

Commons Update for Parish Council Meeting – 7th April 2016

1. Commons Report

Volunteer Group Tasks

Tasks Completed

07/02/16	Uppgate	NCC	Scrub removal on Deadmans Hill
28/02/16	Alderford	NCC	Scrub removal within fenced area
06/03/16	Alderford	NEWS	Scrub removal around Tumulus and various paths

Tasks Planned

10/04/16	Alderford	NCC	Various maintenance tasks (car park/paths/steps etc?)
19/06/16	Alderford	NEWS	tbc

Management Plans

No further action

HLS Agreement

Annual claim forms have been received and need submitting before the 16th May. SW to complete and submit.

Uppgate Common

Ponies ok – no problems to report. Pony checking volunteers are doing an excellent job and every day of the week is covered, but any new volunteers always welcome.

Boardwalk – a number of boards are broken and the boardwalk is approaching the end of its useful life. It was decided at the last PC meeting that we would explore the cost of replacing the boardwalk. SW in the process of obtaining quotations from 3 contractors for replacement and will report back on options and viability of total replacement. May be worth trying to replace the current broken boards in the meantime (estimated cost £100-£200)?

Contractor, George Taylor has completed 3 days on the fen area at Uppgate clearing saplings and treating stumps. Invoice received for £390 which was half of that expected as only 1 man did the work rather than the anticipated 2. GT to return in the summer for half a day to treat any regrowth. (Estimated cost £65-£130).

Letter received from parishioner regarding parking at Uppgate and the blocked drainage ditch on the northern boundary. Drainage ditch cleared by SW and operational but will need further clearance in the future as it silts up with material washed in off road. Parking options explored for Uppgate, but initial estimates for creating dedicated parking area or enhancing verges with grass pavers too expensive for available funding options.

Some complaints received from parishioners regarding “urbanisation” of the common adjacent to the road. Areas being mowed and tended like a garden. This is not in accordance with the Management Plan and HLS Funding Agreement and parishioners should be asked to cease any unauthorised works. For the record, the collection of wood from fallen trees and selected authorised thinning of trees in the woodland is allowed as is the authorised grazing of animals in designated areas. The only other exception would be the mowing of a thin strip adjacent to the highway for maintenance and safety reasons.

Alderford Common

The fenced grassed area has had a certain amount of clearance work done over the last year, but could still benefit from some temporary grazing. NWT have provided some contacts that they work with who may be interested in grazing. SW still to contact them to see if something can be arranged for 2016.

Some minor regrowth of the Japanese Knotweed on the edges of the infestation will be treated by George Taylor as part of further work at Uppgate. (see above). The Himalayan Balsam found late last year around the pond near the road bridge will be dealt with in the summer by a volunteer group.

The car park needs some attention and hopefully this will be addressed by a volunteer group on the 10/04/16.

The paths on Alderford became rather overgrown last year and these will need to be cut on a more regular basis this year with, if necessary, volunteer group assistance.

Steve Williams

April 2016

Swanton with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council