Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 21st May 2025

Volunteer Group Tasks
Volunteer tasks undertaken by Norfolk Conservation Corps (NCC), Norwich Environmental Weekenders (NEWS) and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) unless otherwise stated.
Date Location Volunteer Group Task Completed
Tasks Completed (since last report)
23/03/25 Upgate NEWS Scrub management (Deadman's Hill)
11/05/25 Upgate NCC Scrub management (Deadman's Hill)
Tasks Planned *(exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)*
22/06/25 Upgate NEWS Pulling of small birch and bracken control
July 2025 Alderford NCC Bracken control and repairs to kissing gate
Management Plans

No change.
HLS Agreements

2025 claim forms for Upgate and Alderford submitted to the RPA on 29th April.
Upgate Common

The four NWT ponies were removed from site on 6th May and taken to Cawston for vet and farrier checks. The ponies will remain elsewhere for the summer to allow the site to recover, with ponies returning in around 6 months' time. Invoice for £636 received from NWT on 9th April to cover vet and farrier costs.
NEWS volunteer group undertook a scrub clearance task Deadman's Hill on 23/05/25.
Future tasks over the spring and summer will focus on maintenance and bracken control in addition to some pulling of small birch where nesting birds are absent.
The bench on the footpath along the beck could do with replacing as slats now rotting/missing. To be discussed.
Alderford Common

The annual PondNet eDNA survey for Great Crested Newts was conducted on 18th May. Results should be available later in the year, but hopefully the results will again be positive, despite the very dry spring and resulting low water levels. A plant survey is also planned for one of the ponds as part of the national study and this is likely to happen in July.
Scrub management tasks paused for the nesting season with the tasks until September focussing on maintenance and bracken control.
The kissing gate leading to Reepham Road needs some maintenance including a rotten post and some rails. To be addressed during next Alderford volunteer task in July.
Cutting of footpaths and keeping them clear of bracken through the spring and summer still needs to be sorted with the contractor (Nurture Landscapes) who previously undertook these works. No cutting undertaken so far this year, although the very dry spring has resulted in slow growth to date.
The two benches within the fenced area are starting to deteriorate and could do with replacing. To be discussed.
Steve Williams – May 2025
Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council