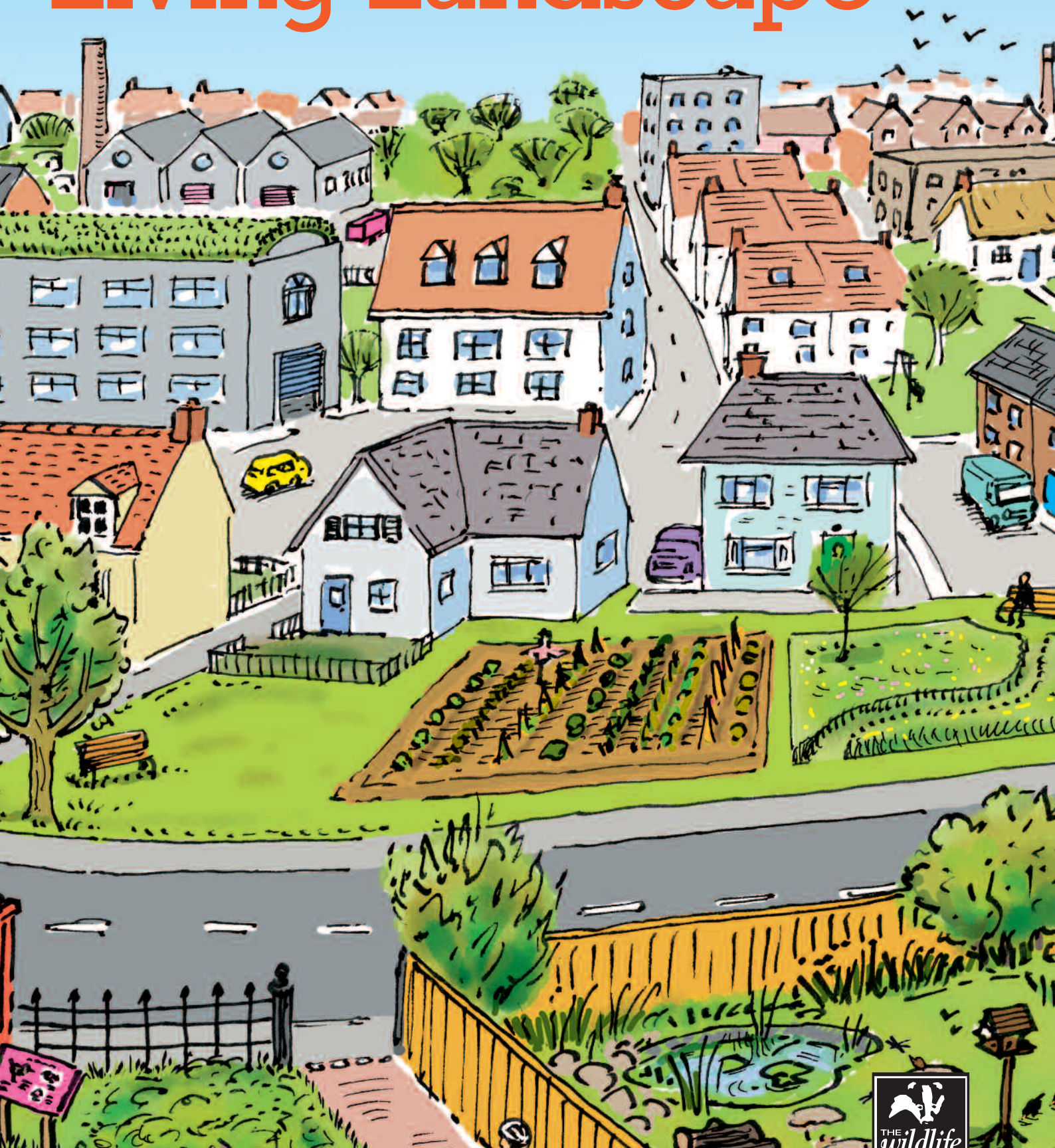


How to build a Living Landscape



Making our towns and countryside work for wildlife



Herts and Middlesex

How to build a Living Landscape

This guide explains how to build a Living Landscape. What does that mean?

Look beyond the jewels that are our nature reserves and other protected areas – havens where diverse habitats support our precious native wildlife. Outside these refuges, both the towns and the countryside can be barren, inhospitable places for wild animals and plants.

Unless we join up the dots.

By creating spaces for wildlife to live in amongst the web of houses, businesses, roads, railway lines and fields, we can do more than just preserve species in tiny pockets of our landscape.

In fact, we **must** do this and we need to act now. Nature reserves on their own will not be enough to protect our wildlife for the future. Habitats continue to be lost, and many UK species are in long term decline.

Our vision is an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. We can only achieve this by building a Living Landscape, with the help of other landowners, land managers and partners across our counties. This vision accepts the landscape as it is, as we have shaped it. It's not practical to think that we can turn the clock back to a time before roads were laid down, rivers were canalised, houses were built, farming intensified. But there is a huge amount that we can do with the landscape we live in now, to improve and secure the future for our local wildlife. It will be good for wildlife, and it will be good for people too; our natural environment is essential to us.

Different places can contribute to a Living Landscape in different ways. In our towns, wildlife-friendly gardening and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will make a difference. On farmed land, wildflower-rich field margins and hedgerows can help. We can make our highways work for nature by restoring wildflower-rich road verges. And golf courses can contribute with careful grass-mowing regimes and heathland restoration. Together, all of these contributions and more will allow people and wildlife to live side by side.

Here's our vision for how, together, we can build an environment rich in wildlife for everyone – where we live.

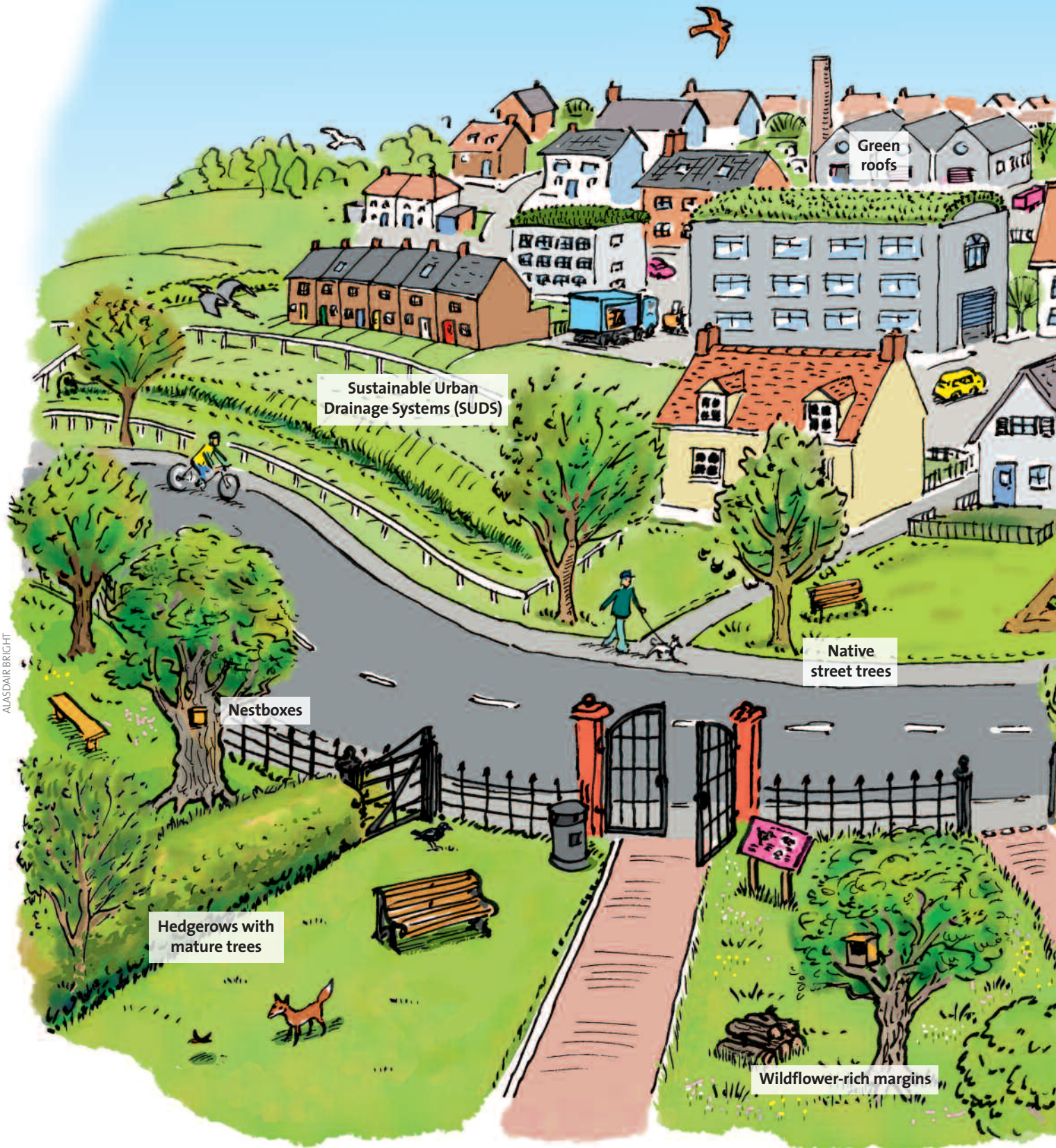


Dr Tom Day
Head of Living Landscapes
Herts and Middlesex
Wildlife Trust

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Towns and cit



Green roofs

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Native street trees

Nestboxes

Hedgerows with mature trees

Wildflower-rich margins

ALASDAIR BRIGHT

Urban green spaces and recreation grounds are often managed intensively, with grass cut short very regularly. However, a rich local environment requires a diversity of green spaces for people to enjoy. More natural green spaces, as well as wildlife-rich margins and corridors, can help build a Living Landscape. Everyone can also make their contribution through wildlife-friendly gardening.

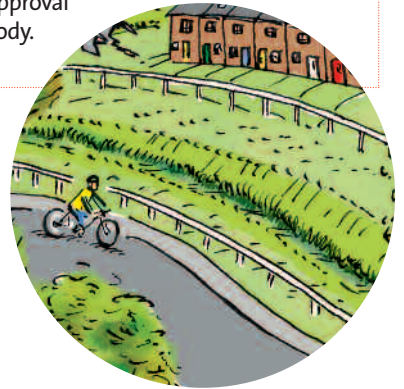




Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

A sustainable system of drainage that can mitigate the adverse effects of urban stormwater runoff on the environment. Ideally these systems should be as naturalised as possible, with thick vegetative margins.

From October 2012 any new construction work in Hertfordshire with drainage requirements will need the drainage system approved by the local SUDS Approval Body.



Towns and cities

Wildlife-friendly gardens

You can provide shelter for wildlife with areas of longer grass, ponds, native trees, nest boxes and bug homes. Sowing native, nectar-rich wildflowers will encourage a variety of insects, in turn attracting birds, frogs, toads and small mammals. Feeding the birds will help to sustain them through the winter and spring.

Public green spaces

Parks and other green spaces can be great for wildlife if they incorporate wildflower-rich areas. Local authorities should try to make margins at least three metres wide with larger areas at least 20-30 metres

wide in places. Hedges provide food and shelter, and should ideally be up to two metres high, one or two metres thick and with mature trees incorporated every ten metres. A single mature English oak tree can support 600 different species!

Ponds with a diameter greater than 10 metres are ideal – they can be any shape; shallow sloping sides will help wildlife to get in and out.

Nectar-rich plants on allotments will attract useful insects to the plot. Schemes that bring nature back into urban areas, such as creating a wildflower-rich meadow in a shared green space, or digging a pond, can bring residents together.

Churchyards

Valuable, relatively un-disturbed habitats. Mature trees are beneficial. Encouraging longer, wildflower-rich grass in areas of the churchyard will entice more wildlife to move in!



Green roofs

A green roof will insulate the building, absorb rainwater, prolong the life of the roof itself and also provide a habitat for wildlife, attracting birds, bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects.



Street trees

Trees contribute to a healthier environment by producing oxygen and locking away carbon during their normal life cycle. They can act as a buffer to reduce noise pollution and in their immediate vicinity can help to reduce airborne pollution by attracting particles on their leaves. A mixture of native trees is preferable. These should be suitable to the soil type and of local provenance.



A Living Landscape in action: **TOWNS AND CITIES**

Stevenage residents embraced a project run by the Wildlife Trust and Stevenage Borough Council that has encouraged nature to thrive in the heart of the town

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's Wild Stevenage project has inspired local people to explore the town's natural assets and encouraged them to help care for these important wildlife havens. The town has many small pockets of natural habitat which attract a surprisingly wide variety of wildlife. Walk for just a couple of minutes from busy Broadhall Way, opposite Stevenage Football Club, and you will soon find yourself amongst the ancient trees of Monks and Whomerley Woods, carpeted with swathes of bluebells in the spring.

Anyone for crickets?

Ann Favell, the Trust's People and Wildlife Officer in Stevenage, says: "Local people have been pond dipping to check how healthy the woodland ponds are. This is vital information that helps the Trust to improve habitats for wildlife. New ponds created in the woods in the spring were soon teeming with tadpoles. In nearby Shacklewell Grassland, Stevenage residents have been busy surveying bush crickets and grasshoppers – numerous different species live here, including the great green bush cricket. Stevenage is thought to be the only place in Hertfordshire where this species has been recorded."

Swift action

Closer to home the town's wildlife lovers have been inviting swifts to stay for the summer, in specially constructed nest boxes fitted to their houses. A scheme run in conjunction with Stevenage Homes saw tenants get a nest box for free, as part of routine roofing work carried out by Breyer, who agreed to cover the costs. Swifts are declining in numbers because there is a lack of suitable nesting sites, so it's hoped that some birds will make Stevenage their home, after their long migration from South Africa.

Locals get stuck in

Conservation work parties have helped to revitalise ponds and protect wildlife in Fairlands Valley Park, where new hedgerows have been planted to create shelter for grassland species. Locals have rolled up their sleeves, donned their wellies and got stuck in. Volunteer Laura Waugh, 26, said: "I will definitely volunteer again. I live in Stevenage and I am looking to get more experience in conserving wildlife. I hope that the project will improve wildlife habitats in the town, getting the community and children involved in caring for nature." In all, local people have racked up over 200 hours in volunteered time in order to protect the town's wildlife.



Local children helped plant a new hedge in Fairlands Valley Park

HMWT

Working together

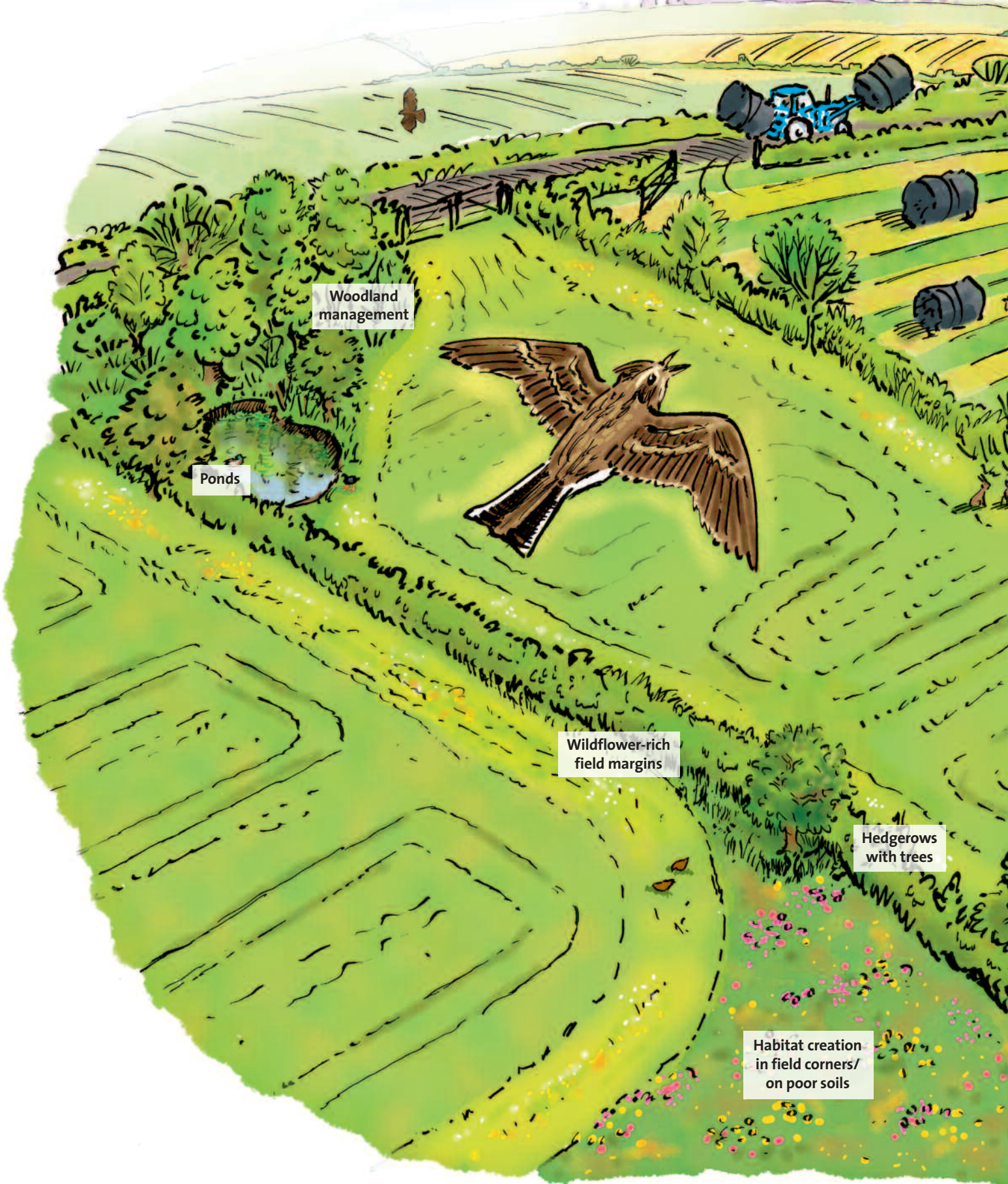
Working in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council has allowed the Wildlife Trust to work on council-owned land and with grants from So Stevenage and Heritage Lottery Fund, carry out important habitat restoration work. The project has breathed new life into community ponds across the town. Wide glades and new footpaths have been added to the woodlands, encouraging in more light, which in turn will allow plants to grow on the woodland floor that attract insects, birds and mammals. Grasslands have been opened up to encourage wildlife to spread out into wider territories, ensuring their populations can survive into the future. Ann continued: "This is just the beginning. The project has sparked an interest in local people to find out more about the natural world around them and what they can do to help protect it. As this interest and commitment grows, so too does the prospect of a healthy future for Stevenage's wonderful wildlife."

Carpets of bluebells in ancient woodland minutes from Stevenage town centre



MICHAEL PEARSE

Farmland



Woodland management

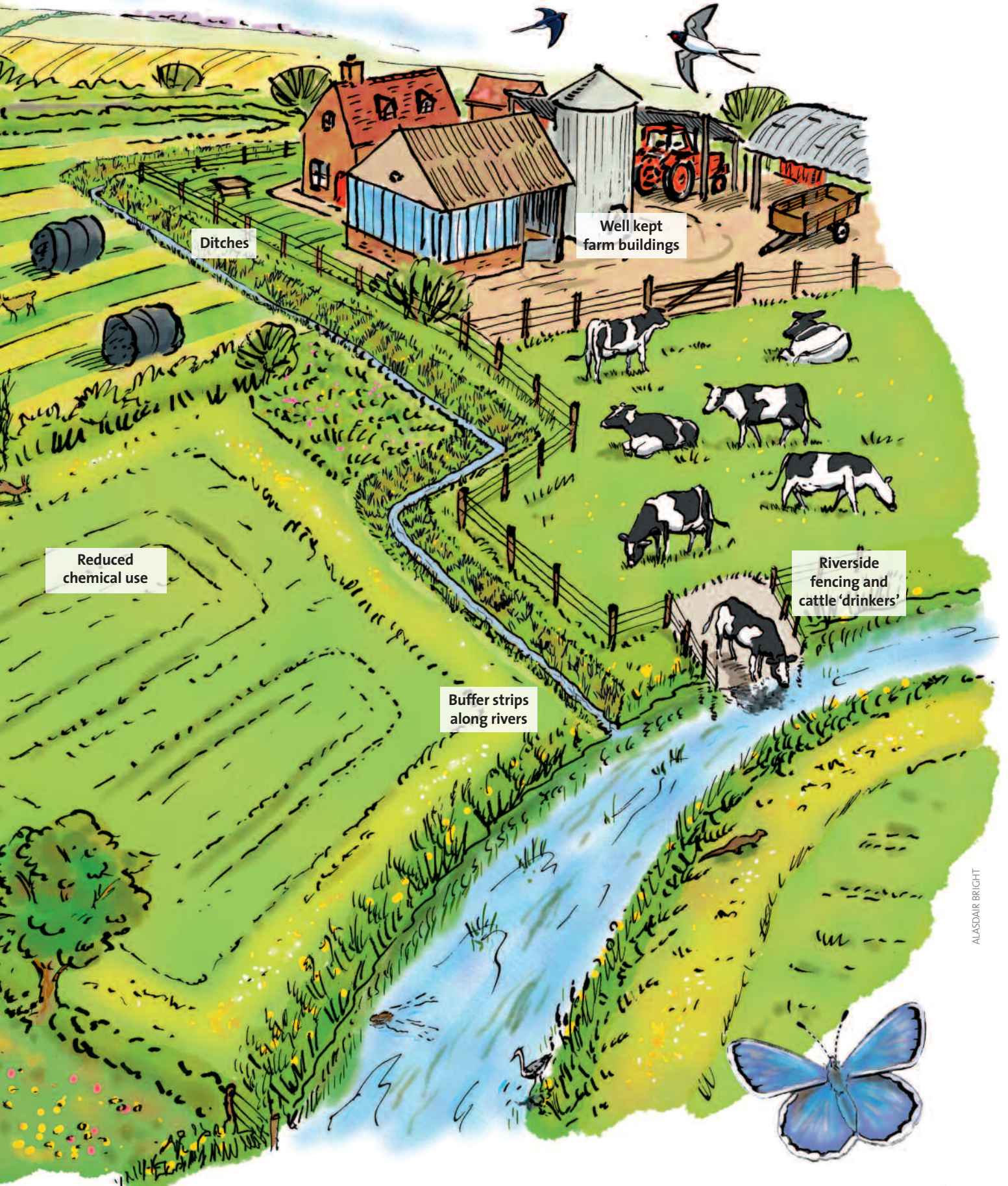
Ponds

Wildflower-rich field margins

Hedgerows with trees

Habitat creation in field corners/
on poor soils

Farming is such an important land use in Hertfordshire; farmers are the stewards of the majority of our local ecosystems. There are lots of opportunities to restore nature, and agri-environment funding schemes are available to help. When building a Living Landscape across farmland, the key is to choose appropriate measures for different locations and to ensure they join up, to maximise habitat connectivity across both individual and neighbouring farms.



Ditches

Well kept farm buildings

Reduced chemical use

Riverside fencing and cattle 'drinkers'

Buffer strips along rivers

ALASDAIR BRIGHT



Farmland

Wildflower-rich field margins

Native wildflowers and grasses along field margins will support a diversity of crop-pollinating insects and allow whole ecosystems to thrive. Six to ten metre-wide strips are ideal. It's important to link margins up between fields, to make habitat corridors. The margins are best planted with a native wildflower seed mix, appropriate to the area and soil types.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows, particularly in association with other habitats, can make great wildlife corridors and contribute to an area's distinctive landscape character. Thicker, taller hedges with regular trees

provide the most benefits. Where hedges have gaps, a mixture of tree planting and traditional hedge-laying can restore them. As well as providing shelter, hedgerows act like a larder for all sorts of wildlife: nectar in the spring supports butterflies and other insects, while berries help small mammals and birds such as redwings and fieldfares through the winter months.

Habitat creation on poor soils

Reverting arable land back to species-rich grassland can be a way of achieving grant income for fields with poor crop productivity. The most valuable grasslands are made up of species native to the area and take into account the local soil and drainage characteristics.

Buffer strips along rivers

Buffer zones of longer vegetation between farmed land and rivers prevent erosion of the river banks by livestock, and pollution of the river water from livestock urine and faeces. A buffer zone also helps to prevent herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers from draining off fields into the river. Otters, water voles and other aquatic and bankside wildlife will benefit. Buffer strips can be provided either by fencing, or by leaving three metres unploughed next to the river bank. Where cattle need to access the river, concrete 'drinkers' can be installed to prevent soil erosion.

Awkward corners

Areas left to go wild and return to nature because they are impossible to get to with machinery provide great refuges for wildlife. Finches will feast on the seeds from burdock and thistles during winter. Small mammals will hide there, catching the attention of kestrels hovering above.

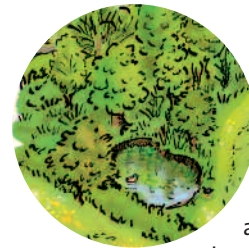
Farm buildings

At the heart of the farm, well kept barns and stores will ensure that farming operations will not have a detrimental effect on the landscape. Slurry from cattle barns and the liquor from silage clamps will all be collected and processed properly. Drainage will be well maintained to ensure that nothing harmful enters ditches or watercourses.



Reduce chemical use

Reducing chemical use to optimum levels can be cost-efficient, whilst also benefitting wildlife and watercourses. Chemical use can be optimised through soil analyses, soil nutrient management planning and targeted application rates.



Ditches and ponds

These are important wetland habitats where water voles and birds such as reed buntings may breed. Bats will feed along and over them. The better the water quality, the more wildlife there will be.

Woodland

Wooded areas provide shelter for animals such as deer and daytime roosting places for bats which may feed widely through the local area by night, using the network of hedgerows to navigate through the landscape.



A Living Landscape in action: **FARMLAND**

Nicholas Buxton farms the Easneye Estate, which lies alongside the Trust's Amwell Nature Reserve. The estate has an impressive track record for wildlife conservation

The Easneye Estate has just recently won the Cambs and Herts FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) Farm Conservation competition, and it's not hard to see why. From restoring hedgerows and managing woodlands to improving the state of the River Ash, Nicholas is working with the Wildlife Trust and a whole host of other conservation charities and partners to try and achieve the best results, both for the farm and for wildlife.

Links across the landscape

The estate is a mixed landscape, with areas of steeper ground that were once dairy pastures, arable land with hedgerows and spinneys, blocks of ancient woodland and the River Ash running through. The key, Nicholas explains, is to try to link areas together – connecting bits of woodland with hedgerows, hedgerows with field margins and field margins with grass margins that run down towards the river.

River restoration

Previously sluggish and damaged by dredging in the 1970s, work has been done to the River Ash to improve the flow with the help of nifty in-channel deflectors and channel narrowing. The non-native signal crayfish has so far not invaded the upper reaches of the river, and native populations of trout and grayling are growing. Sightings of cormorants have increased, indicating

there is plenty for them to feed on. Over 5,750 metres of grass buffer strips now run alongside the river, which, as well as providing habitat for bankside wildlife such as water voles, will prevent arable run off and flooding. It's likely that the work along the river to control mink has resulted in the return of the water vole to Widford dairy pastures nearby.

Hedges, trees and margins

Hedgerows and trees are very important for wildlife. So far at Easneye over five kilometres of hedgerow coppicing and gap-filling has been achieved, with more than one kilometre of new hedgerow planted through Entry/Higher Level Stewardship. These are grant schemes open to all farmers to help with environmental management. In addition hundreds of hedgerow trees have been planted. Nicholas is confident about the work carried out so far: "The tree planting and hedgerow work is already yielding benefits, but over the years ahead it should be a real improvement."

For farmland birds, Nicholas points out the importance of providing field margins, so that hedges don't just lead straight into the arable crop: "You want to have that brood cover, with plenty of insects, through the spring, which is a very important time for chicks." Grey partridges and lapwings breed on the farm. Seed mixes are planted to provide for birds and



CAMPBELL/NATUREPL.COM

Field margins are important for farmland birds like yellowhammers

nectar/pollen mixes for insects, which are so important for pollinating crops.

Hazel and hornbeam coppicing work started last year, as part of an ongoing programme with the help of the English Woodland Grant Scheme. Thinning allows light to reach the woodland floor, encouraging wildflowers to emerge and associated wildlife to thrive. The wood that's removed is sold on as firewood, or used to fuel a woodchip boiler on the estate, making it not only a good solution for wildlife but for the farm's economy too.

The drought has made tree and hedgerow planting difficult over the last two years, but Nicholas is hopeful that the 360 oak trees just planted in hedgerows will take well – and looks forward to them flourishing in the future: "In twenty years I hope to be able to look back on this year as a good thing."

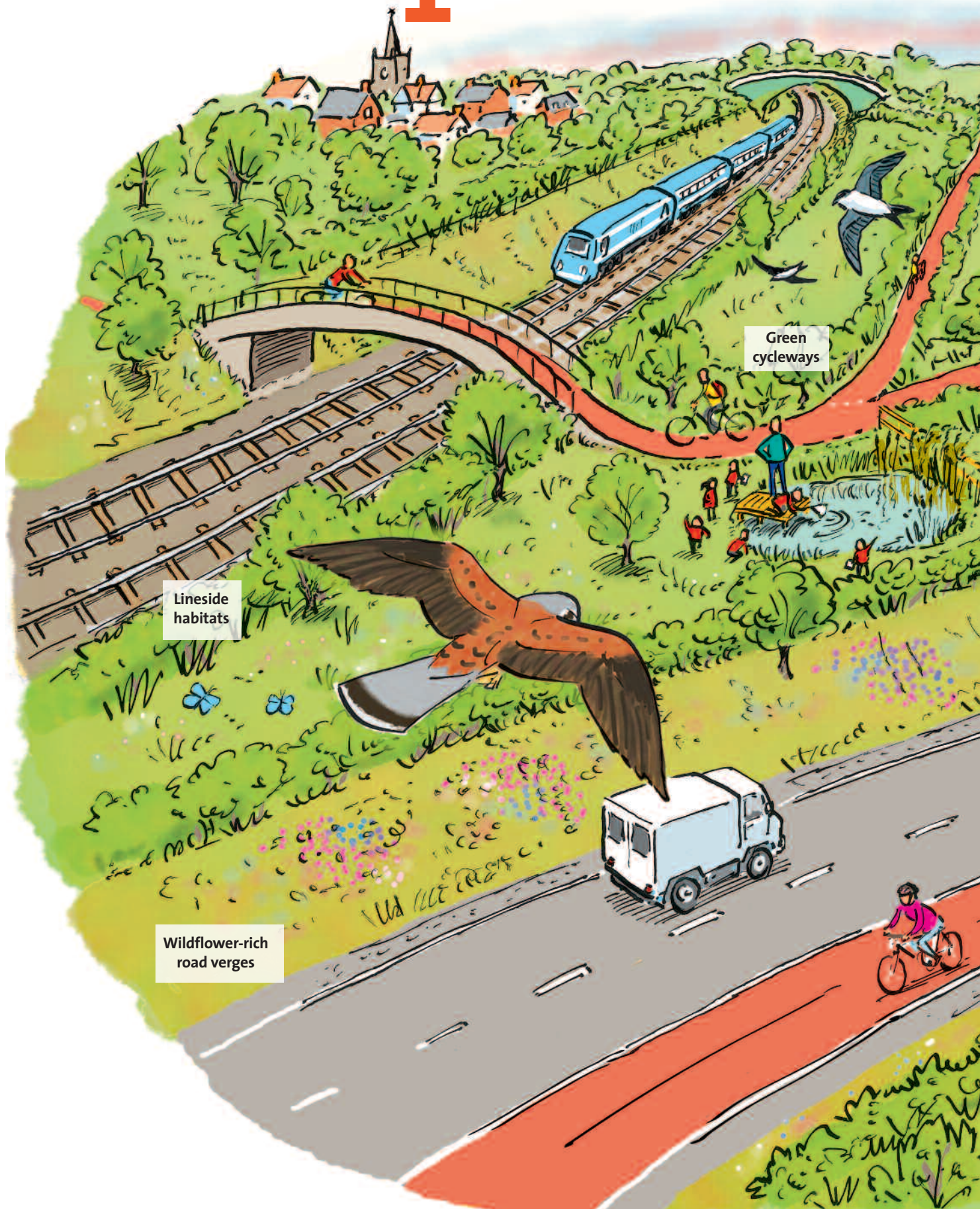
Sensitive, sensible management

As Nicholas says, estates like Easneye need to be managed. After a number of lean years in farming, there is now the opportunity to put them back in good heart. Active management is as important here on the farm as it is on the Wildlife Trust's nature reserves. Man has been shaping the landscape for thousands of years; there's no reason why we shouldn't continue to do this but in a sensitive way, not only for our own benefit but for the protection of our natural environment and its wildlife too.

Nicholas Buxton standing in one of the many buffer strips that help wildlife on the Easneye Estate



Transport net



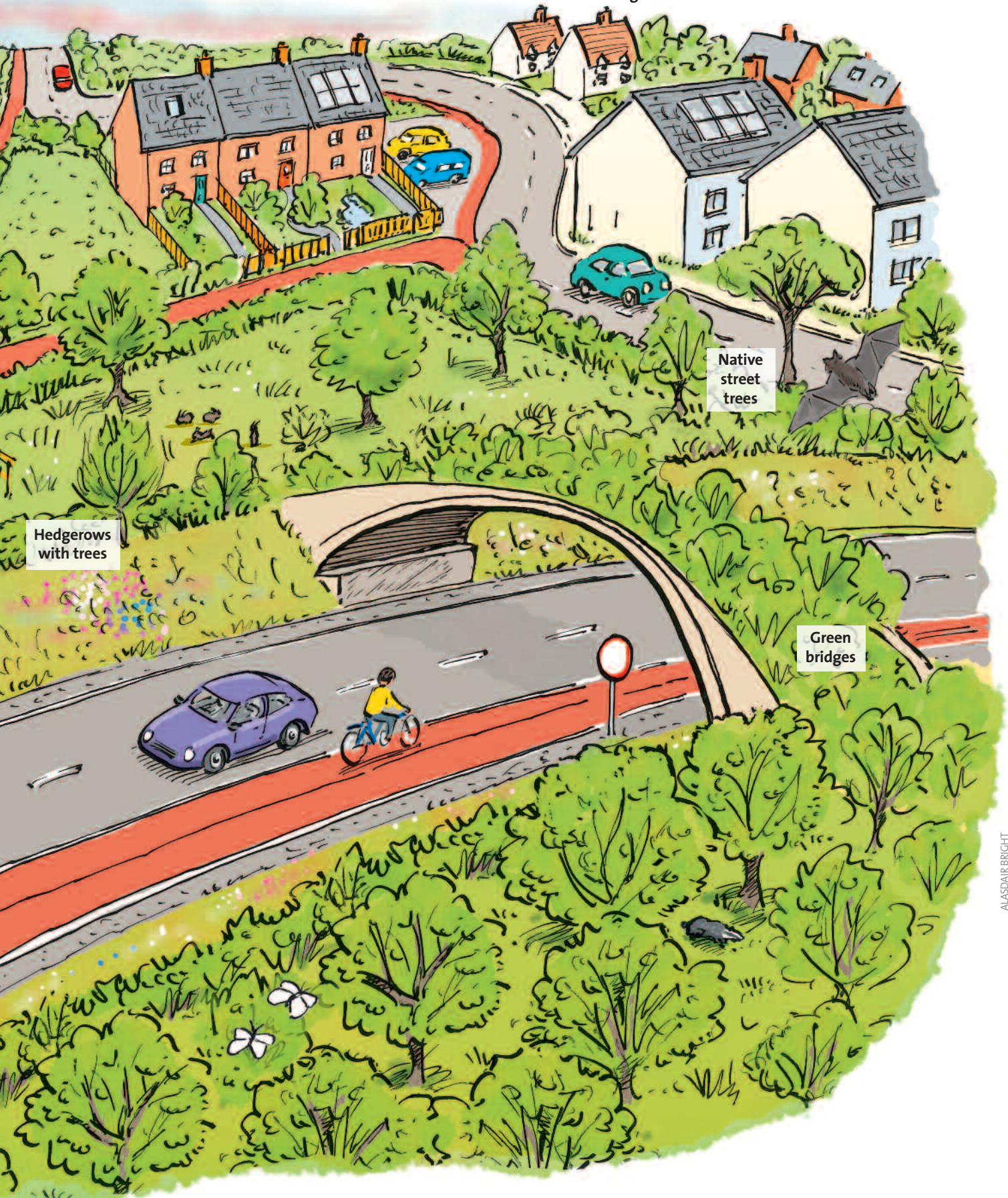
Lineside habitats

Wildflower-rich road verges

Green cycleways

works

Our transport corridors are rarely managed with wildlife in mind, despite the fact that they are linear features with the potential to act as corridors for wildlife as well as vehicles. Cumulatively there is an enormous area of land within these networks that cannot be put to any other use. This is a great opportunity for building a Living Landscape without affecting other land uses. Transport corridors can also be significant barriers to wildlife trying to move through the landscape. Opportunities for bridging the barriers need to be sought.

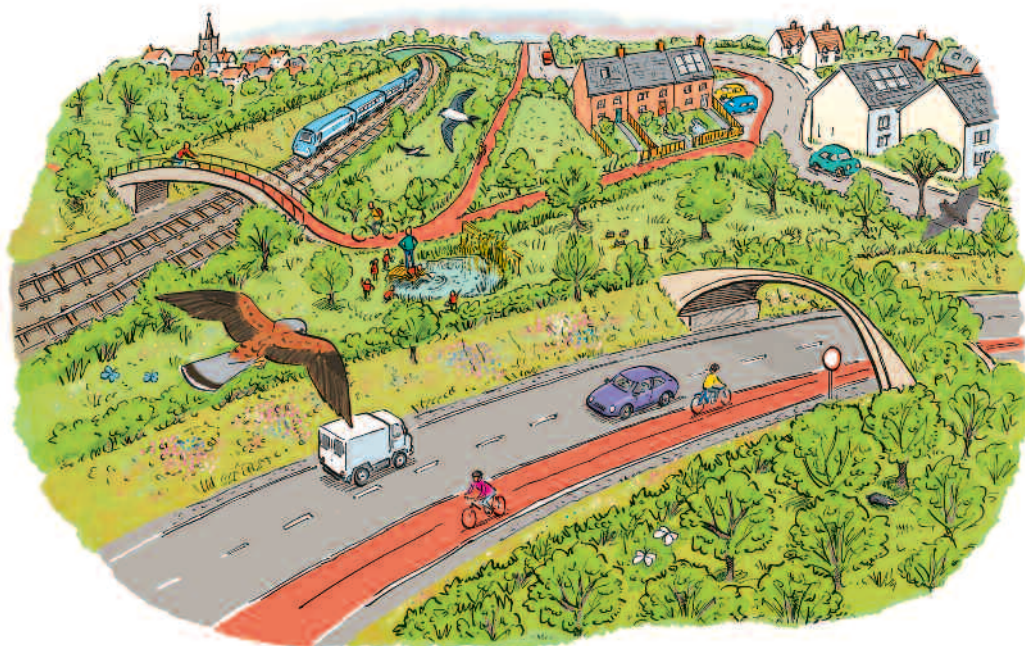


Hedgerows with trees

Native street trees

Green bridges

ALASDAIR BRIGHT



Lineside habitats

Habitats alongside railway lines can provide for birds, insects, small mammals and plants. Species commonly linked to lineside habitats include reptiles, kestrels, orange-tip butterflies, great spotted woodpeckers and bats. If managed well these habitats can help to increase biodiversity; not only can wildlife use the linear nature of the railway line to navigate from one place to another but the embankments can offer a huge cumulative amount of habitats in their own right.

Derelict railway lines like the Nickey Line in Harpenden that have been transformed into recreational routes, provide significant areas of grassland and scrub and also provide ecological links between other habitats through the landscape.



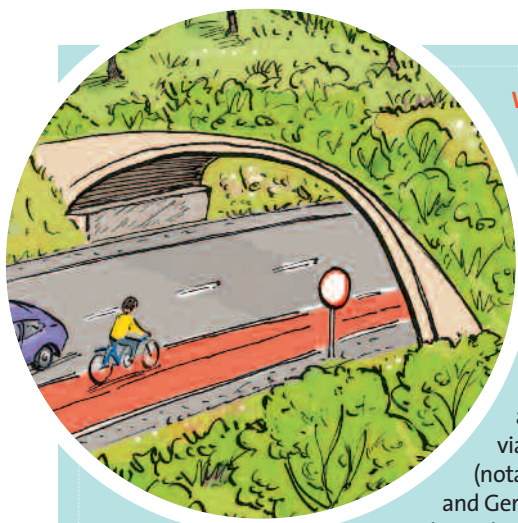
Transport networks

Roadside habitats

Grassland verges can support a diverse range of species if managed in the right way. Depending on the flowers present, verges are best either cut once in late summer or once in spring and once in early autumn. This will ensure that tall plants do not cause an unnecessary visual obstruction for vehicles, whilst allowing rare species to thrive and set seed. It is really important to collect and remove the cuttings because this reduces soil nutrients,

allowing rare wildflowers to survive.

Verges not only provide habitat in their own right but act as corridors for wildlife to move through. Similarly, hedgerows along roads provide cover for all sorts of animals moving through the landscape and are an important source of food and shelter. Street trees provide niches for nature on their own and together can form a linear habitat which is valuable for feeding bats.



Wildlife crossings

Roads can create significant barriers to wildlife through habitat destruction and fragmentation. Sub-dividing the habitat can even result in extinction of fragile local populations altogether. Wildlife crossings allow animals to cross roads, railways and other man-made barriers safely. A crossing could be an underpass, overpass (or ecoduct), green bridge, amphibian/small mammal tunnel or viaduct. Several European countries (notably France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany) integrate environmental factors in the earliest phases of road design and make extensive use of wildlife crossings and other ecological mitigation infrastructure. As well as preventing fragmentation of habitats, wildlife crossings can reduce injury or death from wildlife-motorist collisions.

Green cycleways

Good principles of sustainable development aim for the creation of cycle routes to enable people to get between places more sustainably and healthily. This can help to restore networks for wildlife; habitat creation alongside strategically chosen routes can link patches of habitat up and provide a pleasant and relaxing environment to cycle through.



A Living Landscape in action: **TRANSPORT NETWORKS**

Orchids flourished in fantastic numbers on a roadside verge in north Hertfordshire after restoration work was carried out through the Wildlife Sites Partnership

The road verges of north Hertfordshire make up some of the remaining patches of chalk grassland in the county and many have been designated as Local Wildlife Sites for the wildflowers that thrive there. They are important not just for species like knapweed, bird's-foot trefoil, wild thyme and field scabious but also for their potential to provide links between fragmented grassland sites. The A505 corridor contains an almost continuous strip of chalk grassland running east to west.

Roadside treasures reappear

The Countryside Management Service (CMS) is part of Hertfordshire County Council's Environment Department and a partner in the Wildlife Sites Partnership. The partnership recently worked to restore a roadside verge in Radwell, north of Baldock, together with Hertfordshire Highways and a Bedfordshire-based group

called TEASEL (The Astwick and Stotfold Environmental Link). TEASEL members were worried that the road verge, which is a Local Wildlife Site, was being overcome by bramble and thorn. Tony Bradford from CMS says: "The first option for managing grassland sites is the use of appropriate grazing animals. However, busy roads can no longer be grazed for safety reasons, so management must therefore be directed at achieving ecologically sensitive mowing regimes. Scrub encroachment, pesticide spray drift and the localised increases in rabbit population threaten the sensitive habitat balance too." A simple site survey was carried out to assess the biodiversity status and work out what action to take. Volunteers worked to remove the encroaching scrub. Hertfordshire Highways supported the work and will help with the continued management of the site by cutting the grassland annually. As a result of the work, a survey revealed the



Fifty bee orchids and 200 pyramidal orchids emerged after a road verge was restored near Baldock

TONY BRADFORD

re-emergence of at least 200 pyramidal orchids and around 50 bee orchids. It's hoped with continued positive conservation management that the fantastic display will now return year after year.

The Wildlife Sites Partnership is led by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

'Mini meadows' provide refuge for wildlife in Stevenage

Grass has been encouraged to grow long on some roadside verges by Stevenage Borough Council and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust for the past two years, as part of a trial to help the town's wildlife to thrive. Longer grass allows native wildflowers to bloom and set seeds. Insects such as butterflies and bees are helped, which in turn benefits birds that feed on them.

The line of vision for drivers is unaffected, as the grass is cut short immediately next to the road to a width of two metres, but grass further away from the edge grows long. Stevenage has some very wide road verges which make ideal places for establishing these 'mini-meadows'. The verges also act as corridors, enabling wildlife to move around the town more easily. Some areas are cut at the end of the summer, once the flowers have set seed. Other road verges are left long throughout the year, as grasshoppers and crickets lay their eggs in the grass which hatch the following spring.

Cllr John Gardner, Deputy Leader of Stevenage Borough Council responsible for the Environment said: "The creation of these urban meadows alongside a number of our major roads, through a more managed approach to grass cutting, is already showing evidence of increased variety in both

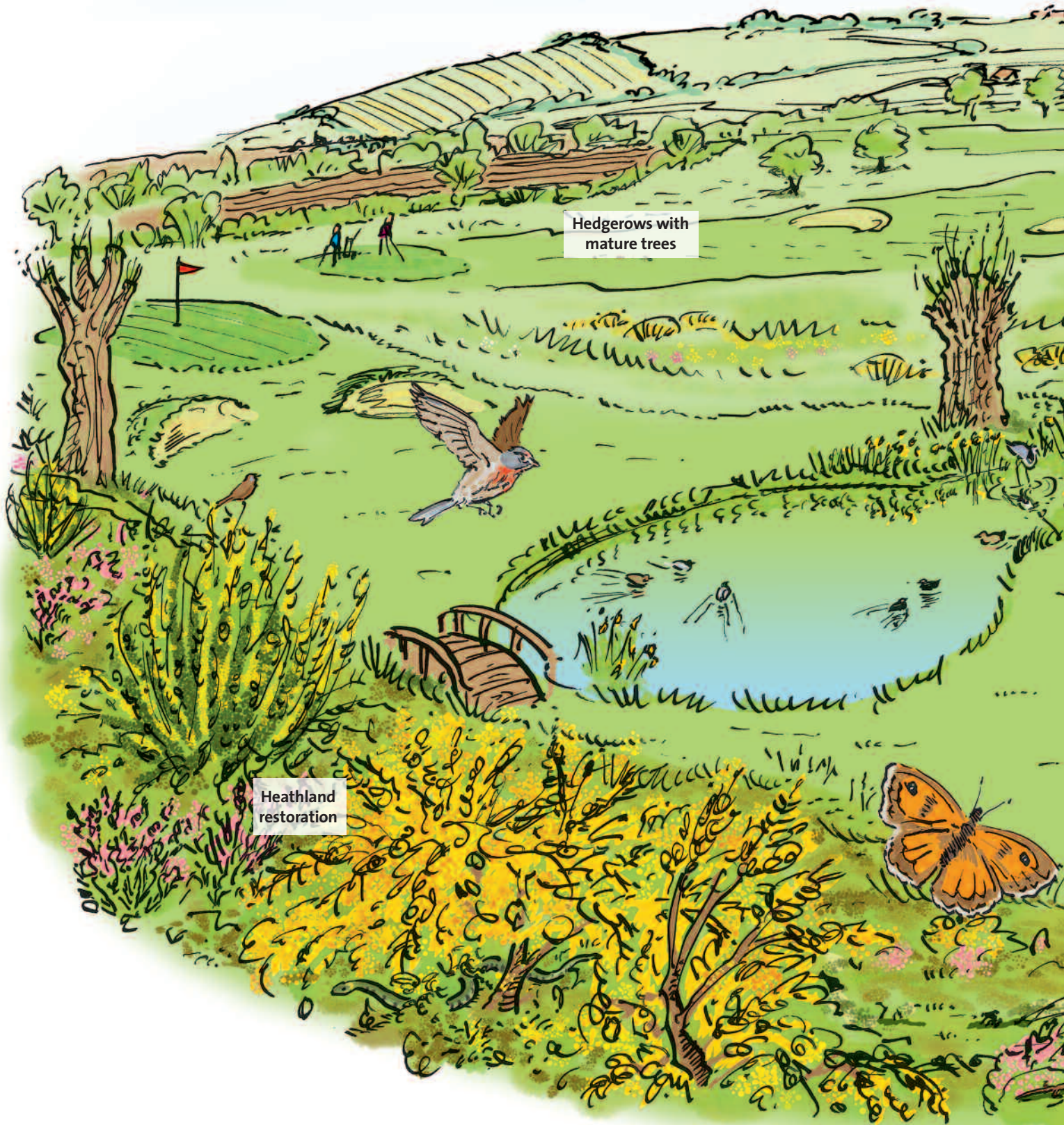


Wildflowers have returned to roadside verges

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insects and wildflowers. It's true to say the butterflies, bees and crickets are returning to our green town to enhance our enjoyment of the natural world." Surveys in 2012 show that two of the verges are already of Local Wildlife Site quality.

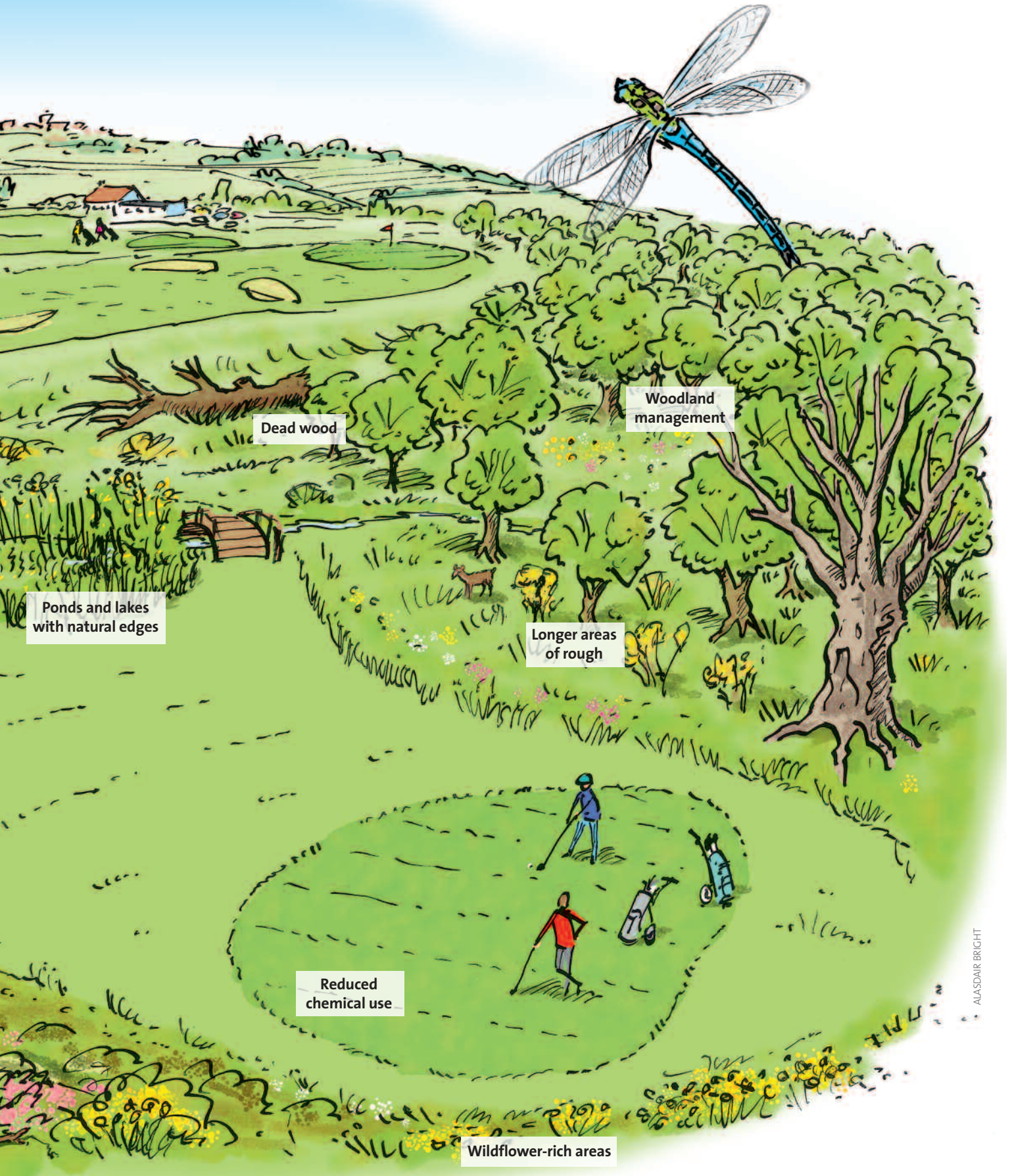
Golf courses



Hedgerows with mature trees

Heathland restoration

In Hertfordshire, there are more than 70 golf courses. By their very nature they are relatively large areas of countryside, much of which is made up of rougher, less intensively-managed land. Managed sympathetically, these areas have huge potential to contribute to a Living Landscape. This doesn't need to impact on the existing land use – it actually enhances it. Wildlife and natural surroundings can make golf more enjoyable.





Golf courses

Reduce chemical use

Reducing chemical use to the bare minimum can be cost-effective, whilst also benefitting wildlife. Chemical use can be optimised through soil analyses, soil nutrient management planning and targeted application rates.

The 'rough'

Remnants of ancient grassland remain on some golf courses. By mowing in sympathy with the flowering periods of native plant species, wildflower meadows can be created where the ground has been untouched by fertilisers. In other cases, where re-generation is less likely to happen quickly, native wildflower seed mixes can be sown. Wildflower-rich grasslands create an abundance of food and cover for insects, small mammals and birds. Summer-flowering meadows can be created by mowing in June and again in late September.

Zoning these longer areas known as the rough will benefit wildlife. Fortnightly mowing of the shorter rough will encourage low growing species like bird's-foot trefoil. Long rough can receive much

less attention, allowing taller plants to grow and set seed, and providing food and cover over winter for insects, small mammals and reptiles like grass snakes.

Heathland

This is a scarce habitat in Hertfordshire but one which can survive on golf courses, particularly within areas of longer rough grass where trampling is less likely. Gorse, broom and heather of varying ages and sizes will benefit wildlife the most. Small, young plants provide basking spots for lizards while larger shrubs provide nest sites for birds. Cutting heather with the blades fairly high will imitate the beneficial effects of a grazing herd. Tree removal will help light to reach the seedling plants and encourage growth.



Woodland and single trees

Again variety is the key. In the past woodlands were coppiced to provide timber for all sorts of uses; the rotational cutting of woodland 'blocks' meant that all stages of development would be present, from bare ground through to closed canopy. This diversity of structure within a woodland supports the widest variety of wildlife. Glades or clearings as a result of coppicing encourage light into the woodland floor, allowing wildflowers to grow which in turn support butterflies and other wildlife.

Pollarding (reducing the size of the crown to prevent a single tree from becoming 'top heavy') of single trees will encourage more light onto previously shaded grass and result in healthier turf.

Where new planting is required, native tree species are best – and native shrubs can provide important food for insects, birds and mammals in the form of berries and flowers.



Hedgerows

Where hedges have gaps, a mixture of tree planting and traditional hedge-laying can restore them. As well as providing shelter, hedgerows act like a larder for all sorts of wildlife: nectar in the spring supports butterflies and other insects, while berries help small mammals and birds such as redwings and fieldfares through the winter months.

Habitat variety

Those golf courses with lots of different types of habitat will attract the most wildlife. Bats will benefit from open grassy areas and expanses of water for feeding, and roost in the trunks of old trees. Grass snakes are particularly suited to golf courses – plenty of water and long grass to hunt in, the sunny bank of a bunker to bask on and compost heaps to lay their eggs in all make a perfect home!



Ponds and lakes

Leaving a natural edge around at least part of a pond or lake will provide cover for aquatic wildlife whilst still allowing golfers to find lost golf balls around the close cut edge. Trees and shrubs add cover for wildlife, although overhanging trees should be cut back on the south side of ponds and lakes to allow enough light in.



A Living Landscape in action: **GOLF COURSES**

A golf course in Harpenden encourages wildlife through careful management

Maintaining a rewarding golf course whilst satisfying the needs of wildlife is a challenge, but it's something that General Manager Terry Crump embraces at Harpenden Common Golf Club. The course forms a significant part of Harpenden Common, over 210 acres of woods, heathland, meadows and ponds designated as a Local Wildlife Site, so careful management to protect the wildlife here is important and much welcomed by local people.

The rough and the smooth

It's necessary to intensively manage parts of the course with regular mowing regimes, but there is room for wildlife in amongst the tees, greens and fairways too, particularly with the longer grass, or 'rough'. Terry says: "We have seen the benefits of working with Harpenden Town Council through a conservation management plan by letting the rough grow long, and only cutting it once a year." Cutting the rough just once a year in July or August means wildflowers have time to set seed and longer grass provides cover for birds, small mammals and insects: "This creates a tougher golf course, for a period. It's obviously cheaper too as we're only cutting it once. Sometimes you get complaints as the rough gets too long, but over the years people have got used to it. We always play our club championships prior to the long rough being cut, so it's as tough as possible!"



The pond and nearby woodland cover at the golf club provides perfect habitat for amphibians

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



HMWT

Terry Crump inspects the plots of heather re-introduced at Harpenden Common Golf Club

Bringing heather back

Harpenden Common is important for its patches of rare heathland and meadow and on the golf course work is being carried out to restore and increase heather and gorse. A careful mowing regime will encourage the heather to spread. Two trial plots where heather has been re-established are growing well; the plots are rabbit-fenced for a period to prevent the nibbling of new shoots but the fencing will eventually be removed once the plants are established. To encourage the heather, shading scrub and trees are trimmed back regularly.

Native species

A number of conifers which act as a barrier between two holes on the course will gradually be replaced with a broadleaved species like hornbeam, which will be much more in keeping with the local habitat. In an area of the course called the Jockey Field, Terry has plans to re-create a wildflower meadow on land that was formerly used for arable farming. Native wildflowers including harebells and thyme grow in an area called the 'dell' – an unexpected crater in the ground rumoured to have been dug by Harpenden Town Council to stop enemy planes landing in the Second World War! The grass here is cut in the same way as the other meadow grass in areas of rough: once a year in late summer to allow the wildflowers to bloom and seed.

Ponds

Careful management of the golf course's pond ensures that wildlife can thrive. Next to the green, grass at the pond's edge is close cut, but the remaining vegetation is left to grow taller – this pond-side habitat provides excellent shelter for aquatic wildlife and the water is alive with tadpoles in the spring. "The wildlife you see here during the summer is

fantastic" Terry confirms. Woodland close to the pond provides overwintering places for the frogs which breed in the pond whilst areas of adjacent rough provide feeding for dragonflies. It's the mosaic of different habitats, providing for the different parts of life cycles that means so many species live here.

The bigger picture

Sympathetic management of the golf course for wildlife is an important part of the Conservation Management Plan for the whole of Harpenden Common. Creating habitat on the golf course that links to and complements habitats on the rest of the common means more room for wildlife to disperse and adapt. Councillor Bert Pawle, Chair of Harpenden Town Council's Environment Committee, says: "We endorse and appreciate all the ongoing good work carried out on the common by Harpenden Common Golf Club, which is living proof of how a good working partnership can deliver benefits for us all. We look forward to the involvement of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust in rolling out this next revision of the Conservation Management Plan."

Getting the balance right is vital – and clearly achievable. Terry thinks club members are persuaded too: "I'm sure, with the publicity that you see nationally about the need for biodiversity on golf courses, that the members realise it's important." You could argue a golf course managed this way provides challenges which help to develop some of the top talent too. Terry confirms: "We've got the best scratch side in Hertfordshire here, a fantastic achievement for a small club like us."

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust is working in partnership with Harpenden Town Council on the Conservation Management Plan for Harpenden Common.

What to do n



ROB HOPKINS

Make your garden wildlife-friendly

Contact your local Wildlife Trust
For a free leaflet on gardening for wildlife call Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust on **01727 858901**. For more resources visit www.wildlifetrusts.org and click on How You Can Help.

Visit Wild About Gardens
A website run jointly by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and The Wildlife Trusts. Advice on things to do this month and ideas for ways you can make your garden wildlife-friendly in just two hours or a weekend. www.wildaboutgardens.org

Join in with The Big Wildlife Garden
An initiative launched by Defra, RHS and The Wildlife Trusts. Great for schools – register your wildlife garden and earn points to work towards a bronze, silver, gold or green medal. www.bigwildlifegarden.org.uk

Everyone

- **Improve your garden for wildlife and spread the message to your neighbours**
- **Volunteer to help look after your local green space**
- **Join the Wildlife Trust – together we can achieve our vision of an environment rich in wildlife for everyone in Hertfordshire and Middlesex**



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Landowners and land managers

- **Take a look at the land uses illustrated in this guide – see which most closely resembles your land and implement what you can**
- **Champion a Living Landscape to your neighbours and encourage them to continue the habitat network out beyond your own land holding. Habitat networks will be most effective where they join up across boundaries**
- **Contact the Wildlife Trust for advice on what funding you could get**

Advice for landowners and land managers

The Wildlife Sites Partnership
This county-based system is acknowledged and promoted nationally by Defra to protect sites of importance for wildlife. The partnership in Hertfordshire includes Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Herts Biological Records Centre, Natural England, the Countryside Management Service, Chilterns AONB and the Environment Agency, and is led and coordinated by the Wildlife Trust.

If you own or manage a Wildlife Site and would like advice, contact **Carol Lodge**, Wildlife Sites Programme Manager **01727 858901** ext 235 carol.lodge@hmwt.org

Campaign for the Farmed Environment

Get advice and guidance on how to retain and increase the environmental benefits of your farmland. This doesn't involve regulation and there is a financial incentive through Entry Level Stewardship. **Elizabeth Ranelagh**, Farm Conservation Adviser **07713 333203** elizabeth.ranelagh@cfeonline.org.uk



Everyone can help to build a Living Landscape

Local authorities

- Build strategic Green Infrastructure, habitat networks and Living Landscape areas into local plans
- Ensure local policies reflect the principle of providing an appropriate net gain for biodiversity for new developments
- Ensure that Green Infrastructure and Living Landscape principles are built into Infrastructure Delivery Plans and that any Developer Contribution/Community Infrastructure Levy schemes provide for these
- Local authorities own and manage land, including public open spaces and land associated with other authority functions, such as highways. As land managers for public benefit, local authorities can make a great contribution to a Living Landscape through sensitive management of this land, entirely consistent with delivering their other statutory functions

Developers

- Most medium to large-scale developments can contribute significantly to a Living Landscape, if planned well. The Wildlife Trust is happy to give feedback and advice from the very earliest stages of a planned development to help optimise opportunities.
- Integrate Living Landscape and Green Infrastructure objectives into site master planning from the outset in order to achieve the greatest benefit/cost ratio
 - Ensure ecological survey requirements are factored into project planning and early phasing to avoid unnecessary delays and costs
 - Steps to follow:
 - Step 1:** Identify existing habitats through ecological surveys and the local Biological Records Centre
 - Step 2:** Identify the potential opportunities for habitat creation and connectivity between existing habitat patches

- Step 3:** Build into the master plan a functioning natural habitat network as key infrastructure. Look for synergies with other Green Infrastructure features such as paths, cycleways and public open spaces
- Step 4:** Create a long-term management plan for the enhancement and maintenance of the existing and proposed new habitats

Planning guidance

'Planning for a healthy environment: good practice for green infrastructure and biodiversity', has been published by The Wildlife Trusts and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). More than 150 organisations and individuals were consulted, with at least 60 making active and constructive contributions. Visit www.wildlifetrusts.org/planning to access an online version.

Guidance for local authorities

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 introduced a duty on local authorities in England and Wales to conserve biodiversity. The Wildlife Trust report 'Local Authority Services and Biodiversity' provides a simple introduction to the duty, highlighting the benefits of and opportunities for protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Download the guide at www.wildlifetrusts.org/publications

The Local Nature Partnership has been recognised and endorsed by government to look strategically at the challenges and opportunities involved in improving Hertfordshire's natural environment and how it contributes to the economy and quality of life of local people. To get involved contact Catherine Wyatt, Herts BAP Officer, East Herts District Council catherine.wyatt@eastherts.gov.uk



Home-made grasshoppers. Join us and inspire the next generation

BEN ANDREW

Join your local Wildlife Trust

The Wildlife Trusts are the only organisations protecting the full range of UK species and habitats at a local level. We can only achieve this with the support of our members – without them, we wouldn't exist. Join us today and do something to protect the natural environment where you live. Call us on **01727 858901** or visit www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk



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“The last time the UK’s wildlife faced a challenge on this scale was at the end of the last ice age. We need to find ways to help our wildlife become more resilient to the trials it faces in the 21st century. We must now work on a landscape scale if we are to give wildlife a chance and allow future generations to enjoy nature as we have.”
Sir David Attenborough

Your local Wildlife Trust

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust is a local charity supported by people who care about protecting wildlife, including over 21,000 members.

With volunteers, we manage a network of more than 40 nature reserves, covering nearly 2,000 acres.

Beyond this our vision is of a Living Landscape, where we work with others to improve our towns and countryside for wildlife.

Help us to protect the natural environment where you live.

Join us today



Herts and Middlesex

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