

# Nettlebed and District Commons Conservators

## Acid Wetland Project 2015/2016



February 2016

### Nettlebed Common Clay Pits

Many people are aware that a great deal of work has been undertaken by the Nettlebed and District Commons Conservators on the Nettlebed Common Clay Pits. Headed up by Rod d' Ayala our Conservation Consultant.

The large number of ponds on Nettlebed Common and the generally acidic nature of the habitats make it a very important site in a county context. The project has restored, enhanced existing and created new ponds over an area of about one hectare on the north east section of the clay pits, leaving a larger area of wet wood with numerous other shaded (more mature) ponds in this the remaining part of the clay pits and elsewhere on the Common. We are grateful for the funding from TOE2\* who have made this project possible.

Work began with tree felling on 17 September (while the ponds were more or less dry and access was easier) with this felling being more or less complete by the middle of November. Tree felling was followed by management work to hold water up at all levels of the system using existing (improved where necessary) and/or new banks and/or dams. There are over 60 individual ponds in the work area alone, including pre-existing and new water bodies varying from small to medium / large in size. This work is still ongoing, but at the time of writing the current phase of work is more or less complete. The ponds will be monitored over the spring and summer and a further phase of work undertaken late summer / autumn 2016 using the remaining grant funding, topped up (as required) from a local donor. This phase of work should include the enhancement of the existing ponds and creation of a new complex of ponds on the bank below Mill House (monitoring results permitting).

To date a total of 580 hours has been spent on the project of which 121 are from our band of very dedicated volunteers.

Whilst this work is going on and the pond levels are being adjusted, we regret that some of the paths have become difficult to walk on especially after such a wet winter. Once the levels have been stabilised and some drainage work has been done the paths are expected to dry out quite quickly.

A walk to show the work to local people was held on 6th February 2016, attended by some fifteen people. TOE2, the main grant giving organisation, are expected to visit the site in March. Rod d' Ayala is planning further guided tours of the site, If you wish to join one please contact: [clerk@nettlebed-commons.org](mailto:clerk@nettlebed-commons.org)

Team Nettlebed, local volunteers who turn out on most Sundays, complement the work being done by Rod and his associates. If you are interested in doing some work on the commons please contact: [volunteers@nettlebed.net](mailto:volunteers@nettlebed.net) or on 07894 580413  
More information can be found on our website [www.nettlebed-commons.org](http://www.nettlebed-commons.org)

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