



Hoe Common was an allotment for the poor, where gorse was cut for fuel and bracken gathered for animal bedding. Once these were no longer needed, the Common became neglected and overgrown.

Conservation work on the Common aims to manage the woodland and to keep the central area open, clearing the birch scrub and some of the gorse to encourage the growth of heather. Periodic cutting of the heather will keep it strong. Occasional grazing will help make the management self-sustaining.

Hoe Bird Walk

For over thirty years, Hoe Common has been the meeting place of the Hoe Bird Walk, a monthly birdwatching group. Over the years, the group has recorded more than 130 species.



Long-tailed tit



Linnet



Nuthatch

If you would like to join the group, the meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month, starting at 8am.



Members of Hoe Home Guard photographed in 1944 on the day they were disbanded and handed in their rifles.

This 1946 RAF aerial photograph shows the network of World War I practice trenches. Management of the Common has to preserve these important historical features. The trenches were also used by the Home Guard in World War II. Notice how few trees there were in 1946.

Please keep dogs under control, especially during the bird nesting season and when there are grazing animals on the Common.



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Satellite photography overleaf ©2015 Google, ©2015 Getmapping plc
Illustrations by Holly Pearson.

Hoe Common



This leaflet explains the aims of the conservation work in progress on the Common as well as particular things of natural and historical interest.



Hoe Common came into being as part of an Inclosure Act in 1811. Before the inclosure, a much larger area stretching as far as Gressenhall Museum (shown on this map of 1797 as the House of Industry, or Workhouse) had been common land. Twelve acres of this land were allotted to the charity, the rest was taken into private ownership.

The Common is acidic heathland, a habitat which is increasingly rare in Norfolk.



Hoe Common

The Common is home to some increasingly rare reptiles, including adders, common lizards and slow worms.



The public footpath is part of the Wensum Way walk and the Cross-Norfolk Trail from King's Lynn to Great Yarmouth.

public footpath

Heather and gorse are more valuable habitat for insects and birds than bracken, which had taken over the central open area.

Some parts have been cleared of bracken to allow heather to regrow.

Fencing this area will allow ponies to be used for occasional grazing.

Around the Common perimeter there is an oak and birch woodland fringe which has grown up in the last 60 years. If left unmanaged, it would soon cover the whole Common.



Purple Hairstreak butterfly



Small Copper butterfly

Butterflies, moths and other insects will benefit from the increased variety of plant life.

circular path



In autumn the woodland hosts a fascinating diversity of fungi, including the spectacular fly agaric.