

Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 18th November 2020

1. Volunteer Group Tasks

Volunteer tasks undertaken by Norfolk Conservation Corps (NCC) and Norwich Environmental Weekenders (NEWS) unless otherwise stated. Now operating a reduced schedule of tasks with a maximum of 6 volunteers per group.

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

20/09/20	Upgate	NEWS	Raking grassland and mowing and raking in glades
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04/10/20	Alderford	NEWS	Mowing and raking of grassland, scrub and path clearance
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Tasks Planned (exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)

Volunteer groups not currently operating during national lockdown.

2. Management Plans

No further action.

Footpath tree safety audit instructed but still 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

Nothing to report.

4. Upgate Common

20/09/20 NEWS finished raking the grassland and did some mowing and raking in the power line rides. Also did some clearance of the ditch at the far western end of the common to try to prevent water coming down the road from entering the common via the access track. This was successfully completed following a lot of initial hard work by Michael Bye.

The storm on 25/09/20 caused quite a lot of damage with some large trees brought down across the footpath along the beck and on Swiffers Lane. The tree across the footpath was kindly cleared by some parishioners, although some smaller branches still need to be removed from the adjacent pond. A number of branches and 4 trees also came down on the fence line, which were removed on 27/09/20. Another tree was reported down on the fence on 09/11/20 and this was removed the following morning.

The boardwalk was successfully removed following a delay due to the bad weather on 01&02/10/20 by contractors organised by Ed Jones (cost £1332.60). Some of the wetter areas along the former boardwalk footpath are now cutting up, although the route is still passable. A decision still needs to be made regarding the future boardwalk replacement/ alternative solution/ rerouting of path to drier ground etc).

Vet/farrier check undertaken on at the end of October and the ponies hooves were trimmed.

Contractor BTS on behalf of UK Power Networks attended on 30/10/20 to coppice and trim back some trees from the power line rides. Additional work still to be completed.

Contractor George Taylor commenced cutting and burning of the large stand of birch saplings growing on the side of Deadman's Hill on 04/11/20. Still needs to be completed. (5 p.days at anticipated cost of £700).

Future tasks for the autumn likely to involve possible pond maintenance and scrub control but availability of volunteers uncertain due to Covid.

5. Alderford Common

20/09/20 Contractor George Taylor treated Japanese Knotweed regrowth on the periphery of the area previously treated.

02/10/20 Dave Weaver mowed around the car park to maintain visibility from the road to try to deter fly-tippers and did some mowing on the grassland and around the fence line.

04/10/20 NEWS finished cutting and raking in the grassland, cleared the fence line and completed some path clearance.

25/10/20 completed some scrub and footpath clearance.

Future tasks for the autumn likely to involve possible pond maintenance and scrub control but availability of volunteers uncertain due to Covid restrictions. Hopefully the cattle will be able to return to the fenced area at the start of the New Year but up in the air at the moment due to the pandemic and changes in personnel at NWT.

Steve Williams – November 2020

Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council