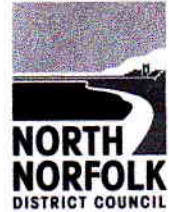


THWAITE COMMON ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

12 NOVEMBER 2018 10.00AM

THE BOARDROOM



Chair: Rob Young

Present:

Rob Young (RY)	Barry Fitzpatrick (BF)
Colin Brown (CB)	Jackie Grimble (JG)
Tony Moore (TM)	Auriel Mims (AM)
Annie Gedge (AG)	John Snelling (JS)
Helen Baczkowska (HB)	Gemma Walker GW)
Will Cutts (WC)	John Mims (JM)
Octavia Holman (OH)	Bob Grimble (BG)
Jeanette Wilson (JW)(Notes)	

1. Apologies:

- Cllr Becky Palmer and Cllr Norman Smith
- RY updated the group on the sad news that Cllr Smith's partner passed away recently. The group will send Cllr Smith their condolences

2. Minutes of last meeting – 13th March 2018:

- Minutes of last meetings were recorded as a true record.

Matters arising

Page 2 – tree cutting –

- A discussion took place about appropriateness of tree cutting works coming out of Council's commons budget
- Having surveyed the trees, significant work needed doing which the Council undertook. The budget is for management of the common which the trees form part of. HB updated the group that the money from the stewardship scheme from DEFRA, is for specific maintenance of the common, if the money is spent elsewhere and outside of the legal agreement, this could be in breach of the agreement. It was considered that the Council need to budget ahead for the remaining 10 years of the agreement
- The Rural Payments Agency payment is due which will top the

- budget up
- CB confirmed that legal advice was sought on trees works and they confirmed that this should be covered from the Council's budget associated with the common
- Works did not progress on the perimeter of the common as this is not the Council's responsibility which would lie with whoever has the liability
- The Council has a Framework agreement with approved contractors and day rates so no re-tendering for the work is required. The approved contractors all have the correct documentation to include insurance etc
- Ivy was removed from the trees to survey the tree, canopy and the growth although this HB confirmed this is not standard practice unless a risk is considered
- The wood was removed from the site and RY confirmed that the Council should have issued an instruction to the contractor not to remove the logs. Contractors will be reminded of this for future reference
- CB/AG will try to establish who removed the timber
- Oversized agricultural vehicles are eroding the waysides. This is a Highways issue who have the right to use roads

CB/AG

3. Matters Arising

- Minutes were sent out in a timely manner
- KMc sent a response to the group on legal responsibilities of the Council
- AG contacted HB and ponds now appear on the workplan
- AG contacted Natural England and the potential to graze cattle etc appears on the workplan but a written derogation agreement form has been submitted which will be discussed further at item 4 and JW to circulate the agreement with the minutes
- TM sent AP a copy of the survey and details from the Friends of Thwaite Common minutes
- TM was informed of the date for grass cutting

TM

4. Derogation agreement and management of east end of common

- To request a change to the grazing needs and regime, AG, under the Environmental Stewardship scheme, needs to complete a derogation form and Natural England have visited the common to discuss this
- Natural England have agreed the following:
 - Central common - cows over the winter and then sheep/goats
 - Eastern common - ponies and graze this too from January to March
 - West common – to graze from May to September
- HB confirmed that winter grazing is beneficial for diversity

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Council informed ▪ AG's team to organise a clearing exercise ▪ Crassula Action Plan – AG to lead on the plan, to include keeping the verges around the pond short without spreading the clippings with the machinery and to hose down the machinery after use ▪ The Friends of Thwaite Common agreed to complete the work with a strimmer although using a scythe would be preferable. NT confirmed that they can provide a training course and can purchase the scythes ▪ AG to circulate the Action Plan to attendees ▪ Middle common pond – this has been encroached by reeds and ought to be included in the maintenance programme. However, HB suggested monitoring this as reeds are a good habitat in their own right and suggested cutting, only once every three years and only by a third. She also suggested that the best time to work on ponds is during September/October | <p>AG</p> <p>NT</p> <p>AG</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing and grazing - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The temporary fencing quote received ranges between £3,500 to £4,000 for similar fencing. This is a substantial cost but AG considered that a grazer would not put cattle in without it ○ AG mentioned that a plan was provided with the tender spec and agreed to circulate both of these documents to the group ○ A compromise was discussed of using some wooden posts for the corners and metal for the intermediates. HB said that the NT can assist with the cost and also discuss this option with Debbie, the grazier. Siting of the posts – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimise siting and number of posts ▪ Communication of the message and to gain a consensus and all to assist with getting the message out | <p>AG</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass cutting – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Baling was explored but unfortunately Rory Hart, the contractor, was not happy to use his equipment but is happy to look again next year with his older machinery ○ DEFRA recommend August and this is the target period but there is a right to exercise some discretion and AG will notify when this will take place and will discuss with Debbie | <p>AG</p> |

7. **Cattle Grids**

- The Parish Council have found HDH Wills Conservation Grant funding but need to have an informal parish consultation process lead by a sub group to discuss options and decide on a proposal, collate and discuss at a Group meeting to discuss further

8. **Wildlife in Common**

- GW – Funding is available for a two year project to look at surveying 60 commons with Thwaite having already started. The project is to raise awareness of the importance of commons for wildlife
- The survey will be collated and information gained will be fed back to this group
- Next year – specialists will complete a survey for invertebrates to compile a comprehensive list
- As mentioned, the NT has a budget for training to include Sythe training which is a full day and will then purchase some sythes. Other training – tool handling, leadership, coppicing. GW to email the Friends of Thwaite Common to establish if they wish to undertake any of the training to include some habitat management
- Case studies will also be compiled and added to the website to show how local people manage their commons
- The Terms of Reference for the Friends of Thwaite Common refers to operating a management plan and it was agreed to share the management plan with the group

GW

Action: AG to circulate the Management Plan

AG

9. **Any other business**

- New email address: johnsnelling0@gmail.com
- AM – the application for grids is a long process so agreed to go ahead with the fencing managing the budget and drawing on the reserves if required. The NT mentioned that they could offer some help for stakes
- A new Workplan – AG is devising this and will circulate in advance of the next meeting
- The government have suggested that funding of agro-environmental schemes are uncertain although there will be some form of bridging scheme for those which finish between now and 2020. The only option for Thwaite Common is to pool together with other areas/commons to lobby for further funding. NT would like to use Thwaite as a case study and HB will keep the Council and the Group informed. RY confirmed the Council's support for the campaign
- 11 March for next meeting – JW to book a room (Committee or

AG

HB

Boardroom). Apologies noted for Barry Fitzpatrick