

# Paxton Pits Nature Reserve



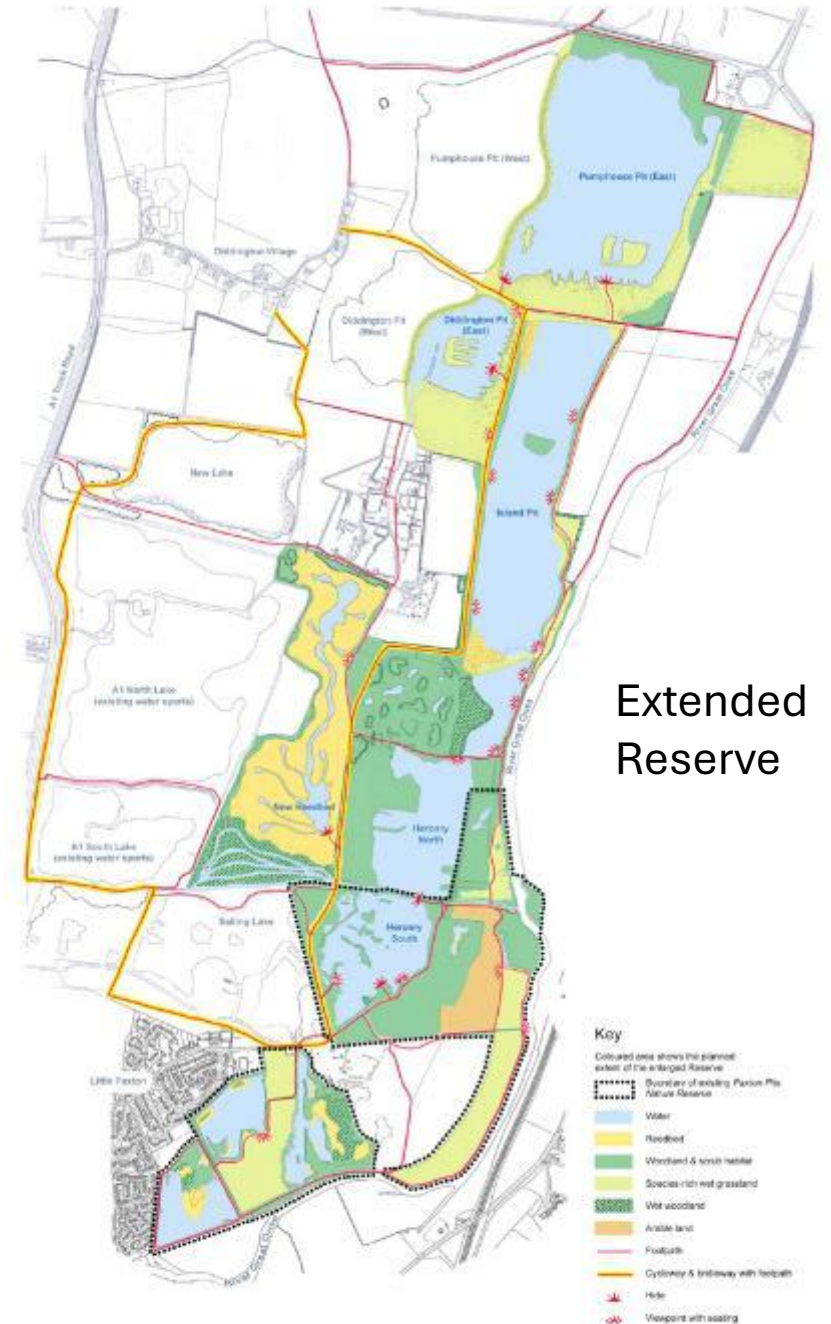


# Paxton Pits Nature Reserve

- Part of the Great Ouse Valley in Huntingdonshire
- Current reserve is 78 hectares of lakes, meadow, grassland, scrub and woodland
- Former quarry site used for gravel extraction since the 1940's
- Set to increase substantially (more than 3.5 times) to 280 hectares as aggregate extraction sites are transferred in phases.
- Extraction is due to finish in 2029

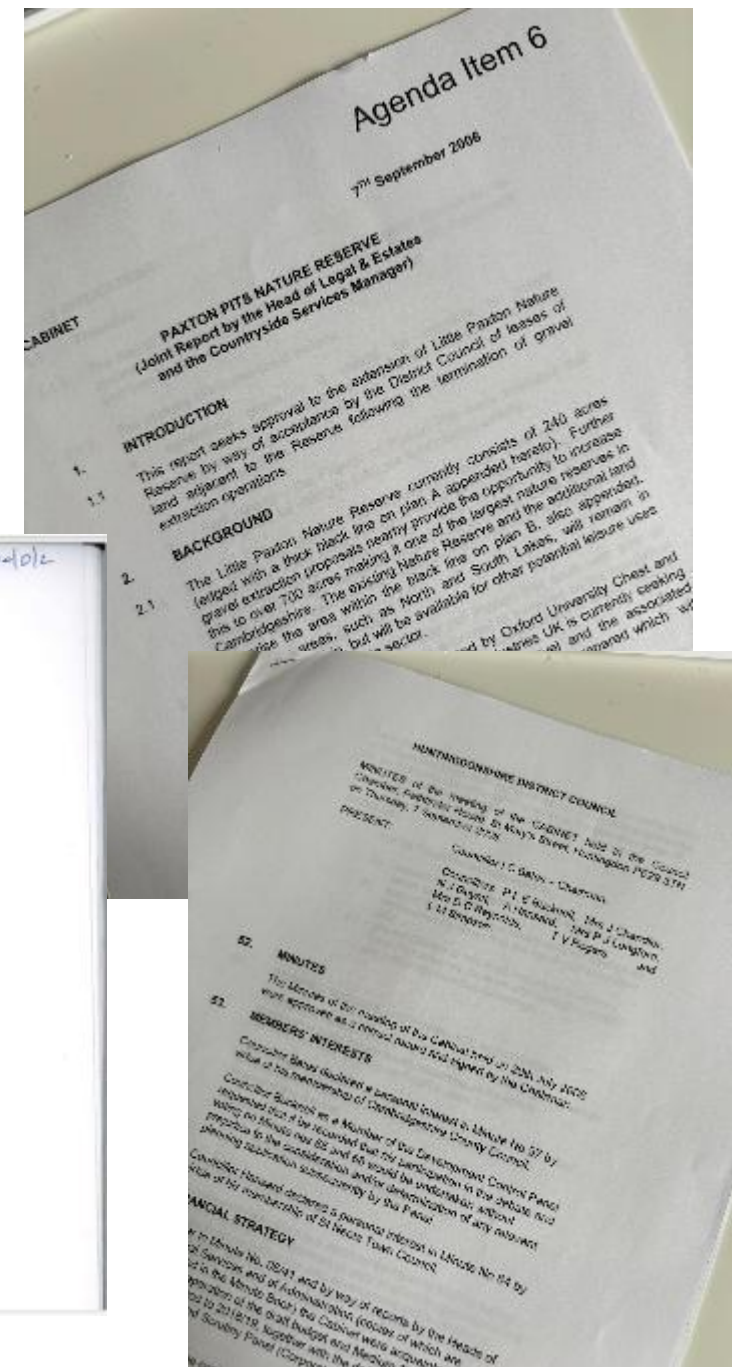


Current Reserve



Extended Reserve

- **On 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006 Council approved the extension of Paxton Pits Nature Reserve** by way of the acceptance of leases of land adjacent to existing reserve following the completion of gravel extraction
- A Section 106 agreement was produced in September 2006 which obliged HDC to enter the leases of the conservation land
- Therefore, the principle of the extension has been approved in the past, they are just subject to separate leases
- The parties are HDC, Oxford University (TOF), Thornhill Estates and Aggregate Industries (now HOLCIM UK)



# The Process

- In 2008 Little Paxton Quarry was mothballed during the economic recession until 2016
- Restoration works were delayed.
- In 2017 planning permission expired so Aggregate Industries submitted a revised proposal to Cambridgeshire County Council to take them up to 2029.



Note: In 2017 it was felt that the 2007 lease which was annexed to the S106 needed modernising. Since then, the legal representatives for the different parties have been negotiating the terms of the leases.

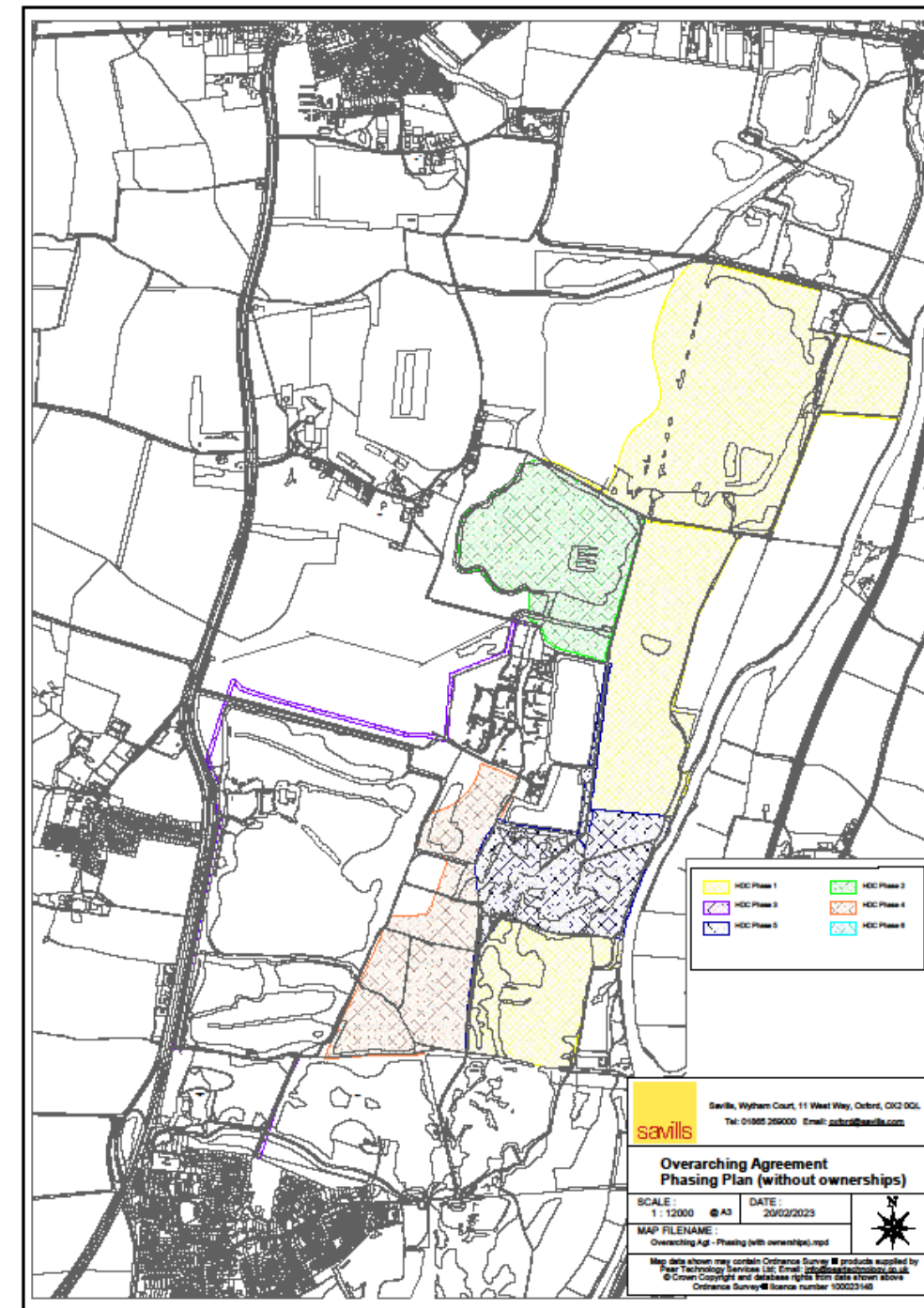


# Current Position

- The Legal representatives have agreed the terms of the leases.
- All the leases will be in substantially the same form.
- Previously approved by Council in 2006

HDC will enter into;

- a) an overreaching agreement with TOF and HOLCIM UK Ltd (formerly Aggregate Industries)
  - b) an overarching agreement with Thornhill and HOLCIM UK Ltd
- These will be for the surrender of HDC's current 2007 lease and the grant of the new leases for the various phases detailed in the plan.
  - The plan shows the areas being leased by the relevant parties;
  - TOF – Yellow (part), orange (part) and blue
  - Thornhill – green, orange (part) and yellow (part)



# The New Leases

- Term to expire – 20 September 2087
- Use of land - nature reserve within the definition contained in section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (ie. *land managed for conservation purposes*) and for the purposes of education and amenity ancillary
- Management of the site is governed by a reserve management plan which is agreed by HDC, TOF and Thornhill in accordance with the S106 agreement. This management plan sets out in detail how the conservation land will be managed, monitored and maintained.





# The Wildlife Benefit

The reserve's wildlife will be enhanced by the addition of a mosaic of important habitats

- A reedbed – nationally scarce habitat
- Five extra lakes
- Three new islands designed for wading birds
- Scrub – a mix of bushes, grassland, sandy banks and small ponds to support a whole host of plants, insects and birds
- Rare wildflower rich grassland
- Rare wet woodland habitat

The remaining 60% of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will be brought into the Reserve.





# The Community Benefit

- 27 km of footpaths
- 8.4km Cycleway
- New bird hides and viewpoints





# Partner Collaboration

The agreements that have secured this Reserve expansion result from the working partnership of Holcim UK, CCC, HDC, the Friends of Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and the landowners, supported by the local community.



In March '25 this partnership was recognised at the National Mineral Planning Association Quarries and Nature Awards in London where Holcim UK received the award for 'highly commended' in the biodiversity landscape scale category for the extension of Paxton Pits.

# Friends of Paxton Pits Nature Reserve



- Started in 1995 and registered as a charity in 2008
- Now has a membership of around 2000
- Celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> year this month with family events and volunteer thank you's.
- Around £80,000 income generated per year from membership fees, visitor centre sales, donations and bequests.
- Of the £250,000 of assets in the bank, £127,000 is currently set aside for work in the new reserve extension when land has been transferred
- An additional £113,000 is allocated to conservation projects on the existing reserve
- The salary costs of a Countryside Ranger Apprentice is being funded by the Friends for 30 months







# Next Steps

- Political approval via Cabinet (September 2025)
- Leases can be signed
- Land in phase 1 and 2 transferred to HDC as restoration works in these areas are complete, infrastructure is in place and is ready to be handed over.
- Countryside Ranger Apprentice will be recruited to provide additional help
- Recommended for approval to allow for wider commercial, health and wildlife benefits to be realized across the site



**Any  
Questions?**