

# LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

## TENDRING DISTRICT



### TeG4 Furze Hill Gravel Pit, Mistley

**Site location:** Disused gravel pit south of Furze Hill, Mistley Heath, Essex

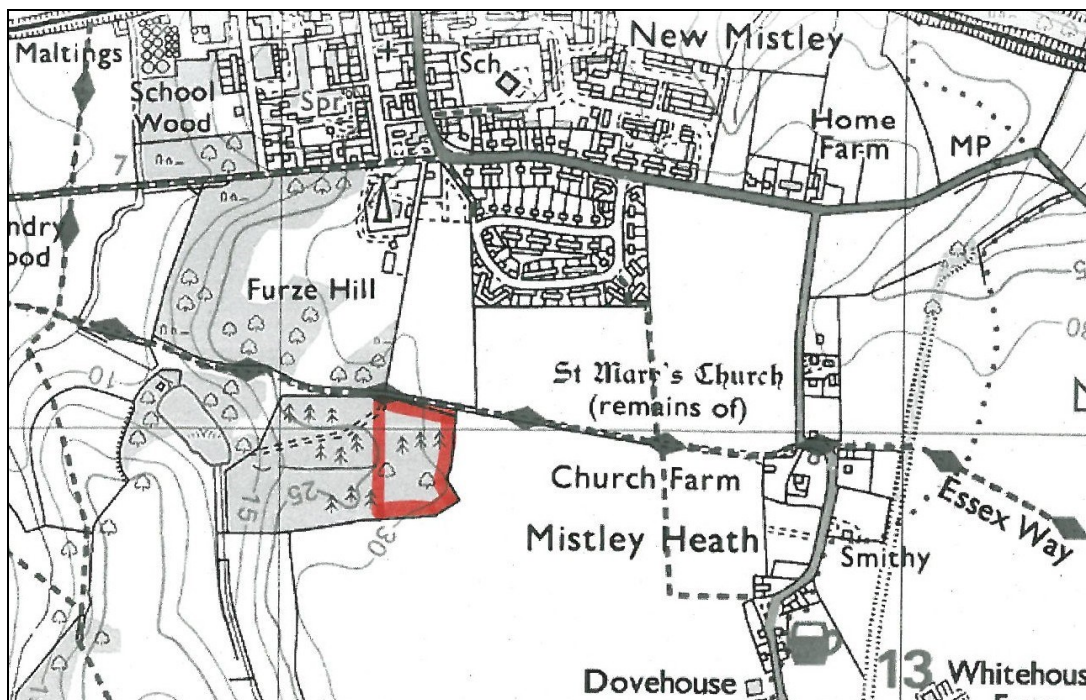
**Grid Reference:** TM 122 309

**Status:** Privately owned

**Summary of the geological interest:**

A disused gravel pit in woodland in Mistley Park, south-east of Furze Hill provides exposures of Waldringfield Gravel. Waldringfield Gravel is the oldest deposit in eastern Essex from the former course of the River Thames and is probably at least 650,000 years old. This gravel pit is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1897 but it does not appear to have a name and so the name Furze Hill Gravel Pit has been adopted for this site.

Iron-stained gravel can be seen underfoot in various parts of the wood and it is seen to consist of pebbles not only of flint but also of various 'exotic' rock types which may have been brought here by the Thames from the west of England and Wales.



**Site Assessment.** Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

### ***Scientific interest and site importance***

Although gravel has not been dug here for a considerable period of time, evidence of gravel working can clearly be seen today throughout the eastern half of the wood with several steep banks and hollows. A coarse, iron-stained gravel can be seen in small excavations made by rabbits, and pebbles from the gravel are on the paths and in the roots of fallen trees.

The gravel appears to contain a high proportion of 'exotic' pebbles that clearly have been carried some distance by the Thames. These include well-rounded pebbles of white vein quartz that may have been brought here from the headwaters of the Thames which was then in North Wales.

Gravel is more clearly seen in the northern part of the wood close to the footpath and also near the southern boundary. In the centre of the wood there are areas of fine-grained gravel, which may be left over from gravel grading and processing on site in Victorian times.

Exposures of Waldringfield Gravel are rare in Essex.

### ***Other information***

The wood is privately owned. The Essex Way, a long-distance public footpath, runs along the northern boundary.