

Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 12th August 2020

1. Volunteer Group Tasks

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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Volunteer Group Task Completed</u>	
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Tasks Completed (since last report)

19/07/20	Upgate	NEWS	Bracken and Himalayan Balsam control
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19/07/20	Alderford	NEWS	Bracken control and clearance of main access track
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Tasks Planned (exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)

13/09/20	tbc	NCC	tbc
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2. Management Plans

No further action.

Footpath tree safety audit instructed but not yet completed due to pandemic (cost of £400). Contractor may be required where any diseased/damaged trees are identified that pose a risk to public safety.

3. HLS Agreements

HLS agreement extensions in place until 31/05/2021. Further extensions are likely to be offered until the new ELM scheme is in place (possibly as late as 2024).

4. Upgate Common

All well with the ponies. New information signs put up at five of the access gates to replace damaged ones.

NEWS undertook a task on 19/07/20 involving the clearance of bracken on Deadman's Hill and pulling/cutting of Himalayan Balsam from a number of locations. The number of volunteers allowed for a split task with half working at Alderford.

Himalayan Balsam also pulled at various other times mainly from the northwest and northeast corners adjacent to the Beck.

Future summer tasks likely to include non-native species eradication (Himalayan Balsam) and bracken control, possible pond maintenance plus some maintenance of infrastructure where required. Grassland will need cutting and raking up in late August. The help of Parishioners in completing this may be necessary in light of the limited availability of volunteer groups (next task booked in for 13/09/20) or otherwise contractors paid to complete it.

The occasional broken boards have been replaced on the boardwalk, but urgent action still required on its future following consultation.

Increased incidence of littering and possibly camping on the common (thanks to parishioners for removing when found). Signs to be erected at main access points if agreed. Draft sign design submitted to council for approval.

5. Alderford Common

No tasks undertaken due to pandemic.

NEWS undertook a task on 19/07/20 involving the clearance of bracken from within the fenced area and clearance of the main access track. Some of the other paths are very overgrown and need attention. Some Himalayan Balsam cleared from northwest corner adjacent to the Beck.

Some Japanese Knotweed has regrown on the periphery of the area previously treated that will require treatment. Contact to be made with contractor to arrange.

Future summer tasks likely to include bracken control, possible pond maintenance plus some maintenance of infrastructure where required. Any urgent requirements may need to be addressed by a contractor.

An incidence of camping occurred at the time of the previous meeting. Damage was caused to the grassland by fires and a significant amount of rubbish was left that needed to be cleared up (see note above re possible sign).

Steve Williams – August 2020

Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council