

## Management Suggestions - Hales Green

**CWS No.:** 141

**District:** South Norfolk

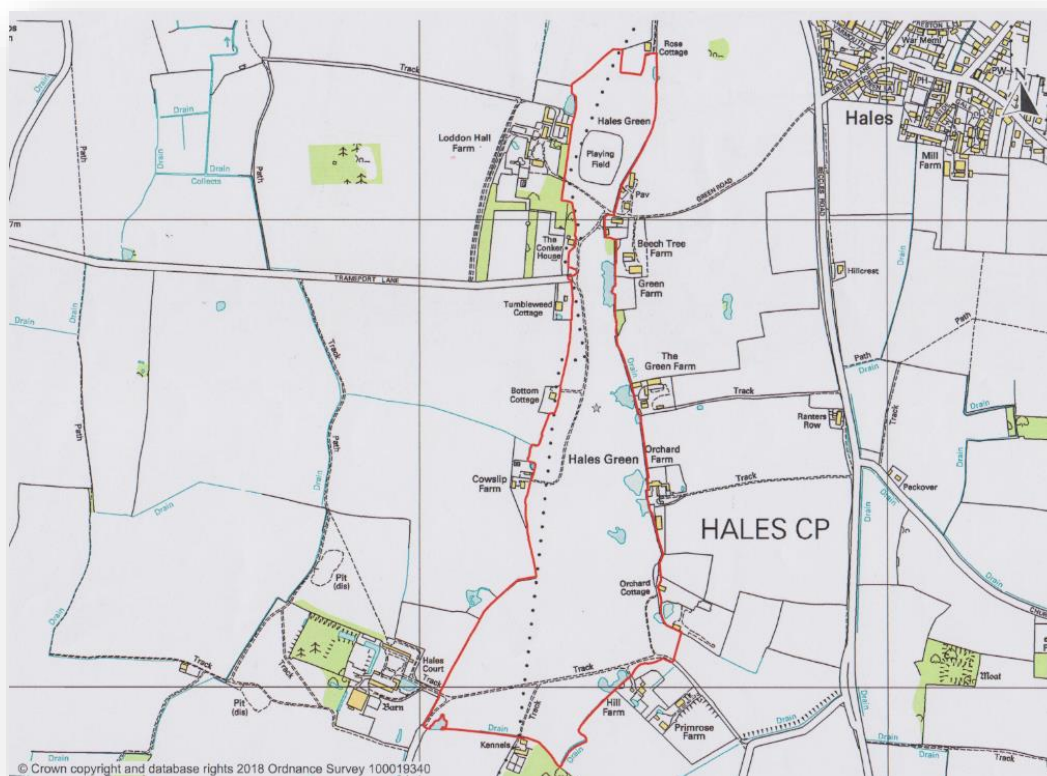
**Grid reference:** TM 373 963

**Area:** 26.7ha

### Overview

Hales Green is an extensive area of neutral grassland, a County Wildlife Site (CWS 141) and Registered Common (CL39). It includes dry and damp grassland with ponds, dry pits, hedges and a small amount of scrub. The common is grazed by cattle and is used for informal public access. Across the common, the grassland is well-grazed and generally poor in herbs, but with some areas more species-rich. Scrub is rare, and is mostly associated with the ponds.

**Map 1:** OS map showing boundary of CWS 141



### Brief habitat description and current site condition

#### Neutral grassland

The neutral grassland is quite improved in places and is relatively species-poor as a result of spraying to treat thistles (*Cirsium arvense*). Some areas of the dry grassland retain species of interest including quaking grass (*Briza media*), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), mouse ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), common birdsfoot trefoil (*Cerastium fontanum*), creeping cinquefoil (*Cerastium fontanum*), bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) and pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*). Otherwise grasses dominate across much of the common.

### **Ponds**

There are some nine ponds across the common, some being seasonally wet depressions. Some of the damper pits and hollows across the common are possibly historic ponds. Species supported in and around the ponds include hard rush (*Juncus effusus*), brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), lesser spearwort (*Veronica beccabunga*), water crowfoot (*Veronica beccabunga*), celery-leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*), water speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*), common spike rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), floating sweet grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), marsh foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), marsh bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), common spotted orchid (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), water violet (*Hottonia palustris*) and tubular water dropwort (*Oenanthe fistulosa*). A few of the ponds have thick bordering scrub.

### **Hedgerows**

The native species hedgerows are in good condition as wildlife habitats in the southern part of the common, being thick and species rich. Some of the hedges in the north and east have become gappy.

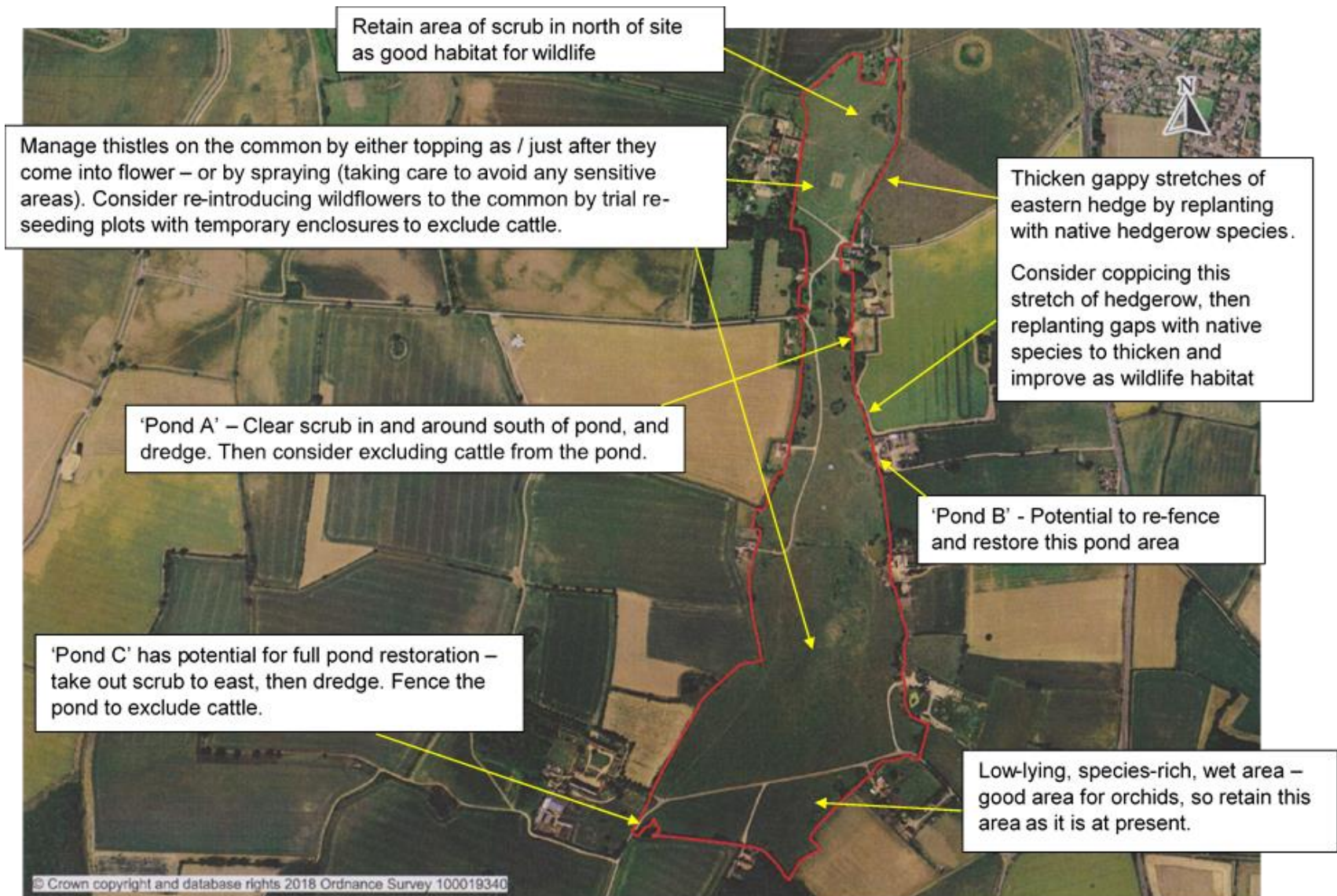
### **Ideal site condition**

- Open neutral grassland with good species diversity
- Dense, native species hedgerows maintained as wildlife habitats
- Mosaic of pond habitats with different shade levels, including some open, sunny ponds containing diverse marginal and aquatic species, and appropriate amounts of scrub on edges

### **Conservation priorities**

- Enhance neutral grassland species across the common, as appropriate
- Thicken and replant any gappy and derelict stretches of hedgerow
- Restore a few, selected ponds as open, sunny habitats for wildlife.

**Management Map** (see table below for further information)



**Management recommendations** (see map for area references)

Conservation priority	Prescriptions	Time of year	Who to deliver	Details
<b>Grassland management:</b>	<p>Continue to cattle graze the grassland</p> <p>Consider control of thistles either by topping as / just after they come into flower, or by spraying thistles off (avoid spraying in any particularly sensitive areas), then think about re-introducing wildflowers.</p> <p>Consider trial re-seeding plots with green hay across the common. Spread hay may need to be protected from grazing for a few weeks.</p> <p>Wildflower areas would need to be cut once a year and cuttings removed, if grazing is not sufficient to manage them.</p>	<p>May to November</p> <p>July</p> <p>Spring/ Summer</p> <p>July/August</p>	<p>Rights holders</p> <p>Contractor</p> <p>Volunteers or Contractor</p> <p>Volunteers</p>	<p>As part of NWT's green hay project</p>
<b>Scrub:</b>	<p>Retain existing scrub in north of the common as valuable wildlife habitat.</p>			
<b>Manage ponds for wildlife</b>	<p>Potential to restore three ponds (see map for locations):</p> <p><b>Pond A</b> – Dredge southern area of this pond to improve habitat: Clear scrub in and around the south, and then dredge. Then look to exclude cattle from this pond by fencing.</p> <p><b>Pond B</b> – Potential to re-fence and restore, if wanted. Consider digging out this pond area, leaving dredged material on north side of pond. Re-fence to exclude cattle.</p> <p><b>Pond C</b> – Take scrub out in the east. Dredge the pond, then fence to exclude cattle.</p> <p>Low-lying, damp, orchid-rich area in south-east – Leave this area as it is at present.</p>	<p>September-January</p>	<p>Contractor / Volunteers</p>	<p>More information on ponds and their restoration is available from Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Norfolk Ponds Project</p>

## Wildlife in Common – Management Suggestions

<b>Hedgerow maintenance</b> – managing hedges for wildlife	Thicken / repair stretches of gappy hedges along the eastern boundary (See map for locations).  North-eastern stretch of gappy hedge: thicken the eastern hedge by replanting native species in gaps.  Consider coppicing and replanting stretch of hedge to south of 'Pond A'	Winter	Volunteers / Contractor	
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### Further information

**Pond information:** <http://www.norfolkwaq.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/NPP-Restoring-Norfolks-Ponds-Guidance-booklet.pdf>