

The logo consists of a stylized white 'N' shape with three curved lines extending from its top right, set against a background of a blurred purple thistle flower.

Norwich Fringe Project

Managing our natural heritage & green spaces

A close-up photograph of a bumblebee with a fuzzy orange and black body, perched on a vibrant purple thistle flower. The flower has many thin, spiky petals. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow.

25 years of championing the local environment and our community | the leading promoter of conservation & natural heritage activities in Norwich & nearby localities | working for the health & wellbeing of individuals and places | now launching a new outreach and development programme to recruit more supporters: **Natural Heritage Champions**

www.norwichfringeproject.co.uk

Our Story :

The Norwich Fringe Project (NFP) is a local authority funded countryside management partnership that makes natural conservation happen. We are led by a group of passionate environmental defenders, who have been promoting engagement with the natural heritage and local communities since 1990.

We aim at protecting the environment and we know that this can be achieved only through people's participation and enthusiasm. What we desire is to make natural heritage sites accessible to everyone.

"The areas where Norwich Fringe has been involved are valuable to many people who might not realise how the area is managed or indeed even that it needs managing at all... Without the Fringe they are in danger of being ignored"

Survey Respondent 2014

We believe in the importance of wildlife and biodiversity. Norwich Fringe Project manages an area of four miles radius around the city, where we are established as the main delivers of services for the conservation of the natural heritage. **This includes 38 nature reserves, wildlife sites and a variety of woodlands, heathlands, traditional marshes, ancient meadows and unique river valleys.**

As well as looking after ancient commons, the project also advises on several recently created sites that are being managed for wildlife such as **Charter Wood** community woodland near Bowthorpe, **Earlham Millennium Pond** and **Ketteringham Quarry**.

We have been safeguarding these wonderful natural heritage sites thanks to the support of a skilled and dedicated team of volunteers and helpers. The range of sites we protect varies in size, from 1 (0.4HA) to 60 (24HA) acres, involving rural and urban communities.

"With my shiny forehead soaking up sunshine on the Costa-del-Croma, it would be such a challenge and change to find out more about the Norwich Fringe. I can't recall the last time I had to swish one back to see my way ahead! Seriously though, we must look beyond our own backyards, however delightful they be, to appreciate precious heritage and environment in all parts of our county. The outskirts of Norwich are under immense pressure and need all the help they can get"

KEITH SKIPPER, Eastern Daily Press columnist & champion of the Norfolk dialect

Norwich Fringe Project is currently financially supported by:



Our Highlights & Plans

- 25 years of experience in managing local natural heritage in Norwich and a 4 mile radius around the city
- 38 nature reserves & wildlife sites, ancient meadows, heaths, woods & marshes such as the 65 acre Marston Marsh at Eaton
 - Earlham Marshes site work funded by High Level Stewardship (HLS) Grant
- volunteer work equal to **£130,000** worth of 'labour' every year
 - support from Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England, The Land Trust, Environment Agency
 - an overall performance rated at **10 out of 10 by 56% of recent survey respondents** and an average score of 9.2 out of 10
 - many of the sites run by NFP are considered as green lungs for disadvantaged urban communities
- core funding from three local authorities still in place despite austerity cuts

- 'Starting Afresh' programme aimed at increasing the engagement with the community
- a new voluntary sector supporters group **Natural Heritage Champions** to enhance our commitment to managing natural heritage
 - creation of the Natural Heritage Champions to extend NFP's health and well-being benefits
- new training for and recruitment of volunteers; ecotherapy projects aimed at all groups and especially those who are more disadvantaged
 - grant funding from **Heritage Lottery Fund** to help re-brand and set up improved ways that will channel financial and volunteer resources more easily.



Starting Afresh:



“The Norwich Fringe Project has always done great service for the city and local community”

Survey Respondent 2014

We want to see 2015 as a year of new plans, hope and further regeneration. Up to now, NFP has been a partnership of local authorities, yet recently change has become essential. Public sector cuts have undermined the financial capabilities and scope of all our partners, and our existence has been under threat.

Despite this, we've decided to pursue our essential work and projects – giving the NFP a new lease of life.

Through our initiative 'Starting Afresh' we've consulted professional experts and local residents, realising how much warmth, encouragement and help we can receive from the people around us. We've gathered opinions and ideas, all indicating the potential of our mission to grow and involve more places, communities and individuals.

After considering options - such as becoming a charity or a Community Interest Company - it was clear that the best solution was to build on the NFP's manifest strengths and abundant goodwill by encouraging more people to come forward, support the work we do and get involved. We will continue to operate for the benefit of the community and enhance our commitment to managing the natural heritage.

Recently we have been awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Other forms of funding we've received include High Level Stewardship (HLS) grants. Combined these will enable the Norwich Fringe Project to gather new energy and broaden our wildlife restoration programme. Other grant opportunities will be pursued. At this point, and in the future, more opportunities are being created to engage with communities and our green spaces.

To make further lasting differences for the environment, we want local communities to drive our natural heritage projects and be the instigator of our actions. Many people have declared their desires to be more involved with the NFP activities: The Natural Heritage Champions is a new volunteer-led supporters group that has been formed to allow everyone a chance to help. It will think of ways to fundraise for the team and use our invaluable volunteers' time wisely.

The Natural Heritage Champions will be nourished by your input and assistance. By becoming a Natural Heritage Champion you'll partake in the defence of natural green spaces, biodiversity and motivate new natural heritage projects across Norwich and environs.

We want to remember 2015 as marking a new start and of working together for a shared growth.



Whitlingham Marsh, a story

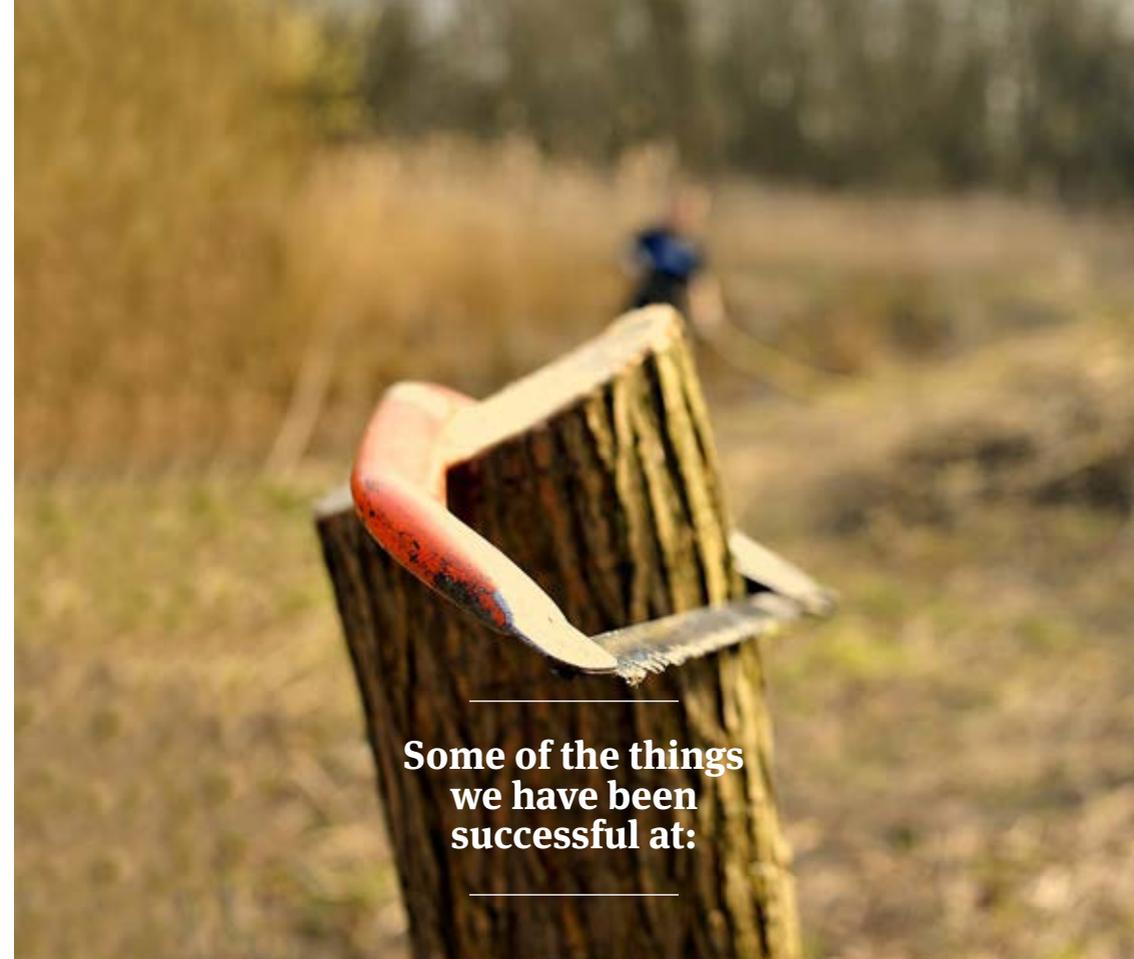
This natural heritage site is situated east of Norwich and is carefully managed by the Norwich Fringe Project. Since this extraordinary local nature spot has been looked after by our group, its accessibility and use by the public has been constantly increasing.

At Whitlingham Marsh, our team of experts and volunteers has been responsible for organising paths cutting and carrying out all the conservation works needed, for example management of local woodlands, marshes and ponds. Most importantly, we have been thinking of ways to guide visitors through these green spaces, trying to provide them both a good time and a learning experience.

Our success at Whitlingham Marsh is underlined by a survey we've conducted recently. Many respondents identified Whitlingham Marsh as the site they would like to get further involved in. Marston Marshes, Eaton Common, Earlham Marshes, Charter Wood, Cooper Wood, Village Ranking Pit, Village Dell, Poringland Wood, Church Hill Common, Suters Drive Pond, Whitlingham Country Park, Cary's Meadow are just some of the locations the Norwich Fringe Project is improving with passion.

"Whitlingham Marsh was a derelict site that was brought back to life from nothing involving a range of different partners and grant funding but led by the NFP. It is now part of a linked set of sites – Whitlingham Country Park that forms a gateway to the Broads"

Bob Cronk, Head of Neighbourhoods at Norwich Council, previous Norwich Fringe Project Officer



**Some of the things
we have been
successful at:**

- Conservation of a wide range of habitats around the city and their beauty, such as places like Woodlands, Meadows, Ponds, Heathland, Fenland, Grassland and Marshland.
- Activities for the protection of natural heritage, including heathland restoration, woodland management, grazing of grassland sites, as well as developing new sites for our local community
- Planning projects and budgets for several habitats requiring help and coordination
- Offering volunteering opportunities for the people living around Norwich and support for a high number of community groups: health promotion initiatives;
- Schools such as Eaton Hall; Guides; Scouts and volunteering schemes with companies like Aviva
- Health walks for children to give them a chance to explore and understand the potential of a healthy environment
- Collaborating with and supporting local farmers, local authorities, Parish Councils and other conservation organisations, such as Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Land Trust and the Environment Agency
- Promoting awareness of wildlife care and providing advice to communities and parish councils on how to grow our natural heritage in the present and in the future



Some of the things we believe in:

“I have frequently worked closely with Norwich Fringe Project to bring sites into management for wildlife. I always breathe a sigh of relief when this happens, as I know it means the site will be well cared for”

Survey Respondent 2014

We are aware of the role that climate change is going to play in the years to come; for this reason, we believe it to be essential to allow as many people as possible to improve the world around us. An increased engagement with the community is beneficial for both our green spaces, natural heritage and society.

We believe that the protection and conservation of natural sites are necessary for the wellbeing and health of us all. NFP encourages people’s skills in the management of countryside heritage, while making sure that volunteers make the most out of their experiences.

We believe that our work wouldn’t be significant without exchanging ideas, sharing opinions and communicating with the people who spend their lives in these areas. We promote a constant dialogue with local residents and site users: we want to spread knowledge of what needs to be done, so that everyone can contribute to simple gestures and actions that are necessary for a healthy landscape.

Our volunteer activities are fundamental to the protective actions carried out by Norwich Fringe Project. In the last 25 years, our green spaces were sustained with creativity by a number of people from different backgrounds: community and heritage groups, schools, local volunteer teams, Parish Councils, councillors and residents.

We currently run volunteer work days on Thursdays and Fridays. We hope to run more.

Our volunteers:

The teams of volunteers we coordinate effectively contributes £130,000 worth of labour every year. Our present situation is determined by the precious work of people who dedicate their free time to the preservation of our environment.

Considering the severe public sector cuts, volunteers’ additional involvement is vital to the survival of the Norwich Fringe Project.

Stephen has been part of our team for a couple of years. He had always been interested in the environment, and when he retired he found himself with some time to help with the activities of NFP.

“I saw the website for NFP and decided to volunteer. I have stayed because I enjoy the variety of activities and the relaxed atmosphere.

All the natural heritage sites managed by NFP are very important, and it would be a great benefit if users could be encouraged to offer their time to help. This would give them a sense of ownership and could lead to fewer incidents of vandalism.

Each of these places has its own unique qualities and I enjoy working on them all. There is so much pressure on the land around Norwich now. I think that enhancing the NFP’s conserving wildlife action must be a priority”

Stephen West

Things you said about us:

Recently, our 'Starting Afresh' survey gathered views and ideas from a variety of contacts on how to enhance the effectiveness of our projects. We have been looking for suggestions from experts and local residents, with the intent of getting more people involved and expanding our area of activity.

The overall performance of the Norwich Fringe Project was highly rated by individuals and association representatives, receiving a remarkable high score of **9.2 out of 10**.

The 56 % of our respondents gave our current work performance a top score response, 10 out of 10.

Many of the comments we collected emphasise the strengths and purposes of our team:

The Norwich Fringe Project is a wonderful community asset and does vital work to maintain awareness of our green spaces and their access. It encourages environmental awareness in young people and helps people feel valued

The team that run it are very dedicated and hard working and have broken down many barriers to enable hard to reach groups to get involved in the conservation work outdoors

I am a part owner of a very small wood in Thorpe St Andrews. We have found the Fringe Project, extremely supportive. Together we have tidied areas, planted new trees, fitted bird and bat boxes. Without them it probably would not have happened.

The Norwich Fringe Project aims at growing its significance locally in enhancing the natural environment, as well as the number of its successful conservation actions. New helpers are necessary to give our projects new directions, aspirations and optimism.

Local communities seem to be ready to participate more in our programmes of work: **73% of the people we consulted said they would be interested in becoming active supporters of the Norwich Fringe Project.**



Our organisation, to date:

At present, the Norwich Fringe Project is supported by the work of one full-time and one part-time employee. Matthew Davies is the Project Manager; his commitment to NFP, his proactive approach and managing skills have been vital to the development of our organisation in the last 10 years.

Local authority managers and elected members also assist with helping to manage the NFP work and activities. Norwich City Council is the responsible accountable local authority for all financial matters and the formal employment of staff.

New volunteer teams will work with the paid staff, help with key tasks and other support functions, and drive forward growth, development and priorities.

"Matthew Davies is very knowledgeable and always strives to deliver flexible, pragmatic and low cost solutions to problems"

"I have worked with Matthew several times and the work he does is fantastic. He is also brilliant with the pupils I work with"

If you'd like to contact Matthew: matthewdavies@norwichfringeproject.co.uk
07733 102 013



Our direction:

After almost a quarter of century of experience and success, we feel excited about the possibility of expanding our natural heritage activities and getting more people from the local community on board.

With an enlarged volunteer supporters base the Norwich Fringe Project will increase its potential and be even more present in our environment. New ideas, conservation restoration and green projects will be brought into being by a diverse range of individuals. Thanks to this communal effort, the value of our natural heritage and wildlife sites will be preserved and their existence in the future will be better secured.



**Join us – become
a Natural Heritage
Champion**

Some reasons for getting involved

The possibilities offered by NFP are extensive and varied. Our new supporters, the Natural Heritage Champions, will play a significant role in our growth. A series of inspiring projects and change needs your contribution so we can:

Undertake new conservation work on sites that are threatened by lack of heritage management in areas around Norwich

Continue our excellent site management activities. And, we want to restore and expand more natural habitats. We want to upgrade boardwalks and footpaths



Set up a new volunteer organisational structure which will communicate better our natural heritage initiatives - with separate teams involved in publicity, promotions and fundraising. We want to send out regular updates and keep the refreshed website vibrant

Provide training for volunteers on how to manage our heritage and protect biodiversity. In particular, we want to promote experience of conservation activities in neglected locations and where biodiversity is under severe stress

Get more people involved - because we believe that everyone needs to share in the responsibility for safeguarding wildlife and biodiversity



Encourage and develop new ecotherapy projects, with the aim of helping people experiencing poor mental health and disadvantaged situations.



Initiate more collaborations with schools, different residents associations and community groups to increase awareness of natural resources and stimulate more exchanges between people of different ages, ethnicities and backgrounds

Promote work programmes which look at ways to encourage health and well-being through exercise and outdoor activity

We are convinced that looking after our natural heritage not only means playing a role in protecting the planet, but is also a way to guarantee a heightened sense of community and shared progress.

**Become a Natural Heritage
Champion to help shape our direction
and hopes for a greener future**

Get in touch today
matthewdavies@norwichfringeproject.co.uk

'It is so important that the green spaces and sites are managed for conservation and for the benefit of the community – especially so close to the city centre where there are fewer opportunities for people to experience nature. With the ever reducing local authority funding, volunteer help and resourcing becomes even more crucial'

Survey Respondent



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