



GLNP
GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE
NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Annual Review 2018-19



Chairman's Foreword



Wild garlic at Goslings Corner in the Lincolnshire Limewoods. © Fran Smith

In a consumer-led market, the launch of a new product is always an exciting yet slightly daunting prospect but in 2018 the GLNP did just that with great success.

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LERC Search (page 5) is our most ambitious project to date and provides an innovative new online system for accessing environmental data 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The system, delivered on budget and on time, was launched at the annual conference in November and has seen numbers of data requests increase with positive feedback from customers, both existing and new.

It isn't the only significant change to operations this year however. After nine years, Richard Chadd took the decision to step down as Chairman of the GLNP at the annual Forum and I was honoured to be elected to take on the role. Richard has provided knowledgeable and unfaltering support throughout his tenure and oversaw the transition from the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership to the GLNP in 2012. On behalf of the Team and our Partners I would like to thank Richard for his service. On a more personal note, I am delighted that Richard has agreed to remain as Vice-Chairman and am pleased to be taking the Partnership forward with his support.

The GLNP's Business Plan also came to an end in 2018 and over the last year, the Team has spent time consulting with Partners to ensure the next five-year strategy reflects everyone's vision for a flourishing natural environment. The last year has also seen us really embed the health and tourism workstreams within GLNP activities (page 13). This has meant the new

Business Plan is able to set out clear objectives for what we hope to achieve in those areas alongside all the others we have been working on for several years.

A new addition to the GLNP Team may also be familiar to some of you. Margaret Haggerty previously worked for the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership and has been welcomed back to the fold as project officer for the SNCI work. This project is now well into its second year as we seek to ensure our Local Sites system is as robust as possible (page 7).

As we approached the last year, we anticipated the UK's planned departure from the European Union would result in increased opportunities to feed into national policy consultations. That certainly proved to be the case and the Team has been very busy in ensuring Greater Lincolnshire's voice is heard. The last year has shown that the GLNP is well positioned to respond and feed into development of new policies to protect and enhance our natural environment.

In a national context, uncertainty looks set to remain the theme for the next 12 months. The GLNP continues to demonstrate however that there is still much that can be achieved in working closely together at a local level. We have a talented, dedicated team that has established the GLNP as one of the strongest in the country and I am confident that together we will continue to strengthen and develop the Partnership whatever the future may hold.

David Hickman
Chairman, Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership

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Evolving Evidence

The conference in 2018 not only marked the launch of LERC Search but also focused on new and innovative methods to support evidence-based policy and decision making for the natural environment.

The first half of the event, held at The Showroom in Lincoln, took on a marine theme with Dr Niall Burton from the British Trust for Ornithology looking at the monitoring and modelling technologies being used to assess the potential impact of offshore wind farms on sea birds. He was followed by Tania Davey from The Wildlife Trusts who discussed the challenges for managing the impact of underwater noise on marine mammals during the development of offshore wind.

Other speakers included Nick Atkinson of the Woodland Trust outlining how mapping historical changes in tree cover in the Lincolnshire landscape can be used to understand future conservation priorities and Gareth Dalglish from Natural England who spoke about approaches to strategic licensing for great crested newts.

The conference culminated with the launch of LERC Search and a presentation by Fran Smith on how the web-based system had been developed.

The event was attended by a broad range of delegates, including a number of ecological consultants keen to learn more about the GLNP's new product, and feedback from the day was excellent.



LERC Search was launched by Fran Smith at the annual conference. © Les Binns

Geodiversity Strategy

The Geodiversity Group is an independent group of amateur and professional geologists working for the benefit of geodiversity in Greater Lincolnshire; the GLNP Team coordinates the activities of this group. The vision for the Geodiversity Strategy is: *That Greater Lincolnshire's geodiversity assets are conserved, recorded, promoted, understood and enjoyed by all.*

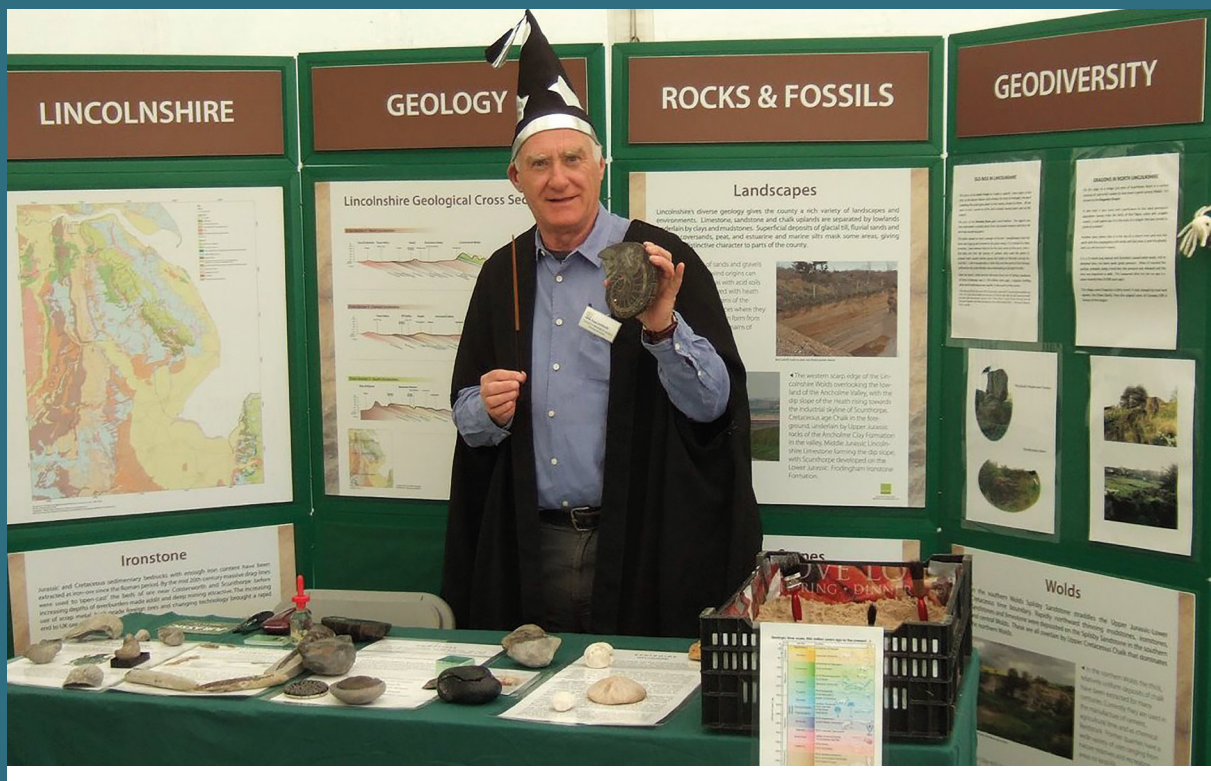
Myth, legend and folklore

This theme for the Geodiversity Group's 2018 stand at the Lincolnshire Show was 'myths and legends' which brought to life the folklore based on the geological features that can be found in Greater Lincolnshire.

Our very own wizard amazed and wowed the crowds with spellbinding stories of dragons and devils of old. These include the Dragonby dragon - a tufa formation found in North Lincolnshire which legend has it is the body of a dragon turned to stone by a local wizard; the devil's pulpit at Tealby where the devil is said to appear at night to drink from the nearby stream and the devil's stone at Winceby - a large boulder which must never be moved for fear of allowing the devil himself to escape!

The Lincolnshire Show also saw the return of the popular 'find a fossil' activity where participants, both young and old, picked up a paintbrush and had a go at gently uncovering their very own fossil amongst the sand. Discoveries included belemnites, the fossilised remains of squid-like creatures that were once thought to be caused by lightning bolts, and ammonites which were believed to be snakes that had been turned to stone.

Thanks go to Paul Hildreth, Helen Gamble and Dinah Smith for their enthusiasm over the two days.



Paul Hildreth of the Geodiversity Group at the Lincolnshire Show. © Helen Gamble

Geodiversity Strategy

New guidance set in stone

The continued hard work, dedication and expertise of the Geodiversity Group has led to the publication of a reviewed set of guidelines for the selection of Local Geological Sites (LGS), which were first adopted in 2009, outlining the importance of geodiversity in Greater Lincolnshire.

This 2nd edition of the guidelines will deliver greater context to important features of geological sites on both a national and local level, as well as bolster the evidence base which provides LGS designations with a sturdy and defensible argument for their consideration in local planning.

The selection criteria have been refined and clarification has been provided on which features are considered to be of higher value in Greater Lincolnshire and therefore deemed to be of importance for protection through the Local Sites system. One such example is the presence of Rasenia an ammonite whose name derives from Market Rasen where specimens are commonly found and is featured on the front cover of our leaflet: 'The geology of Greater Lincolnshire'.

As well as more specific features, criteria for processes and tectonic structures are also included recognising the importance of Greater Lincolnshire for the study and learning opportunities it provides.

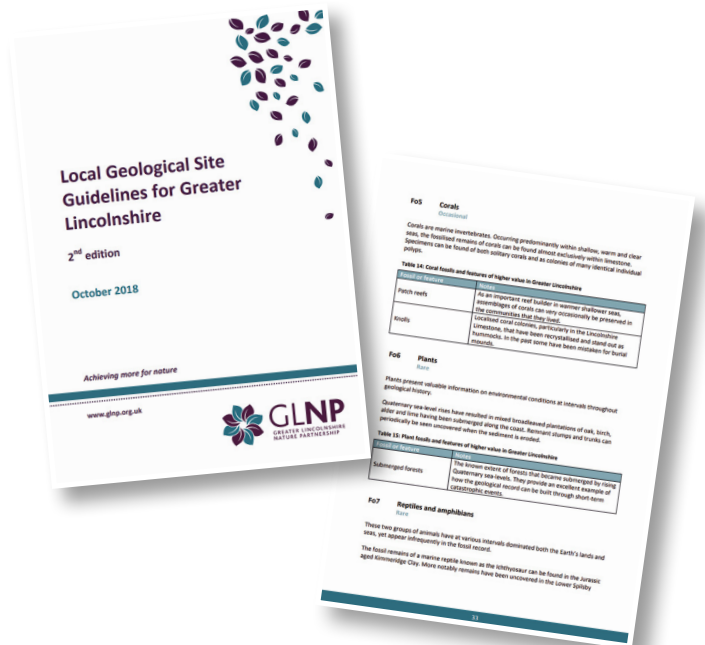
The revised guidelines have also provided an opportunity to bring them in line with GLNP branding and ensure the document is up to date with current national guidance. Following consultation with the Local Geological Sites Panel, who will be responsible for assessing any future surveys against the new criteria, the 2nd edition was signed off at the GLNP Forum in November.

A copy is available to download from the Local Geological Sites page of the GLNP website.

Rocks a big hit

In the last Annual Review we reported on the publication of a new leaflet entitled 'The geology of Greater Lincolnshire'.

The leaflet has proved one of our most popular to date and hundreds of copies have been handed out throughout 2018. We will shortly be getting a new batch printed ready for this year's Lincolnshire Show and it is encouraging to see such a high level of interest in learning more about what lies beneath our feet.



The 2nd edition of the guidelines.



Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre

The Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) collates wildlife and geological information for Greater Lincolnshire and makes it available for various uses. The vision for LERC is to be: *The trusted source of wildlife, habitat and geological information for Greater Lincolnshire.*

The data LERC provides is crucial for ensuring sustainable development, aiding conservation management of sites and understanding the distribution of species and trends over time.

LERC Search has arrived

Our new online automated system to access data – LERC Search - went live in October at the annual GLNP conference. It has been up and running for five months now and has been used nearly 200 times by ecological consultants, local authorities and Partners with service level agreements to access information on sites, habitats and species in their area.

The new system has been built with three key principles in mind:

- Instant results
- 24/7 access
- One fixed price

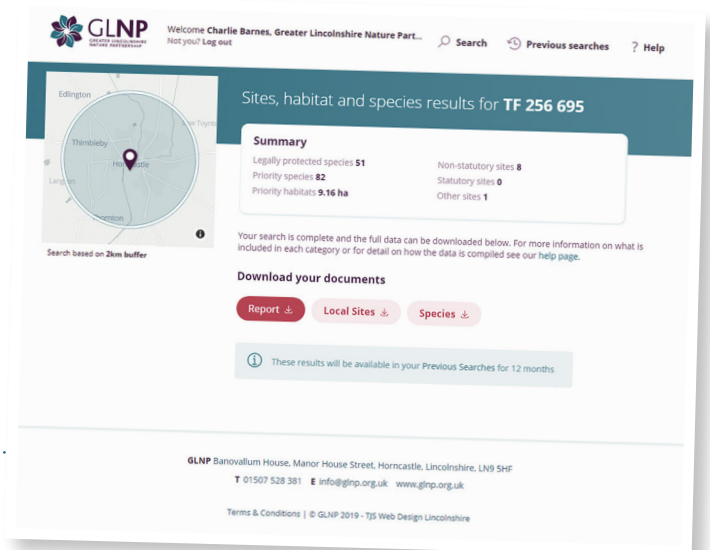
By providing information to the customer at the touch of a button (rather than say, within 10 days, five days or even within the hour) it allows it be accessed, and crucially, used at the most appropriate time rather than becoming a 'tick box' exercise after surveys have been completed and reports have been written.

Allowing access round the clock means the new system can fit into customers' work schedules – not everyone works 9am to 5pm, especially when carrying out bat surveys! A by-product of designing the system to be accessed 24/7 also means that requests for information can be processed during staff absences.

One of the most controversial aspects of the system has been the introduction of a fixed price for each search, regardless of the size of the chosen search area or the variety of information requested (e.g. sites, habitats or particular taxonomic groups). There are two main reasons for this: the first is that the collation and presentation of the results takes the same amount of time regardless of the search area (we charge for the time it takes to produce results rather than for the amount of data returned) and, second, that by presenting upfront a single fixed fee we hope that it'll be clearer for those wanting to access the data how much they will be charged allowing them to factor this in to cost estimates and quotes.

To take a look at the new system, visit <https://search.glnp.org.uk>

LERC Search in action.



Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre

#LoveLincsPlants

The Lincolnshire Plants: Past and Future project reached a milestone in March with the 2000th specimen – European white water-lily *Nymphaea alba* collected in 1846 – digitised by the Natural History Museum.

The project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is a partnership between the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the Natural History Museum in London, The Sir Joseph Banks Society, Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union (LNU) and the University of Lincoln to inspire a new generation of botanists.

Data from both the historic herbarium from the LNU and new specimens being collected as part of the project's contemporary herbarium are being made available online for anyone to view and the records will also be included in the LERC database. Whilst the contemporary herbarium is focussed on Greater Lincolnshire, specimens from across the UK are present in the LNU herbarium and include specimens that are over 200 years old.

The data has been licensed under a public domain dedication which means it can be used for a variety of purposes, including commercial, and is available to access as part of LERC's standard services. To find out more about the dataset visit the Natural History Museum's data portal at <https://data.nhm.ac.uk/dataset/lincs-plants> or contact LERC for further information.



The 2000th specimen from The Lincolnshire Plants: Past and Future project digitised by the Natural History Museum: *Nymphaea alba* collected in 1846. © Natural History Museum

From paper to pixel: an update

In the 2015-16 Annual Review we reported on the start of an historic data digitisation exercise with the first box of archived paper records producing in excess of 20,000 records. Based on this we estimated that there may have been 100,000 records awaiting extraction.

After nearly four years of tireless data entry work, 165,518 records of 5,000 different species have been extracted, including 102,245 birds, 42,549

plants and 4,195 molluscs, with the majority of the records dating from the 1970s and 1980s and the oldest from the 1850s.

The addition of these records, and others, now means the LERC database holds nine million records of 16,420 species across Greater Lincolnshire - one of the largest in the country which is a testament to the dedication of our local recorders.



Local Sites

Local Sites, along with Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), are the most important places for wildlife and geology in Greater Lincolnshire. The vision for the Local Sites system is: *To establish an up to date comprehensive suite of sites of substantive wildlife and geological value.*

Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and Local Geological Sites (LGSs) are selected by the GLNP, based on recommendations made by its expert LWS and LGS Panels. The Register of Local Sites is then submitted for inclusion in local authority planning policy.

Identifying and designating these sites helps local authorities to meet their obligations under legislation and government guidance.

Local Sites update

The Greater Lincolnshire Register of Local Sites now has 1279 LWSs and 95 LGSs listed.

This year 15 candidate sites were considered for new or continued designation by the LWS Panel, resulting in nine new LWSs. Alkborough Flats, a significantly important floodplain where the River Trent meets the Humber Estuary, has been transformed in recent years from mainly arable to a haven for huge populations of breeding and wintering birds. This year sees the entire 360ha site being formally recognised as a LWS.

Of the sites considered for LWS recognition, seven were identified as priority and surveyed within the scope of the GLNP-led Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) project. These included two extensive watercourses that cross the Lincolnshire Wolds; the Great and Long Eaus.



... The Great Eau: a chalk stream. © Sarah Baker

The area of field investigation for this project has so far covered North Lincolnshire, South Holland and South Kesteven and will result in a more robust and consistently evidenced suite of non-statutory sites to be considered in local planning and development, bringing these districts into line with the City of Lincoln.

This project will extend into a second survey year in 2019 with the aim of investigating remaining SNCl in the rest of Greater Lincolnshire's districts.

Gone but not forgotten

Completion of the SNCl project will recommend the deselection of all remaining sites not identified as priorities and not investigated through field surveys. However, although these will no longer be of material consideration in local planning, information on the sites will be kept in the GLNP's database for potential future survey planning and use in wider conservational strategies where appropriate.

Some of these sites may still form an important component of our connected landscapes and many more will have the potential to be managed and improved sympathetically for wildlife. The GLNP is keen to work with landowners on the best ways to realise these aspirations and to continue working towards building a robust and comprehensive evidence base for all sites of wildlife importance in Greater Lincolnshire currently, and not currently, recognised in local planning.

Local Sites

Inspiring habitat management

A series of guidance leaflets on the management of important habitat within Local Wildlife Sites are being developed by the GLNP in order to help and support landowners to maintain their land for the benefit of wildlife.

A second suite of four new leaflets have now been added bringing the total to eight. The new leaflets are available to download on the Local Wildlife Sites page of the GLNP website where you will also find additional supporting information. The new leaflets are for lowland mixed deciduous woodland, dry acid grassland, reedbeds and traditional orchards.

Some of the new management leaflets. © GLNP



Reporting on Local Sites

Single Data List Indicator 160-00 "Proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management is being achieved" is a proxy measure of local biodiversity and is used by central government to assess the performance of local authorities.

	LWSs	LGSs	Local Sites	Sites in positive management	
				Number	Proportion
Boston	26	1	27	23	85%
City of Lincoln	48	2	50	4	8%
East Lindsey	382	20	402	120	30%
North Kesteven	153	8	161	53	33%
South Holland	56	0	56	41	73%
South Kesteven	230	15	245	93	38%
West Lindsey	184	9	193	56	29%
Central Lincolnshire JPU ¹	374	18	392	112	29%
South East Lincolnshire JSPC ²	81	1	82	63	77%
Lincolnshire County	1040	53	1093	373	34%
North East Lincolnshire	32	6	38	4	11%
North Lincolnshire	216	37	253	162	64%
Greater Lincolnshire	1279	95	1374	532	39%

1 Central Lincolnshire Joint Planning Unit (City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey)

2 South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (Boston and South Holland)



Nature Strategy

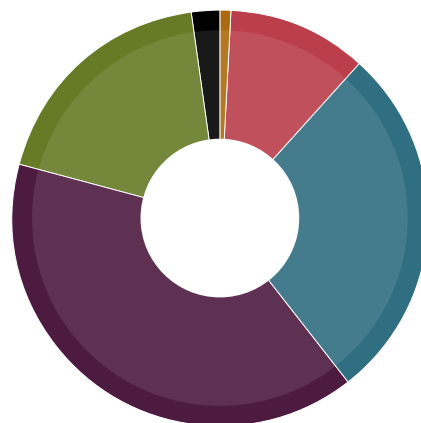
The strategy for nature in Greater Lincolnshire is detailed in the third edition of the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which builds on the strength of the previous two and continues to be the driving force for nature conservation in Greater Lincolnshire. The vision for the Nature Strategy is: *That Greater Lincolnshire and its neighbouring seas are much richer in biodiversity.*

Reported progress for 2018-19 has again remained relatively static as we approach the end of the current BAP period. We continue to have completed just one in five targets however there is an encouraging number which are on or ahead of schedule and should boost success rates when we come to the final evaluation.

It has once again been a strong round of reporting with the number of Partner responses remaining high. There are however still some significant gaps, particularly in relation to delivery by national schemes and initiatives in Greater Lincolnshire. We are currently working on trying to bring in the data for those targets we suspect have been met but not yet reported.

The next reporting period will be the last one for the current BAP and so the forthcoming 12 months present an ideal opportunity for Partners to think about their priorities and give one final push to try and meet those outstanding targets. Thoughts are already turning towards what the future nature strategy for Greater Lincolnshire should look like. Whatever form that takes, let's try to ensure it builds on the success of the last 10 years.

	2017-18	2018-19
Aspiration/Planned	2%	1%
No progress reported	11%	11%
On/Ahead of schedule	27%	28%
Behind schedule	41%	40%
Completed	19%	19%
Discontinued	2%	2%



Mining for newts

A new study has highlighted the potential of Scunthorpe's ironstone quarries as some of the most important places for great crested newts in Greater Lincolnshire.

A paper by Dr Steven Heathcote and Rebekah Beaumont, published in LNU transactions, examined the distribution of large populations of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* to try and establish the importance of great crested newt populations in old quarry ponds.

Using data from Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC), records were filtered to include large populations (more than 100 individuals) where ponds were present at the grid reference. Of the estimated 226 ponds, a large population was recorded in seven – three of which were found to be in former ironstone quarries in north-east Scunthorpe. These

are located closely enough to form a meta-population and likely to act as 'source' populations for the 24 other water bodies found within 1.5km.

It is hoped the findings of the paper will raise awareness of the importance of the ponds and encourage action to protect these great crested newt populations. The authors, and LERC, would also be keen to hear of other large populations in Greater Lincolnshire.



Great crested newt.

Nature Strategy

Habitat bank-ing

A significant area of new wildlife habitat has been created as part of a £1.8 million flood defence scheme to safeguard farmland, homes and industrial premises on the Lincolnshire coast.



Habitat creation as part of the raising of Wrangle sea banks. © Witham Fourth IDB

The existing Wrangle sea banks defences have been raised and re-profiled as part of a scheme led by Witham Fourth District Internal Drainage Board (IDB) which involved a number of BAP Partners and local landowners.

The works have resulted in the creation of more than 10ha of habitat behind the banks which was previously under agricultural production.

The IDB worked closely with representatives from Lincolnshire County Council, the

Environment Agency, Natural England, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust as well as landowners to deliver the scheme.

A key part of the habitat creation element is the wide 'borrow pits', or soke dykes, which fill with brackish water seeping under the banks during high tides. It is anticipated water will be present in the pits most of the year although this semi-wetland habitat will vary across the length of the scheme as pit depths vary.

As the site develops over the coming years, the area has the potential to make a significant contribution towards habitat creation targets in the current nature strategy.

Sweet success

Efforts to conserve traditional orchards in the Lincolnshire Wolds have continued apace over the last 12 months.

With support from the GLNP, a total of 23 orchards have been surveyed across the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty including 10 sites which were previously unknown or significantly larger than expected. This has resulted in 3.11ha of traditional orchards being added to the GLNP's habitat inventory – greatly improving our knowledge of their distribution in this area.

While understanding the extent and condition of traditional orchards is a key target of the nature strategy, achieving better management and creation of new orchards are also important priorities. Focus in 2018 has therefore been on how to encourage good management practice amongst landowners and those working alongside them.

A large orchard at Withcall in the Lincolnshire Wolds was used as the venue for a training session on orchard management in October 2018, aimed at local authority tree officers and others working in the conservation sector.

The National Trust's Gunby Hall provided the perfect setting for an orchard workshop aimed at landowners themselves. The event looked at why orchards are important from an historical and biodiversity perspective and provided practical advice on planting, pruning and nutrition from expert Trevor Rogers. Delegates were able to view Gunby Hall's extensive collection of fruit trees and study the various growth forms from espaliers to stepovers! There was excellent feedback from everyone that attended who left inspired to reinvigorate their own orchard sites.

As part of a suite of 'introduction to management' guides produced by the GLNP, a new leaflet for traditional orchard owners has also been published.



Training day at a Withcall orchard.
© Sarah Baker



Planning with nature

Spatial planning is at the heart of landscape and settlement change. By working in partnership, development plans of all types can progress more smoothly, beneficial elements can be incorporated and many issues can be avoided. The vision is: *Planning processes across Greater Lincolnshire make the most of opportunities for nature.*

As expected, this financial year has seen a shift towards more significant national consultations. Of the 13 consultations the GLNP responded to, six were national.

Focusing on spatial planning, proposed amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework was the first significant consultation in May 2018 and since then changes have already have been finalised. Importantly this document now guides planners to seek 'net biodiversity gain' rather than no net loss and, following further consultation on this aspect in early 2019, the Chancellor has already confirmed that a mandatory approach will be sought by the Government in the forthcoming Environment Bill.

This significant change has received a cautious welcome from the sector but as always the devil is in the detail to ensure net gain works in practice. It should also be noted that Defra is seeking to move from 'biodiversity net gain' to 'environmental net gain'. It is unclear if this will strengthen or weaken the situation for biodiversity. The situation is confused further by a flurry of activity to develop tools for biodiversity net gain and it is currently unclear if these can be adapted for environmental net gain.



Will water quality be prioritised above biodiversity in environmental net gain?
© Martin Redding

From a more local perspective, this year saw the opportunity for the GLNP to join with the Environment Agency, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England to submit a response to the South Kesteven Local Plan. The joint response from members of the environmental sector proved invaluable in presenting a united front on the key messages for the district council to consider. This has led to the first 'Statement of Common Ground' for the GLNP and we are pleased to have been able to work closely with all involved to achieve this outcome.

Seeking local opportunities

Continuing on the theme of working more closely, North Lincolnshire Council commissioned the GLNP to undertake a Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping process for their review of the Local Plan.

This demonstrates how closely the evidence and strategy workstreams of the GLNP work together with data held by LERC, going hand in hand with spatial planning to seek out future opportunities.

A draft map has been generated using a bespoke method which identifies opportunity areas for creation and better management of habitats which also create linkages between ecological networks based on the Lawton principles of a bigger, better and more joined up landscape.

The results should be useful in prioritisation and implementation on the ground. The draft map will now be tested through stakeholder workshops.



Farming with nature

Agriculture has shaped the landscape of Greater Lincolnshire. By working in partnership, policies and practices will be developed to ensure that both farm profitability and biodiversity can be conserved now and in the future. The vision is: *Thriving nature in a productive farmed landscape.*

A buzzy year on the farm...

The pollinator project has continued to provide a positive message with which to connect with farmers across Greater Lincolnshire this year.

The GLNP has presented at a range of farm events including those organised by local Facilitation Fund groups and Championing the Farmed Environment. Other opportunities have included a special pollinator breakfast meeting organised by the University of Lincoln and an interview with BBC Radio Lincolnshire's Alan Stennett for Lincolnshire Farming.

Feedback has been good with farmers across Lincolnshire recognising the need to help our wild pollinators thrive and several asking the GLNP to pay them a visit and look at what opportunities may exist on their farm to do just that.

On farm, trials and surveys have also continued this year to practically develop different approaches to improving pollinator habitat. This has included reducing cutting frequencies of farm verges and trackways, identifying areas of nettles that can be managed to provide larval habitat for butterflies and testing the effectiveness of bee houses for solitary bees.



Trials such as this two-year game buffer could help to improve pollen and nectar resources on farm. © Sarah Baker

A key area of focus has been around exploring options for improved management of game covers. The intention is to try and reduce reliance solely on maize in a bid to improve the diversity of floral resources available without taking additional land out of production. Options being explored have included adding in species such as sunflower or perennial chicory and buffering a slightly reduced maize strip with a more diverse two-year mix which includes species such as phacelia, hybrid kale/rape and sweet clover. Evaluation of the different approaches will continue in 2019 with case studies produced to compare costs as well as impact on driving game birds.

Shaping future policy

Our proposed exit from the European Union has opened the door for much debate about what a new domestic agricultural policy might include.

The GLNP worked closely with Partners to respond to the Government's Health and Harmony consultation on the future of food, farming and the environment. We also attended a stakeholder workshop organised by Defra at Calke Abbey to consider what future policy should seek to achieve.

Conversations have already started to look at how a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) could be structured to deliver a variety of public goods as well as helping to support a productive agricultural economy. The GLNP was invited to attend the first of several anticipated ELMS workshops in early 2019 which sought input from farmers in the Lincolnshire Fens to help shape the Land Management Plan. It is envisaged the plan will form the basis of ELMS as a tool to outline what public goods farmers and land managers are able to deliver.



Enjoying nature

Tourism is key to the economy of Greater Lincolnshire. By working in partnership, everyone can realise the contribution that nature makes to the economy and ensure the benefits continue in the long term. The vision is: *For the value of nature to be recognised and embedded within the wider tourism sector.*

Over the last year the GLNP's involvement in Greater Lincolnshire's leisure and tourism sector has increased. The destination pilot project became part of the Enjoying nature workstream's day to day activity and serves to continue the working relationship between the GLNP and Visit Lincs Coast.

Meanwhile work on the Pinterest journeys project has also continued, taking on a more partnership working style by reaching out for input from various stakeholders with the aim of creating an inclusive end product that Greater Lincolnshire's visitor sector can be proud of.

In addition to ongoing work the GLNP began to grow the breadth of its involvement in the area's visitor economy by attending a number of events. The Love Lincolnshire Wolds conference and subsequent Lincolnshire Wolds Partnership meetings have opened up opportunities to work with East Lindsey District Council in enhancing the importance of the natural environment in the Wolds.

The GLNP has also started writing an Enjoying nature position statement to ensure that the Partnership can be consistent in its work within the tourism sector and add to its evidence base so it can respond to consultations effectively.

Final destination?

The GLNP has continued to work with Visit Lincs Coast to develop a pilot destination on Lincolnshire's coast which generates benefits for both the visitor economy and the natural environment. Previously the project had focussed on highlighting what nature could do for tourism stakeholders, especially business owners. This project has become even more relevant with the launch of Lincolnshire's Natural Coast website, showcasing what nature has to offer.

As part of the project the GLNP met with the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership (WNNMP) and attended a stakeholder meeting for the PROWAD Link giving a greater understanding of the wider picture in terms of sustainable coastal tourism as well as allowing for the destination pilot to be developed in a way that will enable collaborative work right along the coast.

PROWAD is an international partnership which seeks to achieve sustainable tourism around the Wadden Sea located on the southern coastlines of the North Sea. The WNNMP is currently applying to become part of this partnership. While the GLNP's pilot destination project had previously focussed on highlighting what nature could do for tourism stakeholders, through its engagement with the PROWAD group this has evolved to include what tourism stakeholders can do for the natural environment creating an ethos of mutual benefit.



..... North Sea Observatory bathed in sunshine. © Luke Bamforth



Being well with nature

The evidence that the natural environment is good for us is becoming overwhelming. By working in partnership, organisations can act on this evidence and the benefits are able to be felt by all sectors of society. The vision is: *For the value of nature to public health and wellbeing to be recognised and valued within the wider health sector.*

It has been a busy year for the Being well with nature workstream. With the ongoing support of Lincolnshire County Council's Public Health Division, the Sincil Bank Greening project became part of ongoing activities, while the project focussing on green prescribing in West Lindsey has led to involvement with the West Lindsey Green Spaces Forum and Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

Elsewhere, early 2019 saw the publication of the NHS Long Term Plan. Following this the independent healthcare charity, Healthwatch, called for input into the local implementation of the themes set out in the national plan. The GLNP have answered this call providing evidence of the important role that the natural environment can play in achieving the aims of the NHS.

Banking on nature

Over the last year the GLNP has been contributing to the rejuvenation of Lincoln's Sincil Bank. This has been undertaken alongside stakeholders including Lincolnshire County Council, City of Lincoln Council, the University of Lincoln and the Sincil Bank Community Partnership.

A key aspect of this project was to support Sustrans in the creation of a masterplan for the drain which runs through the area. The local community has been integral to the development of the plan giving their input which includes plenty of nods to the natural environment. The GLNP was pleased to see this was important to the local residents and people that use the area. The masterplan was completed by the end of 2018 and adopted by Investors in Lincoln in early 2019.

A number of funding revenue streams have also been awarded to the rejuvenation of Sincil Bank including Heritage Lottery Funding for Place Based Social Action and funding for a planned Pocket Park on St Andrews Close. The GLNP is continuing to work to ensure the park is created in a way that brings nature into the lives of this urban area's local residents and connects them with their wider natural landscape.

The GLNP has also continued to be involved in the East Lindsey Quality of Life Network, working with health and wellbeing stakeholders in the district to ensure that the public receive the care they deserve, while promoting the importance of nature to those working in the sector.

At the last GLNP Forum it was agreed that a position statement for Being well with nature should be developed to support the GLNP's growing involvement within the health and wellbeing sector. Following discussions with the Steering Group and workshops with the Team, this work is now underway.

It has been great to be a part of this project so far, but this is just the beginning. With the Sincil Drain masterplan being approved and the development of open space high on the agenda, the GLNP will continue to emphasise the importance of the natural environment over the coming year, to ensure that nature is an integral part of the wider rejuvenation of Sincil Bank.



Sincil Drain. © Luke Bamforth



Natural capital

With the growing trend towards natural capital in the environmental sector, being able to engage with this approach is becoming more important to both conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The inclusion of natural capital in the Government's 25 year environment plan and important environmental paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework suggest the concept is here to stay.

Last year the GLNP undertook a project to put the Partnership's workstreams into a natural capital context, providing an insight into what aspects of natural capital our work has an impact on. A series of non-technical case studies have been developed to provide an overview of each workstream's contribution while a technical report describes natural capital more widely and describes how figures are produced.

By undertaking an initial assessment of Greater Lincolnshire's natural capital and the contributions being made by the Partnership, the GLNP now has a sound base from which to undertake further natural capital projects.

Tools of the trade

Despite its controversy, the increased prominence of natural capital within the environmental sector has been marked by the production of an increasing number of accounts and a variety of tools and metrics to help interested parties make sense of it all.

At the moment, creating a set of natural capital accounts still requires a lot of work, a lot of extrapolation and the compilation of a great deal of existing data into one place. However there are tools being developed for more specific tasks, such as the Natural Capital Planning Tool (NCPT) which aims to help developers and planning authorities calculate the loss or gain to natural capital through developments. There are also a number of tools focussing on calculating the benefits provided by the creation of Green Infrastructure, such as the GI Value Tool.

It is not just planning and development sectors which are becoming aware of natural capital. The Natural Capital Finance Alliance have produced a report and developed an online tool, Encore, which allows businesses from a variety of sectors to see how they might be affected by the loss of natural capital.

While the availability of natural capital tools can help to clarify a complex topic there is a risk that a lack of a standard methodology could confuse the situation. Alongside this, the positive announcement of mandatory environmental net gain could mean that additional local biodiversity metrics will muddy the water further. It is therefore important for the GLNP to keep up to date with natural capital and net gain, ensuring that the GLNP can provide the best information to Partners and stakeholders when required and promote a consistent approach.

To this end, the GLNP is currently working with North Kesteven District Council to put a natural capital slant on nature improvement projects relating to Sustainable Urban Extensions in Sleaford. The aim is to develop an approach that can be used elsewhere. The GLNP has also supported the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service as they begin to look into natural capital and ecosystem services.

Crops are a perfect example of the benefits society gets from natural capital. © Charlie Barnes



Financial summary

This financial year is the second that a deficit is reported for the GLNP finances, this was expected as policy work had been expanded to health and tourism along with the Team resources needed to ensure effective delivery. The final deficit is just under £7,000 and is considered reasonable against the total income and expenditure figures for the year.

Overall income is in line with expectations, with LERC bringing in over £3,000 more than budgeted. This is counterbalanced by increased and over budget travel and salary costs of the five person Team. Budget figures for 2019-20 have been adjusted accordingly.

Project finances are represented separately; in 2018-19 investment from the project fund is lower than budgeted as is income for projects. Despite this a total of over £35,000 was invested into catalysing projects and delivery that would not have happened otherwise. The majority of this investment was towards the LERC Search website, which has already proved to be very popular with customers and an improvement on the previous system. The underspend for the SNCI project is due to lower than expected survey numbers and only surveying in some local authority areas.

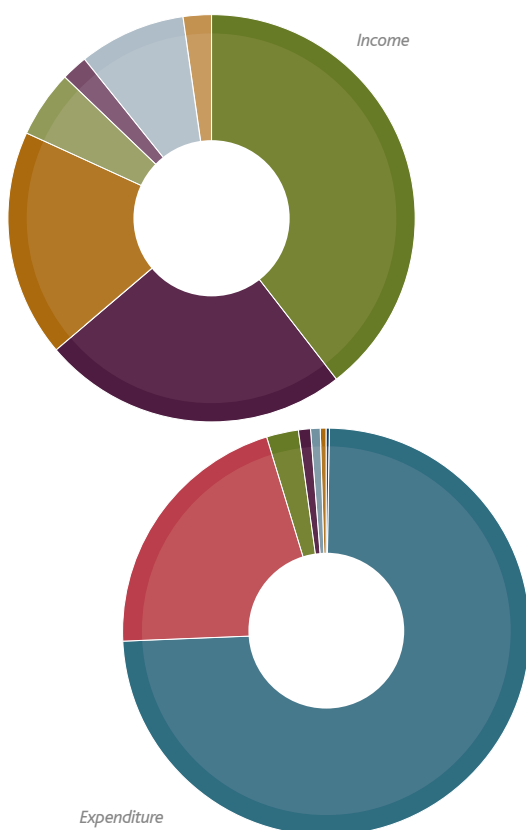
In more positive news, all but one of the remaining local authorities have come on board with the SNCI project for 2019-20 and the underspend has been reallocated to deliver this.

The figures below are a simplified version of the accounts, this year with the reserve funds shown separately to income. The formal accounts are compiled by our hosts, the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, and are prepared in line with the income recognition rules as set out in the Statement of Recommended Practice published by the Charity Commission. There are therefore timing differences between the audited figures, as disclosed in the Trust's published accounts, and the figures reported here.

GLNP income £126,855	GLNP expenditure £133,562
Deficit -£6,707	

Project income £11,762	Project expenditure £35,510
Invest from project fund £23,748	Remaining in project fund £95,829

The breakdown:



Income	
Local authorities	54,707
Data requests	33,758
NGOs	25,000
Project grants	11,762
Statutory agencies	7,440
IDBs	3,125
Other	2,825

Reserves	
GLNP project fund	95,829
Deficit reserve	36,248
Winding up reserve	30,000
Working capital reserve	23,000
Unforeseen reserve	17,000

Expenditure	
Core functions	125,527
Projects	35,510
Data fee	4,220
Publications and website	1,699
Events	1,420
Local Recording Fund	513
LERC Search ongoing costs	183

Future look



© Paul Neale

For the last two years we have looked forward in the hope that clarity will be gained on how our exit from the European Union may impact on the sector. Given the current turmoil surrounding the issue it is impossible to predict whether the next 12 months will provide much in the way of certainty.

There are however a number of developments on the horizon which could bring with them exciting opportunities for Greater Lincolnshire. It is perhaps more important now than ever that we continue to work closely with our Partners to ensure local benefits for nature conservation are maximised.

Net gain, natural capital and Nature Recovery Networks may sound like new buzz words but all three have the potential to open the door to help support more strategically-placed, better funded outcomes for the natural environment. Of course the detail is not yet there and over the next year the GLNP will be working to better understand their practical implications and ensure that where appropriate, local evidence helps inform their implementation as national policies hopefully become clearer.

It is also anticipated that these themes will influence thinking on what comes next when the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan comes to an end in March 2020. Over the next few months, the Team will be working with Partners to look at what a future nature strategy needs to look like to work effectively.

A number of ongoing workstream projects look set to keep the Team busy over the next year and it is also intended that a new communications plan will be developed for the GLNP which Partners will be asked to sign off at the Forum in November.

LERC Search may be running smoothly but work doesn't stop now the product has been launched. A marketing plan has recently been agreed by the Steering Group and over the next year the Team will be working to raise awareness of the system within the wider sector. Monitoring will also be important to ensure the system is delivering on its objectives and user feedback will be gathered as part of that work.

The GLNP is achieving more for nature.



The continuing success of the GLNP is down to the hard work of its many Partner organisations and individuals who devote their time to the Steering Group, working groups and other work of the Nature Partnership. *Thanks go to all those that contributed information and/or images for this review.*



Annual Review 2018-19

Achieving more for nature

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