

News from the Ouse



Little Ouse
Headwaters
Project

Conservation & Community



Supporting our local community

Beverly Blackburn

LOHP enjoys working with the local community and helping out where we can. In the last issue of NFTO, we told you how we had been helping out Thelnetham Parish Council with improvements to their village hall – www.thelnethamvillagehall.co.uk. At the end of December, we helped them again, with our volunteers lending a hand to clear the car park of mud and give the inside a good clean. Our reward was that we could be the first to use the new facilities for our winter walk.

Our volunteers also helped Thelnetham Windmill Committee to restore part of the hedgerow in front of Thelnetham Windmill. The volunteers learned new skills while helping to improve the views of this wonderful building. Chris Mills from the Committee, was delighted with the result, "The volunteers have done a great job, thank you. I can't wait to see

what it looks like when it starts to grow. If you are interested in visiting the windmill there are several open days throughout the year, or if you would like to volunteer to help at the mill visit www.thelnethamwindmill.org.uk"

Over the years we have been working closely with Green Light Trust Volunteers, www.greenlighttrust.org, based near Bury St Edmunds, but that didn't stop them! This year they started a new 4 week programme for their volunteers, and joined us for our Wednesday practical conservation tasks throughout February.

Andrew Brooks from GLT whose strapline is 'Building Health, Hope and Happiness, through the Power of Nature', was really enthused with the project, "working with LOHP volunteers has been great; a really positive experience for all. Our volunteers got engaged with the tasks and met other volunteers."



Ellie Beach

Above: Thelnetham Windmill with its sparse and overgrown hedge.

Left: LOHP volunteers enjoying a break as the hedge is transformed.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Down on the Fens	2
Small things matter!	3
Focus on Broomscot	4
Volunteer Round-up	5
A Winter Walk	6
Colour of the Fens	6
Sponsor-an-Acre	7
Work Party Dates	7
Events	8
How to join LOHP	8



New species discovery on
LOHP sites – see page 3



We are very grateful to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for their generous support. They funded our Conservation Manager post over its first 18 months and are now continuing their support until 2022.

STOP PRESS

New Website

We're working on a new website to bring you more news from the Little Ouse and don't forget that you can keep up to date with the latest on our social media channels.

Online Payment

Online payment for membership and renewals will soon be possible.

Volunteer Conference

Our Volunteer Conference back in December was a fascinating morning, with external organisations and local volunteers giving presentations. The talks covered a range of topics from invasive species, to otters and water level monitoring – something for everyone. A big thank you to all those who contributed and all the volunteers who helped.

LOHP Events Listings

Check out our LOHP events listings on the back page: lots coming up – from an evening chorus walk to a 'Meet the Cows' event.

Village Hall

Visit thelnethamvillagehall.co.uk to see details of their Heritage Activity events including rope-making!

Facebook & Twitter



For more news and great photos go to www.lohp.org.uk and click on the icons. Like or follow us on social media to keep up to date with news and events.

See us at the following Events:

19 April Plant Sale at SWT
10am-3pm Redgrave & Lopham Fen
26 June check website for the most up to date information
times the most up to date information

Conservation Manager update

Down on the Fens



Spring has finally sprung with flowers coming into

bloom, trees into blossom/leaf and birds starting to chase each other around the fens. It's such a lovely time of year with everything coming back to life. Keep your eyes and ears open as our summer migrants start to return; listen out for Chiffchaffs belting out their unmistakeable song. When will you hear your first Cuckoo?

At this time of year we have to change the types of practical conservation management work that we carry out, so as not to cause disruption to nesting birds. We do not cut trees, hedges and bushes, instead we maintain paths, erect/fix fencing, clean signs, undertake survey and monitoring and much more.

It's hard to imagine that I joined LOHP last February and we were treated to one of the hottest weeks; the river and fen levels were at a low and everywhere

was bone dry. A complete contrast to this year, which saw a very wet and windy winter with the fen becoming flooded and impassable on several occasions. The windy weather didn't help our poor ash trees, which are suffering from ash dieback, as they rot at the roots making them prone to falling over without warning. We had to take several down, which had blown down or got hung up on other trees, to make them safe for visitors.

On Blo' Norton Fen, contractors installed a new 25m section of recycled plastic boardwalk along the riverside path, just west of Swallow Bridge. This area was becoming quite eroded and difficult to cross in the winter.

Why not get out and about this spring and explore LOHP sites and see what you can find, join us on one of our events, or come and volunteer.

Ellie Beach

LOHP Conservation Manager

Can you spare a few Hours?

If you can spare a few hours and want to support us, we are always looking for more volunteers to help with practical conservation work parties, monitoring/surveying, stock checking, wardens, admin, fundraising, events and much more. Or do you have a specialist skill which you feel might be of use to us? Please get in touch.

Contact: Ellie Beach, Conservation Manager at ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk (07919 912045) or Reg Langston at reg.langston@lohp.org.uk

Small things Matter! By Rowena Langston

An eventful year for finding invertebrates on LOHP sites

Set against the background of insect declines in the wider countryside, multiple surveys of several Suffolk LOHP sites (mainly in Thelnetham), during 2019, turned up 1,309 species across a range of invertebrate taxa (Lane, S., 2020). These included 74 species designated as Nationally Scarce (Notable, NS) and 16 species designated as Nationally Rare (Red Data Book, NR). This is an impressive total. The surveys highlight the value of wetland aquatic and terrestrial invertebrate fauna on Parkers Piece and Oak Tree Fen in particular. The Brecks-type short grassland on Parkers Piece was found to be a significant habitat for invertebrates. Dead wood, notably on New Fen, also was important for invertebrates. This is very encouraging, given that all these sites are ones that LOHP has been working to restore, starting with Parkers Piece and Bleyswycks Bank in 2009. The pools on Oak Tree Fen are the most recent

wetland additions to this suite of sites. The northern sections of Reeves Meadows show promise, but currently this site – the most recent LOHP acquisition – has a restricted invertebrate fauna.

The recommendations given by Steve Lane, together with those from recent vegetation surveys for LOHP, will assist with the review of our site management plans. The species records are interesting in their own right and essential for assessing the conservation value of LOHP sites. Surveys such as these are complemented by our skilled volunteers regularly recording a range of invertebrates, including butterflies, moths, dragonflies, grasshoppers, bush-crickets, as well as a variety of aquatic species covered by the Riverfly survey which indicates the health of the river.

LOHP volunteer, Graham Moates, who recently found a species of fly new to science at Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Lackford Lakes Reserve, subsequently

found the same species on several LOHP sites including Betty's Fen and New Fen. This species has been named *Melanagromyza moatesi* (Warrington, B., 2019). Congratulations to Graham; it is not everyone who can claim such an accolade! The fly larvae feed, then pupate, inside the stems of hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*, a plant frequently encountered on our sites.

Thanks to Andy Brown, Steve Lane and Graham Moates for their fieldwork on LOHP sites.

References

Lane, S., 2020. Invertebrate Survey Report LOHP 2019: Parkers Piece, New Fen, Bleyswycks Bank, Oak Tree Fen, Webbs Fen, Reeves Meadows, Carr Meadow.

Warrington, B., 2019. *Dipterists Digest* 2019 26, 181-194. A new species of the genus *Melanagromyza* (Diptera, Agromyzidae) from eastern England.



1. Cramp-ball fungus weevil *Platyrhinus resinosus*, designated as a Nationally Scarce species, is associated with a fungus which occurs on ash trees and was recorded on Oak Tree Fen.



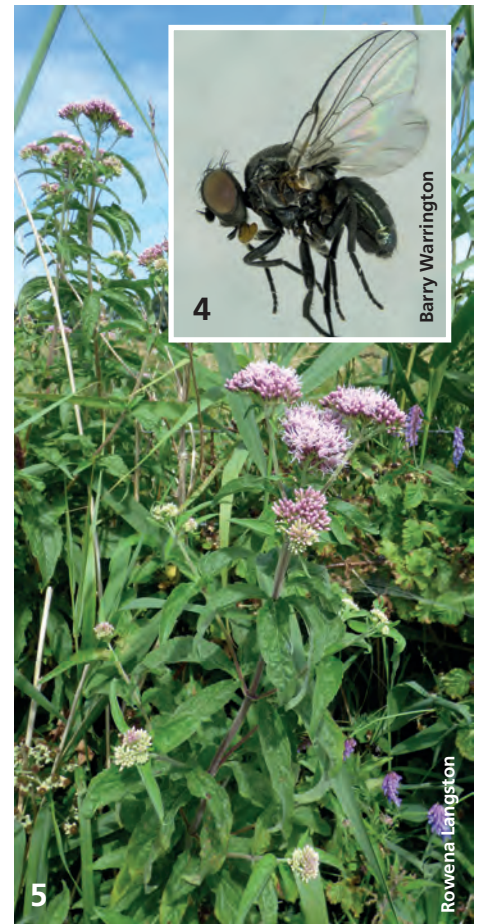
2. Small Yellow Underwing Moth *Panemeria tenebrata*, associated with common and field mouse-ear, was found on Parkers Piece.



3. Spotted Marsh Ladybird *Coccidula scutellata*, found on Bleyswycks Bank and Oak Tree Fen.

4. New to science, fly *Melanagromyza moatesi*, associated with hemp agrimony.

5. Hemp agrimony, *Eupatorium cannabinum*.



Focus on: Broomscot Common



"It's wonderful to have a resource like this so close to the village. It's perfect for dog walkers and the school love coming here for their projects."

John McCormack
Broomscot Common Warden

Arthur Rivett

Broomscot Common has been leased by the LOHP from the Garboldisham Parish Charities since late 2010. The Common covers an area of 11.4 hectares, and is linked to the Little Ouse by a small stream that flows through Garboldisham Old Fen to LOHP's site at Scarfe Meadows. It is a designated County Wildlife Site, and contains a mix of habitats ranging from wet fen at the north end of the site to very dry, sandy grassland much like that found further west in the Brecks.

The LOHP has undertaken a major programme to restore the key habitats, establish a long term management plan and improve public access.

Conservation

The Common is a rich mosaic of habitats – the main area is lowland dry acid grassland and lichen heath, interspersed with gorse, heavily grazed by rabbits and home to linnets and yellowhammers. This rare habitat can be improved to encourage plants like meadow saxifrage, harebell and heath bedstraw.

Contrasting with this dry habitat, at the northern end of the site, there are areas of lowland meadow and fen near the stream crossed by the main footpath onto the Common. Typical fen species found there include ragged robin, blunt-flowered rush, fen and marsh bedstraw and narrow-leaved water dropwort. The stream has an ephemeral pond at its eastern end and is edged by scrub with nesting bullfinches, turtle doves and

garden warblers.

The whole area has had a stock proof fence to allow cattle to graze, to restore species rich fen and grassland.

Gorse, which covers much of the eastern part of the site provides good nesting habitat for birds.

The pond has been opened up by removal of scrub and trees, although some are being left to re-grow as pollards or coppice. Some de-silting has also been carried out to increase the open water habitat.

Hedgerows on the boundaries of the site form an important landscape feature, as well as habitat for birds and insects. They are managed by pollarding and coppicing to promote new growth, and planting-up of any significant gaps with native species.

Special features

The gorse and scrub at Broomscot Common provide ideal nesting habitat for linnets. Their trilling and twittering song is a feature of the Common in spring. These delightful finches feed on seeds in open habitats but build their nests in dense scrub. In common with many other farmland birds, their numbers have been falling rapidly in Britain since the mid 1970s. As a result this once common species is now Red listed in the UK and is a Biodiversity Action Plan species.

The Small Heath is, as its name suggests, a tiny butterfly of heathland and other dry open habitats. Its

caterpillars feed on short turf of the fine grasses. It flies only in sunshine, settling with its wings closed very close to the ground. Number of broods and flight periods vary, but adults may be seen anytime between late April and September. Numbers of colonies have decreased substantially in recent decades and this is now considered a conservation priority species. The colony at Broomscot Common is one of a few remaining in our area.

Access

Restoration of the Common's habitats and wildlife are going hand-in-hand with improving public access. Wide-access kissing gates through the new fence allow access to the public footpath which runs across the site, and a new footbridge (for both people and livestock) has been installed across the stream. As at other LOHP sites, Broomscot Common has a unique interpretation sign embedded in an oak sculpture created by local artists.

Please note that dogs must be kept under very close control during the breeding season, to protect ground nesting birds and at all times when stock are grazing. Thank you.

Event – details page 8
Reptiles, Water Voles, Woodcock, Moths, Butterflies
– guided walk
See website for info
Sunday 5 April 10.30am–12.30pm

What to look for on Broomscot Common

This is a diverse habitat with some interesting species to look out for...



Linnet

Arthur Rivett

The male linnet, has a bright pinky-red head patch and breast.



Small Heath butterfly

Rowena Langston

Small heath butterflies rest with their wings closed when they're not feeding.



Meadow Saxifrage

Rowena Langston

Spring and early summer is the best time to spot this grassland plant.



Yellowhammer

Don Davis

The yellowhammer is often associated with open countryside and hedgerows.

Volunteer Round-up

We have had a busy few months (Jan-Mar), especially with the numerous storms bringing lots of rain, flooding and gale force winds resulting in several fallen trees to deal with.

With 20 plus volunteers joining us on occasions, we managed to get loads done. During February we had extra help when we were joined by a small team of volunteers from the Green Light Trust. They worked hard, learned some new skills and got stuck into any task we gave them.

At Blo' Norton Fen we cleared encroaching scrub from the important fen area, only getting a few volunteers wet in the process! On Parkers Piece, Webbs Fen and Betty's Fen, we carried out fencing repairs and path improvements. At Hinderclay Fen we cleared encroaching scrub from the reedbed, opened views from the bench, cleared invasive species and raised the canopy of trees around the heathland to allow the heather to spread.

With the extra volunteer help, we were able to work with Thelnetham Windmill Committee to improve part of the hedge in front of the Windmill. We laid the hedge and then planted it with 100 whips, protecting them with tree guards we had recycled. It may look a bit



Reg Langston

sparse now but as the trees start to grow it will soon green up. It will continue to be maintained as a low hedge to give better views of the windmill.

We also had the time and volunteers to install bird, including barn owl, nestboxes across the fens ready for prospecting birds to use. Now that bird nesting season is almost upon us, we have to change the types of practical conservation tasks that we undertake so as not to cause disturbance. Our monthly dipwell surveys and Riverfly monitoring will continue.

Ellie Beach

LOHP Conservation Manager



Ellie Beach

A big thank you to all our dedicated Volunteers!

If you want to find out more about us or get involved with practical conservation work parties, monitoring/surveying or become a site warden, please get in touch.

Contact: **Ellie Beach** Conservation Manager at ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk or call 07919 912045, or **Reg Langston** at reg.langston@lohp.org.uk



Rowena Langston

A Winter Walk

What better way to spend a fine winter's morning than to join an LOHP Winter Walk! This is what 55 people (including us: a new-ish LOHP volunteer and a Norwegian visitor) and six dogs did on 29th December.

Our walk was led by LOHP Trustee, Dr Nigel Clark, who explained that LOHP volunteers are working with SWT and others to restore and reconnect the fens, increasing biodiversity while supporting the water table, facilitating carbon storage, and preventing run-off, erosion and flooding.

Our first stop was New Fen, transformed over five years from an

overgrown tree nursery to a coppiced woodland of native trees. Wetter areas have been restored to alkaline fen, originally formed after the last Ice Age and fed by valley springs from the underlying chalk aquifer. Increased plant diversity, including orchids, is developing following restoration, as at SWT's neighbouring Middle Fen.

We crossed the river and walked on through Betty's Fen, LOHP's first acquisition, where older restorations are managed by livestock grazing.

From there we traversed LOHP's newly-acquired Reeves Meadows, noting the difference in regeneration where



Rowena Langston

pesticides had been used.

Finally, soup warmed both belly and heart back in Thelnetham Village Hall, after our thoroughly enjoyable and informative walk.

Diana Coben and Helene Böhler

Colour of the Fens

The Creative Fen Group will hold their next exhibition *Colour of The Fens*, at The Fox Public House, Garboldisham, over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

The Opening times of the pub are Friday 5pm-10pm, Saturday noon to 10pm and Sunday noon to 5pm. It includes a table of information about LOHP.

Exhibition cancelled

There will be a private view on the Friday night with 'nibbles', everyone from LOHP is invited!

At the pub Tasty Thailand street food will be available on Saturday night and Lunch on Sunday.

We look forward to seeing you there.



Webb's Fen – Winter Dawn, acrylic painting by Mary Anne Kenyon .

"There were some beautiful clear sky frosty dawns with mist over the fen in November, but you had to time it right: 7.30 am, the sun just rising, light perfect; by 8am the sun too high."



Flight, print by Gill Thornton, linocut artist.

Gill uses a single piece of lino to produce a multi-coloured print. The lino is gradually cut away as each layer is printed and the image emerges. As the block is essentially destroyed during the process, a reduction print can never be reprinted. Her work is heavily influenced by her love of the reeds and birdlife of the fens.

www.gill-thornton.co.uk

A Creative way to Give

LOHP manages about 200 acres of fens, heaths, meadows and woodland. Each acre costs more than £120 a year to look after and we need a regular income for this, in addition to project grants and membership subscriptions.

Could you give regular help? Existing members and non-members, businesses and individuals are all equally welcome to become sponsors. Sponsorship costs £120 a year or £10 a month per acre, by standing order. You can, of course, sponsor more than one acre.

If you wish, your name can appear in future newsletters, as a thank you for your commitment to the LOHP and to our environment. LOHP is dedicated to restoring and conserving land neighbouring the Little Ouse, for the local community – both now and for future generations.

Our many dedicated volunteers give essential time, energy and labour to help maintain the land, but it does need dedicated money as well. Sponsorship for yourself – or as a gift – will give you the satisfaction of continually helping to care for a very special area of our countryside.

How to become a sponsor: please complete the form on the right and send it to Edward Coales (Treasurer) at the address on the form.

Grateful thanks to all our sponsors, including those willing to be listed below:

Andrew Aves	Paddy Richards
Tim Cooke	Angela Robinson
Diane Creasey	John and Belinda Sears
Cyprium Motorsport Systems Ltd	Helen Squire
John Davie-Thornhill	Starwing Brewery
Andrew Dickson Ltd	Adam and Olivia Stone
English Electric Motor Co	Euan Sutherland
Roger Greenacre	John Wallace
Ian Hume	Greg and Sue West
Glyn Pugh	

LOHP needs You!

We rely on volunteers to run the charity and help with conservation work and lots more. Experience is not required, just bring your enthusiasm!

Contact: **Bev Blackburn** beverly.blackburn@lohp.org.uk or 07747 691285, or **Nick Lingwood** 07772 769025

LOHP Work Parties

Get out and enjoy yourself – at an LOHP work party or event. Work parties are weekly on Wednesdays and usually the second Sunday of the month. Please check website/email circulation nearer the time for details of activity and location which may change depending on the weather.

Sunday 17 May, 10.30am **Himley Fen**

Sunday 12 July, 10.30am **Parker's Piece**

Sunday 9 August, 10.30am **New Fen**

Sunday work party contact: **Bev Blackburn** 07747 691285

Wednesday contact: **Ellie Beach** 07919 912045

Sponsor-an-Acre Application

I/We wish to apply to become a sponsor and member of the Little Ouse Headwaters Project.

Title Full Name

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel:

Email:

I will sponsor acre/s per year at £120 per acre,

I will pay £ per month (£10 minimum)

OR £ per year (£120 min.) **(delete as required)**

We will print your name as a new sponsor in the newsletter.

Please tick the box if you would prefer to remain anonymous. ☐

Charity Gift Aid

I want to Gift Aid the above donation to the LOHP

Signature Date

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today and in the future. I am a UK Taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations to charities, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the LOHP will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Please notify the LOHP if you: 1) wish to cancel this declaration, 2) change your name or home address, or 3) no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and you want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue & Customs to adjust your code.

Standing Order

To Bank

Branch Address

..... Postcode

BA/C Name

Acc. No Sort code

Please pay to: **LOHP**, Barclays PLC, 14 Market Hill, Diss

Sort Code: 20 26 34

Acc No: 50553417

On the day of 20

the sum of (words)
and **monthly/annually** thereafter until cancelled in writing by me **(delete as required)**.

This cancels any existing order in favour of the LOHP.

Full Name

Address:

..... Postcode:

Signature Date

The basis in law of the LOHP holding your personal data is Legitimate Interest.

Please return the WHOLE of this form to:

The Honorary Treasurer (Edward Coales), LOHP, The Farthings, Long Green, Wortham, Suffolk. IP22 1PU.

(Tel. 01379 898479) Email: edwardcoales@live.co.uk



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(not renewals)

Full name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

E-mail:

I wish to support the LOHP as a:

Friend of the Fens: £10 min a year ☐

Ordinary member: £5 a year ☐

Junior member: (<18 years) £1 a year ☐

Please tick one category and write the amount donated below.

I wish to donate £ to the LOHP.

Please make cheques payable to:

Little Ouse Headwaters Project

We can reclaim the basic rate of tax that you have paid on the gross equivalent of your donation so, for example, a membership payment of £10 is worth £12.50 to us. Therefore, if you are a UK taxpayer, we would be very grateful if you would Gift Aid your subscription by simply completing the Gift Aid section, and date and sign this form.

I want to Gift Aid the above donation to the LOHP ☐

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today and in the future. I am a UK Taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations to charities, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

I understand the Little Ouse Headwaters Project will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signature: Date:

Please notify the LOHP if you: 1) wish to cancel this declaration, 2) change your name or home address, or 3) no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and you want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code. *The basis in law for the LOHP holding your personal data is Legitimate Interest.*

Note on renewals: All renewals are due in April. We send a letter to all members. *Please don't use this form to renew membership.*

A big thank you to all those members who send donations along with their renewals. We greatly appreciate this extra support for the work we're doing to enhance the valley and its wildlife.

Please return the **WHOLE** of this form to:

Sue Lawrence, Membership Secretary,
22 Back Hills, Botesdale, IP22 1DW



Events

Reptiles, Water Voles and Riverflies

Sunday 5 April 10.30am–12.30pm

Meet outside Garboldisham Pavilion by the recreation ground, IP22 2QP. Join LOHP for a 2 mile (3km) circular walk to explore two unique sites in Garboldisham. Find out what lives on the sandy uplands of **Broomscot Common**, what calls the wetlands of **Scarfe Meadows** home, and what lurks beneath the surface of the river. Wellies recommended! *Booking not required.*

Evening Chorus Stroll
Sunday 3 May 7pm–9pm
Park opposite Thelnetham Windmill, IP22 1LD.

An alternative walk to catch the evening chorus on International Dawn Chorus Day. A local guide will take us round to see and hear the birds and other wildlife out on the fens towards the end of the day. Suitable footwear and suitable clothing. Bring binoculars if you have them. *Booking essential as numbers are limited.*

Fen Wander and Cream Tea
Sunday 14 June 2pm.

Park opposite Thelnetham Windmill, IP22 1LD.
A stroll around the fens to see the wonderful wildlife including fabulous orchids.
Booking required only for cream teas (£2)

Meet the Cows

Thursday 9 July 7pm–9pm

Park opposite Thelnetham Windmill, IP22 1LD.
Join us on an evening visit to the fens to meet some of our grazing animals close up and learn more about them from our grazier. If time allows, we will then take a short stroll around the fens. *Booking not required.*

FOR BOOKABLE EVENTS: Ellie Beach Conservation Manager
ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk or call 07919 912045

All walks are suggested £4 donation unless otherwise stated.

Check lohp.org.uk for up-to-date details



Little Ouse
Headwaters
Project

Contact us

Email: enquiries@lohp.org.uk

Write to: LOHP, Waveney Cottage, Redgrave Rd,
South Lopham, Diss, IP22 2JN

Phone: Ellie Beach, Conservations Manager
on 07919 912045

Website: www.lohp.org.uk

LOHP Registered charity no: 1098232

Printed using
FSC sustainably
sourced material