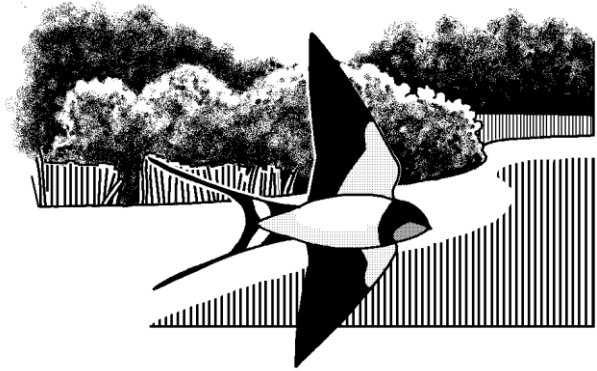


# Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP)

## Members' Newsletter February 2003



As you'll see below, there's been a lot of activity since the first newsletter went out in August last year. We can only give a brief outline of all the happenings here, so if you want to know more, please get in touch (contact details below).

### Good News (1)

Heritage Lottery Fund - we now have "permission to start" (i.e. money in the bank) from HLF. This is for specified work over 5 years on the Frith and the Lows, and includes money for purchase of tools and volunteer training - details of this in forthcoming newsletters. The first major job will be the installation of livestock fencing and new access gates on both sites, for which we are currently tendering. We still need to do a lot of clearing of fence lines before the fencing contract starts - see "Work Parties" for further details.

### Good News (2)

Our application to enter the Frith and the Lows into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme has been successful, and we have signed a 10 year agreement with DEFRA. This provides part of the **partnership** funding for the HLF grant (the rest is made up of volunteer work, so we'll be counting on your support), and will provide payments towards managing the sites to restore the pasture, fen, hedgerows and pollarded trees, as well as establishing two new permissive paths.

Look out for items about these successes in the local press soon - we will be sending out a press release about the project and the new funding in the next few days.

### Other fundraising

Despite our successes, we still need to raise more money to cover ongoing costs, including our public liability insurance, annual rent on some of our land holdings and general running costs. We have a number of ideas for fundraising events, but would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions. We also need help in organising these events. Our first major effort is likely to be a 50:50 auction, towards the end of April. Dan Haskin (the trustee nominated by Theltenham parish council) has volunteered to act as auctioneer, but we need promises of items to be auctioned before we can confirm the event. If you have any unwanted items for the auction, proceeds to be split 50:50 with the charity, please contact us as soon as possible with details.

## **TEN- Transnational Ecological Network**

As reported in the August 2002 newsletter, the multi-partner bid for European funds was initially rejected, but a scaled-down version, with the LOHP still playing a prominent part, has been re-submitted, and is currently at the "pre-assessment" stage in Europe.

### **Trustees meetings**

The first AGM was held in Thelnetham in November 2002, and was followed by a fascinating talk, by David Mitchell from Mid-Suffolk District Council, on veteran trees in the Suffolk landscape.

At the meeting the existing officers were all re-elected. The meeting agreed to create a new membership category of "Friends of the Fens" for those willing to pay an annual subscription of at least £10 per person. The ordinary membership rates of £1 per person, and 25p for junior members, remain unchanged.

The trustees have been holding regular meetings to make sure we keep making progress on issues such as grant applications, and the complicated business of becoming a registered charity.

### **Website**

LOHP goes global! Thanks to Luke Broome-Lynn (nominated trustee from South Lopham), our website is currently under development - you can view the work in progress at [www.lohp.org.uk](http://www.lohp.org.uk)

### **Land management**

- Grazing - the cows on the Frith and horses on the Lows last year made a great impression on the vegetation, although they did develop a bit of wanderlust on one or two occasions. This year, we will introduce stock as soon as the permanent fencing installed..
- Water levels - this winter has been amazingly wet, and water levels have been very high, particularly on the Lows. This has been excellent news for snipe and woodcock, which have both been seen frequently in the area.
- Tree work - over the next few weeks we will have a tree surgeon on site, carrying out essential safety work on trees overhanging the B1113 and re-pollarding some of the oaks. This may look brutal in the first year, but it is a traditional practice that prolongs the life of the tree and increases its interest for wildlife.
- Oak tree survey - our local Wildlife Watch club have started a survey of all the oak trees on the Frith - the children been recording heights and girth, estimating age and noting any special features. This will help to form a baseline record for the future.
- Other surveys - we're keen to record as much as possible about the wildlife in the project area, so will be organising other surveys as time goes on. We already have a number of experts willing to help out with identification of everything from mosquitoes to mosses! Work parties and other help needed

## **Work parties, and other help needed**

We've been holding work parties on the second Sunday in each month throughout the winter, and have successfully cleared some of the fence lines on the Frith and Lows, carried out footpath maintenance at Blo'Norton Fen and tree clearance at Hinderclay Fen- many thanks to all who have participated. We now need to redouble our efforts on fence line clearance, so are adding in an extra work party to the original programme (details below). If the work parties don't appeal, you could still help with other events, fundraising activities and so on - please contact us for more details.

### **Dates for your diaries:**

**Work parties:            Sunday 9 March**

**Sunday 23 March: NB this is new date Sunday 13 April**

The next 3 work parties will be held on either the Frith or the Lows, depending on how wet it is (please call Helen on 01378 687680, or Jo on 01379 898684, for details nearer the time). All start at 10.30, and last for as long as you want them to -even an hour helps! You'll need boots and work gloves, but we'll supply any tools. Children welcome if supervised by an adult.

### **Looking further ahead:**

**50:50 auction - to be confirmed - late April**

**Guided walk - Fens in the Spring - Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May**

Following the success of our first guided walk in September -attended by 30 people -here's an opportunity to see the sites in another season - these events are open to all, so bring your friends along - Meet at Thelnetham White Horse 6.30 pm, more details available nearer the time.

### **Who's who at LOHP?**

The LOHP trustees are all local residents, and each parish council in the project area has nominated one trustee from their village. The trustees are:

Reg Langston, President (Hinderclay PC nominee, Hinderclay Fen warden)

Jo Pitt, Vice-president (Blo Norton PC nominee, Blo Norton Fen & The Lows warden)

Helen Smith, Hon Secretary (Warden for the Frith & The Lows)

Mike Wraight, Treasurer

Luke Broome-Lynne (South Lopham PC nominee)

Dan Haskin (Thelnetham PC nominee)

Paul Brown

Rowena Langston (Hinderclay Fen Warden)

Nigel Clark (Hinderclay Fen warden)

For further information about any aspect of the project please contact us by 'phone (01379-687680, 01379-898009, or 01378 898684), e-mail ([lohpc@wavcott.demon.co.uk](mailto:lohpc@wavcott.demon.co.uk)) or post (Little Ouse Headwaters Project, c/o Waveney Cottage Redgrave Road, South Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2JN). Our website address is [www.lohp.org.uk](http://www.lohp.org.uk).