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## **‘Name a goat’ competition launches conservation project at Hadleigh Country Park**

*Explore Essex launches ‘name the goat’ competition to celebrate the arrival of rare Cheviot goats at Hadleigh Country Park.*

EXPLORE Essex and Essex County Council’s (ECC) Legacy Grazing Service is running a ‘name a goat’ competition to celebrate the arrival of the rare breed at Hadleigh Country Park.

Funded by Essex and Suffolk Water and Essex Climate Action Commission the project\* will support the conservation of the Cheviot species and the goats will provide a natural land management method to help improve biodiversity.

As part of the project, the ‘name a goat’ competition is open to all and aims to help children and young people become interested in the natural world and conservation.

The goats will help restore an area of 12 hectares of important grassland habitats at Hadleigh Country Park, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The goats will feed on woody vegetation and thorny shrubs which will help establish living conditions for wildflowers such as Deptford Pink, Hartwort and Shril Carder Bee. As the area is reduced and grassland is encouraged, the goats will gradually be joined by the Red Poll cattle which currently graze on the marshes in the park.

To ensure the goats remain within a designated area, the project will be one of the first in the country to use Nofence technology within a conservation environment. The technology, which uses GPS tracking, will see the goats fitted with livestock-friendly collars so they can be tracked and monitored throughout the duration of the project.

The Cheviot goats - which are thought to have been introduced to Great Britain during the Neolithic period - are a rare feral breed from the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland and will help control and reduce woody vegetation and scrub at Hadleigh Country Park.

Due to there being only around 1,000 Cheviot goats in Great Britain, it is believed that their introduction at Hadleigh Country Park will make a significant contribution to the conservation of this rare breed.

Councillor Graham Butland, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture, said: “We are extremely excited about this project and delighted to launch the ‘name a goat’ competition. This legacy grazing project will offer environmental and carbon saving benefits while helping to reintroduce a rare breed to our park.

“The health and welfare of the goats is paramount, which is why we are also delighted to be using the Nofence technology in a nature conservation application for the first time. While we want people to enjoy our parks and the wildlife within them, we would ask dog walkers and visitors to not approach the goats and to not feed them.”

Luke Bristow, Essex County Council Principal Ecological Consultant, added: “Prior to the introduction of the goats, the maintenance and upkeep of the park was conducted using mechanical equipment, such as chainsaws and diggers, which is why projects such as this are fundamentally important if we are to help the environment and combat climate change.

“Also, using an ecologically-friendly land management practice and reintroducing a rare breed such as the Cheviot goat, means we not only help ensure the genetic survival of the breed but also the rare flora and fauna which inhabits the park.”

To enter the ‘name a goat’ competition and be in with a chance of an Explore Essex bundle including a printed certificate of the winning goat names, two tickets to Sky Ropes and free parking for a day at Hadleigh Country Park, email [Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk) by 11:59pm on Sunday 5 December. For more information and to view the competition terms and conditions please visit: [Name the Goats | Explore Essex \(explre-essex.com\)](http://Name%20the%20Goats%20|%20Explore%20Essex%20(expl%20re-essex.com)).

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**Editors notes:**

\* The project is the latest step in a scheme started in 2013 to restore traditional ‘conservation’ grazing to the site, which has been supported by the government’s adviser for the natural environment, Natural England.

**For more information contact:** Emma Williams, Marketing and Communications Lead, [Emma.Williams@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Emma.Williams@essex.gov.uk) or Christopher Davies, Marketing and Communications Officer, [Christopher.Davies@Essex.gov.uk](mailto:Christopher.Davies@Essex.gov.uk) or telephone 07738 885659.

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