

## Westleton Common Advisory Group

### **Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7-30 pm in the foyer of Westleton Village Hall**

Present; David Rous (DR), John Bebbington (JBe), Nick Shearme (NS), Joyce Burtenshaw (JBU), Amanda Freeman (AF), Chris Freeman (CR), Julian Alexander (JA), Ian Webber (IW).

1 – *Apologies.* John French, Barry Banks.

2 - *Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.* Agreed correct.

3 - *Matters arising not on this agenda.*

GeoSuffolk were informed of our intention to further clear the cliff face in compartment 13, primarily to encourage sand martins to nest. Bob Markham of GeoSuffolk replied to the effect that they would welcome anything that further exposed the underlying geology. He would also be keen to hear if the sand martins took advantage of this work.

JBe has notified Natural England (for DEFRA) of our plans for compartment 13 later this year.

The Annual Report for 2023 is now completed and published.

4 – *Digital code for lock-down posts.* This was shared with the advisory group but will not be recorded. JBe has notified Suffolk Fire and Resue and the ambulance service.

5 – *Recent management work;*

*A - Wetland area in compartment 11.* Over the winter of 2023/2024 as much excess vegetation as possible has been removed. The site will be assessed later this year with a view to further clearance.

*B - Excess growth of birch in compartment 1 near the beehives.* All excess growth of young birch has been cleared.

6 – *Fire warning signs.* DR will install later when needed.

7 - *Winter contract works for later this year.* NS has contacted our usual contractors to look at the work required and quote. The main work to be done is the clearance of the “sand martin” cliff in compartment 13 and the clearance of gorse on the right side of the approach to Black Slough also in compartment 13.

8 - *Clearing gorse in compartment 13 on the bank leading to Black Slough.* Neil Lister of Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape (formerly Suffolk Coast and Heaths) has offered two days’ work from his volunteer teams this autumn/winter. We have suggested to him that any two Tuesdays between September and the end of December will be best for us. We are considering asking them to help clear the gorse on the left bank on the approach to Black Slough. We will confirm this when we know what the contractors will be doing (see item 7 above). JBe will let Neil Lister know what work is to be done by his teams when the plans for compartment 13 have been finalised.

9 – *Car park repairs.* NS is discussing this with our usual contractors. They can supply filling material. CF could spread the material and fill potholes using a digger and tractor. NS and CF will discuss. Both the parking area between Baker’s Lane and Mill Street and the “container” parking area will be repaired. Westleton Parish Council has “ring-fenced” money to fund this work.

10 – *AOB*

NS outlined a problem that had been reported relating to compartment 3. Certain paths had been obstructed by cut and fallen vegetation (which gets replaced if it is removed). There also seems to be some unauthorised incursion onto the common by people living in a neighbouring house. This apparent incursion includes what seems to be a flower bed and fire pit as well unauthorised clearance and other signs of activity. Concern was expressed to maintain the legal boundary.

Metal posts were also reported in the vicinity of compartment 3 and questions had been raised about the location of some of the "No Access" signs on the Gun Club boundary. DR and NS were able to establish that the warning signs were all on Gun Club land and the metal posts are also not on common land.

The apparent incursion and obstruction had been discussed at the Westleton Parish Council meeting the previous day and the people thought to be responsible will be approached for clarification.

DR reminded us that we should do the annual safety audit soon. NS, DR and IW will agree a date for this.

DR also reported firework debris in compartment 10. He has cleared some. JBe offered to clear more as he would not be able to join the safety audit. Other help may prove necessary.

There is also some damage to a boundary fence on the North Common on the boundary of a neighbouring house that NS will investigate.

*11 - Date of next meeting.* September 2024 – date to be arranged.