

“Kent Wildlife Trust is a valued partner to Tarmac. Since taking on the lease of Oare Marshes, they have done a brilliant job transforming the site into a hugely important nature reserve. We are delighted to permanently place this site into their care and look forward to seeing the reserve continue to support so many vital species.”

Michael Charlton, Estates Manager at Tarmac

Planet

Environmental Stewardship

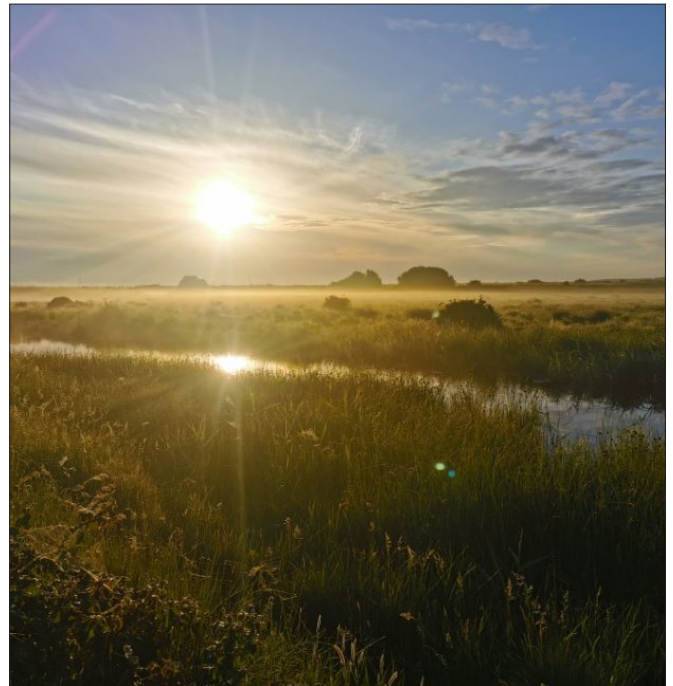
Tarmac gifts important nature reserve to local wildlife trust

In 2024, Tarmac gifted Oare Marshes, an internationally important nature reserve in Faversham, to Kent Wildlife Trust. Since 1984, the trust has managed and leased the area from Tarmac. Forty years later, the transfer of deeds has made them the proud new owner of one of their flagship nature reserves. Oare Marshes is one of the few grazing marshes left in Kent and of significant importance for migratory birds.

The new ownership has been described as a ‘Marsh Milestone’ by Kent Wildlife Trust, who are delighted to have secured this precious nature reserve for future generations to come. The 69 hectares of rare wildlife habitat was gifted by Tarmac, with the trust only covering the legal fees.

It is estimated that around 250 species of bird can be found at Oare Marshes, including the bearded tit, avocet, waders and ducks. In summer, the site is home to European turtle doves, little ringed plovers and warblers. Towards the end of autumn, visitors can catch a glimpse of other birds such as the curlew sandpiper, dunlin, spotted redshank, little stint, whimbrel and common greenshank.

At the reserve is the artesian well, which sees locals travel to the site to bottle the fresh water. The natural spring reaches 250 feet into the earth and was tapped by the local mining machinery and improvement company in the early 1900s. Local sailors were also said to have drunk from the well, and the surrounding marshland and wildlife rely on the spring’s flowing water.



Oare Marshes is a key steppingstone between other locations in and around Swale, including Elmley, South Swale and Seasalter (just outside of the borough). The surrounding farmland areas are grazed and managed through agricultural-environment schemes, with the network of ditches across the landscape providing significant connectivity for species such as the water vole.

Kent Wildlife Trust’s Simon Bateman-Brown said: “We are extremely grateful to Tarmac for allowing us to take on the ownership of this internationally important nature reserve having managed it together for more than 40 years. This moment is a ‘Marsh Milestone’ for this exceptional site which is a precious habitat for so many important species. “Whilst very little will change in terms of the day-to-day management of the reserve, it does mean Oare Marshes is protected for the future.”