



Dereham Town Council

## Proposed Neatherd Country Park.

### Public Consultation

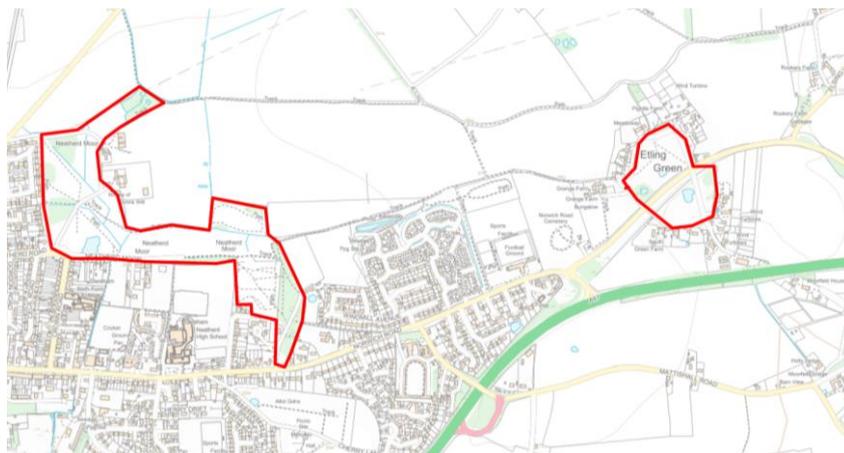
Consultation ends 4pm on the 6<sup>th</sup> July.

The Town Council is considering purchasing additional land around the Neatherd to create a country park.

The purpose of a country park is to provide an environment that is natural or seminatural, where visitors can enjoy a public open space with an informal atmosphere.

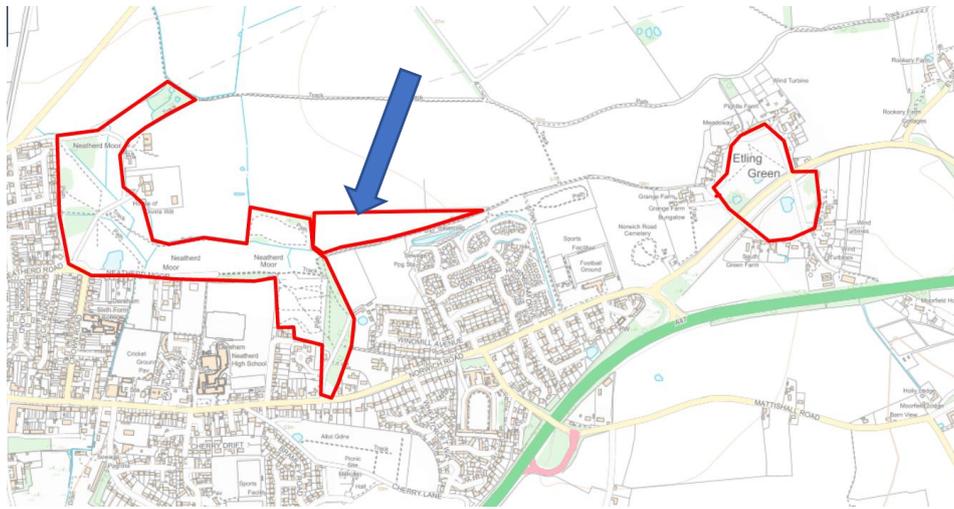
The Neatherd already provides some aspects of a country park, and is enjoyed by many hundreds of people every day. With population growth however, the pressure on the Neatherd has increased. More people enjoying the natural environment that the Neatherd provides could lead to a decline in the value of the Neatherd as a resource for wildlife.

Dereham Town Council has been developing a vision for the Neatherd for some years. In 2008 the Council owned two parcels of land in this area, Neatherd Common and Abbots Field in the west and Etling Green Common in the east. Both Neatherd Common and Etling Green had great value for wildlife and have subsequently been designated County Wildlife sites.

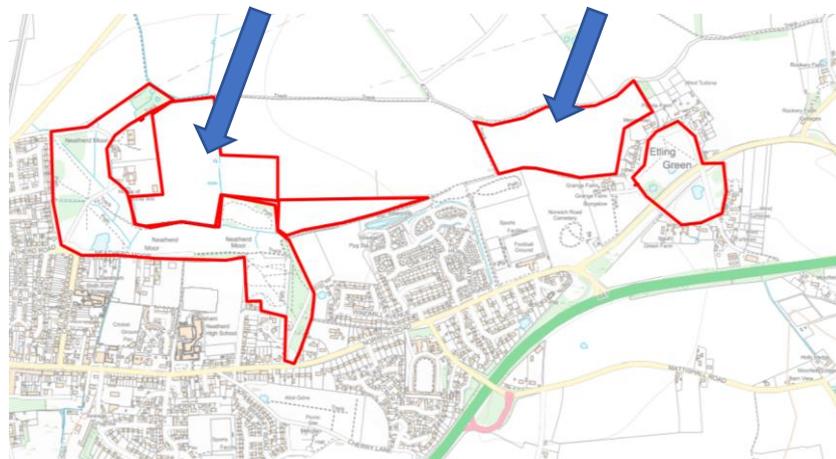


In 2008 the Town Council commissioned a Green Infrastructure Study; one of the findings of this study identified the benefits to wildlife in creating linkages between the two commons. These linkages would allow species to move between the two County Wildlife sites, rather than having isolated populations.

Shortly after this report was completed, the Council took the opportunity to purchase an additional small piece of land running along the northern edge of Shillings lane. This was purchased to try and create a link between the two commons; this land is indicated by the arrow below and has been open to the public since it was purchased.



As other pieces of land came up for sale the Council was able to purchase these also. These are indicated with arrows on the map below. Both pieces are about 22ha and both pieces of land have been rented out since they were purchased with the intention of introducing public access in the future. The most recent purchase at the western end was made in 2015.



In the last year, the Council has commissioned the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to produce a management plan for all the land in the Town Council's ownership around the Neatherd. The Management Plan looked at these areas in terms of wildlife benefit and climate change and concluded that while these areas can play a role in terms of carbon sequestration, their main role should be habitat creation to enable species to adapt to climate change.

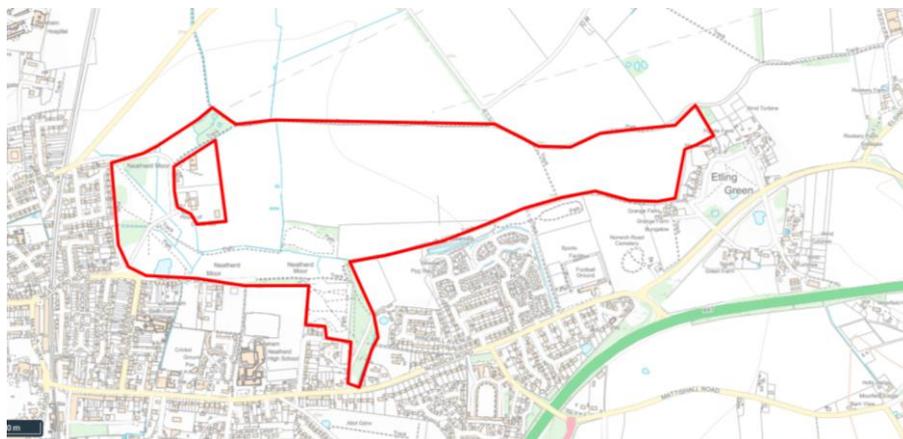
Following on from the Management Plan the Council has agreed bring the land currently rented out into public open space and apply for funding to implement the management plan. The management plan includes planting hedges along historic hedge lines restoring the landscape to how it would have looked 100 years ago, creating additional ponds and wetlands and allow natural rewilding and the regeneration of the landscape to take place.

While this would create two areas which are beneficial for wildlife, the connections between the two are still limited.

In recent weeks another parcel of land totaling 22ha has come on the market – outlined below. This is the central piece completing the connection between the two County Wildlife sites to the east and the west. The Town Council is considering purchasing this piece of land.



If purchased this piece of land would create a Country Park for Dereham totaling 66ha (132 acres), outlined below. The whole area could be restored to how it would have looked in 1900 with small fields surrounded by hedges. The whole area could be returned to wildlife, for future generations to enjoy and value.



The Councillors wish to hear your views on the matter.

Please provide feedback to the Council via the online survey [HERE](#). **Deadline for completing the survey is 4pm on the 6<sup>th</sup> July.**

Information regarding the meetings when this matter will be discussed is available on the Council's website.

Any additional feedback is welcome, please email:

[generalenquiries@derehamtowncouncil.org](mailto:generalenquiries@derehamtowncouncil.org)