



FAQs

Milkwall and Ellwood Pond Development Works

Q: Why are we creating new ponds?

A: Our 'Ponds' project has involved recording all our existing Ponds in the Forest and looking for ways to improve them (e.g., by removing vegetation) or creating new ones where necessary.

We aim to create a network of ponds so that species such as Great Crested Newts can travel between them and so that the overall population of newts can flourish; whilst also making our wildlife habitats bigger, better and more connected.

One of the other benefits of this approach is that we are also creating ponds that can be easily accessed and enjoyed by people living locally.

New ponds are being created where there is very limited wildlife value already and where the soils indicate an ability to hold water unless a liner is planned as part of the work.

Sited correctly a pond is always a huge contribution to the biodiversity of an area as more wildlife will quickly move in.

Q: How did we decide where to put the new ponds?

A. We considered several sites, taking into account underlying soil conditions and the potential for groups of ponds to facilitate species population growth by travelling amongst ponds.

From an ecological point of view it is generally better for the species we are trying to support, such as amphibians, to create new ponds rather than try to remedy 'old' ponds, particularly if they have become infested with the 'wrong' sort of plant.

Restoration of existing ponds is a balancing act between improving it for the wildlife in an area and not harming any wildlife still using the pond. Therefore, it is always better to have a series of ponds located close to each other so that species have a refuge and back-up habitat.

We also selected sites with that currently have reduced wildlife value but that have good potential, for example we are carefully avoiding digging up a species-rich grassland to create a pond.

Q: Are we interfering with nature by doing this work?

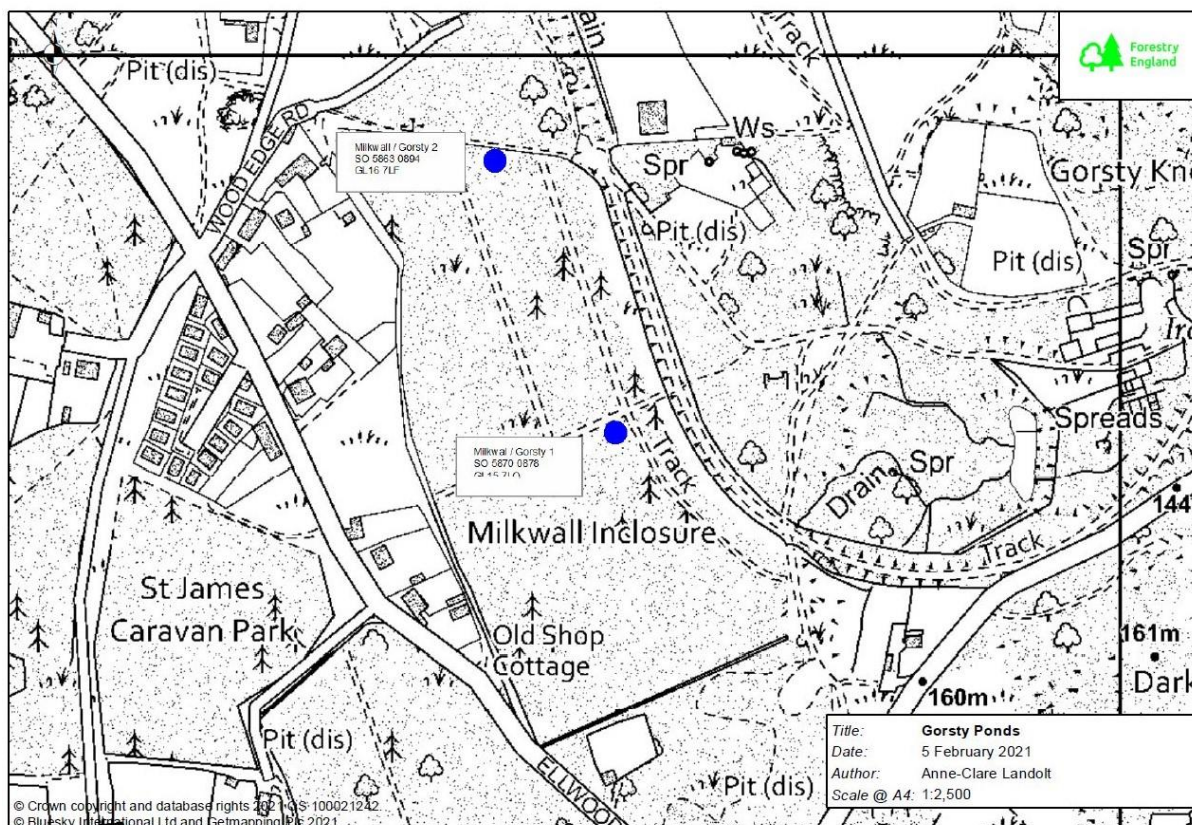
A: We are doing this to support wildlife that inhabit the ponds, to 'give a helping hand' rather than interfere. We want to see the recovery of iconic species that rely on our ponds, such as Great Crested Newts.

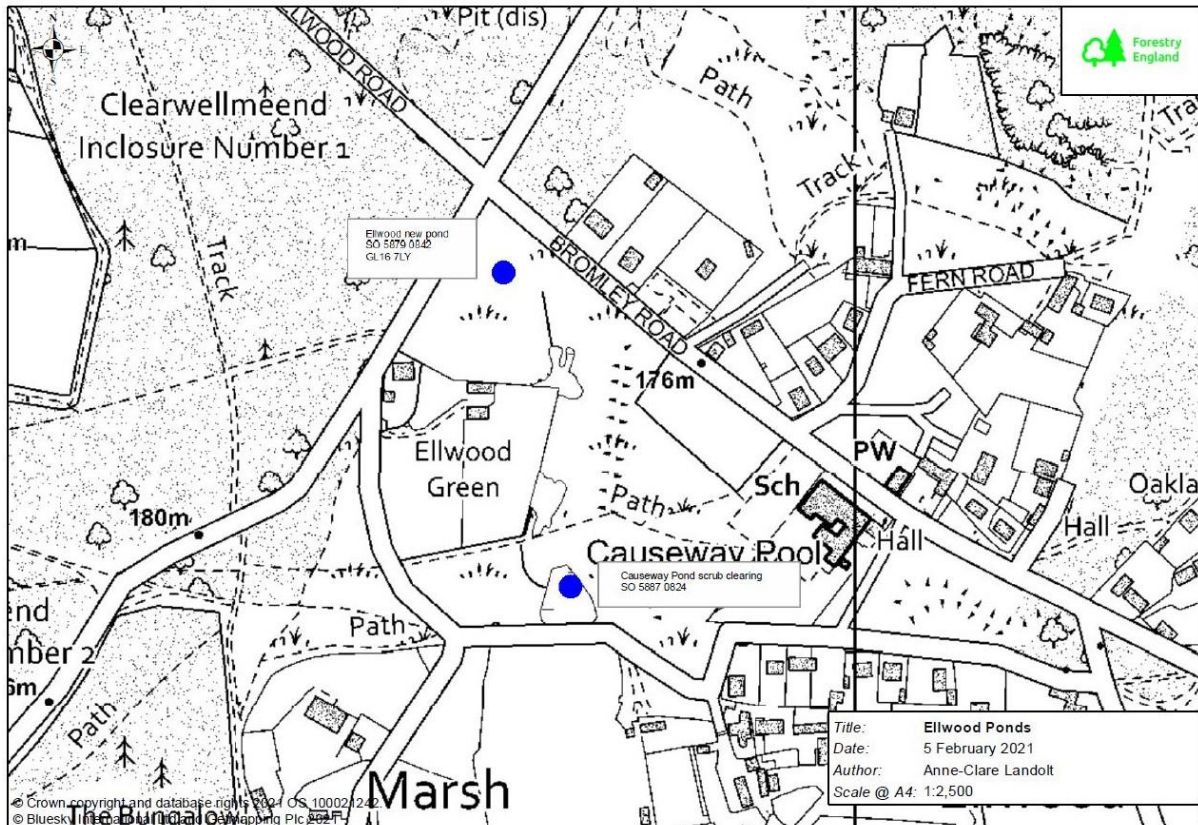
Q: Where are the ponds going to be?

A: The pond works are taking place at four locations:

1. Development of a new pond at Milkwall/Gorsty Knoll, marked 1 on map below.
2. Development of second new pond at Milkwall/Gorsty Knoll, marked 2 on map.
3. Development of a new pond near Ellwood School, outside the school grounds and openly accessible.
4. Scrub clearing to improve the existing Causeway pond.

The following maps indicate the locations for the ponds:





Q. When is this work happening?

A. The pond works in Ellwood begin week commencing 7th February and the work in Milkwall is scheduled for week commencing 14th February.

Q. Are the ponds going to be fenced?

A. The ponds will not be fenced.

Q. Whose land are the ponds on?

A. These ponds are on Forestry England land.



Q. What about the other ponds in this area?

A. Aarons Pond (may also be known as Aerons or Errands), near the Darkhill ironworks site, is a lovely pond. Old photos, dating back to the 1930s, show this was a much bigger pond and people used to swim in it. In more recent years this pond has developed a leak and it now requires major civil engineering work to repair it. The pond most probably contains fish, which reduces its wildlife value. Great crested newts will not inhabit a pond with fish. Toads do use it because their tadpoles have nasty tasting toxins and are not eaten by fish. The pond has silted up due to water flowing in; and also contains an alien pond weed. Over the years volunteers working with Forestry England have worked on removing some of the more dominant trees and vegetation around the pond.

Q. Can I get involved with ponds work?

A. You can join Foresters' Forest as a volunteer to help look after the ponds in future, for example by getting involved with pond maintenance and amphibian surveys. To register your interest please email forestersforest@fvaf.org.uk

Q. Where is ponds project information on the Foresters' Forest website?

Further information can be found on the 'Waterways & Ponds' project page, please see <https://www.forestersforest.uk/projects/23/waterways-and-ponds>