

Essex BNG at Priors Farm

Greenshank-owned, a former Essex gravel quarry becoming 62 hectares of estuary-edge wilderness, adjoining Essex Wildlife Trust's founding reserve

ABOUT THE SCHEME

Priors Farm, Fingringhoe, is a Greenshank-owned site, acquired in 2026, on land worked for sand and gravel since the 1930s. Quarrying stopped around 2020, and the site now sits alongside Fingringhoe Wick, Essex Wildlife Trust's first ever nature reserve, opened in 1961 and still the county's flagship site on the Colne Estuary. This scheme adds a substantial new block of habitat directly onto that existing reserve.

The centrepiece is 24 hectares of open mosaic habitat, created from the site's low-nutrient, free-draining quarry substrate, exactly what this rare habitat type needs.

The site is also becoming a new home for Broad-leaved Cudweed, a little member of the daisy family with downy, grey-green leaves. It's one of Britain's rarest wildflowers, so we're delighted to translocate a new population here.

Alongside this, the scheme brings 33 hectares of woodland, scrub, grassland and ponds into active management, and retains the site's reedbed, hedgerows and saltmarsh within the Colne Estuary SSSI boundary untouched.

SCHEME BNG / NN

Status:
Taking Allocations
Colchester City Council LPA
Greater Thames Estuary NCA
Secured via Section 106

CONTACT

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HABITATS AVAILABLE

Broad Habitat	Metric Habitat	Distinctiveness
Urban	Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land	High
Woodland and forest	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	High
Woodland and forest	Wet woodland (enhanced)	High
Woodland and forest	Other broadleaved woodland (enhanced)	Medium
Grassland	Other neutral grassland (enhanced)	Medium
Grassland	Modified grassland (enhanced)	Low
Heathland and shrub	Mixed, gorse and willow scrub (enhanced)	Medium
Lakes	Ponds, non-priority (enhanced)	Medium
Wetland	Reedbeds (retained)	High
Hedgerows	Retained network	-
Watercourses	Retained network	-

TOWNS & CITIES

- Colchester village
- Wivenhoe
- Rowhedge
- West Mersea
- Brightlingsea

NCAS

- Greater Thames Estuary (NCA 81)

LPAS

- Colchester LPA
- Essex County Council

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