

# SWANNINGTON WITH ALDERFORD AND LITTLE WITCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council held at St Margaret's Church, Swannington on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>  
September 2016 at 7:35pm**

**Present:**

Tim Prail (chairman)	Steve Williams
Trevor Nelson	Helen Mutimer
Ed Jones	Hazel Nelson (minutes)
Steve Griggs	Chris Liles

1. **Apologies** MR, at a family celebration

3. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016**  
It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record

4. **Matters Arising.**

- Play area lease – Laura Marfell-Williams, having received a promise from Mr. Buxton that the land will be gifted; Hansells solicitors quoted £750 + VAT, this is cheaper than any previous quote.

**It was resolved to use Hansells.**

Legal costs incurred by the vendor + land registry costs + fencing must also be paid by the council.

- Bus shelter – ongoing **Action SG**
- Village sign – ongoing **Action SG**
- Report on better broadband – BT require 28 phone lines to undertake a feasibility study. CL has contacted 23 residents, so far, in Uppgate and Hengrave. 21 of these are willing to contribute to the cost of an upgrade (in principle). CL has spoken to approximately 80% of those, in the area, who could potentially benefit.  
BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) could offer £350 grant to any individual, toward upgrade costs, if their data transfer delivery speed is less than 2 megabytes/ sec at present.  
There are 13 phone lines in Little Witchingham (including 2 businesses).

CL was thanked for his clear and helpful report.

5. **Finance** – Accounts attached

**It was resolved to agree the following payments:-**

	£
• Norfolk Conservation Corps, HLS – retrospective	12.50
• Brushcutter/trimmer, HLS – retrospective	395.00
• The conservation Volunteers HLS – retrospective	20.88
• Grass topping and Allturan mower hire HLS – retrospective	171.60
• Materials for boardwalk repair HLS	97.62
• The Conservation Volunteers Uppgate HLS	15.08
• Mazars audit fee	120.00
• Old brushcutter sold	100.00

6. **Commons**

The following report was written by SW:-

**1. Volunteer Group Tasks**

Undertaken by Norfolk Conservation Corps (NCC) and Norwich Environmental Weekenders (NEWS).

**Tasks Completed (since last report)**

### ***Date Location Volunteer Group Task Completed***

*31/07/16 Upgate NCC Balsam removal and Boardwalk repairs*

*14/08/16 Upgate NEWS Scrub clearance around ponds and reedmace removal*

*28/08/16 Upgate NCC Scrub clearance around ponds and reedmace removal*

*11/09/16 Upgate NEWS Scrub removal and clearance in glades*

*18/09/16 Alderford NCC Balsam removal and clearance around ponds*

## **2. Management Plans**

To be discussed with Dave Weaver following his retirement from Natural England at the end of September as previously agreed.

## **3. HLS Agreements**

Dave Weaver is retiring at the end of September; his personal interest in the effective management of the commons and his hard work in assisting with conservation tasks and helping to organise volunteer groups has been greatly appreciated.

## **4. Upgate Common**

Ponies a little overweight due to the good growing conditions this year, but otherwise ok. Next biannual NWT vet and farrier visit due at end of year. More volunteer pony checkers still needed.

Boardwalk – Broken boards and some netting were replaced on 31/07/16. A few spare boards and a roll of netting is available for ongoing repairs. Some repairs to broken/missing netting will be undertaken in the near future.

Long term options for the boardwalk are still being considered. Options for possible funding still being explored before any decisions are made.

The grassland area at the entrance to the common was partially cut on 31/08/16, following some initial brush cutting of thistle by Mark Hassall. The cuttings were then raked into swathes for drying and then taken up and burnt on the fire site by Mark and a number of Upgate residents. Thanks to all those who helped out.

The power line ride and nearby open glades were cut by Mark Hassall with a hand operated mower and some scrub clearance carried out by volunteers to link up the glades with the grassland.

Scrub clearance was undertaken around the Bottomless and Horseshoe ponds, some silt was dug out and Reedmace pulled to open up the ponds and try to prevent them from silting up. Scrub was cleared from the far side of the Beck at the Horseshoe pond to open up a view onto the adjacent meadow.

Regarding invasive non-native plants, the scattered patches of Himalayan Balsam have been removed and most was dealt with before setting seed, so hopefully we are getting on top of the problem and there should be significantly less next year. The Crassula (New Zealand Pygmyweed) in the Hoss Pond remains a problem with no obvious means of eradication although options are being considered.

Some birch regrowth on the fen area is to be cleared.

## **5. Alderford Common**

Unsuccessful in getting anyone to graze Alderford this year. Hopefully this can be rectified for 2017.

The stand of Japanese Knotweed has some regrowth following earlier treatment and a contractor has been asked to return to carry out another round of treatment prior to winter.

The remaining Himalayan Balsam (and regrowth) around the pond near the road bridge has been mown/pulled again by a volunteer group on 18/09/16 and vegetation has been cleared around the other ponds adjacent to the Beck, together with some Reedmace removal.

The Crassula in one pond remains a problem but does not appear to have spread to other ponds so far.

A large bough from a large Ash tree has fallen onto the fence line near the fieldgate entrance, causing some damage. The bough has been trimmed back but is too large to be dealt with by hand saws and a chainsaw will be required. An experienced chainsaw operator who has helped with tree removal in the past (Will Stewart) has been asked if he could attend site to safely remove the bough and make the tree safe.

## **6. Swannington Common**

The Himalayan Balsam in the uncut reed area and along the Beck was not been removed in time to prevent seeding and so has been left to be dealt with next year.

SW was thanked for his excellent report.

## **7. Highways**

The “Triangle” in the centre of Swannington does present a safety issue as large vehicles negotiate a tight turn. To “kerb” the triangle will cost £11,000.

The council decided that the road, at that point, needs to be widened, taking about one metre from the base of the triangle. Jon Winnett, Highways Engineer, to be consulted re: extending the tarmac area allowing more space for

turning traffic. Once his views have been expressed, a bid to help with 50% of the costs will be submitted, on grounds of safety, if not covered as a maintenance issue.

Also include the area in front of the bus shelter for improvement.

**Action TP**

**8. Village Pump & Tree**

Correspondence from the trustees expresses frustration that the tree is still in situ.

Felling to be organised and with less than 5m<sup>3</sup> of wood no licence will be required. Replacement oak tree to be purchased.

**Action SG**

**9. Planning**

- Deighton Hills Shooting Club submitted another appeal to extend their shooting hours. The objections, from the Council have been reiterated.
- CPRE are asking councils to join together to oppose unnecessary housing development. SW excused himself, expressing an interest.

**It was resolved to join with CPRE.**

**Action TP**

**10. Devolution**

No comments – Council wish to wait for more information.

**11. Correspondence**

- STC tree contractors offering services – to be contacted for quote re: Chestnut tree
- Heritage Rangers to be set up by BDC
- Police report 5 crimes in the parish between 1/4/16 – 31/08/16
- Police Community Engagement Officer to have 6 monthly meetings within this area. First meeting in Aylsham 10/01/17. No-one available to attend.

**12. AOB**

- What progress is being made toward the redevelopment of site on Station Road which, at present is attracting much fly tipping.
- Next meeting Thursday November 17<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Action MR**

Meeting closed 8:55pm