

News from the Ouse



Little Ouse
Headwaters
Project

Conservation & Community

Thank you, Reeves Meadows are now ours!

In the last issue of *News from the Ouse*, we announced our fundraising to purchase Reeves Meadows, lying between Hinderclay Fen and the Thelnetham Fens. Now, thanks to the generosity of many local people, and of larger funders, we are the proud owners of the meadows and can start improving them for wildlife and for public access to the valley.

The meadows are a really important acquisition for us. It joins together our land with Suffolk Wildlife Trust's, so that there is a continuous corridor of land managed for conservation from Thelnetham Ford to Hinderclay Fen. And for wildlife, bigger is better - bigger, more joined-up sites attract and retain more species.

Why Reeves?

The previous owners asked us to use the name 'Reeves', after their grandparents, for whom it was their first patch of land in the area. The Reeves are buried in Thelnetham churchyard, overlooking the site, in a very well-tended grave.

Enormous potential

These meadows won't just be a link between wildlife-rich sites; they themselves have great potential for wildlife. The lovely mature hedges give nest sites for birds such as whitethroats, and a good supply of berries for wintering thrushes. Although most of the land is probably too dry for fen restoration, an area near the river, already in long-term set-aside, shows potential to support many species of meadow flowers.

Careful steps to plan the future

We've already had soil and levels surveys done, and an invertebrate survey is under way. The Environment



Full of promise

Rowena Langston

Agency and Norfolk Rivers Trust have been consulted and the LOHP Conservation Advisory Group (including experts and Trustees) met in July to consider what steps to recommend to the Trustees. For this year, a summer hay cut will be done by a local farmer.

Better habitats and better access

Very importantly for us, Reeves Meadows also provide a new gateway for all to access the many paths around our beautiful valley. The footpath leading from Thelnetham church, through the meadows to the river, is already popular, but will soon be more attractive as it passes through wildflower meadows. We are considering creating a safe parking area near the road, making the fens and the Angles Way more accessible. We hope that people will enjoy the Meadows and follow their restoration story for many years to come.

We still need help ...

Although the hard work of our many wonderful volunteers will reduce the inevitable costs of managing the meadows, we still need to raise funds for work on improving the access and on the watercourses. Our appeal is still open and all contributions, great and small, for the reflowering of the meadows will be much appreciated. Please send cheques to Edwards Coales (address on page 7), or visit www.lohp.org.uk/support-us/reeves-meadows-appeal to give online.

Bob Hayward, LOHP Chairman

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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.

School News

Arbour attention

In early spring, Mr Langston brought a team of volunteers with him from the LOHP, to give our school willow arbour some much-needed attention. It had become very straggly and some of the willow had died. The children in Year 6 were shown how to plant new saplings in the gaps and then how to fold the willow shoots down and tie them in with others. The children certainly enjoyed the experience and our willow arbour looks far healthier now.



Learning with a real artist

Once again, Rosemary Humphries has been a regular visitor to Cherry Tree class during our Friday art lessons. As part of our work on comparison of artists, Rosemary brought in some of

her own paintings, including some of the Little Ouse area. The children were able to talk in detail with her about how she got the ideas for her paintings and how the final painting emerged, as well as discussing

differences and similarities between her work and that of other artists. Thank you, Rosemary, for sharing your beautiful work and for your continued support.

Alison Nightingale and Carol McGahan

New gazebo shows off new style

Martin Phillips describes the rationale behind LOHP's new look.

As a locally-based graphic designer, I wanted to help promote the LOHP by improving their image through design.

The new logo and design style is an important element in portraying the strengths, qualities and heritage that make up the LOHP.

The rebrand incorporates the new logo and includes colours and fonts to reflect the fen, river and reeds.

Hopefully the new look will help improve recognition of the LOHP

as an important conservation charity locally and regionally.

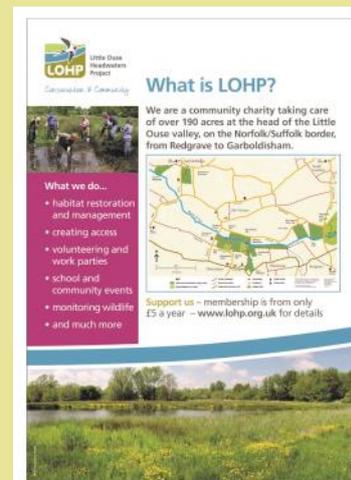
Keep an eye out for the new logo and new style - so far it has been used on a new 3m x 3m gazebo, collection boxes and buckets, display posters, a website header and the header for this newsletter.

Martin Phillips



Sue Lawrence

The new gazebo 'speaking out' for the LOHP at the SWT plant sale



LOHP display posters

An artist in the valley

Rosemary Humphries has enjoyed and worked on LOHP sites for many years. She runs art workshops at LOHP events and regularly works with all year groups of Garboldisham Primary School, using her skills as an artist and as a teacher to help children discover how to make art themselves. By her approach, she transforms their ways of looking at the natural world.

Rosemary's links with wildlife and the natural world date back to her own childhood, when she would devour Ladybird nature books, and avidly collected the wildlife picture cards from PG Tips tea packets. As soon as she was old enough, she delighted in exploring the Fynn Valley on her bike, searching for the flowers of different seasons.

Love of valleys

Rosemary's first came across the LOHP when she saw a small advert for one of the winter walks. Always interested in geography as well as nature, she thought, 'That's me!' and went along. 'Jo and Helen were so welcoming and inspiring', she said, 'and so interesting about the Project's work. It was a revelation to me, the mass of knowledge within the group.'

An inspiring approach which builds confidence

Rosemary is quite clear about what an artist is doing when they make art – and it isn't about producing a beautiful picture. 'There's a magic which happens when you put pencil (or colour) to paper. This is what I want people to discover. Making art is all about the link between your brain and your eye and your hand, getting things down on paper to communicate what you're feeling with the viewer. I've done a lot of



David Humphries

Rosemary working on a limited-colour oil painting of the river near Webb's Fen

adult tuition and very commonly people will say, 'Oh, I can't draw – I was told I could never draw'. This is soul-destroying, and it's an approach the children in Rosemary's teaching sessions will never hear.

She thoroughly understands the science of colour and conveys it animatedly. 'My approach with children is that there is no right or wrong. I teach them about colour and once they've established what they're doing, they should feel absolutely free to put down what they want. They shouldn't have an expectation about what they're doing - but have the adventure of finding what the colour will do for them.' There's a great freedom about using a restricted palette. Rosemary gets the children to choose just 3 colours from the colour wheel and then create all the shades they want from just mixing. 'If you use only three pure colours,' she says vehemently, 'You CANNOT make mud!'

Drawing from real objects

'I take a lot of things in for the children to observe and draw,' says Rosemary, 'They loved the hornets' nest, and the bees' nest, and it led us on to exploring tessellation and the Fibonacci sequence. Recently, we've been looking at snails and fossils with the lower school. I showed the children how to make their ammonites look 3D by using light and shade. The children's work is about to be celebrated in an end-of-year exhibition in the school.'

Inspiration from restoration

'I love seeing the changes in the LOHP sites as they are restored. New Fen, for example, is just fantastic. It was just bare earth a few months ago after the tree clearance, but now it's a magic carpet of colour and texture. It's becoming what it should be – nature has been able to do what it wants to do here - grow back into a wet river fen.'

Nicky Rowbottom

Apologies for errors

In the last issue we should have said the Lophams were famous for growing hemp (not flax) and that the Queen was supplied with household linen and towels (not garments) made from local hemp linen.

Find out more at a fascinating event ...

Hemp - hero or horror?

For the Lophams, especially North Lopham, hemp has been a hero: the raw material for Lopham Linen.

Find out all about it (good and bad) during the **Church Heritage Weekend**, 13th - 15th September.

Concert - 7.30pm on Friday 13th September

Performances by local young people and a choir from Norwich, plus the premiere of a short film about an incident in 1840.

Tickets £6, from Jennie 01379 687679.

Exhibition: Sat 14th and Sun 15th Sept from 11am to 5pm, completely free.

Displays showing the linen production process and examples of genuine Lopham linen Plus refreshments, an opportunity to try modern hand weaving, and a stall with locally-made craft items.

Stepping out on the turf

Chris Hamilton describes an annual ritual with a very long history...

Every year on the evening of 29th April, a small collection of residents from Thelnetham gather on the edge of Thelnetham Fen, armed with little more than a spade and a keen ear for the church bell. This year was no exception. There's Brian in his camouflage jacket, Julian with his dog, Poppy, Tommy is there with his parents and then there is Dan, spadeless, but equipped with a well-seasoned notebook and pen.

This is 'Turf Night', a tradition (and a villager's right) which stretches back hundreds of years to a time when every year on 29th April at 7pm, the church bell would ring for five minutes. During those five minutes, the villagers would dig out four spits of turf to mark a spot where for the rest of the year they would have the

right to harvest the turf (peat) for fuel and heating. In times gone by, things often got quite heated and spades would fly as villagers vied for the best turf patches.

Nowadays it's a more subdued affair, with fewer people and less of a life-sustaining dependence on the fuel. Also, turf can no longer be dug because of the environmental damage. Instead, the 'turf-nighters' are able to lay claim to the wood in the area they lay out. However, there are some rules. Not all wood can be taken (e.g. oak must be left); taking the wood must be done sustainably (e.g. by coppicing) and it cannot be sold, but only taken for personal use.

This year, the air remains silent at 7pm, so everyone heads out to mark their patch, relying on watches and mobile phones as substitutes for the church bell. Dan is the book-keeper, who oversees the event and records



who attends. I ask him how many people typically participate, he thumbs through his already well-thumbed notebook before replying, 'This year we have three, last year we had four

and the year before that we had six families'. So numbers are modest, but also appear to be dwindling. Of those who attended this year, most have been doing it for decades, except Julian and Poppy - first year rookies - keen to help keep the tradition alive. Julian says, 'Once it's gone it's gone. It's important to record the event and to encourage other villagers to keep it alive.' So, readers in Thelnetham, take note, you have nine months to get your spade sharpened ready for next year!

Information will be posted on a village notice board near you (provided it, and you, are in Thelnetham).

Chris Hamilton



Help invited!

Many of you will be aware that the LOHP has been creating a wet fen habitat on part of New Fen, which will become a continuation of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's fantastically rich Middle Fen, full of classic fen species, providing a spectacle of orchids in May and June. However, this will be hard-earned.

LOHP volunteers have already spent many days clearing the scrub off the site, but at the end of the summer this year, we must cut and rake off the growing plants, as well as maintaining our other sites at this busy time. Cutting reduces nutrients and prevents regrowth of saplings.

We must do the same thing the following year, and then, in future years, cut and clear on rotation.

The work is not technical and not always hard - and there is cake!

Reg Langston



Volunteers' action

Spring and summer are usually quieter times for volunteer work parties, since cutting scrub and fen vegetation would disturb breeding birds. Here, Ellie describes the typical tasks that volunteers have been tackling instead.

Work parties have included maintaining hedge plants at Hinderclay Fen, removing oilseed rape from the verges in Garboldisham to stop it seeding into Broomscot Common and installing fencing to stop path erosion on Parkers Piece. We've also removed encroaching ragwort from Reeves Meadows, repaired cattle-damaged bridges on The Lows and, weekly, checked the electric fences/batteries to prevent cattle grazing the more sensitive areas.

After the rain in early June, the vegetation everywhere grew rapidly, so there was a lot to do clearing paths and boardwalks to improve access.

LOHP volunteers joined forces with Thelnetham Parish Council to help remove ivy from the old school house (now the village hall) as part of their Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant.

LOHP volunteers have also been out surveying, monitoring and wardening

on our sites. Volunteers carry out regular dipwell surveys across the sites to record the water levels. We monitor water quality by doing monthly Riverfly surveys at two sites, and this year, soil samples have been taken on Reeves Meadows to help us understand the site better. Botanical surveys are also well underway.

Volunteer outing

As a 'thank you' to our volunteers for all their hard work over the last year, we arranged a visit to Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve near Lowestoft. Matt Gooch, Broads Manager, gave us a guided tour of the reserve and told us about their exciting new project. We saw



Rowena Langston



Ellie Beach

some of the archaeological dig where the new visitor centre is to be built and were taken to view the project area and watch the excavators and tracked dumpers hard at work creating new reedbeds and scrapes. We also got to look round the existing grazing marshes and fen areas and heard about their management. Carlton Marshes is very similar to LOHP sites but on a much larger scale. After an enjoyable morning, we headed back for lunch and of course cakes, with the afternoon free for people to explore.

Thank you to Matt for a great tour. Everyone found the visit fascinating and I'm sure people will be back to see the completed works and new visitor centre set to be completed by spring 2020 - and to hunt for that elusive fen raft spider!

Ellie Beach – Conservation Manager

Down on the Fens

Conservation Manager's Update

I have now been in post for a few months and am thoroughly enjoying it. Everyone I meet is really friendly and happy to stop and chat. The more I visit the sites and get to know them the more interesting they become.

It's amazing how quickly the seasons change. In early summer, the familiar call of the cuckoo could be heard echoing along the valley as they call for a mate and then search out an unsuspecting reed warbler nest to lay their egg in.

Overhead, you can regularly see buzzards trying to avoid the endless harassment from other birds as they soar on the wind, their mewing calls ringing out. My favourite of all is the swift, with their happy screeching calls as they chase each other around the sky doing acrobatics, sometimes intermingled with the odd swallow and house martin. Closer to the ground, dragonflies and damselflies have been emerging. The one that catches your eye is the banded demoiselle with the beautiful blue banding on the males' wings and iridescent green of the female.

The vegetation is growing rapidly, and that calls for a different kind of volunteer - cattle and sheep. We have redpoll cattle grazing Parkers Piece, Bleyswicks Bank and Webbs Fen extensively as one block. There are five cows

Join in - have fun and help wildlife!

If you want to get involved with practical conservation work parties, monitoring/surveying or become a site warden, please get in touch: Conservation Manager Ellie Beach at ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk or Reg Langston at reg.langston@lohp.org.uk

If you walk the sites regularly but have only a little time to spare, we welcome your reports of what you see. Please send them to us.

on The Lows, cows and sheep on Carr Meadow, two cows and several sheep on The Frith and Hereford x Limousin cross cattle on Scarfe Meadows all working hard to keep the vegetation down. Animals can't graze some areas, such as path edges, so volunteers make sure that boardwalks and paths are kept clear for walkers.

Unfortunately, much as I would like to, I can't spend all my time outside, and have been busy updating volunteer resources, writing specifications for works which are too big for volunteers to undertake, getting to grips with our GIS system to enable us to produce maps for plans and reports, filling in grant claim forms, writing management plans and much more – all the things that go on in the background which help makes things run smoothly.

Ellie Beach – LOHP Conservation Manager

Evening chorus walk

Laura Cox describes an LOHP event which brought her closer to birdsong

‘Yesterday evening, Sunday May 5th, nearly 30 intrepid and warmly-wrapped people and Lily the dog, met at Parker’s Piece to embark on a journey of birdsong discovery. The walk was led by two very experienced bird experts (both LOHP Trustees): Rob Fuller, late of the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology), along with our very own Rowena Langston, late of the RSPB. They only had to incline an ear to hear and identify the birds’ songs and calls.

It was a delight

of an evening! Along with the exquisite sound of the blackbird, robin and other familiar voices, we had the sweet and melodic song of the blackcap pointed out to us as well as various other warblers. We heard the screech of a barn owl, then saw it; and learnt snippets of fascinating information about the evening life of birds.

Rob and Rowena subsequently compiled a list of everything we heard or saw, amounting to 22 birds, a yellowhammer brought out of the

bag during the process of bird ringing, and a water vole seen swimming across the river by Betty’s Fen. How fab is that! The list is available if anyone would like to be reminded.

As one who loves the sound of birdsong but cannot remember any useful facts two seconds later about said songs, the evening was just magical, and walking quietly with others along such beautiful parts of the Little Ouse was an evening to remember’!

Laura Cox



Photo by Wendy Cooper - www.flyladyphotographybywendycooper.co.uk

◀ **The tuneful blackcap**

One of the best songsters of the evening was (arguably) the blackcap - which nests in scrub patches maintained by the LOHP as part of the habitat mosaic of our sites. Blackcap numbers are increasing, probably because of generally milder winters and bird food put out in gardens, which means that some individuals remain here and thus avoid the dangers of migration.

Rowena Langston

‘The Awakening Fen’ Exhibition

Martin Phillips was one of the exhibitors at the Creative Fen Group Exhibition at the Fox in Garboldisham.

The Creative Fen Group held their first Exhibition of 2019 at The Fox, on 17–19 May, entitled ‘The Awakening Fen’ – looking at the fens and the work of the LOHP.

The group consists of twelve professional and amateur artists producing artwork of a very high standard.

Inspiration from the local fens and the creatures and plants that live there was used to create paintings, prints, photos and textiles. Works expressed the textures, changing colours, atmosphere and wilderness of these special places.

Thelnetham Windmill from Parkers Piece, weaving by Jean Marshall



It was an excellent display, enjoyed by many visitors over the three days.

Helping to promote the LOHP there was also a display of the new posters and information on membership.

The next planned Creative Fen Group exhibition will be held on 15th – 17th and 22nd – 24th November, also at The Fox. Put the date in your diary!

Martin Phillips

Frozen Ivy, by Mary Anne Kenyon

A creative way to give

Formed in 2002, the 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, 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. The 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	Tim Cooke
Dianne Creasy	Cyprium Motorsport Systems Ltd
Andrew Dickson Ltd	English Electric Motor Co
Peter Frizzell Ltd	Paddy Richards
John and Belinda Sears	Helen Squire
Starwing Brewery	Adam and Olivia Stone
Euan Sutherland	John Wallace
Greg and Sue West	

Who are our sponsors - and why?

Andrew Dickson runs a firm of chartered financial planners in Rickingham. He writes: '*Andrew Dickson Limited*, is pleased to be a sponsor of the LOHP. I was born in Redgrave, where I now live. Most of my colleagues live close by.

The LOHP has already achieved what many would have regarded as totally impossible. The current venture, to buy and restore Reeves Meadows at Thelnetham, is ambitious, but I am sure it can be done by such a knowledgeable and dedicated team.

We are all concerned, like so many people today, about the threats to the countryside. We make our contribution, confident that every penny is used effectively and not squandered on hefty overheads. We wish the LOHP success with the current and future brave enterprises.'

Snippets:

- * **South Lopham** Parish Council have recently issued a very useful leaflet highlighting footpaths and walks in their parish.
- * Look out for **Thelnetham** Heritage Group Events to celebrate the opening of the refurbished village hall, following a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

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

..... Post Code.....

A/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 theday 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 the *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:.....

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



The mark of responsible forestry

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.

Newsletter printed by www.reflex-litho.co.uk

The LOHP needs you!

The LOHP relies on volunteers to run the charity and help with conservation (and other) work. Might you have some energy and time? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

To get involved, and for more information, contact **Bev Blackburn**, Volunteer Coordinator and Event Manager at: beverly.blackburn@lohp.org.uk or 07747 691285, or **Nick Lingwood**, Hon. Secretary on: 07772 769025.

Work parties

Get out and enjoy yourself - whatever the weather - at an LOHP work party or event. Work parties are monthly on Sundays (dates below) and weekly on Wednesdays.

Please check website/email circulation nearer the time for details and location which may change, depending on the weather.

Sun Aug 11	Cutting & clearing	Hinderclay Fen (Adders Tongue Meadow)
Sun Sept 8	Cutting & clearing	Hinderclay Fen (Western Meadow)
Sun Oct 13	Cutting & clearing	Eastern New Fen
Sun Nov 10	Turf pond digging	Bleyswycks Bank
Sun Dec 8	Scrub bashing	Blo' Norton Fen

Sunday work parties start at 10.30.

Sunday work party contact: Bev Blackburn 07747 691285
 Wednesday contact: Reg Langston 01379 898009



LOHP on Facebook & Twitter

for news and great photos go to www.lohp.org.uk and click on the icons



Events

Aug 23rd Start 7.30 - end about 9.15pm 'Batty Evening'
 Meet at Thelnetham Church, local expert Mark Smith. See the bats emerging in and around the church, then look around the churchyard and nearby Reeves Meadows. Booking with Bev essential as numbers are limited: 07747 691285

Nov 29th Friday AGM with the annual talk by Darren Tansley: **'Saving Ratty – what is the future for water voles?'** 7.30 pm Garboldisham Village Hall

Dec 29th Winter walk venue to be confirmed

To contact the LOHP (Reg. charity no: 1098232)

Email: enquiries@lohp.org.uk

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Newsletter editor: Nicky Rowbottom

