

# Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018

## **1. Volunteer Group Tasks**

Undertaken by Norfolk Conservation Corps (NCC) and Norwich Environmental Weekenders (NEWS).

### ***Tasks Completed (since last report)***

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Volunteer Group</u></b>	<b><u>Task Completed</u></b>
25/03/18	Upgate	NEWS	Clearance of birch saplings from Deadman's Hill
06/05/18	Upgate	NCC	Boardwalk partial removal and repair
13/05/18	Alderford	NEWS	Bracken clearance and removal of sycamore from fenceline

### ***Tasks Planned (exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)***

10/06/18	Upgate	NCC	Balsam/Bracken clearance – tbc
15/07/18	Alderford	NCC	Balsam/Bracken clearance – tbc

## **2. Management Plans**

Initial draft outline plans produced based on a Natural England template by Dave Weaver. Meeting held with Nik Bertholdt of Natural England (and DW) on 25/05/18 to discuss broad objectives and specific areas of importance.

New site descriptions will be required, to a certain extent influenced by condition assessments and surveys to be undertaken over the coming months. Management plans will need to align with new scheme when existing HLS agreement expires. Further work required prior to consultation with parishioners and other stakeholders.

## **3. HLS Agreements**

Annual claim forms sent 11/05/18 and receipt acknowledged by claims team in Natural England Cambridge.

See Finance report for financial transactions.

Application request for new scheme (Higher Tier: Countryside Stewardship) to be requested in January 2018 (to be submitted in April 2019 subject to confirmation). To stand the best chance we have been advised to make a single application for both Commons. The scheme runs for 5 years (rather than 10) and some capital grant applications may also be available for specific tasks (to be completed in a 2 year period).

## **4. Upgate Common**

NWT vet attended on 16/04/18 to remove the growth from one of the ponies. Growth successfully removed and pony recovered well.

NEWS volunteers attended site on the 25/03/18 and completed a task removing further birch saplings from Deadman's Hill (cost – NCC expenses plus herbicide cost of £18.99).

NCC volunteers helped remove some of the boardwalk from the approach to Bridge Pond on 06/05/18. Not possible to remove the bridge, but materials removed were used to fix the rotten boards and hand rails. Other boards used to fix rotten boards elsewhere on the boardwalk and spare boards saved for future repairs (cost – NCC expenses plus netting and staples purchased £18.30)

Further contact from Norfolk County Council (Marriott's Way Heritage Trail Project) regarding potential application for funding that would include circular walks at Upgate and Attlebridge that includes proposals for making the boardwalk fit for purpose. As part of this they would need a 10 year lease from us for the land upon which any new boardwalk or alternative path would sit. As no consultation with the Parish Council has taken place I suggested that they forward their proposals to us for consultation with parishioners and other stakeholders and requested an initial meeting to discuss. Currently waiting for details and a meeting date.

## **5. Alderford Common**

Still no one has been found yet to take on grazing within the fenced area for the coming year.

NEWS volunteers attended site on 13/05/18 and cleared bracken from the south east of the common and sycamore scrub from the fenceline. (cost - NEWS expenses).

The stand of Japanese Knotweed near the road is much diminished but is returning to a certain extent. Treatment will be needed over a number of visits that will be organised with the contractor (GT) who undertook the treatment last year.

The footpaths are starting to get overgrown and will need strimming back shortly (to be arranged).

**Steve Williams – May 2018**

**Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council**