

Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 19th July 2017

1. Volunteer Group Tasks

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

Tasks Completed (since last report)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Volunteer Group</u>	<u>Task Completed</u>
04/06/17	Alderford	NEWS	Bracken clearance from grassland, ponds and tumulus
02/07/17	Uppgate	NCC	Raking part of grassland, clearing fallen tree from Bridge Pond, Bracken topping on Deadman's Hill
16/07/17	Alderford	NCC	Clear access path, removal of tree from fenceline, clearance of bracken and Ragwort from grassland and clearance of Balsam from around ponds.

Tasks Planned

13/08/17	Uppgate	NCC	Bracken topping, clearance around ponds, cutting/raking grassland (tbc)
03/09/17	Alderford	NEWS	Bracken topping, clearance around ponds (tbc)
17/09/17	Uppgate	NCC	tbc

2. Management Plans – no action

3. HLS Agreements

Part payment of £1,037.75 received.

Great Crested Newt Surveys (3 evenings) have been undertaken at Uppgate during May/June on behalf of Natural England as part of SSSI monitoring.

4. Uppgate Common

Ponies OK and in good condition. David Tallentire of NWT has returned to his post as Grazing Officer, meeting to be arranged to review grazing.

Boardwalk – A number of boards and the overlying netting were badly damaged by someone riding a horse along the boardwalk. First noticed on Saturday 24/06/17. Not known who caused this damage despite enquiries made. Hard to believe that anyone would be so irresponsible as the horse could be badly hurt, not to mention the damage to the boardwalk! The existing no horse riding signs have been placed in more prominent places, but we may need to consider further signage? Broken boards will need replacing when time permits.

A large group of motorcyclists were encountered on Sunday 9th July coming down through the woodland from the road. I tried to stop them for a chat, but they shot across the Beck onto the private meadows and presumably exited onto Swiffers Lane through a field gate. They were not local and I'm not sure what can be done to prevent such unauthorised access. I'm reasonably certain that they would not take any notice of signs and I'm not sure that anyone wants to see a proliferation of notices all over the common anyway.

Most of the bracken has been topped/removed from Deadman's Hill and the heather is now starting to recover. Birch regrowth from previous cutting has been treated by George Taylor on 08/07/17 (cost £125.00) at the same time as treating the Japanese Knotweed at Alderford.

Some Himalayan Balsam has started to become visible in a few places, particularly around Bottomless Pond, in the area between the upper path and the road and in the woodland to the north of the fen area across the Beck. This is being pulled when seen and will form part of the next volunteer task.

The grassland area near the entrance will need cutting and the cut grass removed, probably during August – to be arranged.

5. Alderford Common

Ecology surveys have been continuing at Alderford by consultants working on behalf of Dong Energy for the Hornsea Project 3 Offshore Windfarm cable route corridor. These should be completed within the next month.

George Taylor has treated the Japanese Knotweed stand (see above).

Bracken has been cleared from within the fenced area and a large Ash tree removed from the fenceline in preparation for further grazing by sheep commencing hopefully some time in August

The footpaths have become swamped by bracken in places and whilst some has been cleared, further clearance is required to keep the paths open. Further bracken clearance will be required in various other places and further work will also be undertaken to clear around the ponds. Balsam has already been cleared from around the pond closest to the road.

Steve Williams - July 2017

Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council