

# ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY 2023–2033

## BRAXTED PARK ESTATE

SEPTEMBER 2023



BRAXTED PARK®  
CONFERENCE & WEDDING VENUE

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



BRAXTED PARK®  
CONFERENCE & WEDDING VENUE

Braxted Park Estate has been rethinking its approach to land use and management for over two decades. It has sought to develop an Estate that contributes to biodiversity improvement and climate resilience through nature-led solutions that complement other Estate enterprises, which in turn can help fund and sustain more extensive land use, thereby ensuring true long-term sustainability.

This Environmental Strategy shares an ambitious environmental vision and sets out opportunities to bring about landscape-scale nature recovery, conservation of heritage features and enhancement of community benefits. This Strategy recommends actions for Braxted Park Estate to realise their environmental goals and ambitions from 2023 – 2033, which sit within four focus areas: biodiversity, carbon, heritage and community.

Braxted Park Estate will work in partnership with key stakeholders including Operation Turtle Dove, RSPB, Bidwells and the local farm cluster to enhance the Estate's ecosystem services to maximise benefits for nature and local communities. The project aims to demonstrate a novel approach to the land management to improve ecological value, and the quality and sustainability of ecosystem services.



## VISION FOR 2033

The Braxted Park Estate endeavours to enhance the natural environment for the benefit of local wildlife and communities. By 2033 the Braxted Park Estate will create a functional landscape that delivers multiple ecosystem services.

The current custodians of Braxted Park Estate have a real desire to promote natural regeneration, with nature-based solutions used to improve ecosystems in a way that is sustainable for the long-term. They are not afraid to experiment with new approaches and will establish credible partnerships to continue being leaders in this space. Demonstrating best practice will be critical in influencing the wider landscape of land managers and local communities, including the local farm cluster and the Lower Blackwater and wider Essex living landscape.

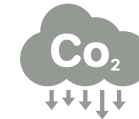
## ACTION PLAN

Actions to realise the opportunities identified in this Strategy are summarised below for each focus area. To facilitate data gathering and monitor success, quantifiable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be determined for each focus area.



### BIODIVERSITY

- Implementation of modified options within the agri-environment schemes to provide more permanent areas for wildlife and improve success of implementation.
- The landscaping around the new holes at the golf course should create wood pasture habitat. A landscape management plan should be developed for the golf course to focus on improving biodiversity, including implementation of ecologically sensitive management within the rough areas.
- Implementation of a BNG scheme that will see phased conversion of 70 ha of predominantly arable land to biodiverse habitats, providing a solution to developers with BNG offsetting requirements.
- Plan developed for the creation of more turtle dove habitats across the rural estate and phased delivery commenced.



### CARBON

- Commence work on developing a carbon baseline of the Estate's enterprises.
- Integration of regenerative agricultural practices within the agri-environment schemes where possible.
- Plan developed for tree planting across the Estate and delivery commenced.



### HERITAGE

- Plan developed to reinstate 'ghost ponds' across the Estate and phased delivery commenced.
- Restoration of Fabians plantation.



### COMMUNITY

- Develop and implement an engagement programme to promote the improved golf course.
- Continued participation in the farm cluster, including knowledge sharing and development of collaborative projects (e.g. turtle dove conservation).

# INTRODUCTION

## RATIONALE

Braxted Park Estate has been rethinking its approach to land use and management for over two decades. It has sought to develop an Estate that contributes to biodiversity improvement and climate resilience through nature-led solutions that complement other Estate enterprises, which in turn can help fund and sustain more extensive land use, thereby ensuring true long-term sustainability.

This document outlines a vision for the environmental enhancement of the Estate from 2023-2033 and sets out a strategy for how this can be achieved. The project aims to identify opportunities to enhance the Estate's natural capital and heritage assets, through the creation and restoration of habitats to improve biodiversity and carbon sequestration, interventions to conserve and restore historical features, and the promotion of community benefits.

Braxted Park Estate will work in partnership with key stakeholders including Operation Turtle Dove, RSPB, Bidwells and the local farm cluster to enhance the Estate's ecosystem services to maximise benefits for nature and local communities. The project aims to demonstrate a novel approach to the land management to improve ecological value, and the quality and sustainability of ecosystem services.

## ESTATE OVERVIEW

Braxted Park Estate is located between Witham and Tiptree in Essex. The Estate covers approximately 704 ha (1,740 ac) and is divided into two areas: the historical buildings and parkland inside the Estate's wall, and the arable land outside the wall. Each area provides different services and benefits for the Estate, local community and nature.

Braxted Park Estate was first recorded as a Deer Park in 1342 and now supports multiple enterprises including agriculture, shoot, golf course, cookery school, wedding venue, and other events.

The Estate sits within the Northern Thames Basin National Character Area and includes several habitats and species of ecological importance, including priority woodlands and turtle doves. A key ecological feature is the River Blackwater and its tributaries which run parallel and throughout the Estate and flow into the lake.

This document sets out how the natural capital assets across the Estate can be enhanced to maximise benefits for nature and society.



# VISION

The Braxted Park Estate endeavours to enhance the natural environment for the benefit of local wildlife and communities. By 2033 the Braxted Park Estate will create a functional landscape that delivers multiple ecosystem services.

The current custodians of Braxted Park Estate have a real desire to promote natural regeneration, with nature-based solutions used to improve ecosystems in a way that is sustainable for the long-term. They are not afraid to experiment with new approaches and will establish credible partnerships to continue being leaders in this space. Demonstrating best practice will be critical in influencing the wider landscape of land managers and local communities, including the local farm cluster and the Lower Blackwater and wider Essex living landscape.

By looking at the Estate on a more strategic level there is an opportunity to have a more holistic and landscape-scale approach to environmental management, providing meaningful opportunities for the Estate to realise its 2033 vision.



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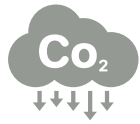


# AREAS OF FOCUS

The strategic vision is supported by four key focus areas:



BIODIVERSITY



CARBON



HERITAGE



COMMUNITY

Each area of focus comprises targets, existing and proposed initiatives to realise these targets, and KPIs to measure success.



# AREAS OF FOCUS



## BIODIVERSITY

### TARGET

To conserve and enhance biodiversity and habitat connectivity across Braxted Park Estate, supporting local priority species and contributing to improved ecosystem services. 40% of land dedicated to enhancing biodiversity

*40% of land dedicated to enhancing biodiversity*

### DESCRIPTION

Higher biodiversity can improve an ecosystem's resilience to change, which is particularly important in the face of climate change and other environmental stressors. Maintaining biodiversity is therefore vital for the ongoing provision of ecosystem services.

### EXISTING INITIATIVES

In January 2023 a Biodiversity Report was published, investigating the biodiversity potential of 653 ha of the Estate. Arable and improved grasslands were the dominant land cover classes, together covering 75% of the project area, followed by broadleaved woodland (21%). 19% of the project area consists of habitats of high or very high distinctiveness – mostly represented by broadleaved woodlands.

Several bird surveys were conducted in 2021 – 2023. Overall, 80 bird species have been observed across the Estate including lapwings and turtle dove (Appendix 1).

The Estate is involved in the RSPB's Operation Turtle Dove project and the Big Green Internet project to connect woodland across the landscape between Clacton and Epping.

Braxted Park Estate has been in an Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship Agreement since 2014 covering 591 ha. The options in the scheme include the management of woodland, wood pasture and parkland, successional areas and scrub, grass margins, and plots of nectar flower and bird seed mixes.

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) performed a biodiversity assessment of the shoot in 2018, which was found to comply with the Code of Good Shooting Practice.

The Estate has participated in the Essex County Council Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) project which aims to unlock public and private capital investment into natural capital opportunities.

### INSIDE THE WALL

- The park consists of wood pasture and parkland with expanses of grazed grassland, woodland, several ponds and a lake.
- A Parkland Management and Restoration Plan was produced in 2016.
- A Golf Course Landscape Restoration Plan was produced in 2022.

### OUTSIDE THE WALL

- Significant arable reversion, including large areas that have naturally regenerated into mixed scrub and oak woodlands.
- Planting over 10 miles of wildlife corridors to connect isolated woodlands.



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## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Continued participation in agri-environmental schemes, modifying options to include more permanent areas for wildlife that improve habitat connectivity.
- Expand priority habitats through habitat creation to buffer and link habitats.
- Thin woodlands as necessary to improve understory biodiversity.
- Reinstate ‘ghost ponds’ based on historical records of pond locations across the Estate.
- Install additional owl boxes across the estate to support barn owl populations.
- To improve biodiversity within the shoot: provide supplementary food and water for turtle doves in late April; improve shrub layers in the outer 30 m of woodlands; provide a wider range of game cover crop types.

## INSIDE THE WALL

- Update the Parkland Restoration Management Plan.
- Ecologically sensitive management of golf course rough areas to include: coppicing woodland, scalloping habitat edges, relaxation of regular cutting and removing arisings, avoidance of herbicide and pesticide use.
- Naturalise 50% of out-of-play golf course waterbodies, particularly in areas less than 2 ft deep, to promote aquatic species.
- Increase wood pasture habitat around proposed new golf course holes and develop a landscape management plan that focuses on improving biodiversity.

## OUTSIDE THE WALL

- \*Development of a 70 ha BNG scheme that will see the conversion of arable land to biodiverse habitats.
- \*Increase turtle dove habitats through the creation of ponds and foraging strips within 300 m of scrub.
- Continued knowledge sharing with the farm cluster and participating in collaborative projects to maximise environmental outcomes across the region.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The BNG scheme will be privately funded through the sale of biodiversity units to developers and businesses, which is expected to fully fund the habitat works and long-term management of the scheme.

Agri-environment schemes will provide grants to support associated habitat creation and management, which are expected to fully fund implementation of the chosen options.

Some initiatives may benefit from alternative funding, such as priority species grants for creating and managing turtle dove habitats. Collaborating with the farm cluster may present options to apply for funding where works are part of a wider project across the region, such as Landscape Recovery within the Environment and Land Management Scheme (ELMS).

The returns from the Estates other enterprises may also provide private funding to support the delivery of these initiatives alongside other sources of funding.

*\*Thanks for the support of Mark Nowers, Turtle Dove Conservation Adviser in the RSPB, for the two proposed initiatives*



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## OUTCOMES

The core nature recovery area will consist of the woodlands, scrub areas, grasslands, ponds, among other permanent habitats and the habitat corridors that connect these across the Estate. The rough areas of the golf course should also be included in the core nature recovery area.

Increasing land dedicated to wildlife through creating and maintaining habitats permanently will allow wildlife corridors to better establish, facilitating wildlife movement across the landscape, expanding species ranges, and providing foraging and refuge sites for wildlife.

Focusing areas on the creation of turtle dove habitats will improve the success of increasing the abundance of this species as the chicks have a restricted range for accessing resources. These areas will not only provide a collective of essential habitats for turtle doves but will support a community of species.

Buffering these core areas for nature restoration through the creation of marginal habitats will reduce the risk of transport of potential pollutants from more intensively managed areas (e.g. cropland and the golf course). Well managed marginal habitats include diverse grassland with varying sward heights and structure, increasing the species the habitat supports.

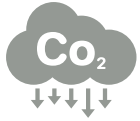
Managing woodland to promote biodiversity will see the creation of wood pasture areas and improved age structure where thinning takes place, improving ground flora and providing a wider range of habitats and resources for wildlife.

By 2033 the core nature recovery area would expect to see an increase in the diversity and abundance of flora species and invertebrates that contributes to sustainable food chains, increasing the presence of small mammals, reptiles and birds.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

A series of KPIs should be set that are quantifiable, which we envisage may include the following aspects:

- Area of land committed to BNG with habitat establishment underway.
- Total area of permanent wildlife habitats
- Increase of priority habitat area through habitat expansion.
- Good levels of aquatic invertebrate species diversity and abundance in new ponds.
- Increase of bird species diversity and abundance recorded annually.
- Increase of ground flora species diversity and abundance in woodlands.
- Increase of flora and invertebrate species diversity and abundance in golf course rough area.



## CARBON

### TARGET

To reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase carbon sequestration and storage across the Estate and its enterprises.

*Average soil organic carbon storage of >100 t/ha*  
*Increase woodland cover by 10%*

### DESCRIPTION

Agriculture is known to be a major contributor to GHG emissions with options for reducing these dependent on land use and management flexibility. Regenerative agriculture is known to contribute to reduced carbon emissions and improved carbon sequestration and storage. This approach covers five core themes: minimising or eradicating soil disturbance; always maintaining soil cover; having living roots in the soils for as long as possible; having diverse rotations; and incorporating livestock into the rotation.

Another key nature-based solution to increasing carbon sequestration and storage is planting trees, where carbon is captured from the atmosphere and transformed to biomass through photosynthesis.

The land across the Estate is mostly a combination of clay, silt and gravel over irregular terrain, which can be difficult to farm and presents an opportunity to implement more regenerative agricultural practices, as well as creation of other habitats.

### EXISTING INITIATIVES

In November 2022 a Soil Organic Carbon Analysis Report was published, which consisted of a desktop analysis of 471 ha of the Estate to investigate the dynamics of soil and soil organic carbon (SOC) from January 2017 to October 2022. The SOC storage was estimated to average 73.68 t/ha in 2021 and it was proposed that the Estate has potential to increase SOC storage to between 121 – 143 t/ha through changes in habitat types and/or management practices.

In 2009 a report from The Carbon Trust was completed for the Estate. All recommendations in this report have been achieved, including replacing the mansion's oil-fired boilers for a single wood chip boiler.



### INSIDE THE WALL

- The Estate has received two awards for sustainability in relation to the installation of the biomass boiler and the construction of the Cookery School.
- Braxted Park Kitchen uses local ingredients and has a long-term field and farm-to-fork policy.

### OUTSIDE THE WALL

- The cropping is typical for a combinable crop rotation in this location. The largest crop by area in an average year is winter drilled milling wheat which command premium over-feed wheat provided the grain is of the correct specification. This is processed by one of the many flour millers in East Anglia.
- To provide a balanced sustainable rotation second wheat is rarely grown and the typical break crop is winter oil seed rape (OSR) to provide an entry into first wheat. OSR produces a good margin with easy access to one of the three UK oilseed plants at Erith on the River Thames.
- Winter beans are grown as a break crop which fix nitrogen in the soil. Aimed at the human consumption market for which they would be exported from east coast ports to North Africa. Linseed is also grown to produce linseed oil for high grade lubrication oils, wood preservative and industrial manufacturing.
- The farm benefits from a modest irrigation water supply and access to a local farmers cooperative that enables sweetcorn and squashes to be grown for wholesale to the London markets.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Complete a comprehensive carbon baseline of the Estate's enterprises to identify opportunities to reduce emissions.
- Integrate regenerative agricultural practices within the agri-environment schemes where possible.
- Work with the Woodland Connectivity Facilitator to implement tree planting opportunities, focusing on expanding and connecting existing woodlands and creation of wood pasture.

### INSIDE THE WALL

- Follow the environmental and sustainability policy for the events business to reduce GHG emissions.
- Consider mob grazing in the park and on any rotational leys.

### OUTSIDE THE WALL

- Establish a variety of cover crops where relevant.
- Integrate livestock into the arable rotation.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Public grants are available for some regenerative agriculture interventions (such as through agri-environment schemes), while other would need private funding to support their implementation.

Grants are expected to cover woodland establishment and management costs. Within the BNG scheme, proposed woodland creation and long-term management would be privately funded.

The opportunity to generate and trade carbon credits as a result of habitat creation and land management changes should be explored which could provide an alternative income stream.

There is also potential for initiatives to be funded through a Landscape Recovery grant, for example collaborating with the farm cluster to contribute to a wider project.

## OUTCOMES

The land remaining in arable use will move towards more regenerative approaches to farming. Establishing cover crops where appropriate will protect the soils from erosion caused by sun, wind and rain and increasing the number of rotational spring crops will help to significantly reduce pesticide use and also allows for better livestock integration, which when introduced into the arable rotation will aid in weed management and add organic matter into the soil ecosystem. Rebuilding the soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity will lead to improved carbon sequestration and water cycles. This in turn improves ecosystem functioning, supporting food production and increasing resilience to external factors such as climate change.

Regenerative agriculture is a long-term commitment and there will be an initial period where a reduction of outputs will be observed, however, after at least five years the benefits of allowing soil quality to improve will start to be seen. The overall aim of regenerative agriculture is to create resilient agricultural systems that are able to maintain food supplies at sustainable yields in addition to delivering environmental benefits. Careful consideration will need to be given to

how the contractor can be incentivised in the short-term to adopt practices where the benefits will not be realised for several years (beyond their current contractual tenure).

## MEASURING SUCCESS

A series of KPIs should be set that are quantifiable, which we envisage may include the following aspects:

- Increase in soil organic carbon storage and abundance of earthworms in areas using regenerative farming approaches.
- Area of arable land ploughed annually across the Estate.
- Area of land left bare preceding spring crops.
- Area of land with new tree planting.





## HERITAGE

### TARGET

To restore and conserve heritage features across the Estate.

### *90% completion of the Landscape Restoration Plan*

### DESCRIPTION

Protecting heritage features sustains the value of heritage. Heritage can influence the character of the environment and an area's sense of place, as well as inspiring new development design and promoting the re-use of existing fabric, minimising waste.

### EXISTING FEATURES AND INITIATIVES

#### INSIDE THE WALL

- The entire site inside the wall is a Grade II\* listed park, with a Grade II\* listed house and other Grade II listed features. The landscape park incorporates the largely below ground Great Braxted Deserted Medieval Village and management accounts for both historic elements.
- The Landscape Restoration Plan produced in 1993 has been executed. A Parkland Management Plan was produced in 2016.
- 75% of the parkland has been restored to reflect the C18-19 parkland design shown on the 1897 OS map.
- The Grade II listed hermitage has been restored and was awarded the 2011 Maldon District Council Building Conservation award.

- The Estate participates in the “Invitation to view” scheme where tours are given of the mid-eighteenth century red-brick house, the estate grounds and hermitage.

#### OUTSIDE THE WALL

- Cropmarks showing evidence of an enclosure and field system north of Broomfield farm, likely relating to a Roman villa/farm site exist as a below ground feature.
- Tiptree Wood, New Wood, and Kelvedon Hall Wood are designated as ancient and semi-natural woodlands, predicted to be of medieval origin.
- Howbridges Wood is also a designated ancient and semi-natural woodland of probable medieval origin and contains the site of a Roman pottery kiln.
- Kelvedon Hall Cottages and Windmill Hill Farm are likely to date back to post-medieval.

#### PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Reinstate ‘ghost ponds’ based on historical records of pond locations across the Estate.
- Continue a working partnership with English Heritage and the Country House Foundation to restore and conserve the heritage features at Braxted Park Estate.

#### INSIDE THE WALL

- Reinstate ‘ghost ponds’ based on historical records of pond locations across the Estate.
- Continue a working partnership with English Heritage and the Country House Foundation to restore and conserve the heritage features at Braxted Park Estate.

- Continue restoring the parkland to reflect the C18-19 parkland design shown on the 1897 OS map (75% complete). This includes the new golf course holes which will improve sightlines, restore wood pasture habitat, and the repair and conservation of Fabians plantation.
- Recreate the path network through Nursery plantation and Fabians plantation.
- Continue restoring and maintaining the Grade II listed Georgian house (windows and roof are 75% complete; exterior brickwork is 50% complete).
- Continue to restore the entire park wall (60% complete), damn wall and lake bridge, and ha-ha.
- Conserve the sub-surface remains of the medieval manor house, deserted medieval village and Glebe gardens.
- Restore the historic greenhouses within the Grade II listed walled garden again to fully functional fruit tree houses (25% complete).

#### OUTSIDE THE WALL

- Consider ceasing ploughing in areas with historic cropmarks, with management modifying to direct drilling or change in use to pasture.
- Conserve historic woodlands through management that maintains woodland structure and tree species composition, with consideration to climate change resilience.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Higher Tier Capital Grants are available for work to conserve or protect individual historic environment features (not roofed buildings) when physical work is needed to change land management practices or restore a site. These grants can cover up to 100% of actual costs. The work must be distinct from any previously conducted under an agri-environment scheme to be applicable for this funding.

## OUTCOMES

Reinstating heritage features across the Estate will conserve the environmental character of the area. This will sustain the value of the heritage and encourage continued visits from the public through the dedicated tours.

Conservation of the historic woodlands will not only maintain their character but also deliver benefits to biodiversity, with diverse woodland structures providing a variety of habitats for wildlife.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

A series of KPIs should be set that are quantifiable, which we envisage may include the following aspects:

- Percentage of 'ghost ponds' reinstated.
- Percentage of the Landscape Restoration Plan complete.
- Condition of ancient woodlands, with woodland structure and species composition resembling the historic status.





## COMMUNITY

### TARGET

To improve community engagement through the Estate being a valued asset to the local area and engendering environmental stewardship in society.

*Increase local employment by >5%*  
*Successful implementation of >3 farm cluster projects*

### DESCRIPTION

Having access to nature is vital for our physical and mental wellbeing. Being in green spaces supports social interactions, improves relaxation, encourages physical movement, and educates people on environmental topics.

The golf course is a key community asset that provides leisure opportunities and the other Estate enterprises promote community engagement. The Estate has potential to deliver targeted local events, further enhancing community engagement.

### EXISTING FEATURES AND INITIATIVES

The Estate is committed to increasing public access to Braxted Park, particularly to promote the education of young and urban-based people about the value that country estates contribute to society. Existing initiatives include visits to Braxted Park by local students and heritage groups.

The Estate includes approximately 9.7 km of public footpaths and 1.7 km of bridleways.

### INSIDE THE WALL

- Enterprises that benefit the local community include the golf course, cookery school and events spaces.
- Active with charities, offering the venue and facilities to various good causes, including golf days, parish walks, charity balls, anti-littering festivals, tea days and open gardens.
- Feasibility study for the sympathetic expansion of the golf club pavilion.

### OUTSIDE THE WALL

- The shoot provides benefits to the community including employment and recreation.
- Participation in the farm cluster engenders environmental stewardship amongst the community.

### PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Explore opportunities for developing ecotourism within the Estate, such as glamping.

### INSIDE THE WALL

- Engagement project to encourage more golfers, promoted by the improved course.
- Recreate the path network through Nursery and Fabians plantations and incorporate in parkland tours.
- Host local community events on the Estate.

### OUTSIDE THE WALL

- Continued knowledge sharing with the farm cluster and participating in collaborative projects



## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Most initiatives will require upfront capital while some, such as restoration of the path network, may be funded through public grants.

Ultimately, the initiatives aim to drive community engagement with the Estate and are likely to contribute to the growth of the Estate's existing enterprises and development of new enterprises, with potential to generate substantial gross returns.

## OUTCOMES

The development of ecotourism can lead to expansion of the offerings of existing enterprises, such as the cookery school and golf course, by increasing the number of people visiting and staying at the Estate.

Growth of enterprises including the golf course expansion, restoration of Fabians plantation and new ecotourism offering will promote new employment opportunities on the Estate, as well as increase community benefits.

An engagement project targeting new golf club members would involve sharing information on the improved course and provide an opportunity for obtaining feedback from prospective members. This may inform the design of the golf club pavilion expansion.

Restoration of the path network through Nursery and Fabians plantations and incorporating these areas in the parkland tours will increase access to greenspace and provide opportunities for people to engage with the environment.

Hosting local community events could be a key method for engaging with the community and showcasing the environmental initiatives across the Estate, increasing the Estate's level of influence relating to positive environmental behaviour and action in the community. This was demonstrated by the anti-littering festival at the Estate that was a big success with over 300 children participating.

Participating in the farm cluster provides opportunities for knowledge sharing and working collaboratively towards mutual goals, which will increase community awareness and potential for landscape scale conservation of the environment.



## MEASURING SUCCESS

A series of KPIs should be set that are quantifiable, which we envisage may include the following aspects:

- Quantity of new employment opportunities as a result of works across the Estate.
- Increased visitors to the golf course annually.
- Increased visitors on the parkland and heritage tours.
- Increased quantity of events hosted on the Estate.
- Quantity of visitors specifically regarding any new eco-tourism offering.



# FARM CLUSTER

Braxted Park Estate is part of the North Essex Farm Cluster (a Community Interest Company) which was launched in November 2022. This farm cluster is extending to incorporate the lower Blackwater area (from Kelvedon to Maldon), thus covering the entire Blackwater catchment (map of catchment shown opposite).

The aim of the farm cluster is for knowledge sharing, networking, and gaining access to funding opportunities. The farm cluster is made up of a wide range of farm businesses, from large contractors to direct sales-based artisan producers, with livestock, arable and horticulture represented.

This will be a key resource for unlocking funding for Landscape Recovery schemes within the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS). The Operation Turtle Dove project would also benefit from a collaborative approach that the farm cluster can facilitate.

Further benefits of the farm cluster include the following.

- Performing coordinated surveys for more accurate assessments of species distribution and abundance.
- Using targeted interventions over a larger area to improve the abundance of a specific species, such as the turtle dove.
- Reducing costs for training courses or educational resources.
- Increasing recognition of conservation efforts.
- Increasing the value of the land by all members improving local soil health and water quality.
- Opening the opportunity to partner with organisations, such as GWCT, RSPB and the Wildlife Trust for project delivery and knowledge sharing, etc.



# ACTION PLAN

The Estate should work with project partners to determine quantifiable KPIs that are appropriate for each focus area. This will enable data to be gathered within the first year of the Strategy implementation that will act as a baseline to compare against future results to monitor success and guide land management.

Key actions for the Estate to implement over the next two years are summarised below.

## BIODIVERSITY

- Implementation of modified options within the agri-environment schemes to provide more permanent areas for wildlife and improve success of implementation.
- The landscaping around the new holes at the golf course should create wood pasture habitat. A landscape management plan should be developed for the golf course to focus on improving biodiversity, including implementation of ecologically sensitive management within the rough areas.
- Implementation of a BNG scheme that will see phased conversion of 70 ha of predominantly arable land to biodiverse habitats, providing a solution to developers with BNG offsetting requirements.
- Plan developed for the creation of more turtle dove habitats across the rural estate and phased delivery commenced.

## CARBON

- Commence work on developing a carbon baseline of the Estate's enterprises.
- Integration of regenerative agricultural practices within the agri-environment schemes where possible.
- Plan developed for tree planting across the Estate and delivery commenced.
- Develop the investment case for generating woodland and soil carbon credits.

## HERITAGE

- Plan developed to reinstate 'ghost ponds' across the Estate and phased delivery commenced.
- Restoration of Fabians plantation.

## COMMUNITY

- Develop and implement an engagement programme to promote the improved golf course.
- Continued participation in the farm cluster, including knowledge sharing and development of collaborative projects (e.g. turtle dove conservation).



## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Arlo Clark (2022) Golf Course Landscape Restoration Plan

Askew Nelson (2016) Braxted Park Parkland Management Plan

Downforce Technologies (2023) Biodiversity Report

Downforce Technologies (2023) Soil Organic Carbon Analysis

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (2021, 2023) Braxted Park Bird Survey Results

Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (2018) Report following a shot biodiversity assessment to the Braxted Park Shoot

RSPB (2023) Bird Records

The Carbon Trust (2009) Assessment of Energy Saving Opportunities for Braxted Park Estates



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# APPENDIX I

## BIRD SURVEYS

FWAG performed bird surveys across Braxted Park Estate in 2021 and 2023. The RSPB also performed a bird survey in May and July 2023 as part of the Operation Turtle Dove project.

Species Common Name	IUCN Status in Europe	IUCN Population Trend in Europe	Species Present			
			Spring 2021	Winter 2022/23	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
Blackbird	Least Concern	Increasing				
Blackcap	Least Concern	Increasing				
Black-headed Gull	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Blue Tit	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Brambling	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Bullfinch	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Buzzard	Least Concern	Increasing				
Canada Goose	Least Concern	Increasing				
Carrion Crow	Least Concern	Increasing				
Chaffinch	Least Concern	Increasing				
Chiffchaff	Least Concern	Increasing				
Coal Tit	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Collard Dove	Least Concern	Stable				
Common Gull	Least Concern	Unknown				
Common Whitethroat	Least Concern	Increasing				
Coot	Near Threatened	Decreasing				
Cormorant	Least Concern	Increasing				
Cuckoo	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Dunnock	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Egyptian Goose	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Fieldfare	Least Concern	Stable				
Garden Warbler	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Goldcrest	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Goldfinch	Least Concern	Increasing				
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Great Tit	Least Concern	Stable				

# APPENDIX I

## BIRD SURVEYS

Species Common Name	IUCN Status in Europe	IUCN Population Trend in Europe	Species Present			
			Spring 2021	Winter 2022/23	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
Greenfinch	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Green Woodpecker	Least Concern	Stable				
Grey Heron	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Greylag Goose	Least Concern	Increasing				
Grey Wagtail	Least Concern	Stable				
Herring Gull	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Helmeted Guineafowl	Least Concern	Stable				
House Martin	Least Concern	Stable				
House Sparrow	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Jackdaw	Least Concern	Increasing				
Jay	Least Concern	Stable				
Kestrel	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Kingfisher	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Lapwing	Critically Endangered	Decreasing				
Lesser Black Backed Gull	Least Concern	Increasing				
Lesser Whitethroat	Least Concern	Stable				
Linnet	Least Concern	Increasing				
Little Grebe	Least Concern	Stable				
Long-tailed Tit	Least Concern	Stable				
Magpie	Least Concern	Stable				
Mallard	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Meadow Pipit	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Mistle Thrush	Least Concern	Stable				
Moorhen	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Nuthatch	Least Concern	Stable				
Pheasant	Least Concern	Stable				
Pied Wagtail	Least Concern	Stable				

# APPENDIX I

## BIRD SURVEYS

Species Common Name	IUCN Status in Europe	IUCN Population Trend in Europe	Species Present			
			Spring 2021	Winter 2022/23	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
Red Kite	Least Concern	Increasing				
Red-legged Partridge	Near Threatened	Decreasing				
Redwing	Near Threatened	Decreasing				
Reed Bunting	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Reed Warbler	Least Concern	Stable				
Robin	Least Concern	Stable				
Rock Dove/ Feral Pigeon	Least Concern	Unknown				
Rook	Vulnerable	Decreasing				
Shelduck	Least Concern	Stable				
Siskin	Least Concern	Stable				
Skylark	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Song Thrush	Least Concern	Stable				
Sparrowhawk	Least Concern	Stable				
Spotted Flycatcher	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Starling	Least Concern	Stable				
Stock Dove	Least Concern	Increasing				
Swallow	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Swift	Near Threatened	Decreasing				
Teal	Least Concern	Increasing				
Treecreeper	Least Concern	Increasing				
Tufted Duck	Near Threatened	Decreasing				
Turtle Dove	Vulnerable	Decreasing				
Wood Pigeon	Least Concern	Increasing				
Willow Warbler	Least Concern	Decreasing				
Wren	Least Concern	Increasing				
Yellowhammer	Least Concern	Decreasing				
		Totals	42	57	53	51



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