



## Introduction to Sculthorpe Moor

### Sculthorpe Moor Community Nature Reserve

'Moor' is an ancient term for 'a wet place' such as the fen - reflected in names of wildlife such as 'Moorhen'.

The Moor has been leased by the Hawk and Owl Trust as a nature reserve from a local parish trust, the Francis Beckham Trust. The land was originally given to Sculthorpe Parish as compensation for land enclosures in the 1700s. The demand for traditional uses such as stock grazing and peat cutting for fuel has now long ceased, and what was an open place decades ago became more like a wood.

### Restoration plan

The plan is to restore the reed and sedge beds to their open glory, but sensitively graduated into the adjoining ancient coppice woodland. Sculthorpe Moor can now be managed not only for wildlife but as a sustainable community nature reserve teaching the skills and glories of fen and woodland management.

### Saw sedge

The Moor is the only place in the Wensum Valley where saw sedge occurs, now a priority habitat for conservation on the European scale. Because it is so much more flexible than reed, saw sedge is traditionally used for thatched roof ridges. In the early 1980s, Sculthorpe Moor was frequented by winter roosting hen harriers. Hen harriers roost on the ground and saw sedge is one of their preferred habitats. By the early 1990s, the birds had disappeared due to the encroachment of scrub into the open areas of sedge. It is intended to open up, restore the sedge beds and harvest them on a three year rotation to again provide young and vigorous sedge.

The Hawk and Owl Trust has taken on this project to benefit not only the birds of prey such as harriers and barn owls that frequent the site, but also the entire eco system that supports these top predators, and traditional working practices that give life to that eco system.