



Ingworth Hedge Planting



1. Fresh Water for Nature

Through the [Carlsberg and WWF Partnership](#), with funding and support from the [National Trust's Riverlands project](#), [Norfolk Rivers Trust](#) (NRT) worked with a landowner in Ingworth to improve water quality and create new habitat for wildlife.

Ingworth is located in the river Bure catchment. The river Bure is a globally-rare chalk river, one of approximately 25 that flow through Norfolk's landscape. These vital habitats, which support a diverse range of wildlife, should possess pristine water that are free of impurities and pollutants, due to being fed by underlying chalk aquifers.

However, the Bure is currently classed as having 'moderate ecological health' (according to Water Framework Directive data, 2022). With pollution from agriculture stated as a reason for not achieving good status, NRT farm advisors have been working locally to address this challenge.

This collaborative project successfully planted over 1,800 meters of native hedging. This not only restored historic hedgerows, but it will also help to mitigate the effects of climate change on biodiversity and food production.



Figure 1. NRT Engagement Officer, Tim Fisher, showing the volunteers the importance of sapling planting and care.



Figure 2. NRT staff help volunteers re-plant the historic hedge.

Working together to fulfil the shared ambition of healing every part of these precious rivers, from their catchment to their banks and the water that flows through them.

WWF and Carlsberg project funded 600m of hedging (3000 plants) and biodegradable tree guards. This was to interrupt flow pathways from arable land to the river Bure. The National Trust's Riverlands project funded an additional 1,200m of hedging (6,267 plants) to plant the remaining field boundaries and create additional farmland habitat; linking the initial planting to the wider landscape.

2. The Importance of Hedge Restoration and Establishment

Water naturally follows the pull of gravity, and areas of land, without interventions such as hedgerows, will allow surface water to follow its natural path freely, without concern for structures such as roads, houses, or villages. A high amount of water moving across the land makes the area more susceptible to flooding and increased soil erosion: creating a potential pollutant and source of sediment increase for the receptor, the river Bure.

Planting these historic field boundaries and establishing new hedgerows will help to mitigate these negative effects by slowing – or in some cases halting – the flow of water across the landscape.

In addition to protecting the river Bure and its catchment, reintroducing these native trees and shrubs to carefully selected areas will provide new farmland habitat. In addition to protecting the river Bure and its catchment, reintroducing these native trees and shrubs to carefully selected areas will provide new farmland habitat. These mixed hedgerows will naturally connect existing and perhaps isolated habitats, creating wildlife corridors for birds, mammals and invertebrates. Pathways are essential for wildlife in our fragmented countryside to sustain and increase biodiversity.

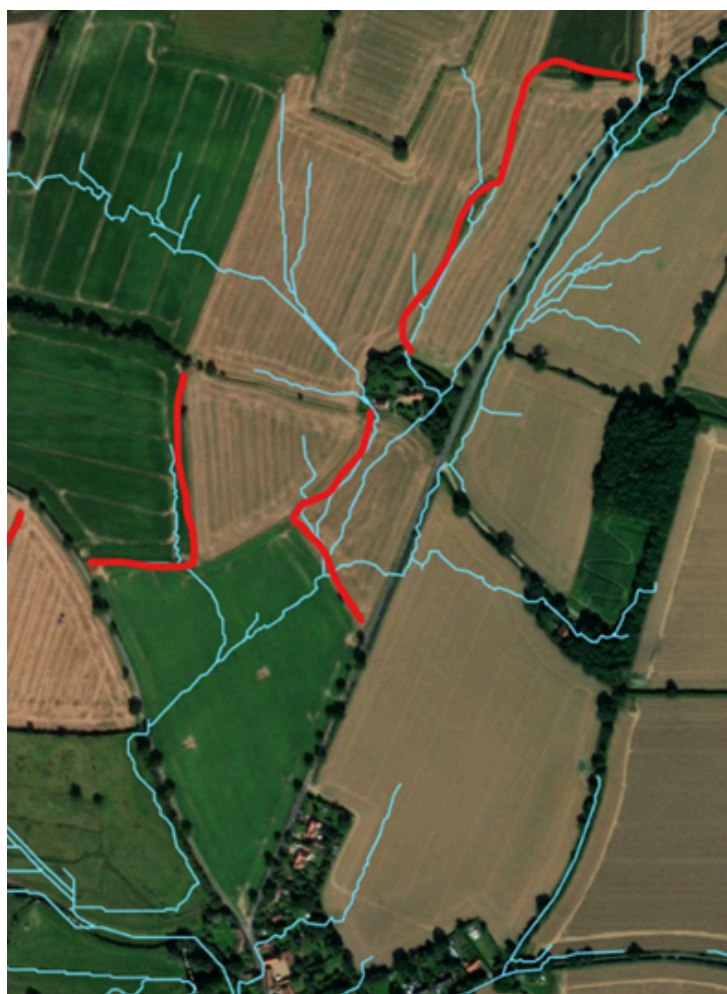


Figure 3. Red line represent the newly planted hedge lines, these will intercept surface water pathways (represented by the blue line lines).



Figure 4. Volunteers are an essential part of the team. .

According to [Hedgelink](#), the UK's most threatened species rely on hedgerow habitats; 12 species of birds, including the song thrush, tree sparrows, turtle doves and yellowhammers. Moreover, our only spined mammal – the hedgehog – needs the safety of hedgerows to travel further distances for food.

3. Collaborative Working

Staff from the local National Trust site [Blickling Estate](#), along with a team from Barratt Homes, joined NRT staff and volunteers to demonstrate the power of collaborative working. Over three days, 20 attendees planted 2,620 saplings along 480 meters of arable field boundaries.

4. Next step

NRT is committed to restoring, protecting and enhancing the water environments of Norfolk and creating connections between nature and communities. As such, the Trust will continue to work closely with local landowners, organisations and people to create or improve interventions and organise further volunteer opportunities in the Bure catchment.

To ensure the saplings remain healthy, landowners sign agreements to maintain the hedgerows. This includes weeding, mulching and replacing any saplings that failed to take. NRT also supports the use of biodegradable tree guards. If any guards have not degraded by the time the tree has outgrown them, they will be removed by hand to ensure correct growth.

Funding Statement

This work was made possible through the generous support of the WWF and Carlsberg partnership. The funding provides essential interventions, restorations and opportunities for landowners, communities and conservation efforts. linking the initial planting to the wider landscape.