

528 trees planted along a Suffolk River

The aim of the partnership project with Suffolk Wildlife Trust is to improve river habitat diversity and the water quality.

The work is needed to meet water quality requirements and to help the river adapt to the changing climate.

This winter officers planted 528 trees over a five-kilometre stretch along the river.

Four kilometres were downstream of Needham Market and more than one kilometre on the Somersham Watercourse at Little Blakenham.

Tree planting along the River Gipping in Bramford.

The trees will provide increased shading for the river, which will benefit the ecology.

Naomi Boyle, Environment Agency Project Manager for the project, said: "Shading will help lessen the effects of our changing climate by helping to keep the river cool in summer.

"This has big benefits for fish, invertebrate populations and water voles.

"It is also expected that shading will help control vigorous plant growth within the river channels at some locations reducing the need to carry out costly in channel vegetation clearance.

"In time the tree roots will help to stabilise the river banks leading to less sediment entering the water which will help improve water quality.

"The roots will also provide vital habitats for fish as will low hanging branches trailing into the watercourse."

The trees planted along the River Gipping in Little Blakenham.

The trees will also provide valuable bankside habitat for breeding bird, bats, otters and invertebrates as well as enhancing the landscape quality of the Gipping valley.

Penny Hemphill, Suffolk Wildlife Trust Project Manager, said: "This has been a successful partnership project and without the goodwill of the landowners involved none of this work would be possible so many thanks to them.

"The trees will provide multiple benefits and increase the ecological and

landscape value of the river valley.

“It is very important when planting trees that the right tree is planted in the right place for the right reason and this is where we can help.”

Can you help?

The Environment Agency are looking for opportunities to carry out other projects on the rivers in the River Gipping Catchment Area as well as other parts of Suffolk. We are looking to improve habitat diversity, water quality and help our rivers adapt to climate change. If you own sections of river and are interested in enhancing river habitats to improve your river environment please contact us at; naomi.boyle@environment-agency.gov.uk or penny.hemphill@suffolkwildlifetrust.org.