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)

03/12/23 Alderford NCC Scrub removal and cutting & raking of grassland in fenced area.

Tasks Planned (exact dates and tasks to be confirmed)

18/02/24 Upgate NEWS Scrub removal

Feb/Mar 24 Alderford NCC tbc

2. Management Plans

No change.

3. HLS Agreements

No change.

4. Upgate Common

Parking at Upgate and the logs continue to be a divisive issue - to be discussed again at meeting.

Meeting held with specialist Contractor (George Taylor) on site on 14/01/24 to discuss works including scrub removal that will not be completed by volunteer groups and some safe removal of some partially fallen trees. Provisionally booked in for February subject to availability.

Following the treatment of the pony with suspected laminitis it was deemed to have recovered sufficiently to remain on site, but one of the other ponies became lame and was removed for treatment leaving only two on site. The removed pony or an alternative will be bought to site to make up the usual three at some point in late winter/early spring.

Repair/replacement of the information board - ongoing.

The Norfolk Fungus Study Group visited on 16/12/23 and found 137 species, including 73 new species for Upgate and 5 that were new to Norfolk.

Next volunteer task booked in for 18/02/24 which will involve further removal of scrub from Deadman’s Hill/Fen and transition.

5. Alderford Common

No further contact from Natural England or the RSPB and still waiting for a meeting to be arranged .

Meeting held with specialist Contractor (George Taylor) on site on 14/01/24 to discuss works including grassland management, rotational scrub management and removal of scrub encroachment that would not be completed by volunteer groups prior to the bird nesting season. Booked in for 7-9 th February for two-person crew.

The provision of grazing for the grassland needs to be arranged if possible but most of the grassland will have been cut and raked by March and so not crucial.

The clerk has instructed a contractor to remove the “dangerous tree” threatening the highway that requires removal by 25/02/24 – to be completed in February.

The information board in the car park is being repaired and will be re-erected in the near future. Thanks to Alistair Gregory for doing this.

The damaged kissing gate at the southeastern corner is functional but still needs to be replaced which will need to be undertaken by a contractor - ongoing.

Next volunteer task at Alderford to be arranged with NCC in February/March.

Steve Williams – January 2024

Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham Parish Council