

News from the Ouse



Little Ouse
Headwaters
Project

Conservation & Community



Wild Fens

Green Veined White Butterfly

Rowena Langston

Back in the spring we all found ourselves in a very unusual situation, 'in lockdown', restricted to our own homes and not allowed to go out and about, due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. We had less people and dogs about and fewer cars on the roads – ground-nesting birds felt safe to nest in otherwise little-used locations – pheasants were taking up residence in narrow grass verges by the side of the road.

Meanwhile, down on the fens, nature was left to its own devices and getting a bit wilder. Gradually people started to return to get their daily exercise and were amazed at the sights and sounds that greeted them.

Migrant birds arrived back from their winter feeding grounds to discover a quieter place. The fens became alive with the sounds of Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps; Cuckoos echoed out their calls along the

valley and Reed and Sedge Warblers started marking out their territories.

Lockdown sightings

Locally there were several records of Turtle Doves, now a declining species that is seldom seen or heard. Orchid numbers across LOHP sites have been good this year, with more popping up where they had not been recorded before.

Southern Marsh, Bee and Pyramidal Orchids have been recorded on New Fen and Reeves Meadows in good numbers, with

Southern Marsh Orchids noted for the first time on Webbs Fen too. Orange-tip, Holly Blue and Green-veined White butterflies were numerous in spring.

As things started to return to more 'normal' it was great to see so many people staying local, enjoying the fens and exploring what is on their doorstep.

"Nature was left to its own devices – getting a bit wilder"

Get involved...

You can get involved with helping to protect the fens in many ways:

- from joining LOHP
- to making a donation
- to sparing some time to come and volunteer with us by carrying out surveys
- undertaking practical conservation work
- supporting our events
- and much more.

Get in contact – if you are interested see the back page for contact details.



Rowena Langston

Bee Orchid on Reeves Meadow

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Keeping busy throughout lockdown – what our members have been up to through lockdown on **pages 4-5**



Who's this?
see page 5



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

What a Hoot



A pair of Barn Owls have taken up residence in a new homemade Barn Owl box that volunteers put up in February on Carr Meadow.



We'll let you know how they get on.

Take a Break

Volunteers have installed 2 new rustic benches on Reeves Meadows, so you can have a rest and enjoy the view.

Little Ouse 1st

For the first time since LOHP was founded, an eel was spotted swimming in the Little Ouse downstream at Hinderclay. This was spotted whilst the Riverfly Partnership monitoring was taking place.

Next stage for New Fen

This autumn we will be working hard to cut and clear the fen vegetation on New Fen, get in touch if you want to lend a hand.



Conservation Manager update

Down on the Fens



Little Ouse from Swallow Bridge

It's been a very strange few months, sadly due to lockdown I missed the best time on the fens – Springtime – but I got sent lots of lovely pictures, so it felt like I was there. Although lockdown has been difficult, it came at the best time of year for us in terms of volunteer practical conservation works parties, as we reduce what we are doing during April to July due to bird nesting season.

I have been one of the lucky ones still able to work throughout lockdown and although I could not get out and visit the fens, I have had plenty to keep me busy. I updated our risk assessments, and put procedures in place to keep us safe and get everyone back to volunteering as soon as possible. I have organised volunteer training and restocked our first aid supplies. I have also been able to spend more time concentrating on updating our management plans for

LOHP sites. One of our main achievements during this time is that we have got our new website up and running – www.lohp.org.uk

The most important thing during this time was keeping in contact with all our volunteers, to reduce loneliness and isolation. So, I started a weekly email to volunteers and trustees with a roundup of what people had been up to. The email was accompanied with a photo page of images volunteers sent in. Our practical volunteers really missed our weekly tea break with cakes – so a virtual tea break was set up where every Wednesday at 11am an image of a cake would be emailed round. Everyone enjoyed the emails and got involved and I know some of our volunteers have freezers bursting with cakes ready for our return!

Ellie Beach

LOHP Conservation Manager

New Website

LOHP has launched its new, easy to navigate and accessible website.

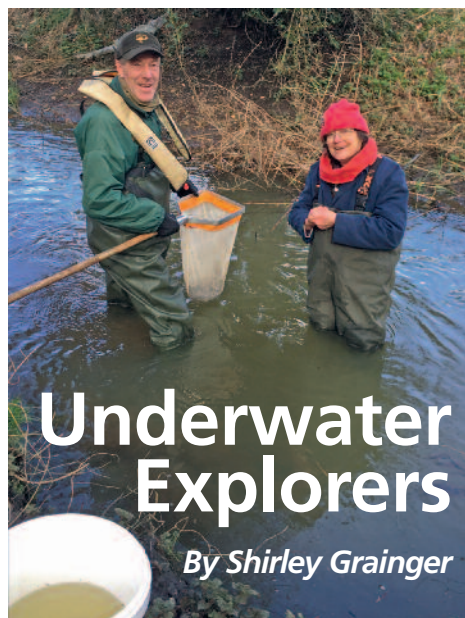
Built in WIX, it is extremely user-friendly, excellent value and one of the most widely used web platforms.

Designed to work seamlessly on all devices, including mobile phones, tablets and computers.

You can now renew your membership, join us or donate all at the click of button. Find out more about our sites, events and how to get involved.

Visit www.lohp.org.uk





We are pleased to report that Riverfly Partnership monitoring is now up and running. Once a month volunteers Reg Grainger and Becky Whatley don their chest waders, and come rain or shine, wade into the Little Ouse to carry out a 3 minute kicksample and hand search. They then spend at least 2 hours per site counting the catch. This takes place as the same 2 sites – at Hinderclay Fen in the east and Scarfe Meadows in the west.



What are we looking for?

Declines in water quality can be reflected by declines in invertebrate diversity and abundance. The Environment Agency (EA) sets trigger levels, which for our first year were at 1 until we had enough data to set realistic levels. Nationally, 8 invertebrate target groups are identified and counted, and so far in LOHP surveys we have identified 6 – namely Cased Caddis, Caseless Caddis, Mayfly (Ephemeroidea), Olives (Baetidae), Stoneflies and Freshwater shrimps (Gammarus).

Scoring

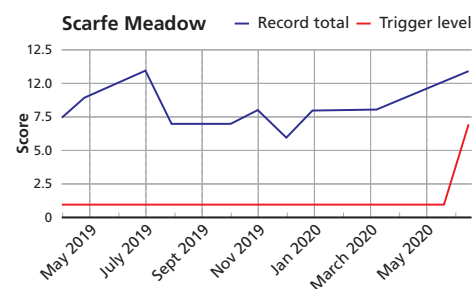
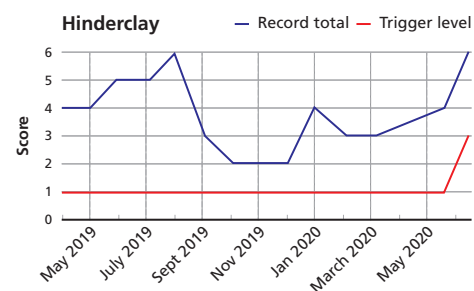
To explain the scoring:

- 1 to 9 of each species = 1
- 10 to 99 = 2
- 100 to 999 = 3
- 1000+ = 4 points.

As you can imagine this involves a lot of counting and estimating. Data collected over the year has shown a big difference in the number of species between the 2 sites and hence the trigger level for Hinderclay Fen is now set at 3, and Scarfe Meadows is 7. The graphs show the results for the past year.

What else do we find?

We also observe other interesting species. For the first time since LOHP was founded, an eel was spotted swimming downstream at Hinderclay. American Signal crayfish have been caught in the sample at Scarfe Meadows, which necessitated a visit from the EA to confirm. Other species seen are many, bullhead of all sizes, sticklebacks, water hoglouse, damselfly nymphs, pea mussels, water mites, pond snails, ramshorn snails, leeches, alderfly, diving beetle, midge larvae and water boatmen.



All results can be viewed on: www.riverflies.org/content/DataExplorer – choose Little Ouse river and you can click the 2 sites

Rewilding the Lows

Years of neglect and mismanagement meant that the seedbank on The Lows was severely depleted. It was decided that something needed to be done to reintroduce wild flowers in the hope of creating a wild flower meadow.

Long strips were rotavated and 'green hay' was cut and brought over from Long Green in Wortham. This was spread over the strips, and plug plants, grown by volunteers, were also planted. Last year's drought made the operation particularly fraught, but most of the plants survived. All we could do was wait until this spring to see if we had succeeded in introducing native species back into the meadow.

Spring 2020 arrived and despite rampant thistle growth (dealt with by spot painting and topping), a plethora of wild flowers appeared. Huzzah! Burdock, camomile, white campion and yarrow to name but a few, are there in abundance and many of the plugs have flourished,

including cowslip, ox-eyed daisy, agrimony and wild carrot.

In early July, Nick Woods (who lives near the Lows and propagated over two hundred plants for the project last year!) did a survey, and was impressed with the success. He noted that 'the top strip, (which got almost all of the plug plants), looked rather special and is alive with grasshoppers and butterflies in contrast to the impoverished short grassland around it.'

He went on to add that the lower strip 'is not so diverse' but still showed a remarkable improvement on what was before. So, the first experiment worked!

We went back to Long Green in August to cut more hay and spread it over the original strips and beyond. The strips will be cut in the Autumn and cattle allowed back in the winter. I can't wait to see what emerges next spring!



A Success Story by John McCormack



Members in Lockdown



Lindsey Bilston

Exploring LOHP sites

Throughout lockdown our members have been kept busy – whether looking for summer visitors, trapping moths and baking tasty cakes, often finding amazing wildlife on their doorsteps. Here's a selection of whats been going on...



Reg Langston

Inquisitive cattle posing on Parkers piece



Lesley Hall

New Volunteer Lesley captured this Large Red Damselfly



Rowena Langston

Barn Owl near Carr Meadow and Reeves Meadows on 14th May



Reg Grainger

Reg and Shirley – doing their bit to protect a pheasant nesting in a silly place!



Nick Woods

Handsome Mullein Moth Caterpillar found devouring Mullein plants in Nick's garden



Richard Minter

Moth trapping in Richard's garden produced these two lovely specimens – Privet Hawk Moth (left) and Elephant Hawk Moth (right)

TEA BREAK TIME: Laura's baking challenge

Laura's Lemon Drizzle Tray Bake



Photo: Sophie Hartshorne-Ewer

8oz (225g) butter, softened
8oz (225g) caster sugar
10oz (275g) self raising flour
2 tsp baking powder
4 eggs, 4 tbs milk
Finely grated zest of 2 lemons

Crunchy topping

60z (175g) granulated sugar
Juice of 2 lemons

Method

Preheat the oven to 160°C/325°F (Gas mark 3). Grease a tin 20x23x4cm (12x9x1.5ins) and line with non-stick baking parchment.

Measure all ingredients into a large bowl and beat well for approx 2mins until blended. Turn into the tin, level the top.

Bake in middle of the oven for approx 35–40mins. Cool in the tin before taking out.

Topping – mix lemon juice and sugar, prick the bake with a fork all over, and drizzle the mix over it.

Note: You can use spelt or gluten free flour and marge, and add extra baking powder if you only have plain flour. **ENJOY!**

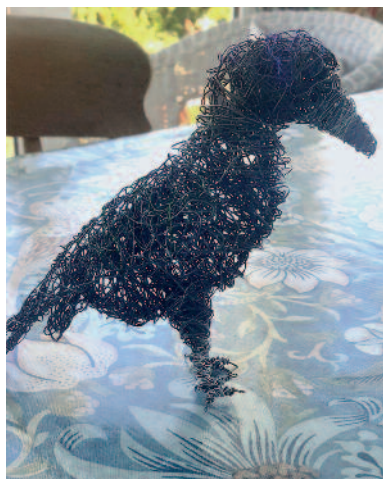


John Preston

John had his first frog in his pond – usually it's just newts!

Creativity in Lockdown

Members, during Lockdown, have been busy creating artworks inspired by the landscape, plantlife and wildlife in their gardens.



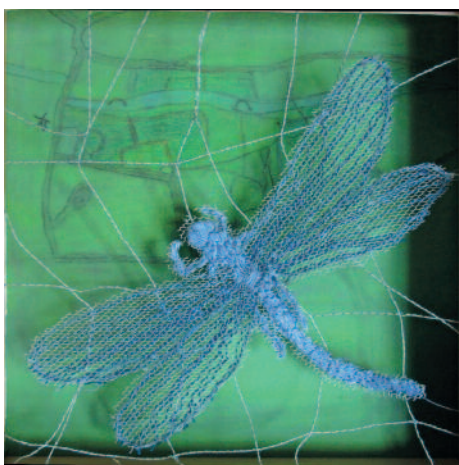
2 lockdown wire sculptures, (left) Covid Corvid, (above) Dragonfly by Sue Lawrence



Pen and watercolour in hand-made sketchbook – Alders by the Little Ouse by Sue Heaser of the Creative Fen Group



Circular painting of teasels by Frances Beasley of the Creative Fen Group



Woven dragonfly over LOHP map by Jean Marshall of the Creative Fen Group



New bench being installed on Reeves Meadows

Ellie Beach

A big thank you to all our Volunteers!

To find out more about volunteering or getting involved with practical conservation work parties, monitoring/surveying or become a site warden, contact: **Ellie Beach** Conservation Manager at ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk or call 07919 912045, or **Reg Langston** at reg.langston@lohp.org.uk

Orchid spotting

There have been a wide variety of orchids that have been seen on LOHP sites and in the local area this Spring and Summer. Here are a few of them.



Nick Lingwood

Larger Skipper on Southern Marsh Orchids on Webbs Fen



Rowena Langston

Pyramidal Orchids flowering on Reeves Meadows



Nick Lingwood

Common Spotted Orchids near Diss



Rowena Langston

Bee Orchid near South Lopham

Focus on: New Fen

By Nigel Clark
New Fen Warden



New Fen before restoration in 2018

Nick Lingwood

In 2014, LOHP was able to purchase New Fen thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and I became its volunteer warden. I will always remember when I first clambered through the tangle of branches intermixed with six foot high nettles and thistles. How could we ever restore the fen to something with a conservation value?

The fen site falls into two sections – the drier ground running back from the entrance on Fen Road, and the wet area adjacent to Thelnetham Middle Fen. The drier area was farmed until the 1970s when it became a tree nursery. However, the nursery was never managed and the serried ranks of mainly non-native trees became a tangled mess. The wetter area was historically an open, wet fen managed for peat and fodder – this was covered in 40-year-old willow scrub and a lot of nettles.

Vision for the restoration

The grant from HLF included funding to have some massive, non-native poplars removed by contractor, with LOHP volunteers removing the smaller, non-native trees. Once this was done, the area could be replanted with appropriate native shrubs and trees, to create an open diverse woodland with glades – much more suitable for native wildlife. The willow scrub was to be progressively removed from the wet fen, allowing the natural fen flora to re-emerge and recolonise from the neighbouring Thelnetham Middle Fen,

which has successfully been managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust for many years.

The scale of the restoration

We were lucky that Peter and Tim Frizzell, of Peter Frizzell Ltd, a local conservation management business, were prepared to remove the poplars in a sensitive way. They did so without damaging trees that we wanted to keep, especially the two large Elms that we only realised were there when we cleared some access paths!

LOHP volunteers have lots of tasks over the course of the year to manage our sites. We had to work out how we could fit in all the work. It was simple, we needed more volunteers enticed by a friendly atmosphere and lots of cake! I thought it would take a decade or more to do the tree removal

needed, and that the only way to make progress was to clear one area at a time and not think about what was to come. We had plans for the minimum we wanted to do each winter – it was clearly a challenge that LOHP volunteers relished – each year we did more than we thought possible. Then, the possibility of Countryside Stewardship grants came up, which would provide the long-term management funding we needed – as long as we could clear the remaining scrub on the fen area by the end of 2018; the volunteers took on the challenge. Over 100 days of voluntary work in just three months got the job done.

A Fen is reborn

I thought that the nettles that were



Marsh Lousewort

Rowena Langston

present under the scrub on the fen would go mad once the trees were removed. However, in its first spring as an open fen in about 40 years, I was staggered to see a mass of fen

speciality plants like Marsh Lousewort and Yellow Rattle, strange plants that suppress grass growth where it occurs and let other plants get a look in. I am no botanist, but I always hoped that in a decade or two some of the orchids that occur on Middle Fen might colonise New Fen. To everyone's delight, in that first year there were six spikes of Southern Marsh Orchid in a small patch of newly cleared fen! This year there were over 30 spread over a large area.

It has been really satisfying being the volunteer warden of New Fen, seeing a little gem slowly reappear from an impoverished scrubland. This encourages me to frequently visit it, and every time there is something new to enjoy. I no longer wonder when it will have a high conservation value – I know it does already and that there is more to come in the future.

We have other sites which would benefit from having a volunteer warden. If you are interested then get in touch (see back page for contact details). You don't need specialist skills, just a keenness to get involved and enjoy being outside.

Ellie Beach

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:

Mr Desmond Wenn	Mrs Paddy Richards
Mr John Wallace	Mr Andrew Dickson
Dr Mark Duxon	Dr Tim Cooke
Mr John & Mrs Belinda Sears	Mr Alec Sharp
Dr Adam & Mrs Olivia Stone	Dr Dianne Creasy
Mr Greg & Mrs Sue West	Mr Euan Sutherland
Ms Helen Squire	Dr Ian Hume
Mr Roger Greenacre	Mr Glyn Pugh
Mrs Angela Robinson	Mr John Davie-Thornhill
Mr Matthew Ward	Dr Paul Williams

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. Work parties are weekly on Wednesdays and usually the second Sunday of the month (Sunday dates below). *Activity and location may change at short notice, please contact us if you would like to come along.*

Sunday 13 Sept, 10.30am	New Fen
Sunday 11 Oct, 10.30am	New Fen
Sunday 8 Nov, 10.30am	Hinderclay Fen
Sunday 13 Dec, 10.30am	Blo' Norton Fen
Sunday 10 Jan, 10.30am	New Fen

Sunday 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.*

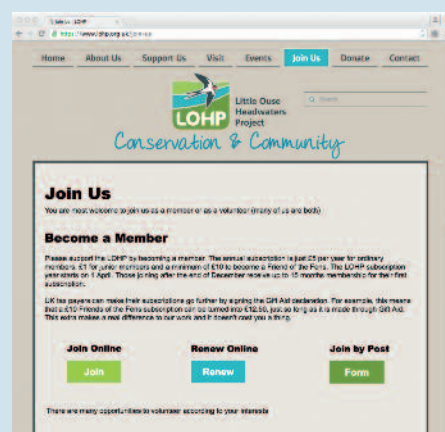
A big thank you to all those members who send donations along with their renewals. We greatly appreciate this extra support for the work we're doing to enhance the valley and its wildlife.

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

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



Online membership and renewals



You can now join or renew your membership on our new website www.lohp.org.uk/join-us

Events

We hope to be able to restart our events programme, but with ongoing restrictions, are unsure events will be able to go ahead.

Please visit our website www.lohp.org.uk for up-to-date details.

AGM 2020

Friday 4 December 7.30pm

The AGM may be held as an online virtual meeting. *Check website for details*

Winter Walk

Sunday 3 January 10.30am

Details to be confirmed.

It may mean the need to book places so keep an eye on your email or our website – suggested £4 donation

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

We suggest a £4 donation for walks unless otherwise stated.



Little Ouse
Headwaters
Project

Contact us

Email: enquiries@lohp.org.uk

Write to: LOHP, Thelnetham Windmill,
Mill Road, Thelnetham, Diss, IP22 1JS

Phone: Ellie Beach,
Conservation Manager
on 07919 912045

Website: www.lohp.org.uk

LOHP Registered charity no: 1098232

