



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

**Bury St Edmunds and
Stowmarket constituency**

NATURE, WHO CARES?

A close-up photograph of a small brown mouse with dark eyes, perched on a green leaf and eating it. The background is a soft-focus green.

Vote with nature in mind this general election

Vote for space for nature, cleaner rivers, healthier communities and natural climate solutions

**General
election
2024**

A manifesto for nature

Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket Constituency

Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket constituency is home to rich and varied wildlife habitats, from Suffolk's Valley Fen wetlands in the headwaters of the Little Ouse, to **Knettishall Heath nature reserve** on the edge of The Brecks, where nightjars nest in the summer. **Bradfield Woods National Nature Reserve** is one of the longest continuously-coppiced ancient woodlands in the country, and home to hazel dormouse. The River Lark is one of only a handful of chalk rivers in Suffolk (only 200 are known globally) and flows through Bury St Edmunds, while the River Gipping flows through Stowmarket, supplying water to homes and businesses, and for growing food, and providing recreational opportunities for people.

Nature in Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket is under serious pressure. Habitat loss and land-use change have left remnant wildlife habitats fragmented and isolated. Growing demand for water from new housing, agriculture, and industry, threatens the survival of rare fen wetlands, and pollution by agricultural chemicals and untreated sewage has reached levels that put the future health of the river, wildlife, and people at risk. In Stowmarket, lack of natural green space means people are missing out on the benefits of access to nature.

If we fail to improve the state of nature in Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket, we risk losing more of the rare and threatened wildlife that lives there, as well as jeopardising food production and water security, people's health and wellbeing, and our ability to combat climate change.

By protecting and restoring nature in Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket we can tackle some of its biggest environmental, social, and economic challenges at the same time as bringing back nature. Reducing agricultural and sewage pollution will improve water quality and protect water resources. Restoring floodplains can protect homes and businesses from flooding. Increasing access to nature can help improve social equity and health outcomes.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust has a vision for creating a wilder Suffolk where thriving nature and healthy rivers support resilient communities, businesses, and wildlife. We are working with partners, farmers, and landowners to restore river valleys and floodplains. At our **Black Bourn Valley nature reserve**, natural regeneration is returning nature to the farmed landscape, while on neighbouring land, Suffolk's first beavers in 400 years have taken up residence on the Black Bourn.

The beautiful marsh helliborine thrives in our fen and wetland reserves.

General election 2024




Ask your prospective parliamentary candidates and parties in the Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket constituency what they are going to do to help create a wilder Suffolk and support our **five priorities for nature**:

- 1 Bring back lost wildlife
- 2 End river pollution and water scarcity
- 3 Fund wildlife-friendly farming
- 4 Enable healthy communities
- 5 Tackle the climate emergency by protecting and restoring nature



Tell your candidates why wildlife matters to you and make sure your next MP makes bringing back nature a priority:

 suffolkwildlifetrust.org/general-election

