

Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme

Investing in the Cambridgeshire & West Norfolk Fens 2009-13

Project Name:	The Dragonfly Centre @ Wicken Fen	
Delivery bodies:	National Trust (Accountable Body) Dragonfly Partnership (Centre managers)	
Location:	Wicken Fen Nature Reserve	
Project cost (£):	69,200	
RDPE grant (£):	36,900	
Project partners:	National Trust, Dragonfly Partnership, Environment Agency, Anglian Water	
Timescales:	Grant awarded by LAG on 24 th April 2009 Project started on 5 th May 2009 Project completed date is 31 st March 2010	
FARDP priority & RDPE measures:	Project supported through Sustainable Rural Tourism Priority and RDPE measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	

Project Summary:

Wicken Fen is Britain's oldest nature reserve with international significance. The reserve is a key environmental asset for the Fens Adventurers area one of the areas main land based tourism attractions, attracting around 37,500 visitors per annum. The reserves owners, the National Trust, sought RDPE funding to enhance the tourism offer at Wicken Fen by establishing a new and specialist visitor attraction, The Dragonfly Centre. Wicken Fen is ideally placed for this new attraction as it hosts 24 different species of dragonflies. The Dragonfly Centre will be resourced with specialist equipment and hands on interpretation material in the form of microscopes, TV's and colourful displays, as well as demonstration dragonfly ponds. Once completed the Dragonfly Centre will be the new home for the Dragonfly Partnership and will be the new British Dragonfly Museum. The partnership will use the Dragonfly centre as a base to conduct dragonfly safaris, guided walks and tours, and general or tailored tuition courses. The centre will be located within an old Fen Workers Cottage on the Wicken Fen site. The cottage has been left vacant and semi-derelict since the 1950's. The funding will therefore be primarily used to renovate and convert the cottage into the new Dragonfly Centre. A high profile launch event will take place on 26th July when Chris Packham, the nation's most famous dragonfly enthusiast and the new presenter of the BBC's Spring Watch, will officially open The Dragonfly Centre.

Project outcomes/benefits:

The Dragonfly Centre should attract an additional 3000 visitors per annum with a resulting revenue increase in the region of £24,000 to Wicken Fen. These benefits will contribute to the long term sustainability and viability of Wicken Fen as one of the key land based tourism attractions in the Fens Adventurers area. It is also expected that some of the activities undertaken by the Dragonfly Partnership, in particular the development of demonstration ponds and the guided walks and safaris within Wicken Fen will help improve biodiversity and access to the countryside.

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Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme is funded by Defra, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: *Europe investing in rural areas* and Local Authorities. The funding is managed locally by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire ACRE and regionally by EEDA.



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