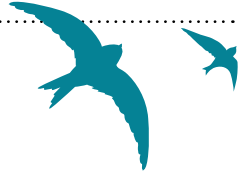
But all this is in danger. Norfolk’s nature, our beautiful landscape, our agricultural economy, and our people’s health are increasingly threatened by climate change, by land-use pressures and by unsustainable development. The time for action – for demanding an abundant, healthy future for nature and for people, side by side – is now.

At Norfolk Wildlife Trust we have a vision of *A Wilder Norfolk for All* in which thriving nature and healthy habitats – on land, in wetlands and in the sea – supports resilient communities, prosperous businesses and abundant wildlife. We see Norfolk as a hub for a thriving national and international nature-based economy. And we see you – our members, our supporters and our friends – as partners in our vision.

We are asking Prospective Parliamentary Candidates and parties in Norfolk to help us realise this vision and support our three priorities for nature.

The time for action — for demanding an abundant, healthy future for nature and for people, side by side — is now.





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Bring back Norfolk's wildlife

One in six species is at risk of extinction in the UK. Norfolk is no exception. Our wealth of varied habitat supports 417 Priority Species¹, which urgently need our help. To halt and reverse the collapse of our natural world, we need the government to put nature into recovery by protecting and restoring at least 30% of land and water for nature by 2030. We have the means to do this, and now it's time for action.

How can government achieve this?

Protect what we already have:

Prevent further habitat loss by ensuring new development both protects and enhances nature. This includes rethinking our approach to sustainable transport and abandoning the destructive currently proposed Norwich Western Link road.

Improve what we already have:

Increase funding for protection and restoration of our most precious habitats such as meadows, ancient woodlands, chalk rivers and heaths.

Create more space for nature:

Increase national funding for wildlife-friendly farming to at least £4.4 billion per year² and link this to Local Nature Recovery Strategy Priorities to ensure the agricultural transition is fair to farmers and better for wildlife, while providing healthier and more affordable food for all.

Connect wild spaces: Improve funding and protection for simple features such as hedgerows and farm ponds at landscape-scale within our farmed landscape.

Prioritise pollinators: To save the future of insects, and all life that depends on them, halve pesticide use by 2030 and ban bee-killing and human-health-harming neonicotinoids.

Integrate climate change in policy:

Help nature adapt to climate change by integrating climate change across all UK Government policies.



© Steve Evans

One in six species is at risk of extinction in the UK.



End river pollution and tackle water scarcity

Toxic levels of sewage and agricultural run-off, unsustainable groundwater abstraction and damage to our wetland landscape, has left our rivers in desperate need of help. Norfolk has over 420km of chalk rivers and streams³ but the health of these world-renowned habitats is at great risk. If we want healthy rivers, then action must be taken.

How can government achieve this?

Halve nutrient pollution from farming, sewage and development by 2030, with incentives for farmers and investment in removing nutrients from sewage as well as properly resourcing enforcement agencies so they can monitor and inspect polluters and enforce penalties upon those who break the law.

Invest in creating and repairing wild habitats to provide a natural solution to flooding and drought, which will protect people's homes and businesses, and improve water quality.

Invest in a holistic approach to managing water resources in Norfolk to ensure that there is enough water for nature, people, farming and business.



Norfolk has over 420km of chalk rivers and streams but the health of these world-renowned habitats is at great risk.

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Let nature help



Spending time in nature boosts physical and mental health, and healthy habitats protect us from the impacts of climate change, boost our food security and underpin our economic prosperity. We must ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to restorative natural places in their neighbourhood (such as our new urban nature reserve at Sweet Briar Marshes in Norwich), and that natural solutions are implemented at scale across every community.

How can government achieve this?

Fund and integrate green prescribing into health and social care services in the community.

Improve access to nature for all by connecting landscapes with people and increasing green and blue spaces in urban areas so that everyone is within 15 minutes' walk of high-quality natural space.

Introduce new statutory guidance to deliver **natural history and outdoor learning for all**, to ensure our schools support happier, more confident children who understand their impact on our natural world.

Prioritise natural flood mitigation solutions to help protect communities and natural sites from the impacts of flooding.



We must ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to restorative natural places in their neighbourhood.

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- If you're a **candidate**, we ask you to pledge your support for our three priorities for nature.
- If you're a **voter** and are worried about nature, you're not alone. A recent poll by The Wildlife Trusts found that the public think the main parties need to be doing more on nature and climate and almost 6 out of 10 people consider environmental issues to be at least as important as other issues facing the country.

**Please vote with nature in mind
this general election**



¹ State of the Natural Environment in Norfolk 2018 – 2019, Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service
² An assessment of the financial resources needed for environmental land management in the UK; A report for the RSPB, the National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts, 2023
³ The State of England's Chalk Rivers (Environment Agency, 2004)

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