



Surrey Nature Partnership

Healthy Environment | Healthy People | Healthy Economy

Biodiversity & Planning Conference

2025

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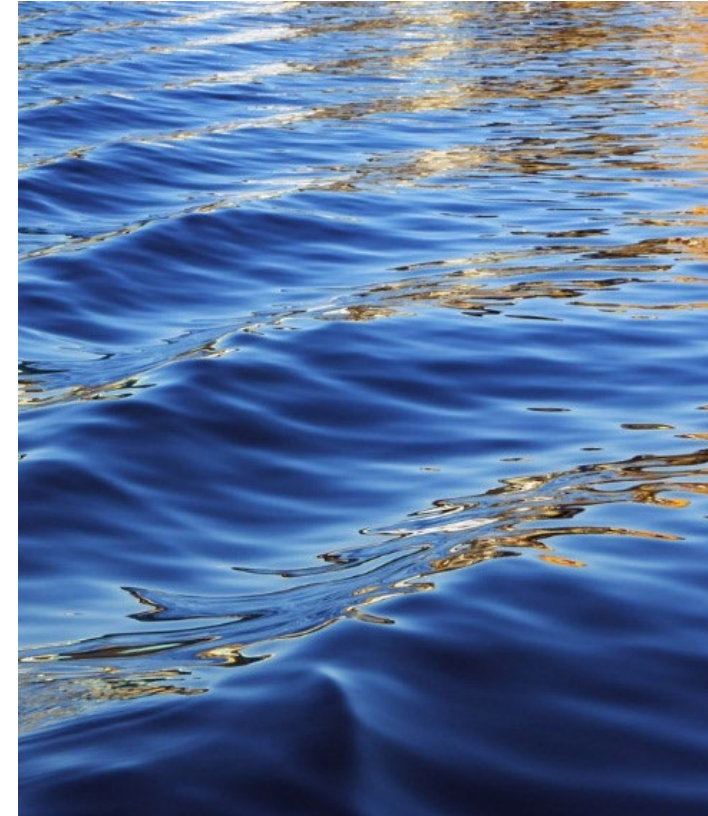


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Case Studies



Case Study: BNG in Action

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Head of Planning and Rural Surveying

About me

- Planning Consultant
- Surveyor
- Property Manager
- Dog's body
- Farmer
- Pilot
- Builder's labourer



What I'd like to talk about today

- Implementing BNG in real life, but what is real life?
- Why the background matters
- Case study 1 – When is long term too long term?
- Case study 2 – Letter of the law, but what about the spirit?
- Case study 3 – Just plant more trees
- Food for thought

What is real life?

- Small and medium scale projects
- Landmark changes for agriculture
- Conflicting demands for farmers
- Increasingly complex legislative environment



Why the background matters

- Clients, farmers especially, need clarity because BNG can impact their livelihood
- Are we keeping the end users and facilitators in mind?
- Focus on the bigger picture



Case study 1

When is long term too long term?

- Dog walking business seeks to lease land
- Change of use needed
- The LPA required a 15m buffer strip to protect already fenced off woodlands nearby
- Who is going to be around in 20 or 30 years to check progress?
- Small project to begin with, turned complicated

Case study 2

Letter of the law, but what about the spirit?

- New barn
- Half in existing farmyard, half in adjoining field, with a hedgerow dividing the two
- LPA agreed on moving hedgerow to the edge of the barn but needed to consider loss of biodiversity on that particular spot
- Farmer has been expanding a woodland so keen on adding more trees for BNG mitigation
- LPA said two habitat types couldn't be mixed (linear vs area)
- The newly planted trees must also remain distinct

Case study 3

“Just plant more trees”

- A common response to BNG
- Ecologists not involved from the outset because budget and uncertainty are huge issues
- Green walls, biodiverse green roof, ground-based planters, hedgerows, but to make up the shortfall, needed to throw in 5 small trees
- Small sites metric 10.2%
vs statutory metric 47% net gain



Consider your audience

- At a CIEEM CPD event on habitat mapping I learnt there are 160 common grass species in the UK
- Digestible information and clear communication to more than just ecologists
- Perfection is the enemy of progress
- Farmer turned down a developer's offer of over £270M to sell their farm to become a new village



Thank you!

