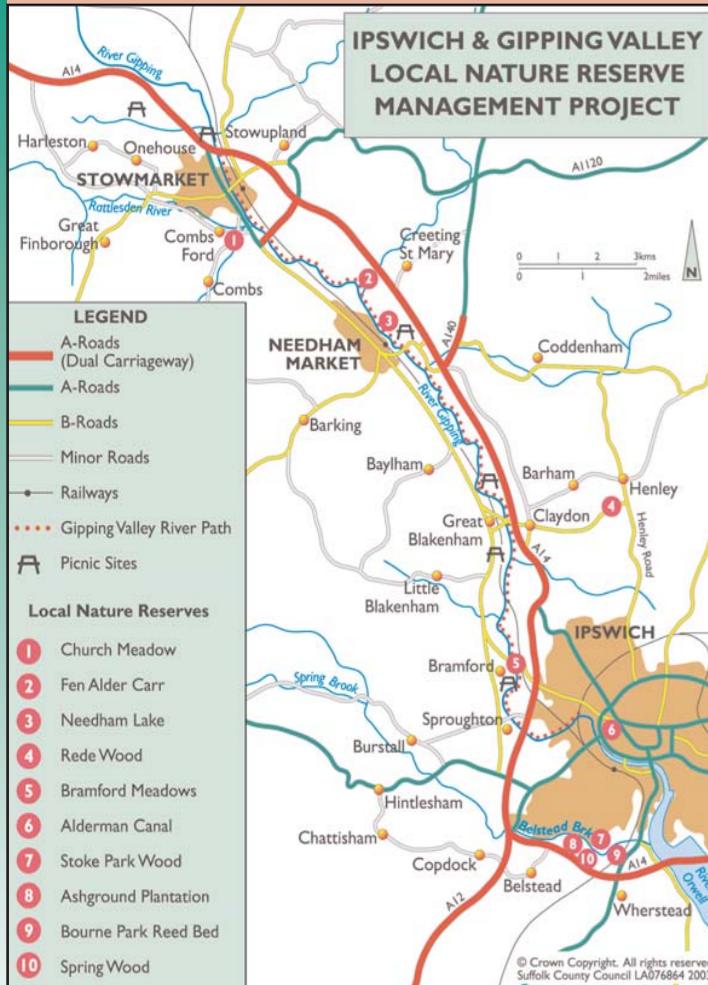


## Wildspace!

The Wildspace! Project started in April 2003, and during its three-year life hopes to encourage people to visit and learn more about Local Nature Reserves in the area.

Local communities will also be actively involved in practical tasks to improve the natural variety of life on these sites.

## The Wildspace! Project Area



## Church Meadow Local Nature Reserve

This quiet, secluded reserve, owned and managed by Mid Suffolk District Council owes its existence to an 18th century manor house - Combs Hall, which once stood behind the Church. Although demolished in 1756, features of the formal garden can still be seen today. These include earth banks that originally surrounded an ornamental lake and a small circular pond. The pond in Combs Wood - southeast of the reserve - is also part of these old landscaped gardens.

Today, sheep grazing in the meadow help increase the variety of wild flowers and grasses by grazing more selectively than a mechanical mower. The two ponds support thriving newt, frog and toad populations as well as large numbers of dragonflies in the summer.

This peaceful site slopes gently to Combs Beck, which feeds into the River Rattlesden, which in turn flows into the River Gipping. It is a small oasis, ideal for a gentle walk and quiet reflection.



## Local Nature Reserves

Local Nature Reserves are places for people and wildlife. They are sites containing wildlife or geological features that are of special local interest. They provide people with an opportunity to learn about these and with the enjoyment of making contact with nature. There are eight LNRs in the Wildspace! Project area and at least two more are being developed.

## How to get involved

Do you live near one of the LNRs? Or enjoy walking or have an interest in wildlife? Then why not think about joining a Friends Group. They help look after the sites in a way that benefits both the local people and the wildlife that lives there. Friends groups take part in practical conservation activities and can also have real input into plans for the future. It's a great way to learn about local wildlife, get some fresh air, exercise - and even make new friends!

## For more information please contact:

Ann Havard  
Wildspace! Project Officer  
C/o Mid Suffolk District Council  
131 High Street  
Needham Market IP6 8DL  
Tel: **01449 727216**  
Fax: **01449 727225**  
Mobile: **07919 963 656**  
[ann.havard@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ann.havard@midsuffolk.gov.uk)

If you would like countryside management information on the Gipping Valley contact the Gipping Valley Countryside Project on 01473 583175

For more information on Mid Suffolk Sites please ring 01449 727221

## Wildspace!

Ipswich and Gipping Valley  
Local Nature Reserves Management Project

# Church Meadow

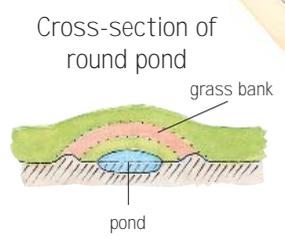
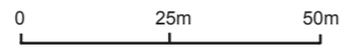
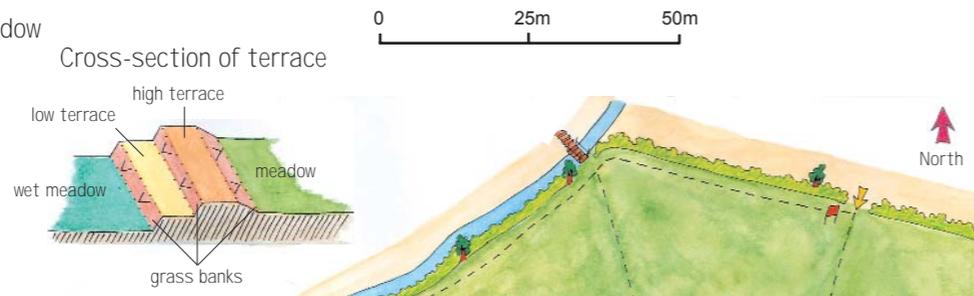
## Local Nature Reserve



For People and Wildlife

Designed by Mid Suffolk District Council's Graphics Section

-  Church Meadow
-  Area outside Church Meadow
-  High Terrace
-  Low Terrace
-  Wet meadow
-  Grass bank
-  Hedge
-  Trees/shrubs
-  Rushes/reeds/sedges
-  Entrance
-  Path
-  Gate
-  Stile
-  Fence
-  Kissing gate
-  Bench
-  Information board



### Lady's Smock or Cuckoo flower

A common plant of damp grassland and streams, the flowers are reminiscent of an old-fashioned ladies smock. Its other name, Cuckoo flower, came about because it flowers in April and May when the Cuckoo heralds in the spring. The young leaves have a peppery taste and can be used in salads.




### Kestrel

Suffolk has the highest density in the UK of this widespread bird of prey. Found in both countryside and urban areas, they make nests in tree cavities or use old crows nests. Kestrels hover, keeping their head motionless whilst watching for small mammals such as voles and shrews.



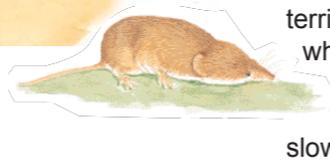
### Comma butterfly

This butterfly is easily recognised by its very ragged wing edges and the small 'C' shaped white mark on the underside of its wing - hence the name. Caterpillars hatch in May and feed on nectar from nettles, hops and elm. The adults also eat fallen fruit.



### Common shrew

Shrews evolved 50 million years ago and are one of the oldest surviving mammals on earth. They are very territorial creatures, aggressively defending their nests, which are built in dense tussocks of grass in woodlands and grasslands. Shrews eat slugs, snails and earthworms by killing them with their toxic saliva; this slows the victim's heart until breathing stops.



# Church Meadow

## LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

This fascinating site was part of an early 18th century formal garden belonging to Combs Hall. The Hall, now demolished, was built between the Church and the ancient Combs Wood. The gardens are now meadows that are either cut or grazed by sheep to benefit wild flowers. As you explore the site look for the remains of earth banks, which once surrounded an ornamental lake, and a small circular pond. The two ponds have thriving newt, frog and toad populations as well as abundant dragonflies and other invertebrates.

### The Gipping Valley

This river valley is an important landscape in the centre of Suffolk. Although you are in a mainly rural setting between Stowmarket and Ipswich, there are pressures from industrial development, mineral extraction, expanding towns and modern agriculture. Local councils and other bodies work together with landowners towards building a healthy and attractive countryside that is accessible and can be enjoyed by everyone.

### Local Nature Reserves

Local Nature Reserves are sites where the wildlife, geology or historic landscape is of special value. There are a number of LNRs in the Gipping Valley and more are being developed. They are publicly owned and protected as an amenity for the community. Everyone is welcome to walk and explore and is encouraged to help in the protection and management of the area.

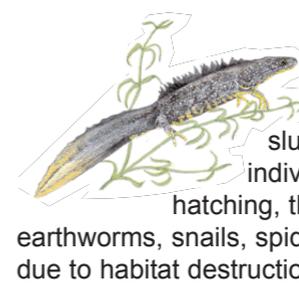
### Greater pond sedge

Found frequently in marshy meadows, swamps, ponds and along rivers, this plant forms extensive patches. All sedges have triangular stems, which helps distinguish them from grasses.



### Great crested newt

In winter newts hide in tree crevices and under stones and in spring they move to deep weedy pools or sluggish overgrown streams to breed. Eggs are attached individually to submerged plants and stones and, after hatching, the tadpoles eat tiny plants and insects. Adult newts eat earthworms, snails, spiders and insects. The species has declined in Britain due to habitat destruction and is strictly protected.




This leaflet has been produced as part of the Ipswich and Gipping Valley Local Nature Reserve Management Project. Anglian Water Environmental Partnership has funded the leaflet with Landfill tax credits provided by Viridor Waste Management.

Based on OS material, Crown copyright, MSDC License No. LA78611 2003

Illustrations and map by Ann Hobday