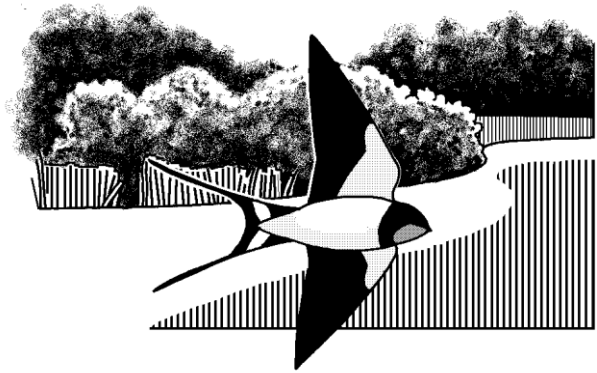


Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP)

Members' Newsletter August 2002



The Little Ouse Headwaters Charity was established at a public meeting held in Hinderclay Village Hall on 10th April 2002. The trustees of the charity intend to produce newsletters on a regular basis to keep our supporters up to date with progress on the project.

TEN - Transnational Ecological Network

The LOHP was part of a large scale bid from several European countries, with Norfolk and Suffolk representing the UK, to this European fund for wetland restoration projects. Unfortunately we heard in June that the initial bid had been unsuccessful. However, there has been some very positive feedback from Europe, and we have been encouraged to submit a modified proposal with the European partners, for consideration at the end of this year. The Trustees are currently working to modify the budget associated with the proposal, in preparation for re-submission of the project bid. We will let members know of any developments regarding this important source of funds in future newsletters.

Trustees meeting

The first meeting of the trustees was held on 16th July 2002. At this meeting a number of issues were discussed, including the need for fundraising events and further grant applications, the format and timing of the AGM, membership recruitment, and creating an LOHP website. All the parishes except Blo' Norton have now nominated a resident to serve as a trustee - we expect to have a nomination from Blo' Norton after the next meeting of the parish council. We are still seeking a volunteer for the position of treasurer. At the meeting the trustees agreed to co-opt Paul Brown as a new trustee. Alison Brown has kindly volunteered to act as membership secretary for the charity, and we will be seeking to recruit more members over the coming months.

Land management and grant applications

We have recently acquired the lease for The Lows in Blo' Norton. This is an area of 4.5 hectares (11 acres) on The Banks, next to Blo Norton Little Fen. The land has large areas of reed and wet grassland, and a drier area of improved pasture. It currently supports characteristic fenland plants, including marsh orchids, and a range of bird species such as overwintering snipe, and breeding reed and sedge warblers and reed bunting. We are very pleased to have been able to take on the lease for this land, and have included it in our application for Countryside Stewardship, along with the Frith in South Lopham. If the bid for CS money is successful we will be undertaking hedge and tree maintenance, and improving access by creating permissive footpaths. We will be managing the land by grazing, and mowing where appropriate in order to improve the conservation interest of the sites. We will be

producing detailed management plans for all the land we have responsibility for in the next few months. In addition to CS, we have also submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which if successful would enable us to install permanent fencing on the land we are managing, provide tools and training for our volunteer workers, and undertake further hedge and tree maintenance work.

Grazing - cows on the Frith, horses on the Lows.

Despite the lack of permanent fencing, we have been able to introduce some grazing activity on the land already - a herd of cows is currently doing it's best to make an impact on the massive amount of vegetation on the Frith, and some tethered horses are steadily munching their way across the Lows.

Volunteers needed!

Thanks to all of you who helped with the clearance of the Frith earlier this year. In addition to work on the Frith, the Blo Norton Fen Conservation Group has been continuing management on this site (now into it's 6th year of activity), and there is also management work going on at Hinderclay Fen.

We are now well into the summer mowing and raking season on the fens - removal of this material is needed on a 4 to 6-year rotation to maintain the characteristic fen vegetation. We have already cleared one patch on Blo Norton Fen, and will be having another event on both Blo Norton and Hinderclay on **Sunday 1st September**. The work will be followed by a barbeque on Blo Norton Fen, so if you'd like to join us call Reg or Rowena Langston (Wardens for Hinderclay Fen) on 01379 898009, or Jo Pitt (Warden for Blo Norton Fen) on 01379 898684 for more details.

Future work parties - look out for the autumn/winter work programme, which will be heading your way in the near future.

Other activities - if the work parties don't appeal to you, we will be needing help in the future with other events, fundraising activities and so on - please contact us if you would like to help.

Come and see your Fens on a guided walk

There will be a guided walk (open to all) around Blo'Norton and Hinderclay Fens starting at 3pm on **Sunday 22 September**, to explain the landscape, some of the flora and fauna and the aims of the management work. Meet in the White Horse pub car park at Thelnetham at 3pm (The new landlord of the pub offers lunches and refreshments, so you may wish to visit it beforehand or after). Bring your wellies, or at least comfortable footwear that you don't mind getting muddy, as it is likely to be wet underfoot in places. We expect the event to finish by 5pm. If at all possible please let us know if you are coming so that we can plan the walk more effectively. If you would like further information or are concerned about managing the walk please contact Rowena and Reg Langston on 01379 898009 or Jo-Anne Pitt on 01379 898684 who will be able to answer your queries. We look forward to seeing you!

For further information about any aspect of the project please contact us by 'phone (01379-687680 or 01379-898009), e-mail (lohp@wavcott.demon.co.uk) or post (Little Ouse Headwaters Project, c/o Waveney Cottage Redgrave Road, South Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2JN).