



MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Upper Ouse Conservation Trust
April-May-June 2025
#001

Townend Field Nature Reserve: Thank you!



On 29th May 2025, the contracts were exchanged and the Upper Ouse Conservation Trust became the VERY proud owners of Townend Field... now Townend Field Nature Reserve! £275,000 was raised in just 4 weeks. We could not have done it without the INCREDIBLE support of everyone who donated, cheered us on, liked, shared and helped to spread the word in any way. Thank you to all of you for your wonderful support and for joining us as members!



Nature

Find out about some of the survey results already in, from our incredible volunteers who have carried out baseline surveys.

Community

Discover how the community have already been showing their support and what we have planned for our members.

Landscape Character

See how the National Trust have already helped us to get work started to protect landscape character in the village!

Education

Read about where Great Ouseburn Community Primary School's area of the field will be and what our agreements are with them.

Dame Judi Dench

Dame Judi Dench, beloved British actor and national treasure, was born in Heworth, York. Her brother and father were both GPs in the area, including doing their rounds in Great Ouseburn. Dame Judi is also passionate about protecting trees, so when we got in touch to see if she could help in some way, we were blown away when she recorded a special video appeal to launch our fundraising campaign. She also made a personal donation and recorded a celebratory video for the success of the campaign. You can see both videos on our website..

Dame Judi has raised 'several glasses of champagne' to everyone involved and to honour her support, we have named the first footpath 'Judi's Walk,' which she is said to be 'delighted' by.



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Objective 1:

Create a safe and lasting environment for wildlife to thrive, preserving the diverse wildlife existing on the site and developing the environment to encourage wildlife to return to the site.

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ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE



We have partnered with Askham Bryan College for staff and students to carry out baseline (then ongoing) wildlife surveys. This began on Thursday 19th June.

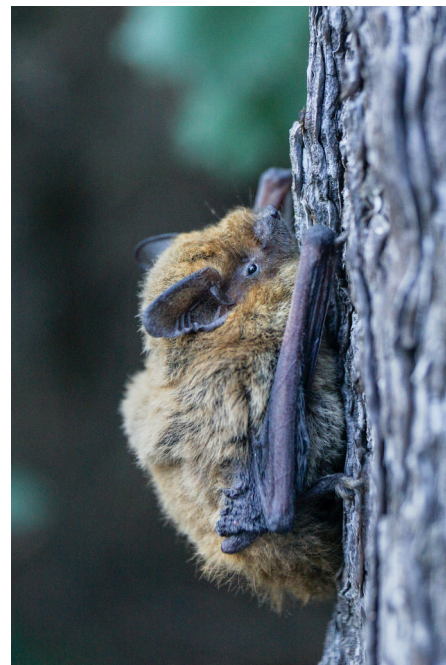
Their findings will be shared with the Trust, to inform the management of the site. Helping us to understand and protect what's there, and opportunities to increase biodiversity. We will share their findings in our next newsletter, once the first series of surveying has been complete. Thank you to the whole team - your enthusiasm is infectious and we are incredibly grateful for your time.

Bat Surveys

Local bat expert Dave Watkins has been surveying bat calls on Townend Field, which are now being analysed. This is an exciting addition to the surveys that are being carried out and will tell us which bats are either to feed over the grassland and wetland areas or perhaps roosting in cavities in the trees.. The surveys are due to be repeated, to capture changes over time in the local bat population in the nature reserve. Bats are protected species in their own right, but their presence can also help us to understand the health of a habitat.

Bat Walks

Would you be interested in coming on a bat walk through Townend Field Nature Reserve? Dave Watkins has really kindly volunteered to run a bat walk . We are in the process of sorting out dates but also need to gauge interest. If you are interested, please email us at info@uoc.org.uk to let us know and we'll get back to you!

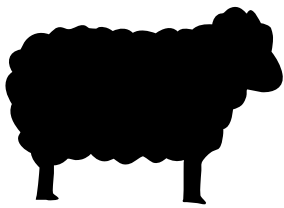


Moth Surveys

Moth surveys have also begun, An initial moth trap revealed 22 different species, which although relatively low for what we had hoped,, gives us a good baseline as we work on developing the land as a Nature Reserve. Surveying will continue to provide data that can inform our management of the land.



Sustainable Farming



The land has previously been grazed by sheep and hay-crops taken by a tenant farmer. We are thrilled that these practices are able to continue with the same farmer, helping to manage the land in a sustainable way. He has been very understanding of our aims and objectives and as a result, has agreed that there will be no use of pesticides, herbicides or fertiliser, and sheep will stay in the top field (Townend Field) keeping the lower field (known as the Long Carr) free of livestock to encourage more wildlife, whilst maintaining the land through grazing. The Long Carr will be maintained by mowing, where appropriate. There will be no dogs allowed at all while stock are grazing (see below.)

Rules on Dogs

Whilst one of our aims is to encourage the community to access the field (with a permissive footpath opening later this year,) we also must take into consideration our primary objective: To develop and protect the land as a nature reserve.

With this in mind, the trustees have agreed as an initial policy, There will be **no dogs allowed on the Long Carr at all**, to encourage and protect wildlife. Dogs on short leads will be allowed on the paths on Townend Field, except when stock are in the field.

We expect owners to pick up after their dogs and observe the rules in place. UOCT will monitor how well this is working and review the policy if necessary. Our priority remains wildlife and caring for the land as a nature reserve, so we thank everyone for their support in advance on this.





Our first bird survey: The results

Not only has Dave Watkins been busy collecting data on bats at Townend Field Nature Reserve, he has also been taking recordings of birdsong and has identified and verified the different species. What an incredible start!

The static recording session was carried out between 14th and 23rd June 2025. The digital recorder recorded around the clock for these days and Dave picked up both the diurnal and nocturnal calls.



You can also get involved via our website.

If you spot something on Townend Field, you are able to upload a sighting report (with an optional photograph if you're lucky enough to capture one,) which will also help us to build up a clearer picture of existing wildlife in Townend Field Nature Reserve.



Common Name	Scientific Name	Detections
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	38
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	12
Carriion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	60
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	1252
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	72
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	5370
Common House-Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	4
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	16
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	8
Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	11278
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	3
Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	549
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	9
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	62
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	8
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	61
Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	1129
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	26
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	15
Eurasian Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	10
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	13
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	10
Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	1225
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	11
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	12718
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	13
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	3
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	64
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	4
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	1
Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	13
Graylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	52
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	106
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	5
Greater Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>	330
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	3
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	314
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	22
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	5
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	6
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	44
Ring-necked Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	86
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	22
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	35
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	37
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	752
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	207

COMMUNITY

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Objective 2:

Create a lasting benefit for the local community through permissive access and participation in positive action for nature. Strengthen community sense of place and connection to nature.

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The First Members' Meeting:

You're invited

- Thursday 31st July 2025
- 7pm
- Great Ouseburn Village Hall

Online zoom link available upon request

Our first members' meeting will be a wonderful opportunity to bring together our members for us to say thank you! You will be able to receive your membership card (featuring the stunning artwork by Colin Swinton on the next page of this newsletter.) Not only that, but members who attend will also be able to find out more about our management plan and volunteering opportunities to support our different objectives.

We would love to see as many of you there as possible! Can't make it? Please let us know and we can arrange to either leave your membership card at our registered address (Great Ouseburn Village Store & Post Office,) or if you live further afield, we can post it out to you.



An Artist's Impression



Great Ouseburn resident and artist Colin Swinton has kindly painted this striking watercolour impression of Townend Field as a nature reserve. We have had some interest in purchasing prints to raise money for the Upper Ouse Conservation Trust and this is something that we are looking into on a pre-order basis. Please get in touch if you would also be interested so that we can gauge interest.

Garden Festival Success!



Just a few days after taking on ownership of Townend Field, we were delighted to be able to thank everyone for their support at a stand in the entrance at the Great Ouseburn Garden Festival. The event ran across the village and was a huge success and we are incredibly grateful to have received a total of £1000 from a share of the proceeds from the 2025 festival!

Take a look at our newly updated website!



A HUGE thank you to Great Ouseburn resident and volunteer Luke Crawford, for his incredible hard work behind the scenes.

Volunteers

We now have dedicated volunteers... to co-ordinate the volunteers! A massive thank you to Andrew Haynes for ploughing through the membership forms to collate the offers of help many of our members have given! Please bear with us as we set this up, there is a lot to consider and we are doing our best

If you would like to volunteer but you don't think that you told us at the point of applying for membership, don't worry! You can email us directly at info@uoct.org.uk and one of us will get back to you!

One of our first jobs will be co-ordinating a team of volunteers to remove the invasive Himalayan balsam.

Yorkshire Rewilding Network - Visit

On Sunday 8th June, trustees Kate Yates, Graeme Jackson and Louise Rayner visited a 13-acre private site, 5-years in the making of being managed for nature. They were blown away by owners James and Su's work and just what an impact it has had in a relatively short space of time. We are now also part of the 'Yorkshire Rewilding Network,' being supported by a wonderful community of people with similar aims and objectives who have tried and tested advice when we need it!



Fundraising

Our digital fundraising pack is now available!



If you are able to, please also consider setting up a regular standing order donation to the Upper Ouse Conservation Trust, to provide ongoing financial support that is required to manage and enhance the land. Every bit helps!

Memories of Townend Field

We are beginning to gather written and oral history from people who have memories of Townend Field.

Are you someone who used to use the field? Do you know someone who did?

We'd love to hear from you!

Head to our website and click on 'Get Involved' then 'Sightings & Memories' or email us at info@uoct.org.uk

Thank you!

PROTECT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

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Objective 3:

The views the land affords are a significant feature of the village and are specifically mentioned in the village 'Conservation Area Character Appraisal'. We will look to maintain this whilst further developing nature and wildlife on the site.

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Townend Field Stone Wall

We estimate the wall to have been built in the mid 1700s and it is a significant feature of Great Ouseburn village, as you walk from Little Ouseburn.



Some areas are in disrepair, although the wall is structurally stable, but we are committed to protecting and repairing it sensitively. We were very grateful to the grounds team from Beninbrough Hall (National Trust) who came to clear the vegetation along the wall, enabling us to see the extent of the work required. Keep up to date on our social media sites and in our next newsletter for updates.

Access will be through an existing gap in the wall and we are working on the funding and purchase to support this. We look forward to being able to allow access via the permissive footpath later in the year, once essential work has been carried out.



**National
Trust**



EDUCATION

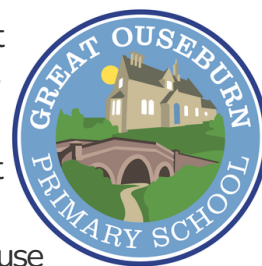
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Objective 4:

Facilitate use of Town End Field by Great Ouseburn School, promoting health, environmental awareness and nature connection.

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The Upper Ouse Conservation Trust have prepared and agreed the lease with the school, which is ready for signing. This is for a nominal amount and will ensure that approximately 0.5 acres of land is protected for the use of the school, whilst being in-keeping with our other objectives.



The area is directly behind the current school playground (a small tarmac yard with some green artificial grass over it to try and provide the best area that they had at the time.) Very soon, a gate will lead directly from the existing playground into a fenced-off area, including the oak tree.

Key points in the lease are:

- No buildings can be erected on the land
- Permission is granted for an occasional forest school canopy to be put up for shelter
- A storage box no higher than one metre may be placed for storage of equipment
- The maintenance and insurance of the designated area is the responsibility of the school.

Head to our website and go to the 'blog' section to see videos from the children of how they wanted to use the field, during the fundraising campaign!



We hope that all of the staff and children at Great Ouseburn Community Primary School enjoy using their new school field!



Although it hasn't been used by school children in recent years, Townsend Field used to be accessed by the village primary school. Above, you can see the children sitting beneath an old oak tree this tree will soon form part of the school field.



THANK YOU!



Townend Field Nature Reserve



20 ACRES
A DIVERSE HABITAT OF
WETLAND, WOODLAND,
MEADOW AND STREAMS



2 VILLAGES
LITTLE & GREAT
OUSEBURN WITH
BRANTON GREEN



1 UPPER OUSE
CONSERVATION TRUST
COMMUNITY BENEFIT
SOCIETY ESTABLISHED



6 TRUSTEES
BRINGING A BROAD
RANGE OF SKILLS &
EXPERIENCE



214 TRUST MEMBERS
RECRUITED IN THE FIRST
SIX MONTHS OF THE
CAMPAIGN



78 VOLUNTEERS
READY TO GET INVOLVED
IN ESTABLISHING AND
SUSTAINING THE RESERVE



100+ SCHOOL CHILDREN
TO BENEFIT FROM A NEW
FOREST SCHOOL &
OUTDOOR SPACE



47 BIRD SPECIES NOTED
DURING AN INITIAL
SURVEY, WITH SOME
RED LIST SPECIES



23 MOTH AND BUTTERFLY
SPECIES IDENTIFIED IN THE
FIRST LEPIDOPTERA
SURVEY ON THE SITE



10,000 SURVEY IMAGES
CAPTURED BY ASKHAM
BRYAN COLLEGE
STUDENTS

Infographic kindly created by volunteer Sue Draper

What have the trustees been doing?

We have been meeting regularly and working behind the scenes to complete essential setting up activities so that the UOCT can function, such as insurance, financial outlook and putting together a one-year management plan to keep us on track. We hope that you have found this newsletter a useful update on everything that has been happening.

Future Newsletters

We aim to publish these newsletters quarterly in our first year, before re-assessing. The next newsletter will be e-mailed out around the end of September 2025.

Thank you for your support. We hope to see you at our first members' meeting.

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