



Little Ouse  
Headwaters  
Project

**Little Ouse Headwaters Project**  
Ellie Beach – Conservation Manager  
Thelnetham Windmill  
Mill Road  
Thelnetham  
Diss  
IP22 1JS  
Email: [ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk](mailto:ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk)  
Phone: 07919 912045

*To find out more, become a member or donate visit*  
[www.lohp.org.uk](http://www.lohp.org.uk)

## **Annual Report for Blo' Norton Parish Council**

2021 turned out to be even busier than the previous year. Once lockdown restrictions started to ease by late summer, our volunteer teams were out in force across all our sites, undertaking practical conservation work and monitoring and surveying. We were joined by lots of new volunteers as well.

The usual fen and reedbed management undertaken across our sites by contractors and volunteers were successfully completed last year. And the kind winter, no prolonged flooding or lockdowns and increased number of volunteers - meant that we were able to catch up on several missed winters of tree and scrub work on Blo' Norton Fen and across our other sites. Removing scrub from shading the fen and reedbed was of high priority before they started to dry out these important habitats, and it allows additional light to reach the important fen plants species while improving the conditions for invertebrates.

Bird ringing continued last year on Hinderclay Fen, and we undertook our first reptile survey there and on Broomscot Common, with mixed results. Reptiles and amphibians were seen during the year in low numbers but strangely not under the reptile sheets. We are going to continue the survey this year on both sites. Last year we also continued with our Water Vole surveys on The Lows and Scarfe Meadows, this year we are moving our rafts mainly to Reeves Meadows with a couple remaining on The Lows.

We have been battered by several storms so far this year seeing numerous trees coming down across our sites. Volunteers were out shortly after the storms, reopening paths and making them safe, specialist tree contractors will be brought in to do emergency tree works in some areas. Where trees have fallen down, and it is safe to so do they will be left as fallen deadwood.

Two new official Rights of Way,( Public Footpath 17) were created by LOHP volunteers back in February on Hinderclay Fen under the guidance of Suffolk County Councils Rights of Way Team. The new paths join the Angles Way to the river, opposite a footpath on the Norfolk side (Public Footpath 5) leading to Fen Road, Norfolk. Both Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils are now working on costings and funding for installing a very welcome footbridge to cross the river at this end of the valley. More details will follow once they are known. While we wait for the bridge, the two new routes provide a lovely walk through the silver birch woodland and around the edge of the heathland.

Our volunteers have also improved a couple of other paths on Hinderclay Fen; by cutting back the official line of the Right of Way at the eastern end of the site (closer to the duck farm fencing) from where it comes in off Fen Road, Suffolk (Public Footpath 12). This will create an alternative route in times when the main path may become flooded, in bad weather. At the western end of the site, our volunteers have again been busy improving the section of path through the wet woodland, by using natural material already on site, to raise up the levels to reduce the flooding when we have excess rainfall. And over on Broomscot Common the path onto the site was improved with the help of local business Mervyn Lambert Plant Hire providing the volunteers with crushed concrete to improve the paths surface, as the site had got impassable in the winter.

Over the coming months 'Site QR code' and 'Little Ouse Walk' waymarker discs will be appearing on LOHP sites. The QR codes when scanned by a mobile device will take you to that site's webpage on the website, so people can find out more about our sites. We also have a new leaflet which you should have received with the parish news.

This year sees LOHP celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. During the summer we have a celebration event planned for **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July** 11am to 4pm, based around Parkers Piece (opposite Thelnetham Windmill). We will have stalls, rural crafts, vintage tractors, art, children's activities, guided walks, sheep dog demonstrations, refreshments, Thelnetham Windmill will also be open for tours, and much, much more. More details will be coming soon, hope you can all join us to celebrate a successful 20 years.

**Ellie Beach**  
*LOHP Conservation Manager*  
22-04-2022

