

Tetney Blow Wells

Location & Access

OS: 113 • **GR:** TA 320 007 • 14.9ha (36.80 acres) • Management Agreement 1972

Habitat type: Marsh/Wetland

The reserve lies south-east of Tetney church. Entry is by public footpath from Church Lane approximately 350 metres east of the church. Follow the path through a meadow to a footbridge over Tetney Drain. Cross this bridge and a second footbridge on to the reserve. Visitors are requested to keep to the defined paths or waymarked route, which avoids dangerous boggy areas and deep water.

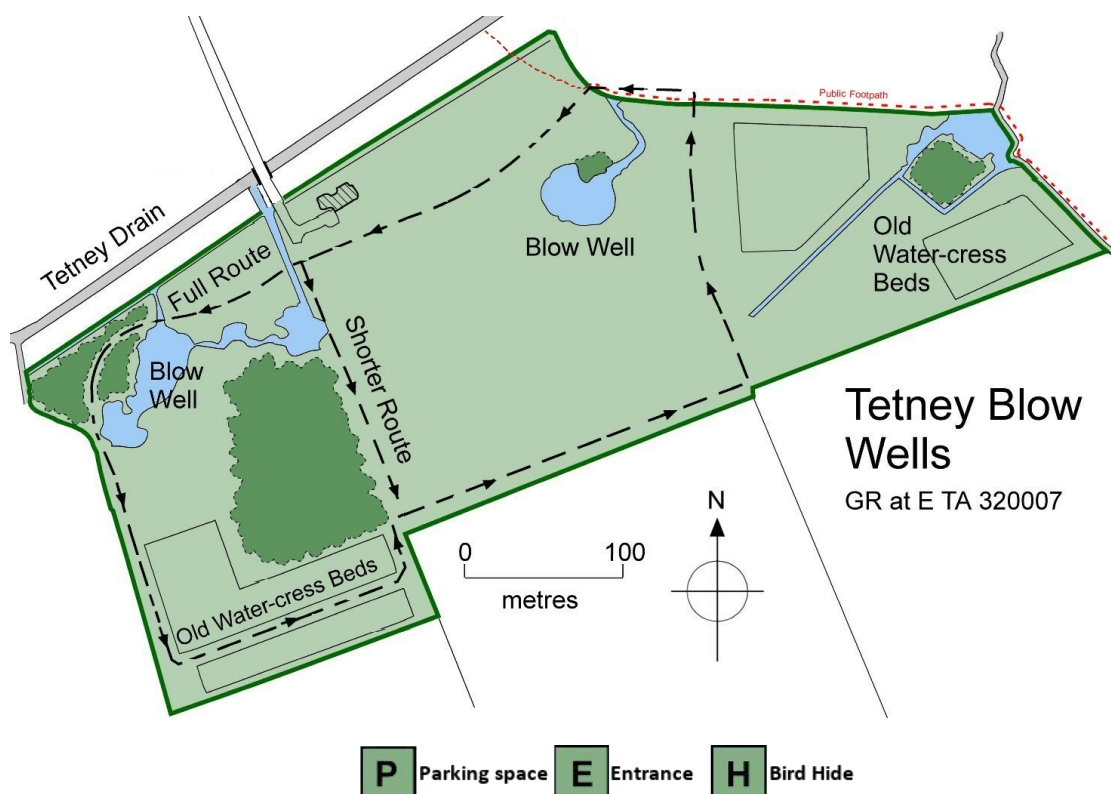
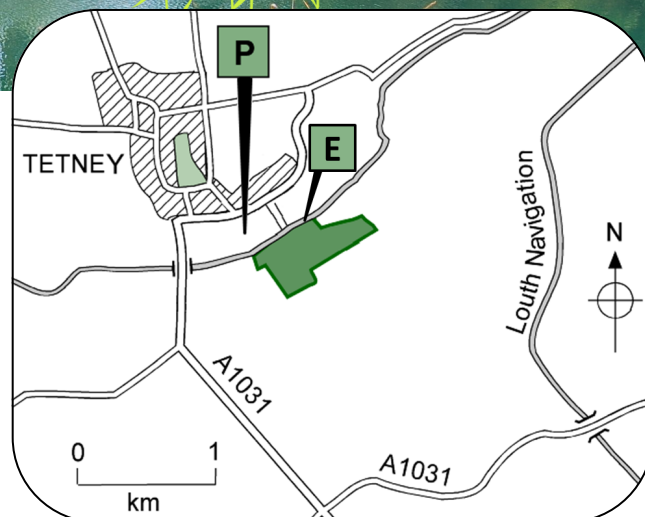
Description & Management

The reserve consists of four large blow wells with associated habitats, which include damp woodland, meadow and

old water-cress beds that have been colonised by marsh vegetation and reedbeds. The blow wells are the result of artesian springs where water under pressure escapes from the chalk through structural weaknesses in the overlying boulder clay to reach the surface. The wells are reed-fringed and have prolific growths of starwort and Canadian pondweed.

The area was used as a water-cress farm from 1948 to 1961 and the remains of concrete channels and pathways, which served four water-cress beds, may still be seen. These beds are now dominated by reeds and

great willowherb, and one in the south-west is regularly cut and raked in late summer to maintain its flora. The grassland areas provide a fine display of cowslips in spring and are mown for hay in July by a local farmer.



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Waymarked Route

1.2km (0.7 miles)

Follow the visitors route towards the west, passing the Anglian Water Authority pumping station on your right and a blow well on your left and continue across the meadow. You will soon pass another blow well where its overflow channel flows under the path on its way to Tetney Drain.

Looking north you will see Tetney church, restored in 1363, with its fine tower added 100 years later. The church was considerably extended in the 19th century.

As you continue you will see a group of pine trees interspersed with willow and hawthorn to your right. Turn left along the bank between the blow well and the boundary dyke. Look for water-starwort and spikes of mare's tail in the water. You may also see coot and moorhen on the water and sometimes tufted duck,

mallard mute swan and little grebe. Sedge warblers are often to be heard and seen in the surrounding reeds and bushes. Walk along the concrete channel and follow this south, parallel to the disused water-cress beds, now overgrown with reed and scrub, on your left. (If you find this section of the route is flooded return towards the Anglian Water pumping station to take the 'shorter route' south.) Near to the southern boundary follow the route to the left along another disused cress bed, where you may see great willowherb, reedmace, figwort, meadowsweet and southern marsh-orchid.

On leaving the reedbed, turn left through the corner of the small wood, where there are planted willows, alder, poplar and ash. Follow the path along the southern boundary dyke, in which floating pondweed, water-starwort and water-crowfoot grow. Behind the bank to your left is an extensive reedbed

supplied with water from a small blow well. Look for the purple flowers of lesser knapweed in the meadow in summer and in spring you may see cowslips. Turn left after the hawthorn hedge and follow the grassy track beside the poplars, and then cross the meadow towards the gate. You will pass more disused watercress beds on the right. You will pass more disused water-cress beds on the right which have been cleared of trees and scrub so that they may eventually be returned to open swampy habitat. Go over the stile beside the gate to join a public footpath outside the reserve.

If you wish to see the blow well at the north-east corner of the reserve, follow the footpath to the right of the gate beside the hedge until you reach the blow well, then return to the gate by the same route. Under certain light conditions the water appears to have a beautiful green colour. Look for flowers of water violet during July and August.

