



**Lincolnshire**  
Wildlife Trust

# Annual Review

*2013 - 2014*







# Our vision: Lincolnshire and the neighbouring sea and estuaries to be rich in wildlife for the benefit of everyone

## From the Chairman

My first full year as Chairman has been, as our president said, 'A baptism of fire'. The tidal surge, which is covered else where, was the start of things. The death of Sir John Mason, after a long and courageous fight against cancer was a sad loss and he will be missed by all who knew him. Mine and the Trust's sympathy are extended to his wife and family.

It is all too easy to dwell on the negative things but we should resist this as there has also been much to celebrate as the vision of creating Living Landscapes is beginning to be achieved with the purchase of the remaining section of the Woodhall Spa Airfield and the transfer back to the Trust of Birds Wood and the surrounding quarry workings complete with additional land and a bungalow. This will be enhance by further sand extraction to the north of the site, creating a link to the Trust's Haxey Turbarry Reserve. Due to further sand extraction it will be some years before the site can be open for visitors but an enlarged wetland is an exciting prospect. These are just two examples of additional land acquisitions.

There are other positive things to celebrate, little terns at Gibraltar Point have had their best breeding success for over a decade. The tidal surge has resulted in larger areas of suitable habitat being created which has helped in this recovery, every cloud has a silver lining! Elsewhere in this review there are reports of species doing well, marbled white butterflies at Red Hill being a good example.

The Trust are lucky in having a dedicated and hard working staff who make all these positive moves forward possible. Their hard work, with the support they receive from you the members, other landowners, businesses, councils and other environmental groups, will ensure that wildlife in Lincolnshire from the Humber to the Wash, will flourish for us and future generations to enjoy. It just remains for me to thank all our many supporters for their efforts in helping the Trust achieve its aims in creating an environment rich in wildlife for the benefit of all.

**Geoff Trinder**  
Chairman

*There's increasing evidence that connecting with nature and spending time outdoors is better for our health and our children's health. Throughout the year, thousands of children have visited Trust nature reserves with their schools, taken part in regular activities with their local Wildlife Watch group or in events organised by the Trust's Education Officers.*



Tom Goodger, Sheri Lake, Mary Porter, Adrian Royston

Cover image: short-eared owl Geoff Trinder



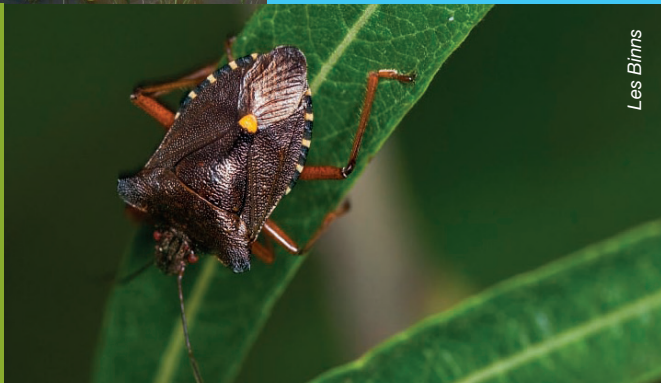


Pasque flowers at Ancaster were bigger and more numerous than seen before with up to 30 plants.



Over 10,000 people took part in almost 300 events over the year including this pond dipping as part of an open day organised by the Bourne Area Group.

On one weekend in July, 890 species of plants and animals were identified at Whisby Nature Park including 35 new species for the site.



## The year of the storm surge

The year ultimately became dominated by the damage caused by the tidal flooding in December 2013. On the evening of 5 December 2013 a tidal surge in the North Sea resulted in the highest tides ever recorded in Britain, exceeding those 60 years earlier in the winter of 1953, estimated 2 metres higher than would be usually expected.

The surge of water caused overtopping of the Humber Bank and extensive flooding along the North Sea coast including Lincolnshire causing considerable damage including to Trust nature reserves, buildings, paths, fences and other infrastructure. The sites most affected were Far Ings, Donna Nook and Gibraltar Point, many smaller sites on the Humber and Wash also suffered damage.

It is difficult to understand the full scale of the impact on nature reserves and associated visitor facilities though it is estimated that the Trust's insured losses could be in the region of £1million, this is equivalent to half our total annual operating budget. The response to the event will have implications on the Trust's operations for many years to come.



With the breaching of Bulldog Bank at Gibraltar Point water flooded onto The Mere and Freshwater Marsh to a depth of at least two metres.

Major works were undertaken at Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve to deal with the immediate aftermath of the flooding. Efforts to drain saline water from the freshwater marsh and reduce the chances of an immediate re-occurrence were carried out. Long lengths of fencing were replaced to enable conservation grazing and paths rebuilt. The reserve was quickly re-opened, however the visitor centre and study centre buildings will have to be demolished leaving just the old coastguard house built in 1859. The vision is to restore the old coastguard house and build a new visitor centre that can withstand flooding.

At Far Ings National Nature Reserve natural flows of freshwater into the lakes saw rapid reduction in salinity of the freshwater pits. Long lengths of fencing were replaced to enable conservation grazing and paths rebuilt. The reserve was partially re-opened, major repairs to the Humber Bank by the Environment Agency and to the visitor centre limited access.

In late November, Donna Nook Seal Colony was recognised by Humber Industry and Nature Conservation Association (INCA) was for its contribution to the Humber environment; a successful breeding season sees it as the largest English breeding colony with an estimated 6,000 animals. During and immediately after the tidal surge, seal safety was a key priority and a higher number of rescues than normal were undertaken. Quick action on the night along with relatively gentle conditions and timing of the event (late in the season) saw mortality levels remain very low. The seal viewing area remained officially closed through to the end of the season for visitor safety. Long lengths of fencing were replaced to enable conservation grazing and paths rebuilt.

With the visitor centre and café closed, refreshments were provided from a catering van in the car park.



Thought to be extinct in the county by the 1980s, on a single day in 2013, 300 individual marbled white butterflies were counted at Red Hill nature reserve.



Les Birrns



Peter Rowarth

3,500 marsh helleborine were counted at Saltfleetby.

Up to a dozen snipe were seen at Snipe Dales over the autumn and winter.



Don Davis

## Inspiring people

The closure of the visitor and education centres at Far Ings and Gibraltar Point has greatly reduced capacity for delivering education. At Far Ings, the old visitor centre was adapted to accommodate the Trust shop and a busy programme of school visits. At Gibraltar Point, temporary facilities for day visit school groups are provided within the Plantation where two Tipis provide an outdoor classroom.

However, over 60 schools were visited for outreach work, engaging with a further 8,000 pupils. This is a significant increase from the 5,500 in 2013 and was very positively received.

The recently established Wildlife Watch group in Grimsby, an urban group, is going from strength to strength. With 11 Watch groups in the county there are opportunities for families to discover wildlife together.

The Trust's website was re-launched in March using a more modern platform developed by The Wildlife Trusts nationally.

*Woodhall Spa Airfield was featured on BBC TV's Countryfile, BBC Radio 4 Open Country and BBC Look North*



Robert Enderby

## Securing more land for wildlife

With funding from WREN, a legacy donation from Robert Thomas Pearson and generous donations from the public, the former RAF Woodhall Spa Airfield has been secured by the Trust. These funds will complete the purchase of the remaining area of previously quarried land at the old airfield. Plans to restore to a nature reserve while retaining some of the military heritage are underway. An extensive consultation has been carried out in the community and interested parties.

Restoration of the 120 hectares of the airfield already owned by the Trust is already underway to transform the habitats for the benefit of wildlife. Cessation of the adjacent gravel extraction and processing operations has seen a dramatic change in water levels with a positive rise resulting in attractive wet flushes.

Work on restoration of the Trust's new Huttoft Marsh nature reserve was been delayed due to technical difficulties but is now proceeding to establish coastal grazing marsh and dune habitat which will significantly extend the area of the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park managed for wildlife. The area is being considered as one of the county's first local designated Nature Improvement Areas.

A small but valuable extension to Rush Furlong Nature Reserve (three selions in old measurements – appropriate given the name of the reserve) was complemented by an impressive display of green winged orchids. The purchase was made possible by a generous gift from Stanley Johnson a long standing member of the Isle of Axholme Area Group.

The Trust remains active involved in forward planning to try to ensure appropriate policies are included in local and national plans and strategies to protect nature conservation sites from inappropriate development and other activity and achieve more resilience to climate change and other pressures.



Water levels on Willow Tree Fen nature reserve reached a peak of 1.36 metres, the highest by far. The high water levels attracted wetland birds including almost 1,000 wigeon.

Barrie Wilkinson

Black darter dragonflies, one of 15 species of dragonfly at Epworth Turbarry, were seen laying their eggs in the pools on the reserve.



Dean Eades



Sheri Lake

Whisby Education Centre had its busiest year ever with 10,507 people using the centre during the year.

## Managing nature reserves

Snipe Dales Nature Reserve and Country Park showed clear evidence of the importance of the river restoration work completed only a year ago with impressive results from a fish survey carried out by the Environment Agency. Good numbers of brown trout, lamprey and bullhead were in evidence. The restoration work included widening a bridge, dams and culverts to allow for a more natural river flow and for fish to migrate. The Trust joined the Lincolnshire Rivers Trust and the Sustainable Eel Group releasing young eels into the River Lymn.

The woodland flora project to increase the diversity of flowers at Snipe Dales is also delivering some promising early results both aesthetically and scientifically.

A major wetland project has been completed in Teal Lake at Whisby Nature Park funded by Biffaward and Cargill. Levelling a series of gravel ridges in the lake which had developed a dense cover of birch and willow has created a new varied landscape of pools, channels and sheltered backwaters that will encourage wildlife and waterside vegetation to flourish.

## Creating a Living Landscape

Over the five years of the Life on the Verge projects in south-west Lincolnshire (from 2008) and the Lincolnshire Wolds (from 2011) more than 250 volunteers have helped to survey 2,741km of road (5,482km of verge) and given at least 3,000 hours of their time. Through these surveys many road verges that have maintained their botanical interest have been discovered and been designated as Local Wildlife Sites. Work has now focussed on the legacy of the Life on the Verge project.

The Trust has received a grant of £76,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the new Lincolnshire's Wildflower Meadows Network project. The project aims to inspire, involve and train volunteers in wildflower meadow creation and management by establishing demonstration sites, community projects, holding events and training days. Local wildflower seed and green hay will be collected from Trust nature reserves including our Coronation Meadow Red Hill for use on project sites.



Kevin James

Red Hill was selected as one of the country's Coronation Meadows to mark the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. The meadow will provide source seed for further extensions on the site and new meadows across the county.

## Campaigning for wildlife

The Drift is a precious stretch of wildflower-rich green lane in south-west Lincolnshire was suffering severe damage from off-road vehicles and bikes despite designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The online 'Save the Drift' petition achieved 1,200 responses and no doubt contributed to the decision by Lincolnshire County Council to safeguard the site through increased controls.

The Trust responded to 129 planning applications, a reduction on previous years resulting from the adoption of a new approach to planning after the Trust's policy changes in 2012.

The Trust remains active involved in forward planning to try to ensure appropriate policies are included in local and national plans and strategies to protect nature conservation sites from inappropriate development and other activity and achieve more resilience to climate change and other pressures.





Harry Hogg

A pod of five bottlenose dolphins were seen breaching out of the water offshore from Gibraltar Point in late August.

At Gibraltar Point, amongst the impressive annual gathering of up to 70,000 knot in late summer, there was a remarkable build-up of 12,000 dunlin, 5,700 sanderling and 1,000 ringed plover.



Robin Cosgrove



Matthew Blissett

Until the beginning of May 2013, when a male and female were spotted together at Scotton Common, the minotaur beetle hadn't been seen in Lincolnshire since 2008.

## Working together

The Trust works with a large number of organisations in pursuing its aims. Partnerships with local authorities, statutory agencies and other voluntary bodies are a hallmark of our way of working. Several of the Trust's nature reserves are operated in conjunction with local authorities, notably: Gibraltar Point (Lincolnshire County Council and East Lindsey District Council); Whisby Nature Park (Lincolnshire County Council and North Kesteven District Council); Snipe Dales near Horncastle (Lincolnshire County Council). The Trust works closely with Natural England in the management of the Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR and with the Ministry of Defence in the management of the Donna Nook NNR and Wainfleet Range.

The Trust played a key role in the establishment of the Humber Nature Partnership spanning the estuary and is continuing to support the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.

The Trust hosts the South Lincolnshire Fenlands Project Officer on behalf of the partnership. Along with the Regional Fens Project Officer good progress is being made to improve the area for wildlife in this intensively farmed area.

The Nature Improvement Area partnership project, working across part of the Humberhead Levels, is underway.

The delivery phase of the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes scheme is well underway, hosted by East Lindsey District Council. The Trust sits on the Project Executive Board and 'Discover, Explore, Celebrate' Group and chairs the 'Protect and Sustain' Group.



Joe Blissett

*Through the Lincolnshire Coastal Marshes Project a series of lesson planners, resource materials and activity sheets have been produced for primary schools to learn about the area's natural and historic significance.*

## Restoring Living Seas

The Trust through its Marine Planning Officer, a unique role in the NGO sector, has actively engaged in major developments and plans in the North Sea and around the UK most notably windfarms.

Despite considerable efforts to promote sites of the Lincolnshire coast no Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) previously recommended to government have been included in the first two tranches to be considered for designation. There was minor success with the introduction of Byelaws and associated Regulatory Notices relating to European Marine Sites. The first four Regulatory Notices introduced under the Byelaw were to protect *Sabellaria spinulosa* (Ross worm) reef and Boulder and Cobble Communities in The Wash and *Zostera* species (eelgrass) beds on the Lincolnshire coast on Haile Sand between Northcoates Point and Donna Nook.



# Financial overview 2013 - 2014

During the financial year the Trust agreed to acquire the final phase of the old CEMEX works at Woodhall Airfield at a cost of £620k. The Trust is extremely grateful to WREN, who provided a very generous grant of £450k during the current financial year, alongside a number of other individuals who supported the Trust's appeal for funds. This sum is included in our year-end cash balances and will be spent once the legal formalities have been completed. The acquisition will add significant scale to our land holdings in the Kirkby Moor Living Landscape area.

Unrestricted income from membership, investments and legacies has held up well with membership income benefitting from a gift aid campaign in the last quarter. This produced an additional £4k and will generate further income in the future. Additional resources have been expended to increase membership numbers and at the year-end the Trust had 25,530 members, up from 25,010 at the start of the year.

The Trust is particularly grateful for the legacies received in the current year. At £436k, these represent a very valuable source of income and allow the Trust to achieve its objectives by increasing the number of projects it is able to complete during the year.

After a period of difficult trading, shared by other well-known 'High Street' retailers, the Trust took the difficult decision to close the Lincoln Shop after 35 years. Disposal of the lease was finalized during the current

year at minimal cost and at the end of November the subsidiary company was on course to deliver an "above budget" performance. Unfortunately, that promise has been impacted by the decline in retail and catering turnover following the tidal surge, mentioned elsewhere in this Review. However, insurance is in place and the performance of the business is being carefully monitored pending its re-establishment in new premises.

Following advice from our auditors, all the assets that have been lost or damaged beyond economic use in the tidal surge have been written off. These entries and the accrual of insurance monies agreed to date are included within the main set of accounts but are not included in the figures quoted below, because of their exceptional nature. Further sums are expected from the insurance claim, but as these have yet to be agreed, they cannot be included in this year's accounts.

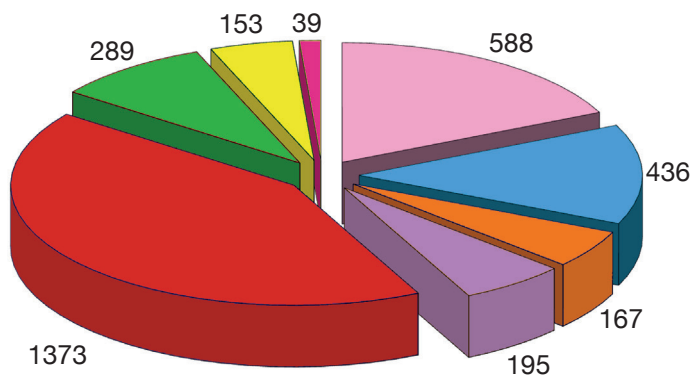
In summary, this has been a challenging year and the events of 5th December highlight the importance of having a strong Balance Sheet. With the ongoing support of members and volunteers working alongside a committed team of staff, the Trust is well placed to weather any further storms – financial or climate-related – that may occur.

**David Cohen**  
Honorary Treasurer

*Copies of the full annual report and financial statements may be obtained from the Trust's Headquarters.*

## Income

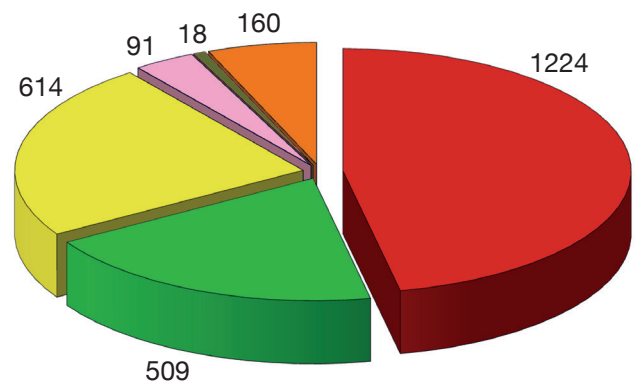
Total £3,240K



- Subscriptions, donations and gift aid
- Legacies
- Merchandising and consultancy income
- Investment income
- Nature reserve income
- Wider countryside conservation
- Inspiring people
- Other income

## Expenditure

Total £2,616K



- Nature reserve management
- Wider countryside conservation
- Inspiring people
- Costs of generating voluntary income
- Governance costs
- Merchandising and consultancy costs

**Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year.**



# Future Plans

- Deliver plans for post flood recovery particularly focused at Far Ings, Donna Nook and Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserves.
- Continue delivery of Living Landscape projects on which we lead or are a partner: particularly the transition phase for Life on the Verge, Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes and Coastal Country Park, and Humberhead Levels NIA, and complete Kirkby Moor extension (airfield acquisition phase 2).
- Advocate the establishment of the first Marine Conservation Zone off the Lincolnshire coast and influence other Marine Protected Areas, marine plans and developments for benefit of wildlife.
- Achieve a nature conservation success through both the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership and the Humber Nature Partnership.
- Achieve growth in membership numbers and income.
- Implement changes to pensions (auto enrolment) and VAT arrangements.
- Agree the Strategic Plan for next five year period (2015-2020).

## Acknowledgements

The Trust is a voluntary, charitable organisation whose work is dependent on the goodwill, financial support and voluntary input of individuals, businesses, local authorities and voluntary bodies. We acknowledge with thanks the help of all our supporters. We are grateful to the following for substantial financial support in 2013/2014 through donations, grants and the sponsorship of projects:

Anglian Water	Forestry Commission	RSPB
Anglia Regional Co-op	Heritage Lottery Fund	RSWT
Biffaward	Lincolnshire County Council	South Holland District Council
Cargill PLC	Ministry of Defence	Vine House Farm
Centrica	Natural England	Wash Fens Rural Development Programme
Defra	North East Lindsey	Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN)
East Lindsey District Council	Drainage Board	Wolds AONB
Environment Agency	North Kesteven District Council	
Esmé Fairbairn Foundation	North Lincolnshire Council	
The European Union	Paw Print Charitable Trust	

## Legacies

Receipts from legacies form a substantial part of our unrestricted income, allowing us to find match funding for a variety of projects and to maintain our Conservation and Development Funds. During 2013/14 the Trust has been notified of bequests from the Wills of the following:

Mary Holt	Victor Holt	Charles Ian Lee
Iris Mary Bauckham	Neil Anthony Taylor	Mavis Dorothy Adams
Marguerite Parker	John Monks	Herbert James Sharman
Alexander George Parker	Robert Thomas Pearson	Elinor Woodward
Winifrid Margery Fox	Peter Grant	

## Corporate Members

Corporate Membership of the Trust is designed to provide an effective means for companies to demonstrate care for the local environment. The following were Corporate Members during the reporting period:

A R H Tucker & Sons	Cupit Print	Omex Agriculture Ltd
Aggregate Industries	Fenland Laundries Limited	Page Paper Limited
Alfred Enderby Ltd	Growing Wild Ltd	Red Dog Film
Andrew & Co	Hornsby Travel Services Ltd	Riva Construction
Anglian Water Services	Humber Bridge Board	Rowhire Ltd
Associated British Ports	J E Piccaver & Co	S Betteridge Paving Contractor
B A Bush & Son Ltd	J W Ruddock & Sons Ltd	SCS Technology Solutions Ltd
Badley Ashton & Associates Ltd	John E Haith Ltd	Sibelco UK
Cargill PLC	Jolly Common Caravan Park	Singleton Birch Ltd
Chapel Garden Centre	Kes Building Maintenance	Tata Steel UK Ltd
Cleethorpes Builders Merchants	Lafarge Aggregates Ltd	TCS UK Spraying
Clugston Group Ltd	Lincoln Cooperative Ltd	The John Kinch Group
ConocoPhillips (UK) Ltd	Lowfields Leisure Ltd	TOTAL UK LIMITED - Lindsey
Cray Valley Ltd	Mortons of Horncastle Ltd	Oil Refinery
Creative Nature	N E Lindsey Drainage Board	Truelove Property & Construction
Crowder & Sons Ltd	Natureland Seal Sanctuary	YARA (UK) Ltd
Exeter St Veterinary Centre	Novartis Grimsby	

### Headquarters/Registered Office

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Manor House Street  
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Lincolnshire LN9 5HF  
Tel: 01507 526667  
Fax: 01507 525732  
Email: info@lincstrust.co.uk  
Website: www.lincstrust.org.uk

### Far Ings National Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre

Barton-on-Humber DN18 5RG  
Tel: 01652 637055

### Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve

Skegness PE24 4SU  
Tel: 01754 898057

### Snipe Dales Nature Reserve and Country Park

Lusby, Spilsby PE23 4JB  
Tel: 01507 588401

### Whisby Nature Park

Tel: 01522 500676  
**Education Centre**  
Tel: 01522 696926  
Thorpe-on-the-Hill, Lincoln  
LN6 9BW

### Senior Staff

*Chief Executive:* P Learoyd  
*Head of Reserves:* D Bromwich  
*Head of Conservation:* C Steel  
*Head of Finance:* S J Smith

### Patrons

The Earl of Yarborough  
Baroness Willoughby de Eresby

### Presidents:

Dr A E Smith CBE MA President and Trustee  
Mr D N Robinson OBE MSc Vice President and Trustee  
Mr D F Wright MSc MSB Vice President  
Mr B Tear BSc Vice President

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Mrs A Quigley BA  
Ms T Smalley MSc  
Mr P Stapleton  
Mr E J Redshaw  
*appointed 01.05.13*  
*appointed 01.11.13*