



Essex Wildlife Trust

Protecting Essex Wildlife

Living Landscapes

Living Seas

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Local Wildlife Sites

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What are Local Wildlife Sites?

Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), previously known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or County Wildlife Sites (CoWS) are areas of land with significant wildlife value. In reality they are typically an area of ancient woodland, a flower-rich hay meadow or a village pond.

Sites can be found throughout Essex and together with nationally and internationally statutory protected areas, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), they represent the best areas for wildlife in the County.

Why are Local Wildlife Sites important?

Local Wildlife Sites support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites will contain habitats and species that are priorities under the Essex or UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP), which sets out strategies for the conservation of much of our most vulnerable wildlife. Together with statutory protected areas, LoWS represent the minimum habitat we need to protect in order to maintain the current levels of wildlife in Essex.

Local Wildlife Sites complement SSSIs and nature reserves by helping to maintain links between these sites. In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of conserving such places, so that wildlife can survive in the wider countryside, outside of nature reserves.

How are sites protected?

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Local Wildlife Sites are protected within the local planning system. They are a 'material consideration' in the determination of planning applications, and this should ensure that there is a general presumption against development upon them.

It should be stressed that notification does not confer any rights of access either for the general public or nature conservation organisations; it is simply recognition of a site's nature conservation value.

How does the system operate?

The Local Wildlife Site system in Essex is coordinated by Essex Wildlife Trust through the Essex Wildlife Sites Project (EWSP). The EWSP has an Advisory Group, which comprises representatives from Natural England, Essex County Council, Essex Field Club, Essex Planning Officers' Association Planning Policy Forum, Environment Agency, and the Essex Biodiversity Project. This Group provides expert advice and support to the Project, and ensures the system in Essex follows national guidance and best practice.

EWSP carries out the following key roles:

Maintaining an up-to-date register of all sites in Essex
Information is held by Essex Wildlife Trust and is supplied upon request* by Essex Ecology Services (EECOS) the consultancy arm of the Trust.

* *There is a charge for providing information to consultants.*

Contacts

Essex Wildlife Trust Wildlife Sites Officer - John More

Landowner liaison and general enquiries
Phone: 01621 862988 Email: johnm@essexwt.org.uk 

Essex Wildlife Trust's Wildlife Sites Officer provides free advice to LoWS owners, offering guidance where required to help secure sustainable management for the site. For example, he will assist in applications for Environmental Stewardship, or similar grant applications, this will ensure sites are managed for nature conservation objectives.

EECOS - Pat Hatch

Planning guidance
Phone: 01621 862986 Email: path@essexwt.org.uk 

For further information please visit the [Essex Local Wildlife Sites](#)  website.

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