Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 20th March 2024

1. Volunteer Group Tasks

Volunteer tasks undertaken by Norfolk Conservation Corps (NCC) and Norwich Environmental Weekenders (NEWS) unless otherwise stated.

Date	***Location***	***Volunteer Group***	***Task Completed***
Tasks Completed (since last report)			
18/02/24	*Upgate*	*NEWS*	*Scrub removal from Deadman's Hill.*
25/02/24	*Alderford*	*NCC*	*Scrub removal, cutting and raking of the grassland.*
Tasks Planned *(exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)*			
26/05/24	*Alderford*	*NCC*	*tbc*
30/06/24	*Upgate*	*NEWS*	*tbc*

2. Management Plans

No change.

3. HLS Agreements

Claim forms for 2024 received. Forms need submitting by 15th May for both sites – in progress.

4. Upgate Common

Specialist Contractor attended site in February to safely remove partially fallen trees threatening the fence line in the far southeastern corner of the fenced area and remove scrub from the fen/transition zone - cost £600.

Volunteer group undertook scrub removal from Deadman's Hill on 18/02/24 using a combination of pulling, cutting and treating. Task not fully completed due to weather conditions and so some scrub remains for action next season.

Conservation management tasks have been paused for the bird nesting season but a volunteer task at Upgate has been arranged with NEWS for 30/06/24 – possible task to involve Himalayan Balsam removal and/or bracken control.

Still only two Dartmoor ponies on site for the time being, but both appear in good health.

Do waste bin erected at entrance to track as agreed at January meeting. – cost £323.88

Repair/replacement of the information board - ongoing.

5. Alderford Common

No further contact from Natural England or the RSPB and still waiting for a meeting to be arranged and for a nesting bird survey to be undertaken.

Volunteer group undertook cutting / raking and scrub removal from the grassland on 25/02/24.

Specialist Contractor also attended site in February to cut and rake the grassland and remove trees from the edge - cost £900.

The "dangerous tree" threatening the highway at Alderford was removed by a contractor on 30/01/24 - cost £1020.

Conservation management tasks have been paused for the bird nesting season but a volunteer task at Alderford has been arranged with NCC for 26/05/24 – possible task to involve gate repair or bracken control.

The information board in the car park is being repaired and will be re-erected in the near future - in progress.

The damaged kissing gate at the southeastern corner is functional but still needs to be replaced which will need to be undertaken by a contractor or possibly by a volunteer group - ongoing.

Steve Williams – March 2024
Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council