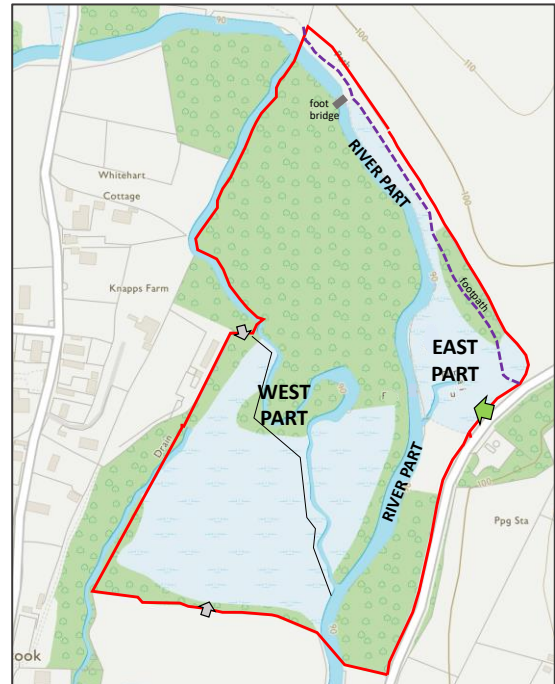


HOULDERS MEADOW NATURE RESERVE – CONCEPT BRIEF

- The Proposition is to put together a syndicate of organisations, hopefully supported by other interested voluntary and statutory parties, to secure and preserve a site, in Boxford, Berkshire as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) of exceptional ecological value.
- The project name ‘Houlders Meadow’ is drawn from the historic name of the largest water meadow on the site as recorded in the Boxford Enclosures Act 1819.
- The site is circa 23 acres (9 Ha) and in three parts:
 - **East Part**- Mainly water meadows on the east side
 - **River Part** - The River Lambourn bisecting the site
 - **West Part** – Scrub to the crossed by footpath east to west
- The separate elements of the site offer in the West Part a protected, undisturbed space for wildlife which is observable from the East Part which provides for public access and engagement. While the river dividing these parts provides its own particular ecological and amenity feature.
- The site was acquired by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) for its hydrological scientific interest and is protected as: a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), A Biodiversity Opportunity Area ((BOA)
- The site’s protected species include the Desmoulins snails, Brook Lamprey, Bullhead and the rivers bank and floating vegetation. It offers a protected undisturbed habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna including deer, voles, wood mouse, kingfishers, barn owls and extensive rare meadow plants and insects.
- The site (edged in red) would fill a void space in the network of wildlife sites (shaded) in the district and along the course of the River Lambourn. Creating links is a declared local objective of the West Berkshire Council.



- CEH has withdrawn from the site and the ownership of the land is now in the sole control of National Environmental Research Council (NERC) who have announced they are looking to dispose of the site. Consequently there is now a potential to acquire the site and establish a nature reserve.
- Any land can be dedicated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) if any such request is confirmed by Natural England and a local authority i.e, West Berkshire Council (or the local parish council if the powers have been delegated). Alternatively Natural England can nominate a site meeting its criteria as a National Nature Reserves (NNR).
- It is intended that the following groups will be asked to participate in the syndicate
 - Locally interested individuals (non necessarily only Boxford residents)
 - Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife trust
 - Boxford Parish Council
- Additionally it is hoped that it will be possible to get support from
 - Natural England
 - West Berkshire Council
 - Berkshire Local Nature Partnership
 - North Wessex AONB
- It is hoped that with a properly structured offer control of the site can be obtained without requiring substantial up front cash investment and thereafter maintenance and development costs can be kept to a minimum by using local volunteers and groups.