Excitement in Suffolk as Carlton Marshes cashes in

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All eyes have been on Carlton Marshes in recent days. Have a quick glance at social media or the local news and it's clear that something big is going down at this quiet corner of the Suffolk Coast.

To those in the know, the sighting of an American Bittern is an incredibly rare and exciting event, attracting people from as far afield as Holland, Spain, France, Germany and Belgium.

As many as 600 a day, according to Broads Warden Matt Gooch: "The feedback from people who have never been to Carlton Marshes before has been amazing – everyone has been saying what amazing potential it has".

A National Nature Reserve

What Matt hasn't been able to tell anyone, until today, is that Suffolk Wildlife Trust's vision for a vast new nature reserve at Carlton Marshes in the Broads will finally become a reality thanks to £4,063,000 from the National Lottery.

The grant is one of the largest ever given to a Wildlife Trust and will enable the biggest wetland creation in the Broads for a decade. Suffolk Wildlife Trust hopes it will become a National Nature Reserve in the next five years.

[quote=Matt Gooch, Broads Warden]"It's the biggest thing Suffolk Wildlife Trust has ever done"[/quote]

"At the moment it's used by dog walkers but apart from that, it's a bit wild and can feel daunting, so people tend to bypass Carlton Marshes in favour of places like Minsmere and Dunwich Heath, further down the Suffolk Coast," says Matt.

"All that's about to change – it's the biggest thing Suffolk Wildlife Trust has ever done."

A wild place

The Trust say they can now can now begin restoring this precious part of East Anglia and create a place where wildness spreads as far as the eye can see. By 2020, a new visitor centre will be complete and the whole of the western fringe of Lowestoft will have been transformed into a watery landscape, perfect for wintering wildfowl and nationally declining waders like lapwing and redshank.

Matt added: "Whenever I talk to colleagues in other organisations – the RSPB, National, Trust, Natural England – everyone's talking about potential of Carlton Marshes. This is a major win for landscape, wildlife and people."



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Volunteers at work in the Suffolk Broads John Ferguson



Suffolk Broads vision

Changing lives: young naturalist finds hope in Suffolk wildlife haven