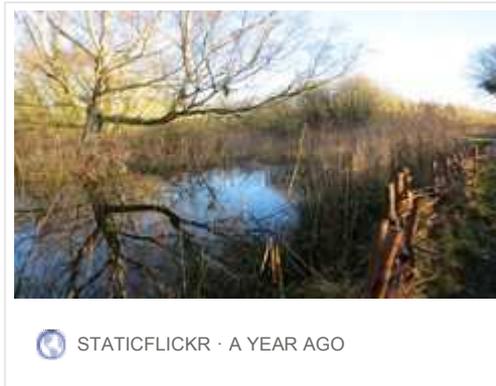


by HertsCMS a year ago

Oughtonhead Common Wetland Creation & Restoration Works

PROJECT COMPLETED JUNE 2015



A range of wetland enhancement works have now been completed at Oughtonhead Common Local Nature Reserve. The project has created and restored habitat for wildlife and improved access for visitors.

The project was funded by a partnership between Hertfordshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England and North Hertfordshire District Council, who own the site. An additional contribution was made as a bequest in memory of the late Phil Lumley who was Volunteer Warden of Oughtonhead Common. He devoted immense energy into organising the activities of the Friends group and obtained thousands of pounds worth of grants to improve the site for wildlife and visitors. The works were managed by CMS on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council.

PROJECT UPDATES

JUNE 2015

The new interpretation has now been installed on the viewing platform overlooking the new pond.



A beautiful new archway sculpture leads the way to the feature, with animals typical of the site carved into the oak. An event was held to celebrate these installations and the completion of the habitat restoration project, with members of the Friends group and other partners in attendance.



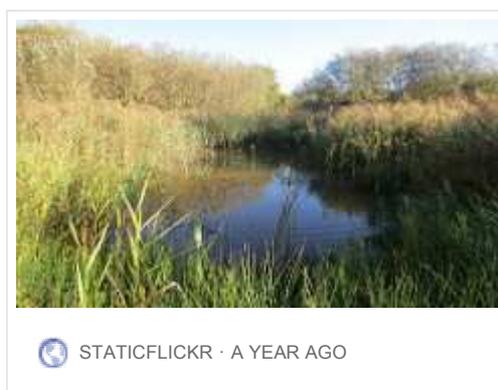
OCTOBER 2014

Now that the bird nesting season is over, reeds have been removed from sections of the river. It is hoped this will improve the flow and create more open water. Kingfishers are regularly seen here and will now have more open areas to fish in.



Reeds cleared from River Oughton

The wetland restoration areas are coming on really well. The vegetation has grown back vigorously. Numerous tadpoles were seen in the ponds and ditches earlier in the spring and dragonflies and kingfishers are also using the area.



New pond developing nicely

We are now starting to work on the interpretation, which will provide information for visitors on the wetland area and its wildlife



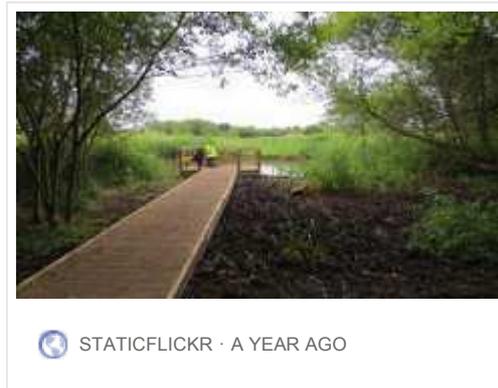
Boardwalk after 3 months

JULY 2014

The new boardwalk and viewing platform is now complete, providing access through and views over the newly created wetland and the rest of the common.



New boardwalk



Viewing platform gets finishing touches

FEBRUARY 2014 - WEEK 5

Much of the work has now been completed but due to the wet weather we have decided to postpone a couple of projects until later in the year. The boardwalk and viewing platform will be installed when the area settles and dries out, provisionally towards the end of April, depending on conditions. The reed removal from the river will take place towards the end of the summer / early autumn, when the river level has dropped and after the bird nesting season. In addition, some of the branches and roots from the cleared scrub will be left on site until the ground is drier and access to remove them is easier.

FEBRUARY 2014 - WEEK 4

The sedge bed has now been opened up, with vegetation removed to create more open water. Plants have been left around the banks and in 'islands' to provide habitat variety, with shallow pools restored for spawning frogs.



Sedge bed before works



Sedge bed after works

FEBRUARY 2014 - WEEK 3

New wildlife habitat is now starting to emerge as the first of the new ponds and ditches are created.



The digger moves in.....



and new ponds are created

JANUARY 2014 - WEEK 2

With scrub cut back from the ditches they have really been opened to the light. The silt will also soon be removed to help rejuvenate the ditches for the aquatic life they once supported.



Scrub has been cleared



and the ditch has been opened up

JANUARY 2014 - WEEK 1

Contractors have started to clear back the bushes that are overshadowing the ditch. This water course used to support lots of aquatic plants and animals but as the bushes have grown up they have blocked out the light and now the ditch is just full of dead leaves and silt.



River lost in reeds



Ditch shaded by scrub

We are clearing a strip of bushes, including their roots, all along the south side of the ditch and in a few places on the north side. This will let in light and help bring the ditch back to life, making it an ideal habitat for wildlife such as water vole, water shrew, frogs and dragonflies. It will also enable access for the silt be removed.



Scrub is cut



and bundled into faggots for use elsewhere



Tree roots are removed to prevent regrowth.