



The proposed Fens Reservoir, in Cambridgeshire. Image: Anglian Water

Green Futures new infrastructure and historic gardens in the East of England



Historic England



Funded by
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- Who we are
- Why do we need this project?
- What NSIPs will we be looking at?
- What do we want to achieve?
- Why get involved?
- Questions



What is the Green Futures project?

- Researching and recording historic designed landscapes (HDLs) potentially affected by major infrastructure projects in the East of England.
- It will contribute to the protection of HDLs, whilst helping us all be more familiar with infrastructure projects.
- It will run until Autumn 2026 and train existing and new volunteers from in the East. Training will be shared nationally and free for anyone to attend.

What are NSIPs?

- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are projects over a certain size
- So big and nationally important that permission to build them needs to be given at a national level
- Apply to Planning Inspectorate (not local authority) for Development Consent Order



Image courtesy of [Ian Taylor](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/4632925) [geograph.org.uk/p/4632925](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/4632925)

Why do we need NSIPs?

- Categories of NSIPs include: Energy, Transport, Water & Waste
- The East has highest number of NSIP applications (50) including:
 - Solar energy schemes
 - Wind farms
 - Reservoirs
 - Road and rail
 - Waste-water
 - all associated pylons, cables, pipelines etc.



How might they impact Historic Designed Landscapes?

- NSIPs are likely to impact historic parks and gardens – both directly and in the setting
- Historic England is a Statutory Environmental Body (SEB) for NSIPs
- Non-designated designed landscapes are less understood and more at risk
- Planners, developers and consultees like HE need information on the significances of HPGs, to assess potential impact of NSIPs and mitigate risk



Volunteer from Suffolk's Unforgettable Garden Story Project, funded by Historic England

The Gardens Trust

- Only UK charity solely dedicated to protecting historic designed landscapes
- 1200 members + 8000 members of County Gardens Trusts
- We host events, talks & lectures
- Publish *Garden History* journal
- A **Statutory Consultee** in the planning process



Blaise Castle, Sharing Repton Project



<https://thegardenstrust.org/what-we-do/>



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Suffolk's Unforgettable Garden Story

Over 20 volunteers researched more than 20 parks and gardens in Suffolk from 2022 – 2024, funded by Historic England.

It highlighted the value of Suffolk's historic designed landscapes and resulted in the registration of 7 new sites on Historic England's National Heritage List for England.



Nottinghamshire's Garden Story

9 volunteers researched 8 non-designated landscapes from 2023-2024.

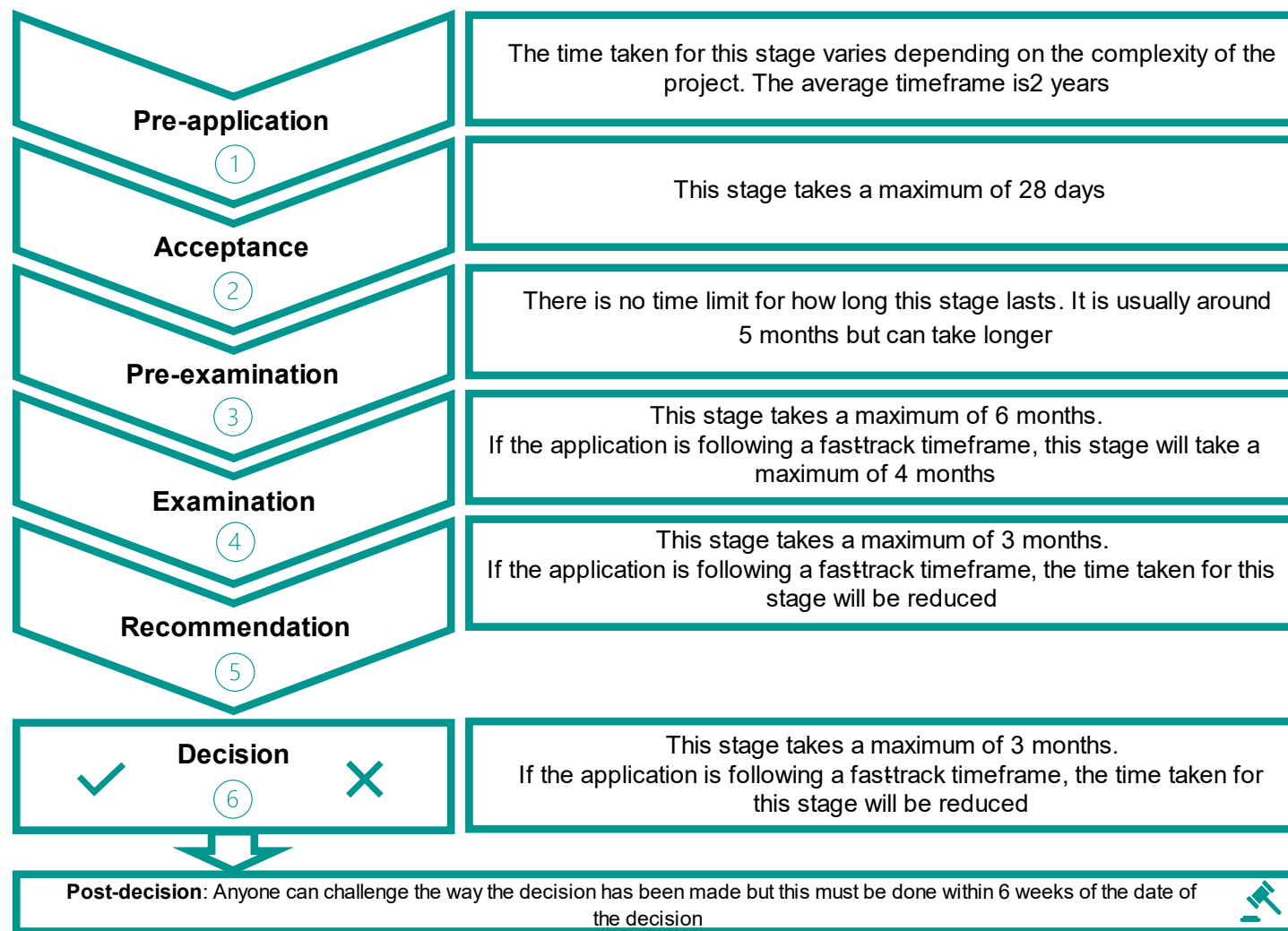
3 of the volunteers joined Notts Gardens Trust and over 100 took part in online history & research methods training.

Engaged with 120 local people during outreach events.



Image courtesy of www.freeworldmaps.net/euro/kingdom/eastofengland/
 Right: www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-projects-the-stages-of-the-nsip-process-and-how-to-have-your-say#the-stages-of-the-nsip-process

NSIP Process



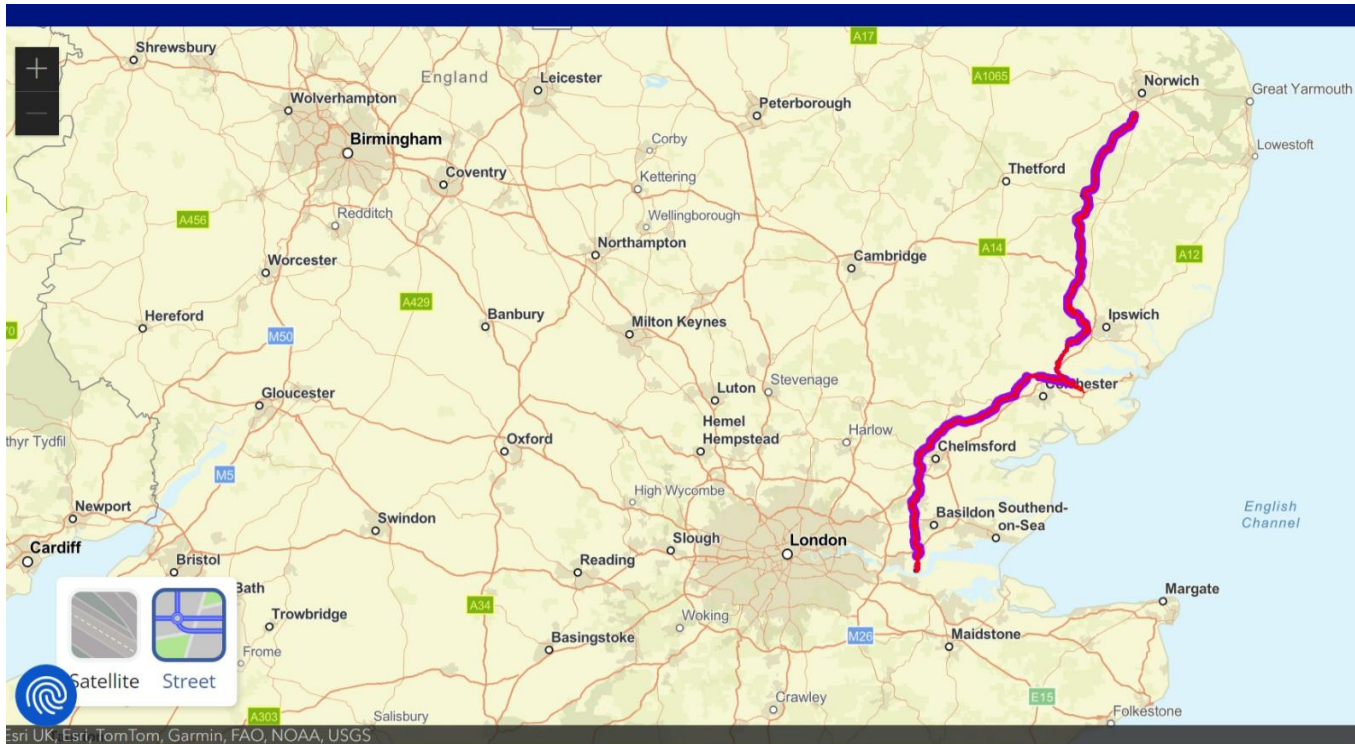


Image: <https://norwichtotilburymap.nationalgrid.com/>

NSIPs in the East



- Norwich to Tilbury – National Grid upgrade and connection to offshore windfarm
- Pylons and underground cables, from offshore windfarm
- Approx. 26 historic parks and gardens affected, mostly non-designated

Image: https://s0.geograph.org.uk/geophotos/02/53/90/2539024_8260e1ab_1024x1024.jpg



The proposed Fens Reservoir, in Cambridgeshire. Image: Anglian Water

Right: water channel, courtesy of Anglian Water

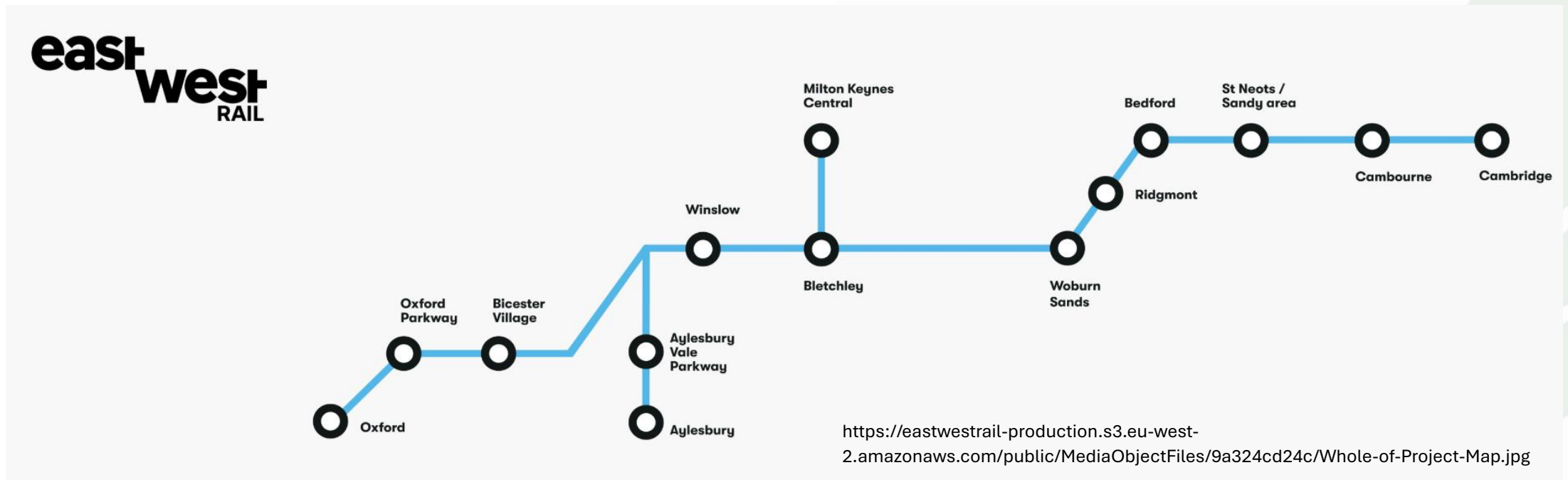
NSIPs in the East

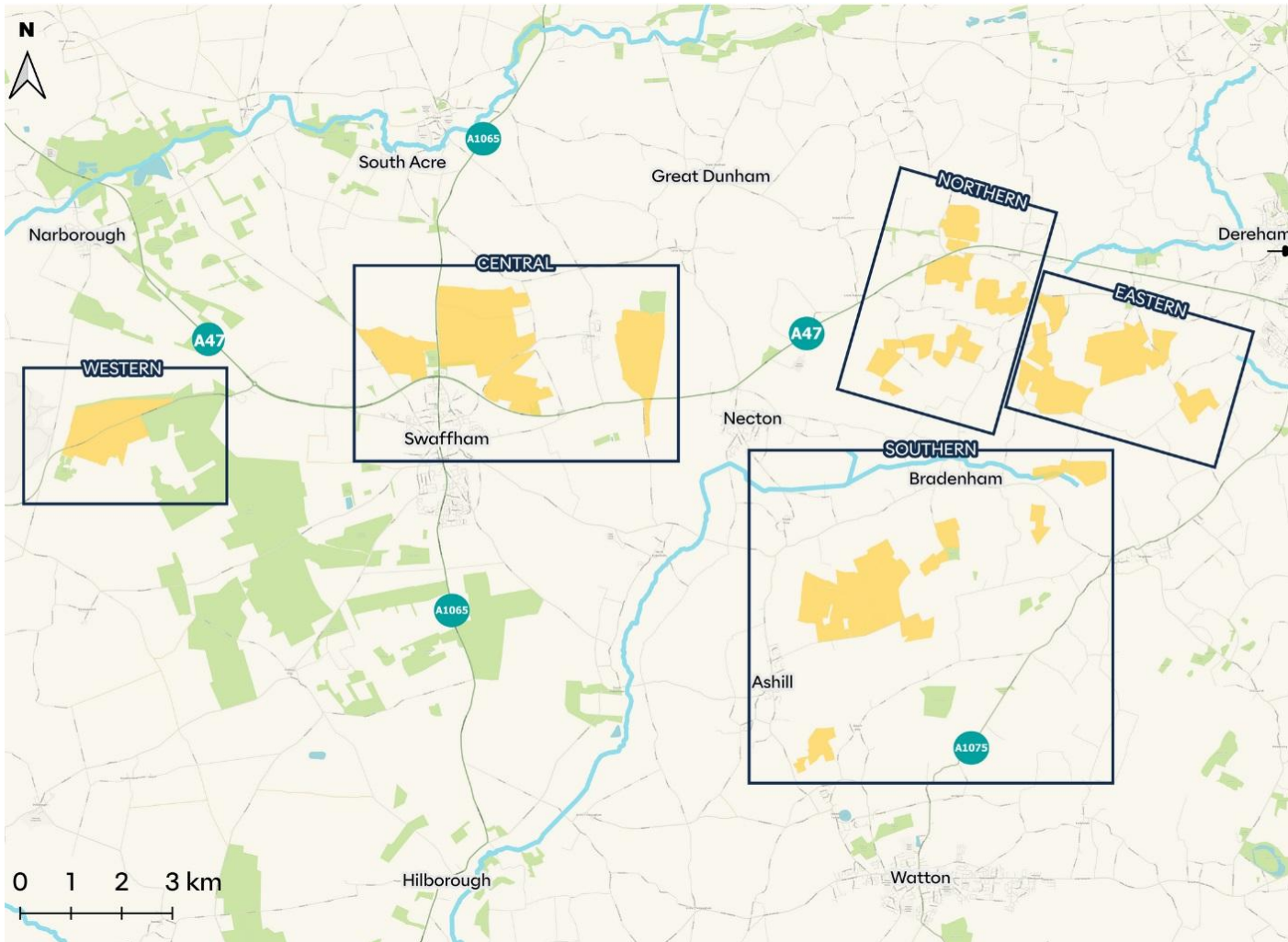


- Fens Reservoir – Cambridgeshire
- Waterbody, pipeline and channels
- At least 4 historic parks and gardens affected

NSIPs in the East

- East-West Rail new line, Bedford to Cambridge
- Preferred route may impact multiple parks and gardens





Images: <https://uk.rwe.com/project-proposals/high-grove-solar-farm/>

NSIPs in the East



- High Grove Solar – Norfolk
- 4000 acres, over five sites
- Green energy for 363,000 homes a year

What does the project hope to achieve?

Improve understanding of historic designed landscapes potentially affected by NSIPs which will better equip Historic England to respond

We will better understand how to **champion historic designed landscapes** affected by NSIPs, alongside other organisations

To **raise awareness** of the importance of historic parks and gardens in the East of England

To **strengthen our impact** by recruiting and training new volunteers and supporters across the country

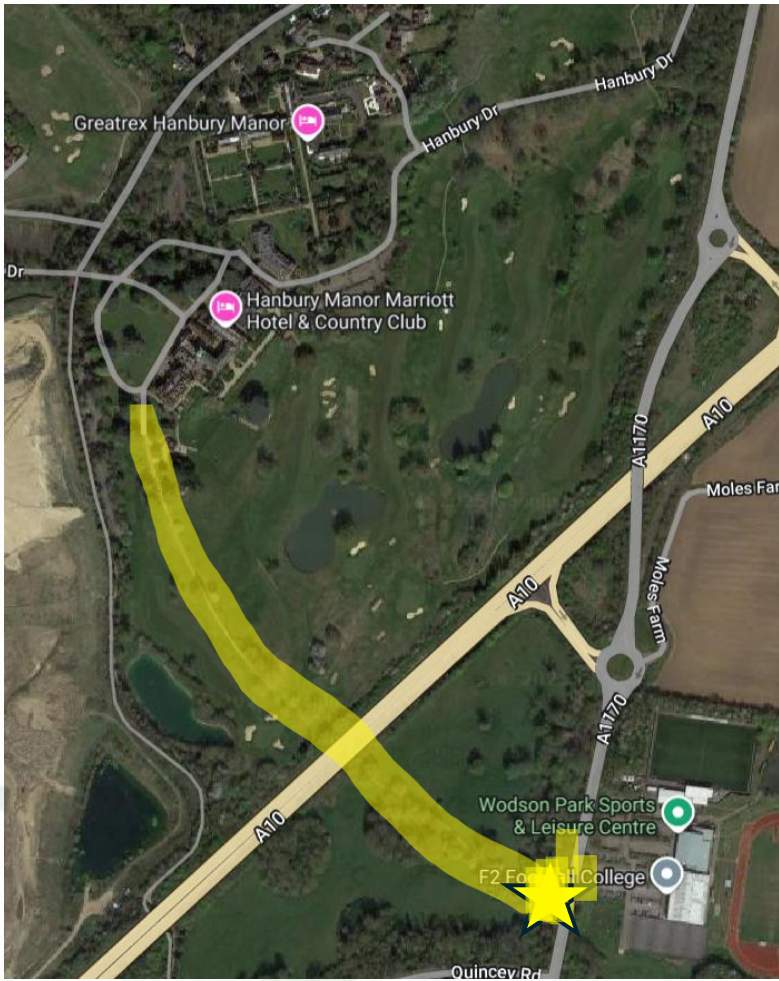
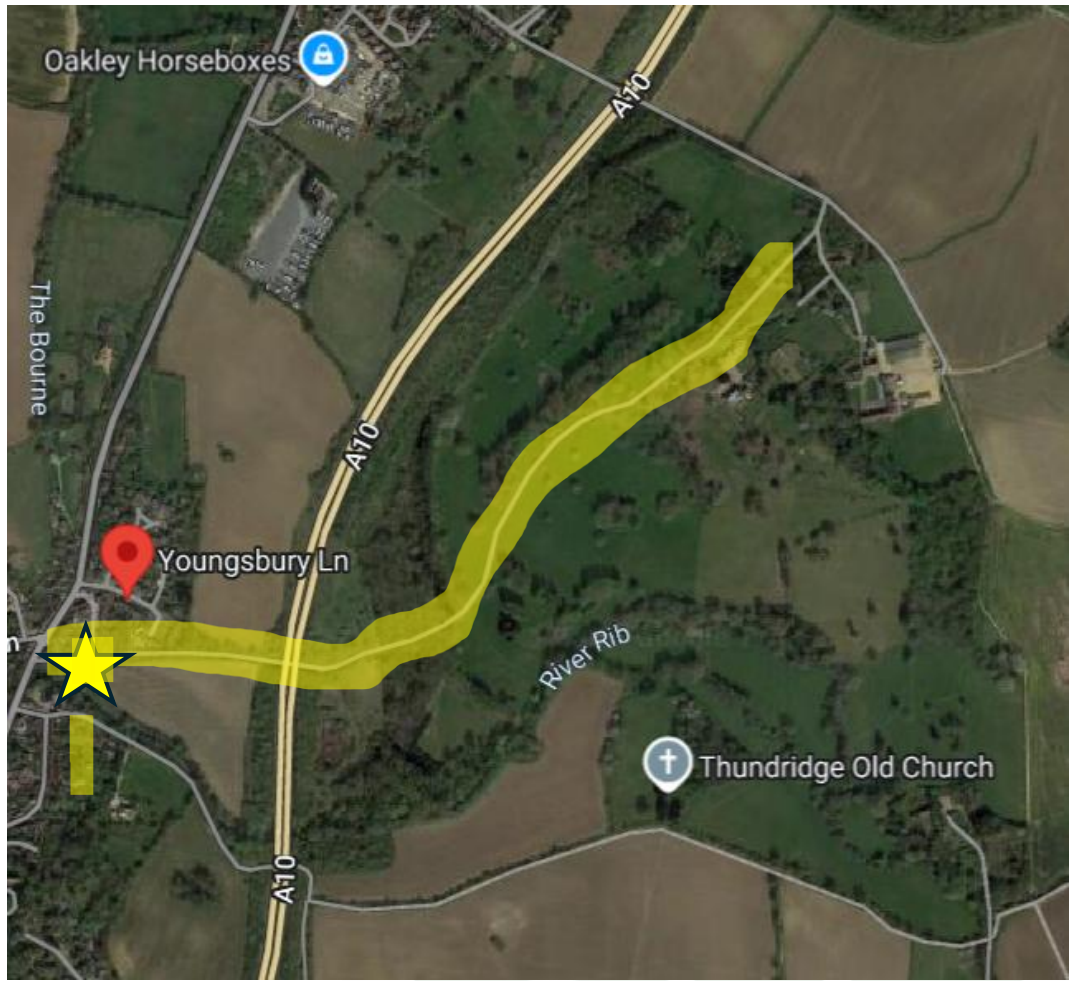
What difference can we make?

- **Sunnica solar farm, at Chippenham Park, Cambridge** – greater buffer zones created to protect key parts of the historic landscape



Image <https://uk.rwe.com/project-proposals/high-grove-solar-farm/>

A10 Ware/Wadesmill bypass
Youngsbury Park & Poles Park, Hertfordshire – approach drive retained/severed

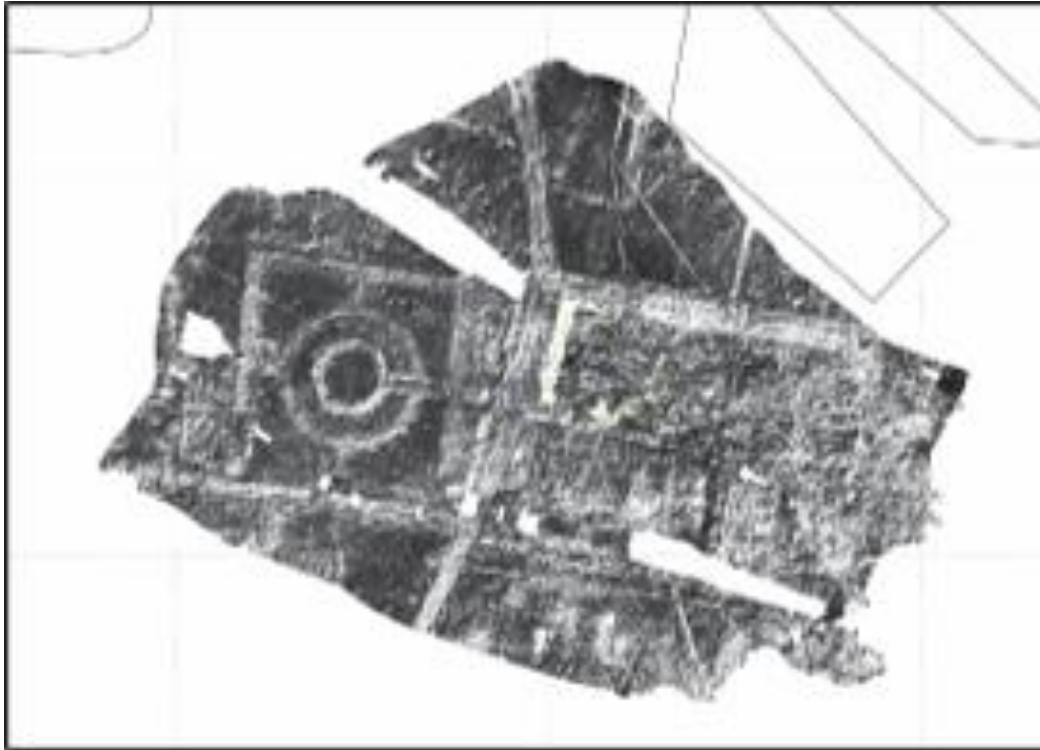


Images: www.google.co.uk/maps Left Youngsbury Park, Right Poles Park

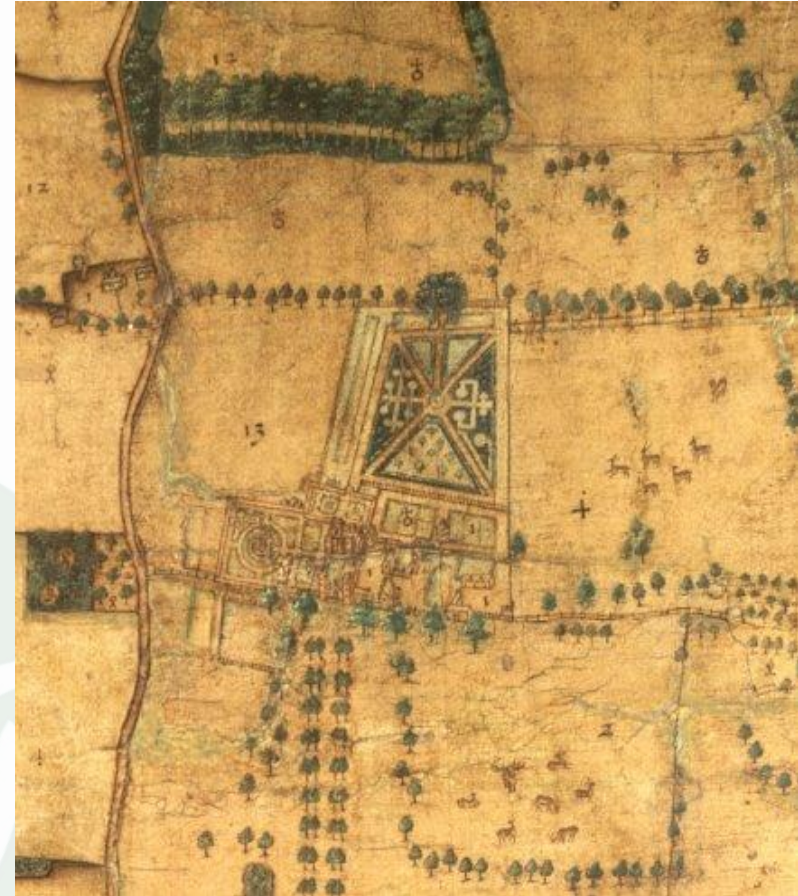


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What difference can we make? – Land of the Fanns



Above: Ground Penetrating Radar Image of Belhus, courtesy of Historic England; Right: 1619 Survey (part D/DL P1A), courtesy of Essex Record Office



What difference can we make? – Greensand Country Landscape Partnership



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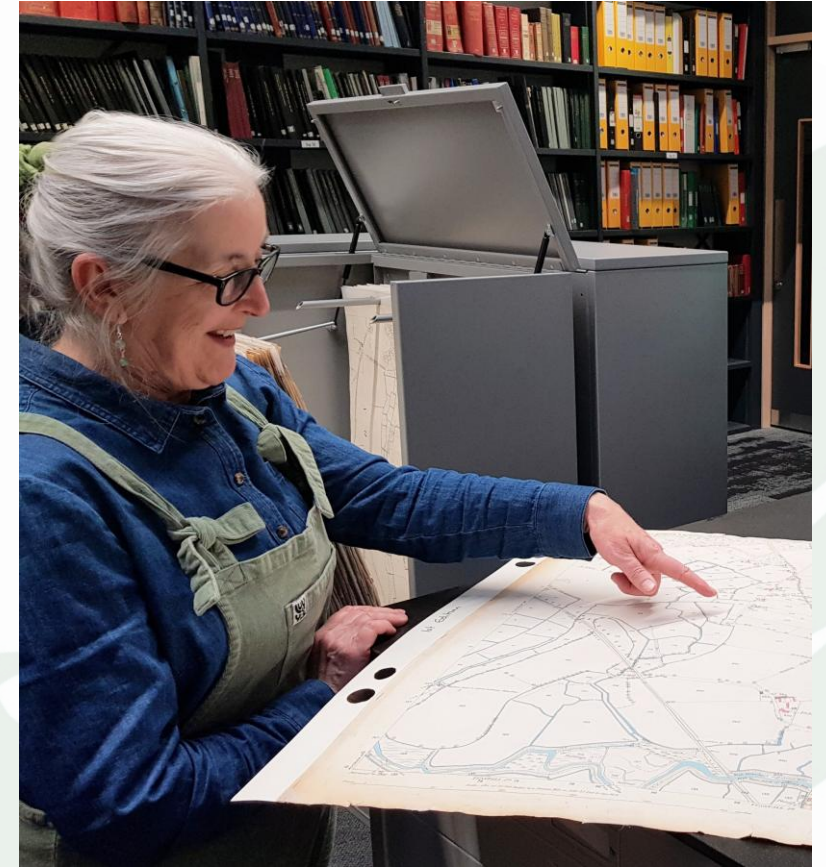


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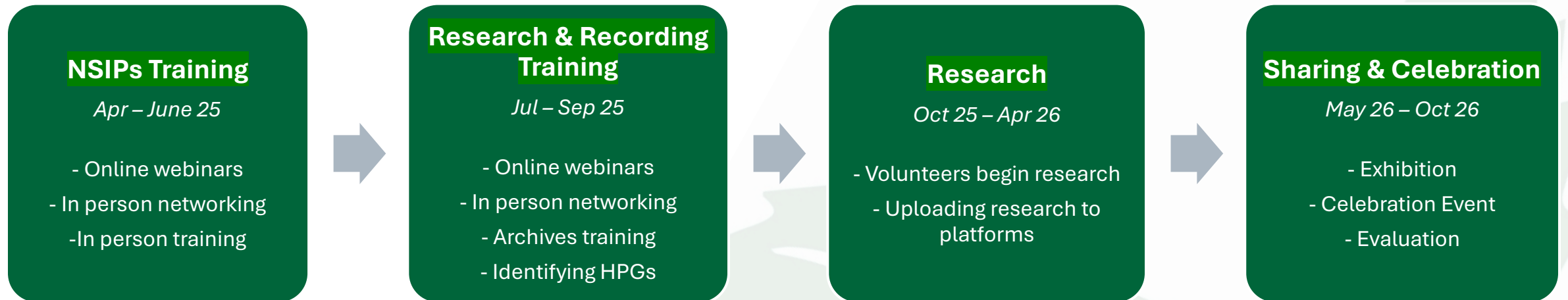
Project Outputs

- To recruit **40 volunteers** across the East of England
- To research at least **ten non-designated sites** in each county in the East of England (60 sites in total)
- To **share research** via Historic Environment Records, the National Heritage List for England (through Historic England's Missing Pieces project), Local Lists and travelling Exhibition
- If possible Registration candidates are discovered, work with GT to **apply for designation**



Green Futures Timeline

Spring 2025 to October 2026





Volunteer Roles – how you can help

- Research
- Communications – social media, photos, news & press
- Site visits
- Exhibition - creation and logistics
- More experienced researchers can support new volunteers
- Social/pastoral support volunteer
- Up to 10-15 hrs per month (flexible)

Why get involved?

"I'd like to say thank you for bringing this to our county, because we're quite often overlooked, as such a small gardens trust. But with this project and your wonderful research I think we've proven that we can achieve some great things"

Jason Mordan, Chair, Nottinghamshire Gardens Trust

"I feel pleased to have joined in the project. I enjoyed meeting a whole new group of people during the visits and online. It is always a benefit to keep my brain active... undertaking new kinds of research in this way."

Nottinghamshire Volunteer



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"The project has been a wonderful opportunity to focus new attention on Suffolk's rich garden heritage and to involve volunteers in actively researching and reporting on sites to make them truly 'unforgettable'."

Edward Martin, Chair, Suffolk Gardens Trust

"The training we received was excellent and we were supported throughout... I enjoyed every minute of the research and am keen to do more. The highlight was finding the name of a woman who ran [an] estate in the 16th century and learning all that she achieved. This made the project come alive for me..."

Suffolk Volunteer

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More reasons to get involved...

- ✓ Volunteer for a great charity
- ✓ Free training delivered by experts from Historic England, the Gardens Trust and National Trust
- ✓ Visits to archives and landscapes across the East
- ✓ Network with professionals and volunteers from across the historic designed landscape sector
- ✓ Volunteer expenses

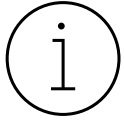


Champion our historic parks and gardens

- Help record history for future generations
- Support the Gardens Trust and your local County Gardens Trust
- Help promote the value and importance of our garden heritage
- Enrich the historic record so developers can make more informed decisions



Next Steps...



Find out more



Visit our website:

<https://thegardenstrust.org/green-futures>

Contact your CGT:

<https://thegardenstrust.org/support-us/find-local-cgts/>



Stay updated



Sign up to our e-bulletin:

<https://thegardenstrust.org/support-us/subscribe/>



Take part



Complete our volunteer sign up form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeh6cHH5qcLRvEwybmi0Z_b_eYCrqPdVOG6BUww7ttxap2j_w/viewform