

What is Stafford Brooks?



Stafford Brooks is a £4.1 million project started in 2022 by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, National Highways, Stafford Borough Council, and the Environment Agency.

After a research, consultation, and planning phase, conservation work is taking place at eight sites in Stafford Borough to make these green spaces better for wildlife and the local people.

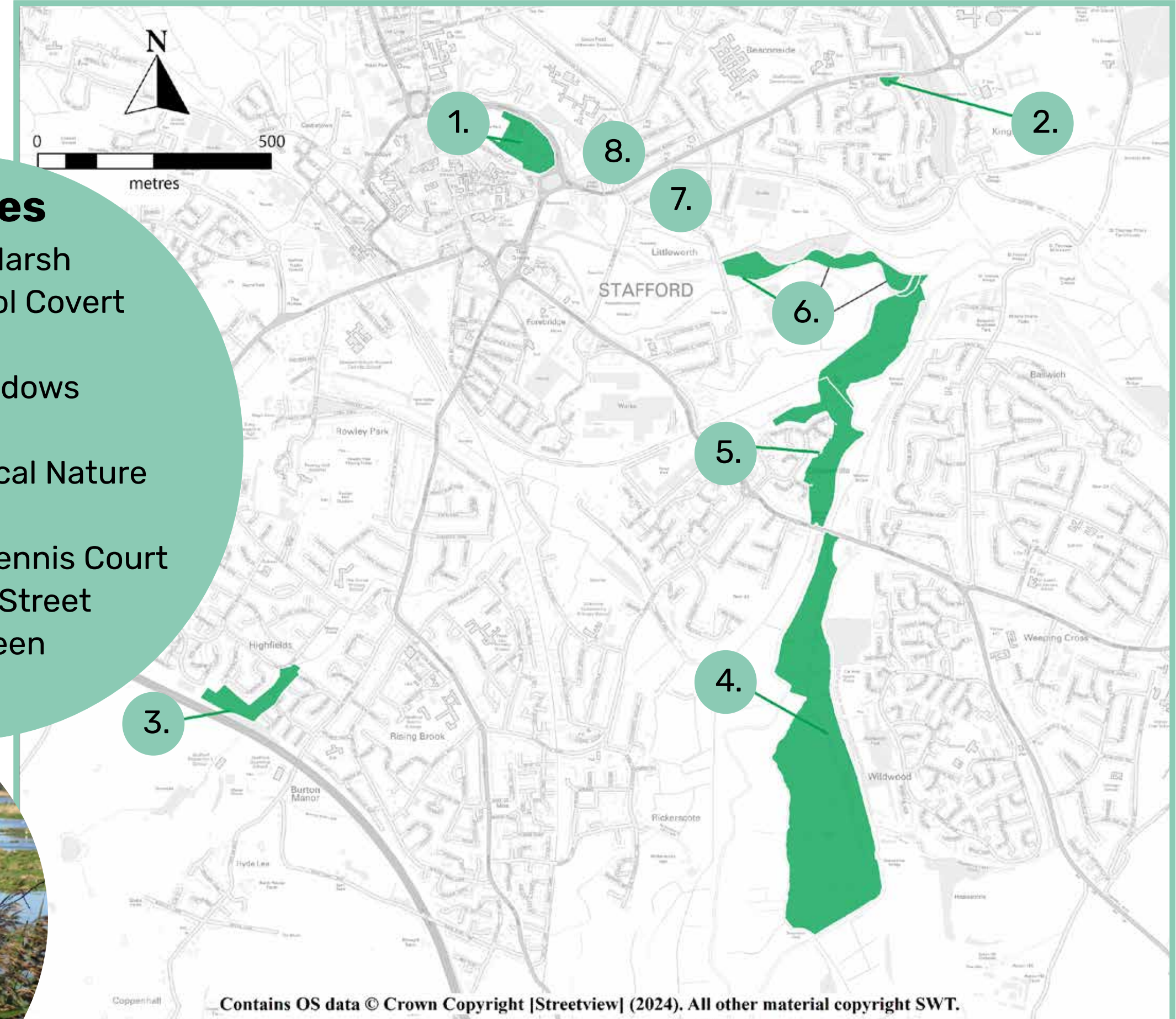
With funding from National Highways, expertise from the Conservation Team at Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and support from Stafford Borough Council, and The Environment Agency, this project is leading the way for a wider programme of conservation works across the county town.

The landscape-wide scope of the project means that sites can be joined up strategically to make a Nature Recovery Network.

This will make habitats more resilient to increasing climate pressures, and help ensure wildlife can move freely and is not isolated to confined areas.

The sites

1. Kingsmead Marsh
2. Kingston Pool Covert
3. Rising Brook
4. Radford Meadows
5. Queensville
6. Riverside Local Nature Reserve
7. Littleworth Tennis Court
8. Corporation Street Bowling Green



Kingsmead Marsh



This site has special lowland fen habitats which are very important for wading birds and wetland invertebrates like dragonflies, craneflies, and damselflies.

We're going to improve this habitat by creating small 'dragonfly' pools to hold open water, and fell some willow trees which could take over if left unmanaged.

This summer we'll begin creating the pools, connecting them with open water which will give greater access for wildlife.

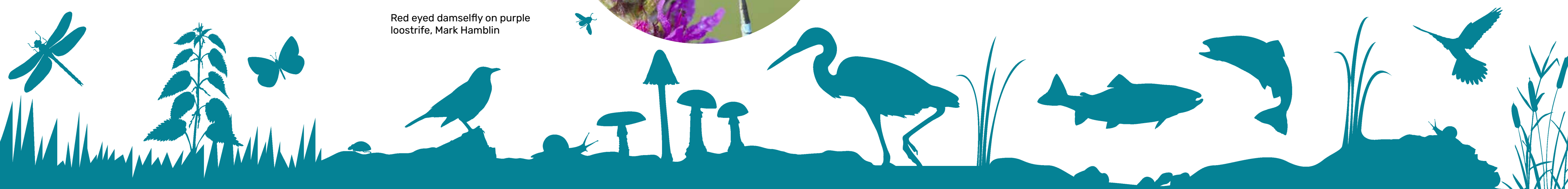
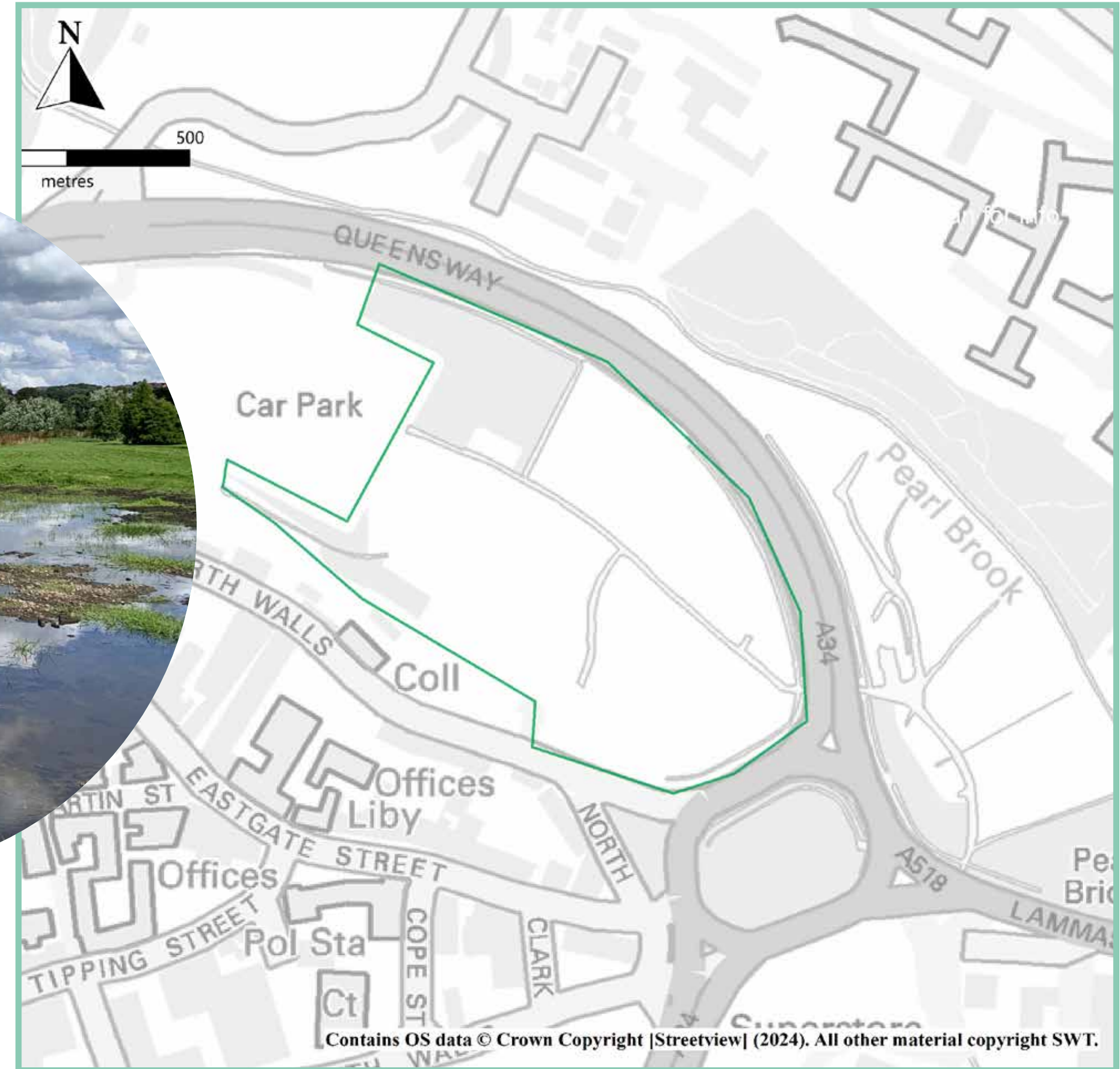
This work will improve the site for nature by providing different depths of water and improved fen habitat. It will also help keep the site wetter during dry hot summer months and in turn give wildlife a refuge.



Photos top to bottom:
Pool on the Burton Washlands,
Victoria Bunter

Heron, Bertie Gregory
2020 VISION

Red eyed damselfly on purple
loostrife, Mark Hamblin



Kingston Pool Covert (S.)



We will work to transform the grassland on the south side of the covert into a lowland meadow with a wider variety of wildflowers which will attract more insects. Right now, this grassland has very little variety, and one species is out competing the rest. By pulling up turf and reseeding we'll create greater diversity.

This summer we'll begin work here and we hope to see the first signs of wildflowers in 2025. However, grasslands like this one do typically take around five years to fully establish so it may take time for it to look different.



Photos top to bottom:
Wildflower field at Shawcroft,
David Cadman

Red admiral butterfly,
Amy Lewis

Common blue butterfly,
Tom Hibbert



The Environment Agency has kindly secured extra funding for improvement works to take place along the Kingston Brook in the nearby woodland. We will share more information on this soon.



Rising Brook



Grassland and wet woodland on this site will be improved to host a variety of new species. To do this we will open up drains to let water pool more naturally.

Water quality will improve as water will filter through the woodland. Importantly, the work will increase carbon storage at the site, which is vital to tackling climate change.

Where needed, we will plant water-loving trees like native black poplar. This tree provides many benefits for wildlife and we're working to bolster their numbers in the county as they are at risk of extinction.

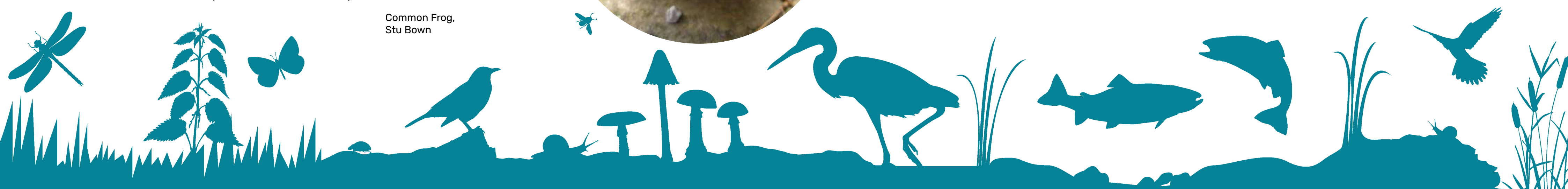
This summer we'll begin work here. Over coming years we'll start to see some of the benefits but the full results will take several years to develop.

Tree planting is best done in autumn and winter when the weather is cooler and wetter, so younger sapplings have a better chance of survival. Native black poplar trees can live for 200 years when healthy.

Photos top to bottom:
Rising Brook Woodland before works start, Victoria Bunter

Yellow rattle,
Tom J Ellis

Common Frog,
Stu Bown



Radford Meadows

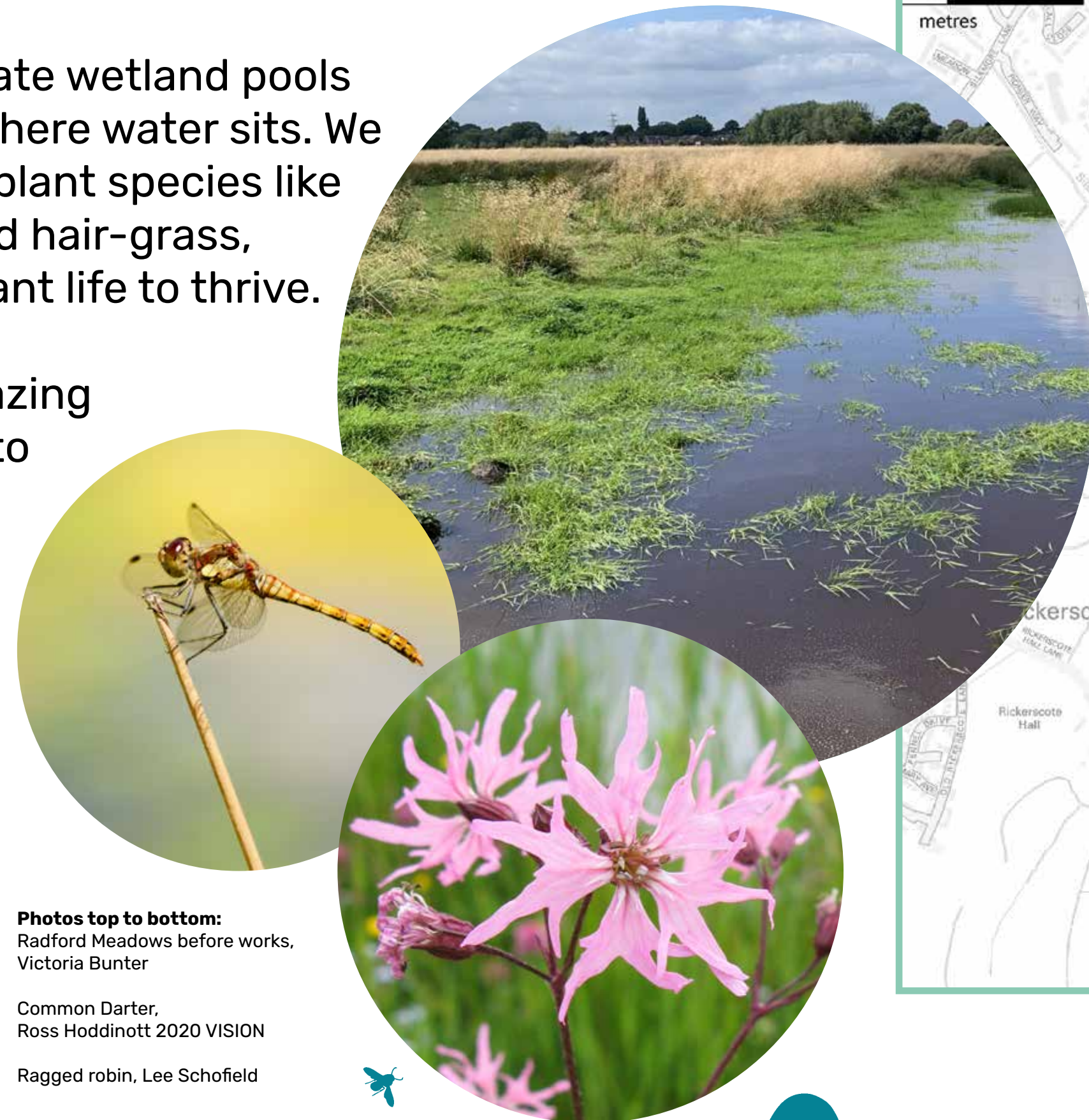


This rough grassland has potential to become a wetland mosaic habitat that holds a lot of water and keeps flooding away from other areas in the community.

To achieve this we will excavate wetland pools and block drains to control where water sits. We will also manage aggressive plant species like broad-leaved dock and tufted hair-grass, allowing a wider variety of plant life to thrive.

The current conservation grazing we do on this site may need to pause while we undertake work, but will continue again in the future.

This summer we'll begin work here. Wetland establishment is very much dependent upon seasonal rainfall over the next few years.



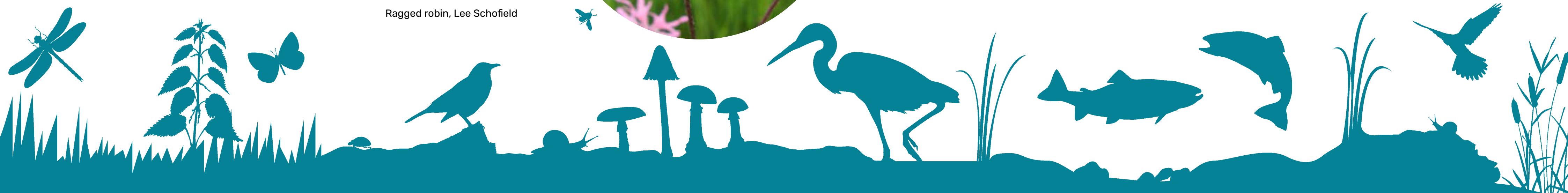
Photos top to bottom:
Radford Meadows before works,
Victoria Bunter

Common Darter,
Ross Hoddinott 2020 VISION

Ragged robin, Lee Schofield



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Queensville



This grassland site already features shallow pools. We'll make these into more permanent pools, ensuring they are in the best place to hold water on site.

We'll also enhance 5.7 hectares of grassland here, creating wildflower meadows. In summer visitors will be able to enjoy meandering through these meadows on mown pathways, which will be created as part of the site's seasonal management.

This summer we'll begin work here and we hope to see the first signs of wildflowers in 2025. However, grasslands like this one do typically take around five years to fully establish so it may take time for it to look different.



Photos top to bottom:
Five spot burnet, Shirley Freeman
Common toad, Tom Marshall
Bird's foot trefoil, Lee Schofield



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Riverside LNR



At Riverside Local Nature Reserve we will reprofile the riverbank, altering where and how the river flows. This will make more open water on site, and create a shallow bank along the river which is good habitat for juvenile fish and invertebrates.

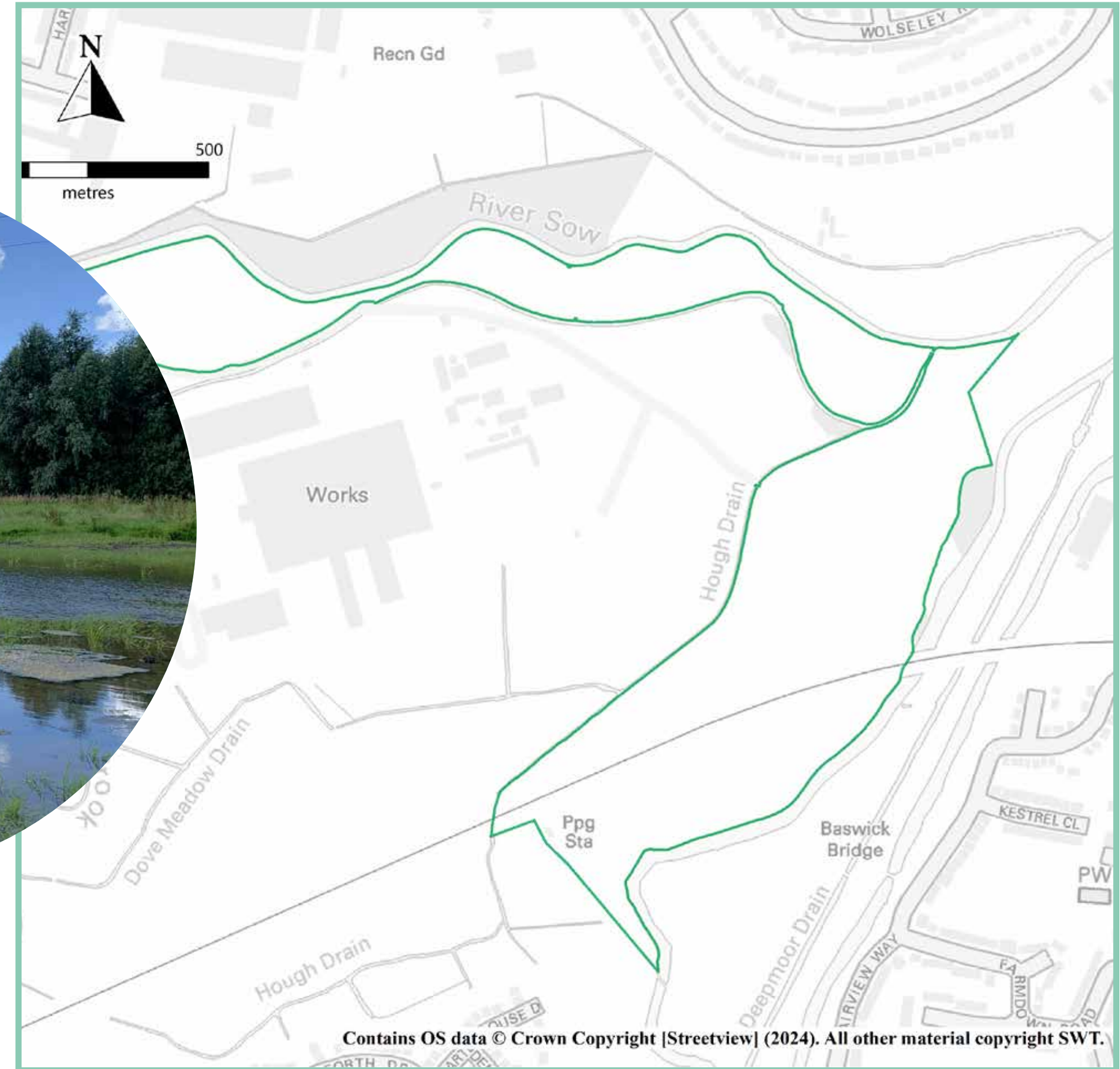
This will also help us ensure the wetland onsite is healthy, and is wet all year, but in a more appropriate location on the reserve than it has been previously.

This won't completely stop flooding if we have more years with record levels of rainfall, but it will help reduce the risk of flooding to areas outside the floodplain.

Work starts here in Summer 2024, but nature has her own timeline. It may be several years before we see fully developed results with mature plants established on river banks. Black poplar trees take time to grow, and can live for 200 years when healthy.



Photos top to bottom:
Burton washlands wetland pool example, Victoria Bunter
Common frog, Richard Burkmar
Kingfisher, Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography



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Littleworth Tennis Courts



This former recreation ground will be getting some care and attention through the project as a pocket park - a little pocket of habitat that acts as a stepping stone for wildlife to move through a larger network of nature.

We will remove turf and sow seeds to turn this into lowland meadow, a habitat with a greater variety of wildflower and insect species.

Residents will be able to enjoy summer wildflowers like oxeye daisy and common knapweed. These will also provide a vital food source for pollinators and potentially attract butterflies such as the common blue.

Works are starting in Summer 2024, but nature has her own timeline. We expect to see the first signs of wildflowers in 2025, but grasslands such as the one here typically take about five years to fully develop.



Photos top to bottom:
Grindon wildflower meadow,
Victoria Bunter

Female common blue butterfly,
Bob Coyle

Common knapweed,
Philip Percey



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Corporation Street



The land previously used as a bowling green on Corporation Street will be turned into vibrant lowland meadow, a habitat with a greater variety of wildflower and insect species. This little pocket park will act as a stepping stone for wildlife to move through a larger network of nature in the urban area.

We will remove existing turf and plant wildflower seed, and we'll plan an appropriate mowing schedule for the local council so blooms can be enjoyed by local residents and passing people.

Works are starting in Summer 2024, but nature has her own timeline. We expect to see the first signs of wildflowers in 2025, but grasslands such as the one here typically take about five years to fully develop.



Photos top to bottom:
Bradley fields wildflower meadow with knapweed, David Cadman

Common carder bee, Penny Frith

Oxeye daisy, Richard Burkmar

