



Little Ouse Headwaters Charity

Annual Report of the Trustees 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004

Landmarks

This report covers the first full year of the LOHC's existence as a registered charity and a company. It details our achievements for the year and summarises our finances.

The first section is on

Land management

And by the end of the year the Charity was responsible for the management of nearly 100 acres (39ha) of land along the headwaters of the Little Ouse. This included our first land purchase, consisting of about 5 and a half acres of the western end of Blo'Norton Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest and European Special Area of Conservation. Jo will say more later on about our plans for this site.

Management work on the Frith and the Lows continued apace but entered a new phase last year. Instead of collecting rubbish and clearing fence lines we were able get the rubbish removed from the sites, fence them, install access gates and water troughs and start a new grazing regime.

On our wet fen sites, the Blo' Norton Fens and Hinderclay Fen, we continued our rotation of summer mowing and raking-off of the vegetation. This replicates the past management practices that maintained the botanical richness of the fens and also improves the habitat for fenland birds such as snipe and water rail.

We also started to improve the hedges and woodland on the drier soils of our sites. On the Frith we revived the traditional management of pollarding some of the oaks in the hedge and also planted over 100m of new hedging. And to retain the landscape character of the field, we planted new standard trees and reinstated the old pine circle.

Involving people

We wanted to emphasise that the LOHC really is its volunteers. We don't have any paid staff and so our dependence on volunteers, and our indebtedness to them, really can't be overemphasized.

Our conservation volunteers worked incredibly hard at our regular work parties, planting trees and hedges, mowing and raking fen vegetation, and clearing recent scrub from the open fens. Lots of volunteer hours were also put into the sites outside the work parties, with tasks such as keeping paths clear, installing water troughs and making, and putting-up, nestboxes.

Our Heritage Lottery funding allows us to offer training to volunteers and, last year, 2 of our volunteers completed a week-long course on the maintenance and use of chainsaws and ten volunteers attended a course on the use of hand tools.

In line with our stated policy, for practical management tasks that are beyond the scope of volunteer work parties, we continued to use local suppliers and contractors as much as possible.

We were particularly pleased to be able to involve more children in the project this year with the Lophams Primary School, the local Wildlife Watch group taking part in conservation tasks.

We are always keen to encourage more people to enjoy the landscape and wildlife of the sites that we manage and during the year we opened nearly 2km of new permissive paths, bringing to a total of 4km the path network within our sites.

Membership

Our membership has remained at about 80 with many members becoming Friends of the Fens, with considerably benefits our funds.

The report goes on to list the

Members of the Board of Trustees which remained unchanged during the year:

and then details all of the grants that we received. If I can just point out the major grants which were

1. Heritage Lottery Fund 'Your Heritage' grant of nearly £50k towards a £77K project over 5yrs.
2. A CS agreement is for ten years, The income from this scheme varies from year-to-year (2,159)
3. A European grant of nearly £76K, over three years, towards a £150K, project.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2004 LITTLE OUSE HEADWATERS CHARITY

Accounts are a summary of the full formal accounts that will shortly be sent to the Charity Commission and Companies House and any member wanting to examine a full copy of the accounts is of course welcome to request one. We divided the accounts summary into income and expenditure. In each category we have distinguished between unrestricted and unrestricted funds. Restricted funds are those from grant giving bodies that place restrictions, and often very specific ones, on the sorts of items on which the money can be spent. If you look at our incoming resources you will see that the use of over 80% of them was restricted. Our unrestricted funds were boosted last year by the receipt of one substantial donation and one legacy. These are really chance events and you can see that without them our unrestricted funds would have been very small indeed.

The greater part of our expenditure was on land-management and related items, such as tools for volunteers. Although most of our expenditure could be met from our restricted funds, some substantial items, such as rent for the land we lease, has to met from our own unrestricted funds. In a year with less unrestricted income you can see that we could have difficulty in meeting these costs and Jo will talking later the way in which the Trustees are addressing this problem. The healthy bank balance at the end of the year reflects in part the way in which our Heritage Lottery funding is administered. 50% of the total grant is paid to us at the outset of the project and were only part way through that spending at the end of the financial year.

What you don't see in these accounts is the effective financial contribution made by our volunteers. For our Heritage Lottery Grant we are actually able to cost their work as match funding towards the restoration of the Frith and the Lows. During this financial year, for these two sites alone, this was equivalent to over £9,500.

and so the contribution made over the project as a whole by all of volunteers is very substantial indeed and the Trustees really do want to express their gratitude to everyone involved.

<u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u>	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>
Balance transferred to Company 7 March'03	119	
Subscriptions	488	
Donations and Legacies	7,319	
Rental Income	75	
Other Income	150	
Grants and Funding		43,824
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Total	8,151	43,824
<u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>
Habitat Management	445	18,229
Promotion/Volunteer Recruitment		213
Monitoring		588
Access		899
Training		982
Professional Fees	229	229
Insurance		320
Small Tools	4	1,300
Water Charges	333	333
Rent & Rates	1,925	
Land Purchase	2,750	2,750
Post & Stationery	13	159
Loan Repayment	262	
Petty Cash	7	
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Total	5,968	26,002
<u>FUND BALANCES at 31ST MARCH 2004</u>	2,183	17,822

Trustees Statement

This summary of our accounts was prepared by Diss Accounting and Taxation Services, in conjunction with Harriet Potter, based on the information supplied by Little Ouse Headwater Charity. Diss Accounting and Taxation Services act as our independent examiners: the LOHC is not required to have its Annual Accounts audited because its annual turn-over is too small. Our full, annual accounts will be submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies after approval by the Board of Trustees. Copies of these accounts can be obtained by writing to the Honorary Secretary, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed, A4 envelope.

We are very grateful to all of our funders for their contribution towards our work. We are also indebted to the LOHC's many volunteers. Although the very substantial financial value of their contribution does not appear in the annual accounts, we are able to cost it as match funding toward our Heritage Lottery Grant on the Frith and the Lows. During this financial year, for these two sites alone, this was equivalent to over £9,500.

The Little Ouse Headwater Charity (also known as the Little Ouse Headwaters Project- LOHP) is a company Limited by guarantee and is governed under company law by Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Company's registered number is 4684054 and its charity registration number is 1098232. Its registered office is Waveney Cottage, Redgrave Road, South Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2 JN.