



Local Nature Reserves

places for people and wildlife



working today
for nature tomorrow

What are Local Nature Reserves?

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) can offer a space to walk, talk, think, learn and play, or simply enjoy. The living green spaces, including LNRs, that form parts of our towns, cities and villages are important to us not only because they support a rich and vibrant variety of wildlife, but because they make the places where we live and work healthier and less stressful.



Farley Copse LNR, Bracknell. Steve Turkington

Large skipper *Ochlodes venate*.
Peter Wakely/English Nature



There are over 1,000 LNRs in England today ranging from windswept coastal headlands, ancient woodlands and flower rich meadows to former inner city railways, long-abandoned landfill sites and industrial areas. In total they cover over 35,000 ha, forming an impressive natural resource which makes an important contribution to England's biodiversity.



Boardwalks LNR, Cambridgeshire. Peter Wakely/English Nature

English Nature recommends that LNRs should be:

- normally greater than 2ha in size;
- capable of being managed primarily for nature conservation and so that the special opportunities for study, research or enjoyment of nature are maintained.

and one or more of the following:

- of high natural interest locally;
- of some reasonable natural interest and of high value locally for formal education or research;
- of some reasonable natural interest and of high value locally for the informal enjoyment of nature by the public.

LNRs provide a great opportunity for people to become involved in the management of their local environment, for educational events and public open days. Such activities can form part of local authority community strategies.

In addition, because LNRs support habitats and species that are important at a local (and often national) level, they should form an integral part of Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Ideally, LNRs should be placed in a clear strategic framework for accessible natural greenspace set out in Development Plans, other formal local authority documents and Local Biodiversity Action Plans. They could, for example, be seen as links in green networks which serve a variety of environmental, leisure and transport functions.



Cotwall End LNR, Dudley. Paul Glendell/English Nature

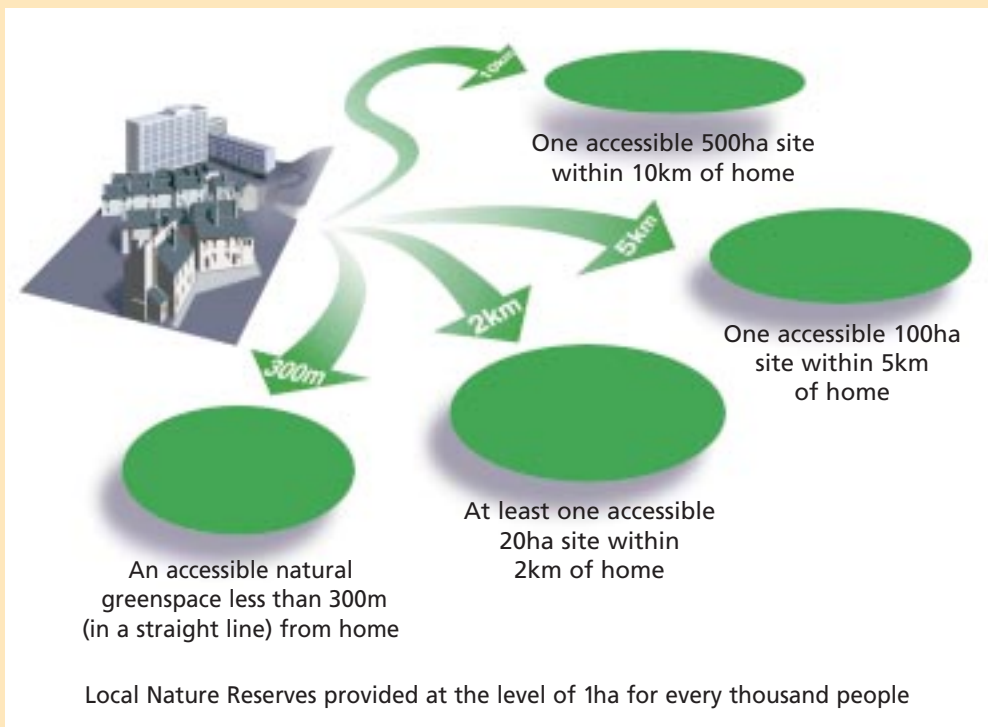


Environmental games. Tim Collins/English Nature



Water vole *Arvicola terrestris*. E & D Hosking/FLPA

English Nature recommends that people living in towns and cities should have:



In some areas these levels of accessible natural greenspace provision will be hard to achieve in the short term, but they should be long term targets and could act as indicators of sustainability.

How is a Local Nature Reserve declared?

Local Nature Reserve is a statutory designation. LNRs are declared by principal local authorities but Parish and Town Councils can also declare their own LNRs if they have been delegated the powers to do so.

Declaring an LNR is normally straightforward and therefore inexpensive in terms of staff time and other resources. The process of selecting, acquiring, declaring and managing LNRs can be made easier if local authorities use the expertise and advice offered by English Nature.

- To establish an LNR the declaring local authority must first have a legal interest in the land concerned. This means for example that they should own or lease it or have a nature reserve agreement with the owner.
- The land must also lie within the area which the declaring local authority controls.

If a local authority has, or knows of, land which it thinks would make a good LNR, it should contact the appropriate English Nature area team and discuss the proposal informally.



Holyford Woods, 1,000th LNR to be declared. Paul Glendell/English Nature



The area team will be able to advise whether the land would make a good LNR, the kind of the management it

might require, and provide help on how to commence the declaration process.



The five-kilometre Seaton Tramway is a fantastic way of watching the birds in places like Seaton Marshes LNR. Paul Glendell/English Nature.

The local authority should also consult local communities and involve them in putting together outline management proposals for the site, making it clear what the long

term objectives are. Thought should be given to ways of funding the desired management of the site and what other costs may be involved.



Children pond dipping. Paul Glendell/English Nature.

The local authority should then write to the English Nature area team to inform it that they intend to make the LNR declaration.

The following steps should then be taken:

- a formal declaration should be drawn up (this need only be on one side of A4 paper) accompanied by a map at a scale which accurately shows the LNR boundary;
- the declaration should be agreed by the relevant local authority committees;
- a public notice announcing the declaration should be placed in a local paper and copies of the declaration and map made available for the public to inspect free of charge;
- the local authority should formally notify the English Nature area team of the LNR declaration in writing and send it a copy of the declaration and map.

If there is to be an official opening ceremony it can be held after the above formalities have been completed.

This gives time to plan events and carry out initial management and interpretative work.



Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*. Peter Roworth/English Nature.



Pupils on a nature walk in Jocks Copse. Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

How are Local Nature Reserves managed?

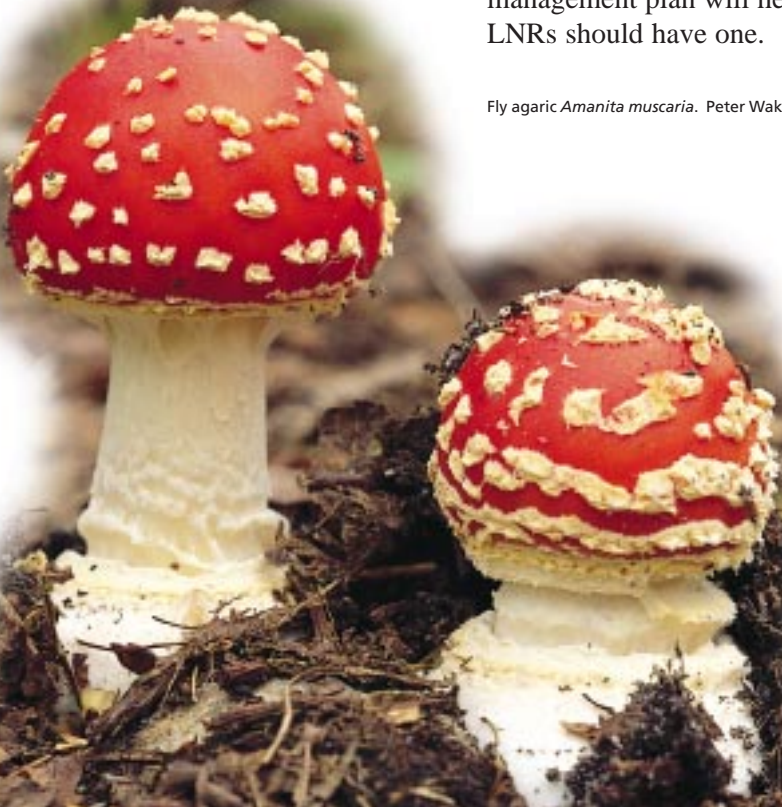
An LNR must be managed so that the features which gave the site its special interest are maintained. Well managed, an LNR will continue to make an important contribution to local biodiversity which future generations can enjoy.

The value of a site for its wildlife or geological interest can be increased, often substantially, by good

management. Indeed, many habitats often considered to be ‘natural’ such as grazing meadow or heathland require careful management to maintain their natural interest.

In declaring an LNR the local authority accepts a responsibility to ensure that the special interest of the site is maintained. It must, therefore, consider who will be responsible for managing the LNR and what money will be needed. Producing a simple management plan will help, and all LNRs should have one.

Fly agaric *Amanita muscaria*. Peter Wakely/English Nature.





Volunteers at work. Paul Glendell/English Nature.

Many organisations can give advice about producing a management plan and the sort of management the site might require. English Nature’s area teams can help to put you in touch with the right people.

Many LNRs are managed by local volunteer groups, or organisations like the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Wildlife Trusts. Some LNRs have Steering Groups or Junior Management Boards, made up of local school children, to help guide development and management of the LNR. Indeed, many LNRs are used extensively by schools and managers should seek the involvement of the local education authority so that the full potential of the LNR for education is realised.

Staff (funded, for example, by the local authority, sponsorship, or through Lottery projects) enable local communities to make the most of their LNRs for both people and wildlife.



Alsney Park Cemetery LNR, Hackney. Paul Glendell/English Nature.



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For more information consult:

- your English Nature area team, or via them, specialists at our national office
- detailed information given in the English Nature publication '*Local Nature Reserves in England - a guide to their selection and declaration*'
- English Nature's publication '*Managing Local Nature Reserves*'
- the English Nature website
www.english-nature.org.uk

You will find our area team addresses on our website or contact our enquiry service (01733 455101); e-mail: enquiries@english-nature.org.uk

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Wild Day Out at Richmond Park,
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