

Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 21st November 2019

1. Volunteer Group Tasks

Volunteer 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 Task Completed</u>	
14/10/18	Upgate	NEWS	Coppicing of gorse and control of scrub and bramble
11/11/18	Upgate	NCC	Pulling birch scrub from fen and Deadman's Hill

Tasks Planned (exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)

Jan/Feb 2019	Alderford	NCC	tbc
Feb/Feb 2019	Upgate	NEWS	tbc

2. Management Plans

Draft plans mostly completed for review/consultation. May need to amend in light of possibility of extending existing HLS Agreement (see below) to ensure alignment with current prescriptions.

3. HLS Agreements

See Finance report for financial transactions.

Natural England (NE) have informed us that it will now be possible to extend our existing HLS Agreements for 4 years rather than applying through the new Countryside Stewardship scheme. This could be advantageous as new applications are not guaranteed to succeed, are likely to result in smaller subsidies and there will be no gap in funding as would happen with the new scheme which would not commence until 2020 (current funding runs out in 2019). Meeting arranged towards the end of November with NE to discuss and review current condition of sites.

4. Upgate Common

All ok with the Ponies. No new volunteer pony checkers have come forward, despite request for help in previous report.

Vet and Farrier visit carried out on 08/11/18. Ponies sedated, examined and hooves trimmed. No problems to report. Ponies were due to be moved to Alderford, but NWT declined to undertake the move and the ponies will remain at Upgate.

No further movement regarding the potential application for funding for a circular walk at Upgate (including proposals for making the boardwalk fit for purpose). Norfolk County Council emailed for update, but no response received to date.

One broken board on the boardwalk replaced with already purchased board.

A NEWS volunteer group attended site on 14/10/18. Some of the larger patches of gorse were coppiced and partially fallen trees safely dropped using chainsaws from along the fenceline and within the enclosure.

A NCC volunteer group attended site on 11/11/18 to remove birch scrub from Deadman's Hill, the valley fen and transition zone.

5. Alderford Common

Ponies from Upgate are no longer going to be moved to Alderford. However, a meeting was held with NWT and the possibility of temporarily putting 4 British White cattle on the site for a couple of months at the beginning of 2019 discussed. If this is not possible then alternative grazing options will have to be looked into again.

The broken 6" corner fence post was replaced on 16/09/18 by SW with the assistance of Dave Weaver. Further minor fence repair required before any grazing commences.

Steve Williams – November 2018

Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council