



NETTLEBED & DISTRICT COMMONS CONSERVATORS

NETTLEBED, LOWER COMMON WOOD, OXLANDS BOTTOM, HIGHMOOR COMMON WOOD, HIGHMOOR,
WITHERIDGE HILL, KINGWOOD, PEPPARD www.nettlebed-commons.org

The Friends of
Nettlebed
and District Commons

30th November 2018

Dear Friends

Update on Commons Funding

The Conservators are delighted to advise you of the award of grants from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) and Network Rail for specific conservation projects on Nettlebed, Kingwood and Peppard Commons. The grants are substantial and are a huge boost for us. For your further information, I attach a press release, which is currently being circulated to various local media outlets.

Some further good news, the response to our recent mail campaign to raise funds for administering and maintaining the Commons has been very heartening. So far, around £1,875 worth of new donations have been committed annually, together with some generous one-off donations. Thanks to your generous response, our operating deficit has been significantly reduced. There is still a little way to go and you may be wondering why we are unable to use the grants just awarded to us to bring the operating budget into balance, but it is a condition of the grants that the funds be solely dedicated to the new conservation projects defined in our grant application and not reassigned to existing work on the Commons.

Thank you so much for your support and appreciation of the value of the Commons to our area.

Yours sincerely

Peter Allport
Chairman of NDCC

Nettlebed & District Commons Conservators awarded Grants for Conservation Projects

Supported by the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) with funding from Network Rail's 'No Net Loss of Biodiversity' initiative on its Greater West Programme, together with other funding secured through biodiversity offsetting, Nettlebed & District Conservators (NDCC) have been awarded grants totalling £31,600 for new conservation and landscape improvement projects on Peppard, Kingwood and Nettlebed Commons. NDCC's funding application greatly benefited from support by Nettlebed Estate, the Parish Councils of Rotherfield Peppard and Nettlebed, Chiltern Society (with whom NDCC already cooperate on conservation work at Kingwood Common), and Chilterns Conservation Board.

Announcing the grants, Karen Woolley, TOE Chairwoman, said "The conservation projects proposed by NDCC were praised by assessors from both TOE and Network Rail, and will do much to enhance biodiversity on Nettlebed & District Commons. NDCC's work, and that of The Chiltern Society, is well known to us, and we are confident that together they will successfully deliver these improvements." Peter Allport, Chairman of NDCC, was delighted with the awards, saying "This is a really wonderful boost for our conservation work on the Commons, and I cannot overemphasise the enormity of what TOE and Network Rail have done for us."

Nettlebed & District Commons total 560 acres and were established as common land by Robert Fleming in 1906. Nowadays, the Commons are mostly dominated by secondary woodland, and the main focus of NDCC's projects will be to open up selected areas by creating woodland rides and glades, thereby encouraging new natural habitats, increasing biodiversity, and improving access for recreation and leisure pursuits. The Commons are widely used, not only by people from Rotherfield Peppard and Nettlebed, but also from neighbouring parishes and from Henley and Reading.

This environmental initiative was launched by Network Rail under its Greater West Programme in order to compensate for biodiversity losses arising from ongoing railway electrification works, and provided the opportunity to advance the Commons conservation programme. Network Rail's funds were heavily oversubscribed and NDCC was very fortunate that TOE, with Network Rail's support, were able to secure supplementary funding through other funds available for biodiversity offsetting in order to ensure that the Commons projects were fully financed.

The awards, which were announced in October, are strictly dedicated to the new conservation measures defined in NDCC's funding application and cannot be assigned to annual operating expenditures or ongoing general Commons maintenance.

The funded conservation work will be supported by NDCC's volunteer work parties. The Commons are ecologically important, Peppard and Kingwood containing locally rare heathland, and Nettlebed having one of the most important wetland sites in Oxfordshire. They are special; please help to conserve them.

For further information about the grants, and NDCC's Commons projects, please contact:

TOE: Lynn Parker, 01865 407003 and www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk

NDCC: Tony Rancombe, 01491 628887, tonyrancombe@yahoo.co.uk

NDCC website: <https://www.nettlebed-commons.org/>

NDCC/23Nov18

NDCC and Chiltern Society volunteers working on Kingwood Common

Clearing bracken and bramble from a heathland glade



Photo: Colin Drake