

**Burwell Fen**

**Location:** Cambridgeshire, CB7 5XP

**Pre-restoration:** Modified grassland with isolated scrub

**Target:** Mixed open fen and wet grassland with naturalistic grazing

**Restoration activity:**

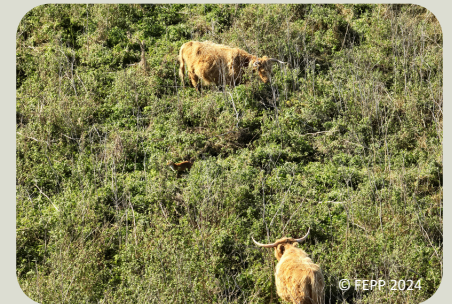
- Water table management using clay perimeter bunding and new sluice
- Water transfer pipe
- Installation of gates
- Track repairs



The key to restoration at Burwell Fen is having the ability to maintain a constant high water table on the peatland. This is being done by winning clay from beneath the peat and using this clay to produce an impermeable perimeter barrier to keep the water on the fen. Around the perimeter the top layer of peat is temporarily set aside and a trench cut down to the underlying clay. The trench is then backfilled with site won clay from the borrow pit to form a low level impermeable bund.



Initial archaeological investigations of the borrow pit (where the clay is sourced from to form the bunds) found insignificant activity. There was some evidence of ploughing marks and field drainage within the clay layer, which is likely to be from the 'Dig for Britain' campaign in the 1940s.



The restoration works on Burwell Fen, a former reclaimed fen impacted by 'Dig for Britain' movement, encompass the construction of perimeter trenched clay bund to intersect paleochannels (ancient, extinct river) to retain rainwater/winter abstracted water to saturate shallow peat (<1m deep) deposits.

A water transfer pipe will allow the control of abstracted water across the site whilst providing improved access for livestock and ponies. A new solar pump will enable use of summer abstraction to reduce summer drawdown.

