

# Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **1. Volunteer Group Tasks**

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

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

19/01/20	Upgate	NCC	Control of bramble patches and scrub clearance on heathland
01/03/20	Upgate	NEWS	Scrub clearance on transition and felling of partially fallen trees
08/03/20	Alderford	NCC	Coppicing of willow and selected scrub removal in fenced area

### ***Tasks Planned (exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)***

April/May	tbc	NCC	tbc
07/06/20	tbc	NEWS	tbc

## **2. Management Plans**

Mapping for draft plans completed. Consultation on hold pending clarity on future funding schemes that may require amendments to current drafts.

Footpath tree safety audit instructed but not yet completed (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. 2020 claim form for Alderford received – requires submission prior to 15/05/20. Upgate claim form not yet received.

## **4. Upgate Common**

No problems to report with respect to the ponies. Ponies will be removed again over the summer following the successful break in grazing last year.

Task on 19/01/20 (NCC) involved scrub clearance on lowland heath and control of bramble patches. Further scrub clearance undertaken on transition zone between heath and fen on 01/03/20 (NEWS).

Contractor George Taylor + assistant attended site for a day in February to safely fell a number of storm damaged trees that were partially fallen and leaning over the fenceline (cost –see below).

Future tasks on hold until after main bird nesting season. Summer tasks will address non-native species eradication (Himalayan Balsam) and bracken control plus some maintenance of infrastructure where required.

## **5. Alderford Common**

Contractor George Taylor + assistant attended site in February to open up the access track, remove scrub from inside access gate to allow for vehicle turning and complete scrub removal from an area of the chalk grassland (cost £785 for 6 p/days + fuel and herbicide- 2 days at Upgate and 4 days at Alderford).

Cattle successfully moved on to site by NWT on 27/02/20. 4 nr British White cows will remain on site (subject to continued assessment of impact) up until the end of March. Thanks to Sheila Foster-Hancock, Jayne Phillips, Lynn and Maurice Culshaw and Steve Griggs for assisting in checking of the cows on a daily basis. All gates signed and no issues reported. A temporary fence has been erected around the yew tree growing near the main pond to prevent the cows from eating the tree which can be poisonous to them – this has been electrified as they were found to trample the fence otherwise. Some damage caused to steps, which will need some maintenance when cattle removed.

Task undertaken on 08/03/20 (NCC) involved coppicing some large willow and removing some scrub from the chalk grassland.

Future tasks on hold until after main bird nesting season. Summer tasks will address non-native species eradication (Himalayan Balsam) and bracken control plus some maintenance of infrastructure where required. Fenceline along the southern edge will need quite a few fence posts replacing. (cost of posts likely to be in the order of £90, subject to exact number required).

**Steve Williams – March 2020**

**Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council**