

Commons Report for Parish Council Meeting – 18th May 2022

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1. Volunteer Group Tasks

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

Date Location Volunteer Group Task Completed

Tasks Completed (since last report)

27/03/22 Alderford NCC Clearance around and repair of wooden steps out of pit

Tasks Planned (exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)

22/05/22 Upgate NEWS Fence repairs

12/06/22 tbc NCC tbc

2. Management Plans

No change.

3. HLS Agreements

Claim forms for 2022 submitted on 03/05/2022 for Alderford and Upgate Common's HLS Agreements.

4. Upgate Common

At the last PC meeting on 16/03/22 it was unanimously agreed to proceed with the gravel path option for replacement of the removed boardwalk sections on the footpath adjacent to the Beck. Quotations have been sought from 3 contractors. Natural England have been contacted to enquire about the need for consenting of the works but we are still waiting for a response. A meeting was held on site with a Countryside Access Officer from Norfolk County Council on 05/05/22 to discuss options for NCC involvement. There is a possibility that NCC will fund some additional sections of path around the footbridge over the Beck (southern approach and north along the southern section of Swiffers Lane) where the footpath aligns with the official footpath routes. Currently waiting for confirmation.

NCC will probably not replace the damaged Wynch's Way information board or damaged map board which both fell down due to rotten supporting posts and so we will need to repair and re-erect if we wish to retain them. However, NCC will replace the fallen finger post on the common.

Next volunteer tasks to be confirmed depending upon weather, although there are limitations on what can be addressed over the next few months to avoid disturbance of breeding birds.

5. Alderford Common

Task undertaken on 27/03/22 with NCC volunteer group involving clearance around and replacement of broken wooden retained steps that climb out of the old marl pit in two locations. Cost of wood for replacement and staking was £201.55.

The Freshwater Habitats Trust who have been undertaking Great Crested Newt (GCN) surveys at Alderford since 2015 as part of a national eDNA survey have provided the results from last year, which indicate the presence of GCN in all 7 ponds surveyed on Alderford Common in 2021, which is good news.

The southern section of the fenced area that is overgrown and has fallen down in a number of places still needs replacing during the Summer/Autumn, prior to any future grazing. Contractors still to be approached for quotations with a view to fixing this and the damaged kissing gate at the southeastern corner.

NCC were reminded of the need to replace the fallen footpath marker post in the access track into the fenced area during the meeting at Upgate on 05/05/22.

Next tasks to be confirmed depending upon weather and availability of volunteer groups, although there are limitations on what can be addressed over the next few months to avoid disturbance of breeding birds.

Steve Williams – May 2022

Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council