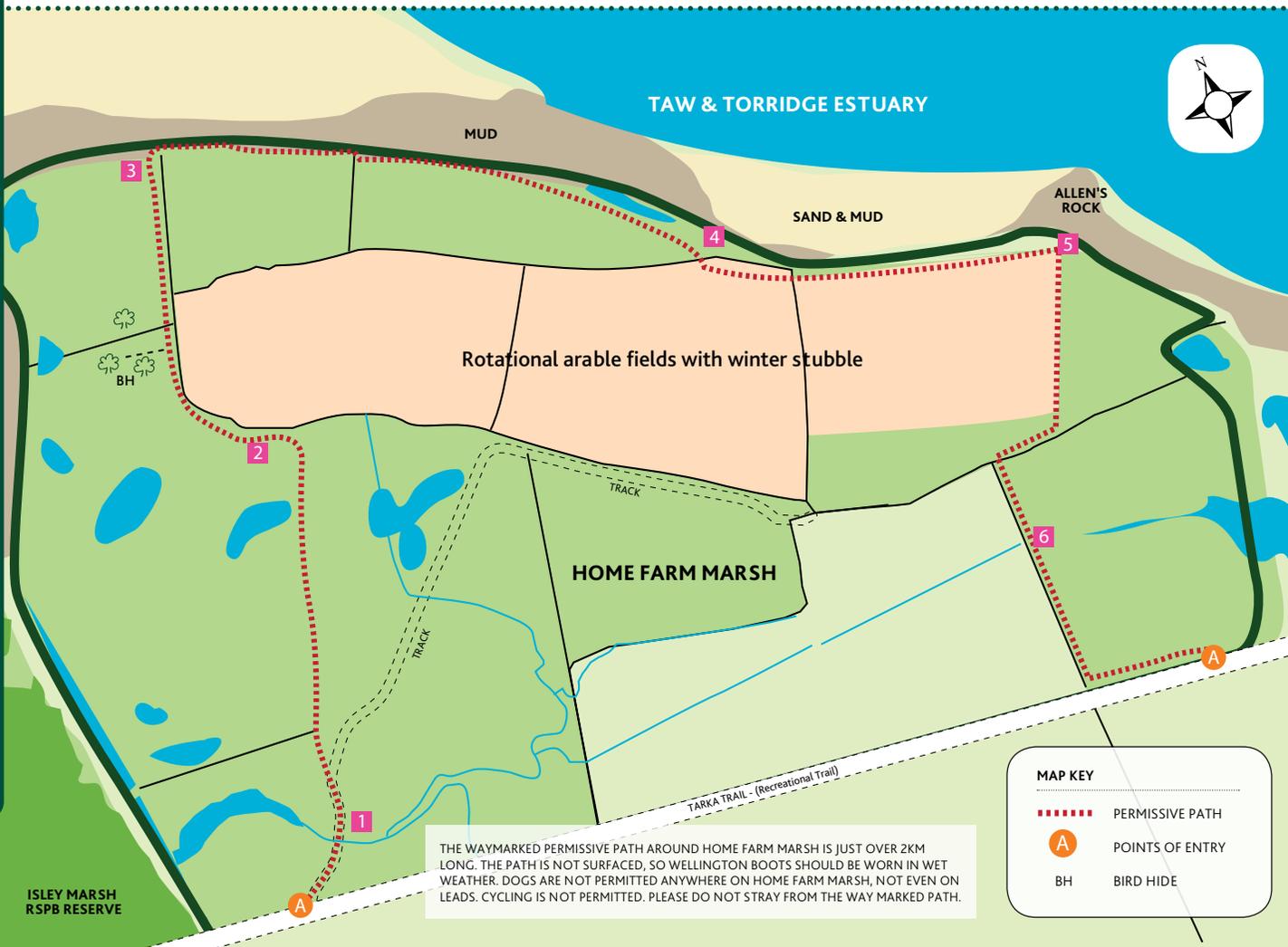


Walking route around Home Farm Marsh



Point 3: Sea Wall & Flower Embankment

The farm track runs out to the flood bank, with extensive views across the estuary providing good bird watching in winter. The permissive path then turns right, running along the sandy embankment. Sheltered by the feathery Tamarisk, this provides an ideal habitat for a wealth of summer wild flowers including Pale Flax, Restharrow and Yellow-wort, and Southern Marsh orchids. The tamarisk hedge is a haven for grasshoppers and other insects.



LOOK OUT FOR: HOLLY BLUE

Point 4: Big New Field & Twelve Acres

The gateway separates an arable field in which spring-sown cereals are grown, and a field of permanent grassland. This pasture will become species-rich over time as more flowering plants colonise. A strip of plants has been sown at the end of the arable field to provide cover and seed for birds throughout the winter and spring. In addition to three fields of winter stubble, one of the arable fields is left fallow in rotation, to encourage breeding lapwings.



The tamarisk hedge on the estuary side is coppiced to thicken it out and improve its habitat value. A memorial stone to Lady Hilda MacNeill lies to the east of the gate and can be seen from the permissive path. She died while trying to save a drowning child, in 1904 and both perished.

LOOK OUT FOR: LAPWING, FIELD PANSY

Point 5: Allen's Rock

Barley or wheat is grown in this field' sown in the spring to reduce pesticide use. After harvesting, the stubble is left over winter to provide cover and food for birds.

East of the fence, the field has been sown with natural grasses. Wildflowers are being encouraged to provide nectar for insects.

LOOK OUT FOR: GOLDFINCH, POPPIES



Point 6: Hill's Marsh

A wet ditch divides this large enclosure, and the long-term aim is to make the centre of the field even wetter than it is now.

Reeds, rushes and sedges are being encouraged to spread, which will provide better cover for insects, birds and mammals.

LOOK OUT FOR: LITTLE EGRET, YELLOW FLAG



Point 1: Monkey Island & Right of Crossing

Cattle graze the permanent grassland on both sides of the farm track in the summer and the autumn, to maintain a good sward, keeping brambles and scrub under control. A series of shallow ponds have been created in the stream that flows towards Isley Marsh. These provide a feeding and nesting area for moorhens, ducks, snipe & waders. Please keep to the track to avoid disturbance.

LOOK OUT FOR: COMMON SNIPE; CELERY-LEAVED BUTTERCUP



Point 2: Water meadow & scrapes

This large field is now a permanent pasture with ponds and scrapes. The earth from these was used to create the hedge bank that now runs alongside the farm track and permissive path, reducing the disturbance to birds from walkers. Many drains in the field have been blocked, so parts of it are now very wet in the winter and spring. This helps wading birds by keeping invertebrates close to the surface – for ease of feeding.

LOOK OUT FOR: CANADA GEESE, SKYLARKS





Home Farm Marsh

Home Farm Marsh borders the Tarka Trail on the Taw/Torridge estuary, between Bideford and Barnstaple, near Fremington. The Gaia Trust is working to restore the 71ha site to its former status as a wetland, enhancing its biodiversity. Species recovery is encouraging, particularly with farmland birds that are in general decline.

Significant wetland restoration and habitat creation has established over 18.5 hectares of permanent pasture dominated by native grasses. New wetlands are attracting many geese, ducks and wading birds, with signs that some are now breeding for the first time for many years. Arable fields are being managed to provide food and cover for a range of birds, mammals and invertebrates and to encourage the spread of typical wild flowers, and now support a wide variety of birds.

A permissive path has been created to take the walker past the variety of habitats at Home Farm Marsh, but dogs are not permitted as the main aim of the Marsh is to encourage breeding and overwintering birds. The adjoining Tarka Trail is suitable for wheelchairs and the Trust has developed a trail suitable for disabled access on this property. Volunteers are active in practical working groups and species recording.

Location: North Devon; Grid Ref SS494326

Access is from the Tarka Trail, parking at Fremington Quay and walking towards Lower Yelland.

The acquisition of this land was made possible with the help of:

Heritage Lottery Fund; Pennon Environmental Trust; Alan Evans Trust; Dulverton Trust; Four Winds Trust; Hamamelis Trust; H D H Wills Trust; Idlewild Trust; John Coates Trust; Linley Wightman Shaw Foundation; Norman Family Trust; N Smith Charity; Steel Trust; Mr Charles Bromley; Mr Derek Clough; Mr & Mrs Day; Ms K Gray.

The Gaia Trust encourages volunteering groups and local involvement at Home Farm Marsh. The Trust is particularly keen to extend the experience of the land to those groups traditionally excluded, either from disability or social disadvantage. Our aim is to make the countryside we manage user-friendly to visitors - and visitor friendly to the people who farm the land.

The Gaia Trust

Conservation alone is not enough - bringing nature and people together

The Gaia Trust, a registered charity (No. 800302) founded in 1988, works to forge a lasting alliance between communities and their surrounding open spaces. The Trust acts to protect an attractive and viable countryside by promoting sustainable farming, and other land uses, giving local communities a central involvement in their stewardship. Creation of habitats and wildlife conservation in partnership with appropriate public access are central to the way in which the Trust manages its land.

Home Farm Marsh

The Gaia Trust acquired Home Farm Marsh in 2002 with the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, trusts and individuals. With the help of Defra's Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Gaia has worked to reverse the effects of more intensive farming practices to enhance biodiversity with the creation of intertidal habitats, wet grassland, scrapes and ponds, winter stubbles, arable margins and pasture

How can you help?

The Gaia Trust welcomes donations to enable it to manage existing properties and to acquire additional areas of farm and woodland. Volunteers are crucial to our work, and we would welcome your support and involvement. As well as Home Farm Marsh in Devon, the Gaia Trust also owns Treraven Farm on the Camel Trail, Wadebridge, and other properties in Cornwall.



For further information visit the Gaia Trust's website www.gaiatrust.org.uk, or contact us at:

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Mount Hawke, Truro, Cornwall, TR4 8DH

Telephone: 01209 890696

E-mail: alisonvaughan@gaiatrust.org.uk

Website: www.gaiatrust.org.uk

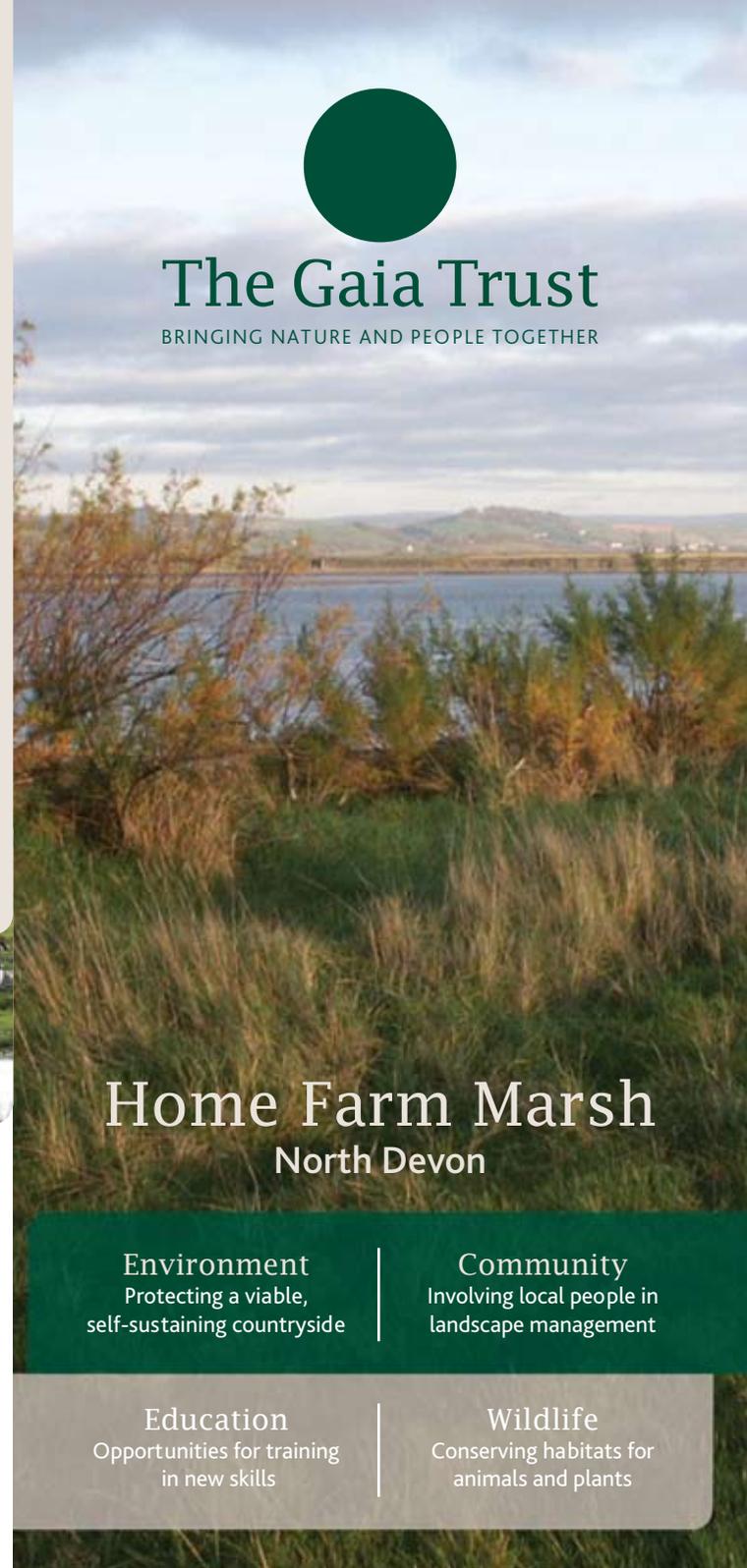
Registered charity address:

The Gaia Trust, Deli Farm, Delabole PL33 9BZ Tel: 01840 214100



The Gaia Trust

BRINGING NATURE AND PEOPLE TOGETHER



Home Farm Marsh North Devon

Environment
Protecting a viable,
self-sustaining countryside

Community
Involving local people in
landscape management

Education
Opportunities for training
in new skills

Wildlife
Conserving habitats for
animals and plants