

Martyn Priestley:

One Saturday morning I was in Toad Holes Beck, which is adjacent to Raw Nook [nature reserve], and I heard some cutting down of trees and I was a bit perplexed so I went to investigate and, um, I came across a company that's on the Euroway Trading Estate adjacent to Toad Holes Beck, and they were cutting down trees on their own land. Their own land. So I went to see the workers who were cutting the trees down, and they were very nice. I went and politely spoke to them and said that it was nesting time, and did they realise what they was doing, you know. Anyway, I got them on board and they went away and next thing the owner of the company, Tiffin Sandwiches, came out to speak to me. So again, very politely, I explained what the position was and he shouldn't be cutting trees down and this. He apologised and said that he didn't know anything about cutting trees down in nesting time. Believe that or you believe it or not, that's up to you. But anyway, cut a long story short, I saw an opportunity there, because the guy apologised and said, right, you know, we don't do anything about that, you know, virtually would I like to work voluntarily on the side of them. So to cut a long story short again, He's building a new factory part of an extension, so I thought there's an opportunity here, so I asked him about creating a Wildlife Garden, around the perimeter of his thing, which would benefit the people, the workers as well as himself. Anyway, that was it. Anyway, he took my email address and lo and behold, a few weeks later I was called in, or asked to call in, and I had a meeting in the boardroom with them, all these fancy people and I drew some plans for them for a Wildlife Garden now. And so we left on good terms and obviously I got in that our group, that we needed funds, etcetera, so just drop that one in. Anyway, a little bit later on, about two or three months later, I'm looking at the Telegraph and Argus the local press and I see Tiffin Sandwiches purchase a pond which is adjacent to their site, which is part of Toad Holes Beck, for £75,000. And I thought, I don't believe this. So I rang, I had a contact there, one of the managers, and I asked him what he was doing. He said, "Oh, yeah, we're going to turn it into a nature area, we'll build a factory and then we're going to turn it into a nature area". And I was astounded by this and blah, blah, blah. So I asked him and I contacted Natural England because of this biodiversity net gain issue, which I won't go too much in. So they've then contacted Tiffin Sandwiches now and they've formed a partnership now, so. But they're taking out, they're building the building first. So at

least that pond now, the big pond now, which is part of Toad Holes Beck, is now secure and safe. So what began as a potential conflict, which I could have gone in, you know, blah, blah, blah, has become a long-term collaboration now, rooted in local knowledge, respect and shared responsibilities for biodiversity and his company.