

## Water Environment Improvements Project Evidence Form

### Scope & Purpose

This form is to be used by the external Water Environment Governance Group (WEGG), to review, validate and formally approve the length of bluespaces improved for the Water Environment Improvements ODI. The form will be completed by the Water Environment Team with support from project partners and presented to the WEGG. After formal approval, the km of water environment improved will be recorded against the ODI and projects will be marked as completed on the Water Environment Scorecard and illustrated as delivered in the Bluespaces Mapping Portals.

### Project Name

Eye Way of Healing

### Project Lead

Company/ Organisation	Named Lead	Position	Contact Details
Eye Town Moors Woodland Society	Maryanne Henderson	Volunteer project officer	hendma@phonecoop.coop

### Bluespaces Improved

Year	Claimed	Proposed	Reason For Any Change
Year 3	2.1 km	2.8 km	GIS Miscalculation

### Water Environment Assurance

This project has been reviewed internally to ensure it has delivered benefits above and beyond our baseline and regulatory obligations to improve the water environment accessible to customers across at least two out of three aspects. Following our assurance process, the project was approved by both our internal and external groups for review before delivery. This form presents evidence of project completion and the outputs achieved, to request project sign off.

Level	Project Acceptance Date	Project Approval Date	Completed Project Sign Off Date
Project Team	January 2022	N/A	N/A
Water Environment Steering Group (Internal)	January 2022	January 2022	N/A
Water Environment Governance Group (External)	March 2022	March 2022	May 2023

### Project Timescales

Candidate Project Approved	Project Initiated	Project Completed
March 2022	June 2022	March 2023

## Project Summary and Highlights

### Summary

The Eye Way of Healing project was selected as one of four sites by Suffolk County Council's Healing Woods scheme, an ambitious initiative to create more natural woodland and greenspace across the county, particularly where it is most needed to help support people's health and wellbeing. The Eye site is fully accessible and provides an area where people can remember loved ones.

Improvements delivered through the project include restoration of Lamsey Brook to enhance biodiversity and to help mitigate flooding in the centre of Eye town, the installation of bat and owl boxes, tree planting, interpretation and seating areas. A green corridor now connects areas of woodland, a water meadow and meadows with footpaths creating a new 'Path of Healing' allowing the local community to benefit from and enjoy the local environment.

### Highlights

- Tree planting and wildflower meadow creation
- Installation of flow deflectors and silt traps
- New boardwalk and path upgrades, and new seating and picnic area
- Pole mounted bat boxes, owl boxes and a kestrel box
- Three new interpretation boards created through ESW JAH
- Riverfly monitoring and bat walks
- Increased volunteer work parties, and guided walks to showcase the works



Maps

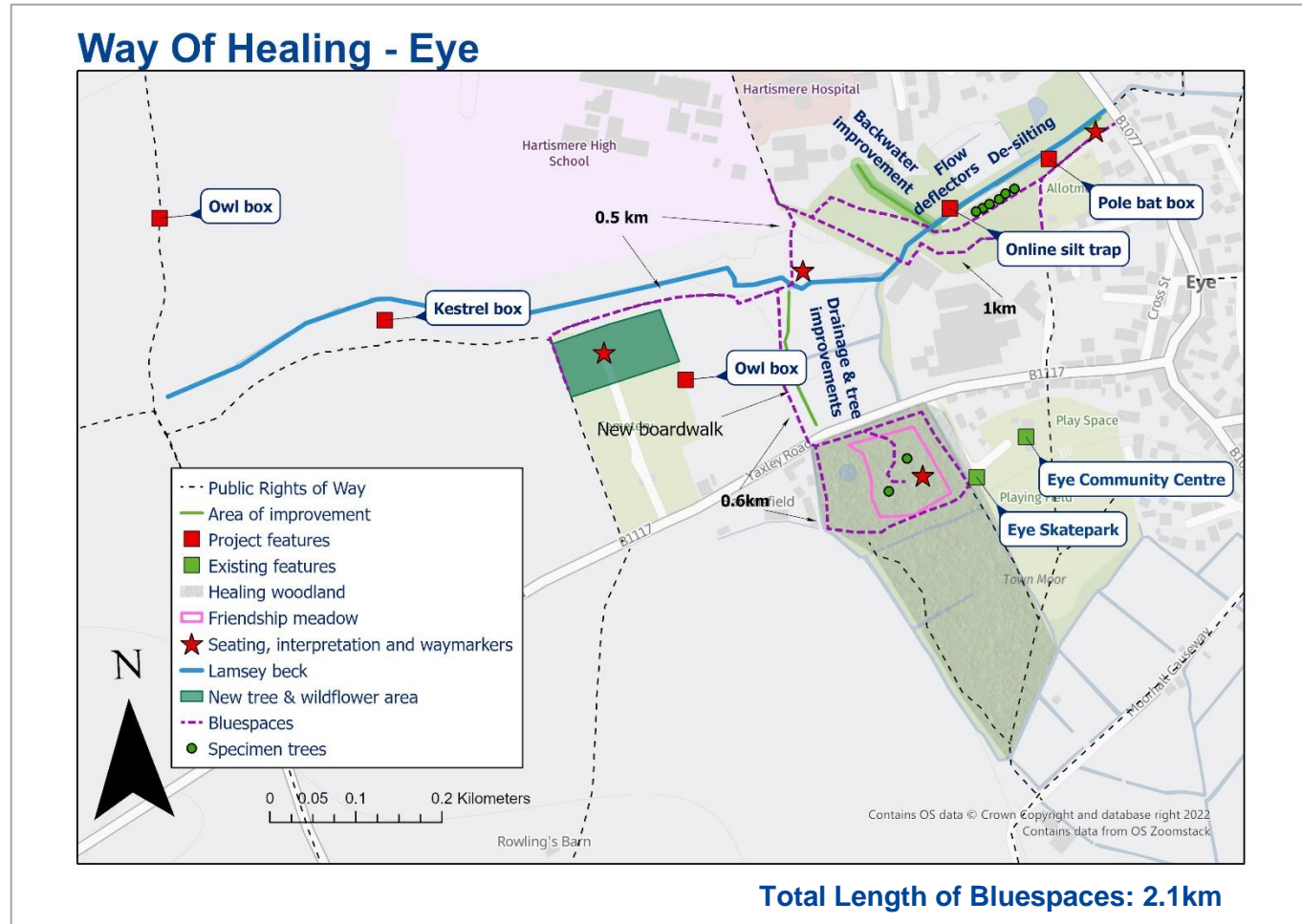



Figure 1: Bluespaces improved through the Eye Way of Healing project

**Project Outputs, Benefits & Evidence Against Criteria**

Access, Facilities & Recreation	
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Installation of new seating areas, picnic benches and interpretation boards installed along the Way of Healing footpath to increase access to and enjoyment of the water environment</li> <li>2. Creation of a friendship meadow and contemplation areas to benefit health and wellbeing</li> <li>3. Riverfly surveys, guided walks and interpretation to help encourage positive environmental behaviours</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A1: Increases access to, engagement with and enjoyment of the water environment</li> <li>➤ A2: Benefits health and wellbeing through:</li> <li>➤ A3: Influences positive environmental behaviors</li> </ul>
Outputs	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New seating areas, waymarkers, picnic benches, boardwalk and three interpretation boards (Lamsey beck, Healing wood and the water meadow) installed along the Way of Healing footpath to increase access to and enjoyment of the water environment</li> <li>2. Areas designated for friendship and contemplation designed and created with a range of people including walkers, students, the elderly and local business workers all using the new areas</li> <li>3. Riverfly surveys and guided walks with the engineer and officer from the River Waveney Trust attended by 30 people and further walks delivered including a bat walk</li> </ol>	
Evidence	
	
<p>Newly installed seating areas, riverfly monitoring and well attended guided bat walk event</p>	

**Wildlife & Biodiversity**

**Expected Project Outcomes**

1. Removal of targeted dead Ash trees and additional planting of native tree species to benefit the woodland environment
2. The addition of pole mounted bat and barn owl nesting boxes to help improve the abundance and distribution of these species
3. Creation of wildflower meadow and in-channel interventions benefit biodiversity and the distribution and abundance of species

**Benefits**

- B1: Improves the quantity, quality and connectivity of habitats
- B2: Improves the conservation status and or abundance or distribution of species


**Outputs**

1. New areas of planting and areas of dead Ash managed to allow natural regeneration created benefiting the meadow and woodland environment. Several specimen trees have been planted within the woodland and along the beck
2. Two bat boxes installed on a pole, a barn owl box and kestrel box installed along the Way of Healing
3. Flow deflectors, silt traps and log jams have benefited the aquatic biodiversity and planting of meadows increased the abundance and diversity within the area

**Evidence**



Pole mounted bat boxes, owl box, native tree planting and increase in starwort as a result of in-channel interventions

Water Quality	
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Installation of flow deflectors, silt traps and log jams to help improve the state and function of the water course and assist with the protection of drinking water</li> <li>2. Removal of overhanging trees and in-channel debris to improve the visual appearance of the beck</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ C2: Contributes towards improved status or no deterioration of rivers or bathing waters or protecting drinking water</li> <li>➤ C3: Improves state and function of water, including naturalisation, visual appearance, litter and odour</li> </ul>
Outputs	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flow deflectors, silt traps and log jams have been installed within the beck to help diversify the channel and help improve the functionality and flood resilience of the water course contributing towards water quality improvements. The beck is showing excellent signs of improved channel morphology and sediment. Where deflectors have been installed there is good silt and berm development with energy lines clearly forming</li> <li>2. Removal of overhanging trees and in-channel debris has helped improve the visual appearance of the beck with further work identified including the installation of coir rolls or pallets</li> </ol>	
Evidence	
	
<p>Opening of the channel to improve light and the installation of log jams, silt traps and deflectors</p>	

**Additional & Secondary Benefits**

Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Silt traps, log jams and creation of natural flood habitat to help reduce flooding to the area and act towards climate change adaptation</li> <li>2. The Way of Healing is a community driven project that directly benefits the health and wellbeing of the local community and visitors to the area</li> <li>3. The project is within a targeted area for water reduction and water saving messages and engagement will benefit NWG</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ D1: Provides resilience and adaptation to climate change and/or reduces the risk of flooding</li> <li>➤ D2: Provides benefits to local communities, the local economy or NWG</li> <li>➤ D3: Supports strategic project or investment into strategic partnership or landscape/regional activity</li> </ul>

**Outputs**

1. Silt traps, log jams and creation of natural flood habitat has helped provide resilience and reduce the risk of localised flooding
2. The Way of Healing is a community driven project and has created opportunities for engagement and awareness directly benefitting the health and wellbeing of the local community and visitors to the area
3. The project is within a targeted area for water reduction and NWG have been promoted as part of the works

**Evidence**

On the day a select band of children and parents from the school, volunteers, the mayor of Eye and donors gathered for a free ice cream and to lend a hand filling in the soil around the two new trees. For those interested, the trees are "swamp cypress" (taxodium distichum) a deciduous conifer native to America but well adapted to sort of wet conditions that we have in this area of the moors. The pair of trees should provide a green gateway to the path through the woods in the summer with the needles turning red before falling in the autumn.

Mike Smith's little digger had done the hard work, digging three foot holes down to the damp sub-soil, and many small hands with spades quickly filled in around the roots. A quick stamping down and heavy watering finished off the job....for now! Please feel free to use the woods and picnic area and to join us in our work parties if able (3rd Sunday 10:00- 12:00) to make this area your own.

Chris Willoughby

This project is unique to Eye in Suffolk supported by



## Customer Testimonies & Media

Eye Community Website article: <https://www.eyesuffolk.org/countryside/the-way-of-healing-wood/>

### Personal observations from a volunteer:

*“This project has generated a huge surge of local interest in the area around the water course, some related to the water engineer’s work involving diggers and people in waders, but most are very positive about the enhanced environment around the beck. This includes greater visibility of the water course as access has been improved and that a seating area has been installed providing views back to the town and along the beck. This seating area picks up the morning and evening sun which alter the views available.*

*The range of people commenting range from a visitor to the Hartismere Care Home who was able to take her father out in a wheelchair as far as the seating area to long-time residents who are valuing the changes to area which had previous been overgrown which crack willow and comfrey. Eye Town Council has established a Youth Council with students from Hartismere High School, they have been involved with tree planting and have expressed a keenness for further involvement and have floated the idea for crowdfunding a path which would open up further access to those with buggies, mobility scooters and wheelchairs. The questions asked by passers-by are wide ranging and some will be addressed on the information boards such as the rather unusual Scarlett Elf Cup fungi which initially appear to be discarded Coke bottle tops. Comments are also made about the quality of the water as this is a topical item, and the bridges allow people to pause and watch the water flowing.”*

Copy of email 13/6/22 from Cllr Peter Gould to Cllr Richard Rout and Tim De Keyser following their visit to the Way of Healing on 10<sup>th</sup> June 22.

Dear Richard and Tim

I am writing on behalf of the team in Eye to thank you for your visit last Friday. As you will have seen there is considerable pride in what is being achieved and the vision and enthusiasm to do more. Your visit and positive support is very welcome and we are keen to help you in encouraging other places in Suffolk to develop their own projects. Let’s talk about making progress.

I attach a couple of photos I took and I know others did the same.

Best wishes

Peter

Emails from Cllr Peter Gould (Eye Ward) following a very positive site visit in September with Anita Caccioli Director of MSDC, and Will Burchnall Head of Public Realm MSDC. Cllr Peter Gould is Midsuffok District Councillor for Eye, as well as Suffolk County Councillor for Eye.

Dear Anita, Will and Jack

Thank you for coming to Eye this morning. Your interest and expertise is very much appreciated and strengthens the local determination to succeed.

Thanks Will for the information sent so promptly and for encouraging us to believe that we have a project that would attract the funding needed to deliver a comprehensive programme of improvements.

I have copied to those attending this morning and Maryanne so we all have contact details.

Best wishes

Peter



## Lead Partner Quotes & Testimonials

### Eye Way of Healing Project Assessment - Eye Outdoors Group Statement April 2023

#### Health and well-being benefits

Clearance and widening of existing footpaths along the Way of Healing from the Healing Woods to the Lamsey Beck has increased public access overall, especially to the section of path along the beck, which was overgrown, boggy in sections, and unattractive.

From our observations, installation of benches and picnic areas for sitting in beautiful semi wild spots right in the centre of town is encouraging more people to slow down and enjoy the outdoors. Residents and dog walkers often sit chatting with friends, watch the river and wildlife, and enjoy the surrounding trees and greenery. Inclusion of walk events along the beck – a bat detection walk; a walk and talk with WMA and RWT; Blossom Charity Art Trail, and regular Onelife Suffolk Well-Being walks has ensured a continuing interest from members of the Eye community, as well as attracting visitors to the area and trail.

#### Benefits to Wildlife

Planting trees, adding flow deflectors, leaky dam and berm are all designed to clean and enhance the beck and increase biodiversity and improve habitat for a range of plants, birds, butterflies mammals and other wildlife. The increase in Starwort in the water along the beck is a great indicator of improved water quality already. An Egret is seen regularly feeding along the banks. At the start of the project in March, WMA Ecologists found much evidence of water vole inhabiting the banks, and numbers are likely to increase with the improved habitat. We are hopeful the bat boxes, Owl and Kestrel boxes will be in use this year. Clearance of trees, and the creation of the friendship meadow has introduced more light into the Healing Woods area, and many more butterflies were spotted last summer.

#### Benefit to the town

The project is helping boost the economy in the town, with small business such as Cafeye; the Queens Head and the Chocolaterie nearby as visitors use their facilities – walkers; cyclists; people visiting the art trail and attending project events such as the bat walk; students use the chip shop and sit by the beck.

#### Overall benefit and well- being

There is now a sense of community interest and pride in the local green environment, with the project areas as a focal point. For example, the Increase in the number of volunteers helping at weekend project work parties. ETC, SCC and MSDC have all taken a big interest in the project achievements and have visited the trail. It has become a very public facing project – people see and comment on the difference, notice and appreciate the trees planted, the river looking better and cleaner, benches for sitting, and events that interest them. It is a welcome publicly accessible green space and river in the centre of Eye, that is both friendly to wildlife and people. We have already succeeded with the help of Blue Spaces to create an area that supports both biodiversity, as well as community access.

#### Benefits in future

The success of phase one has led to further investment of grant funding of 20k for phase two of the project, focussed on extending the Way of Healing and creating a new permissive path alongside another section of Lamsey Beck in the centre of Eye. This will enable even more access to the beck, with a wider inclusive pathway suitable for everyone. SCC have discussed supporting grant applications to improve the ETC cemetery for wildlife, and Eye Outdoors Group have been invited into the project group as participants.

**Maryanne Henderson, Eye Outdoors Group Secretary**

**Carol Alexander- Williams, Eye Outdoors Group Treasurer**

## Other Supporting Evidence

[Water's worth saving in Suffolk \(eswater.co.uk\)](http://eswater.co.uk)

Eye Community Website article: <https://www.eyesuffolk.org/countryside/the-town-moors/>