

Westleton Common Advisory Group

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 5th September 2022 at 7-30 pm in the foyer of Westleton Village Hall

Present: Nick Shearme (NS), David Rous (DR), Julian Alexander (JA), John Bebbington (JBe), Amanda Freeman (AF), Barry Banks (BB), Chris Freeman (CF).

1 – *Apologies.* Joyce Burtenshaw (JBU).

2 - *Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 5th July 2022.*

Agreed to be correct.

3 - *Matters arising not on this agenda.*

3a – *Unsafe bench.*

JA advised this bench should be scrapped. DR advised this bench is popular so should be replaced. A simple bench of two uprights and a cross piece is all that is required. CF to obtain suitable bench and arrange installation. Cost estimate about £100; NS to arrange financial approval from Westleton PC via Ian Haines.

3b – *Displaying maps in hall.*

JBe to arrange lamination and installation of the Land Registry map of the areas of the common owned by Westleton PC.

3c - *Purchase of tools.*

NS to establish cost of 4 shears and arrange financial approval and ordering with Westleton PC via Ian Haines.

4 – *Corrections to Management Plan.*

The corrections to plans of common and modifications in text advised by JBe agreed.

JBe to arrange for all printed versions and digital/on-line versions of the plan to be changed. The substance of the plan has not been changed so Westleton PC will be asked just to note the changes.

Following these difficulties the group reaffirmed its view that – to quote from the minutes of the meeting on 5th July 2022 – *“having an agreed recorded map of the boundary could well be useful but feels that, on balance, this proposal would be unwise. It would be necessary to agree the boundaries with all the neighbouring property owners. This would be time consuming and could, possibly, raise concerns that are currently not of interest. Letting sleeping dogs lie is a useful cliché that comes to mind.”*

5 – *Dates, format and agenda for public consultation meeting.*

NS, DR, JA and BB will attend the public consultation meeting on the common due at 10 am on Tuesday 6 September 2022.

6 – *Grant applications.*

The Rural Payments Agency has advised Westleton PC that all agri-environmental agreements which started before 1 January 2021 will continue to be funded through the Exchequer. They will write to Westleton PC in September with more details.

7 – *Help from Coast and Heath volunteers.*

We have applied to Suffolk Coasts and Heaths for help with gorse clearance in compartment 9. They are expected to respond in September 2022.

8 – *Fire risk.*

The fire risk assessment for the common is included in the Westleton PC risk assessments and can be read on the Parish Council pages of the Westleton website.

This is brief but, in the view of all members of the Advisory Group, covers all that is needed. JBe will review this to see if anything needs to be added.

Fire breaks have been created on the North Common. It has been suggested that these should be extended but there are access problems, and the risk of habitat loss and erosion may be too great.

NS will meet with Mark Collins of Collins Farming and Forestry Services to discuss clearing the undergrowth round Four Winds and improving fire breaks near the beehives in compartment 1. He will also meet with the owner of Four Winds.

DR advises that fire breaks should be cleared each year and that the work should be done between the end of September and the end of February.

9 – AOB

Drop-down posts at footpath from carpark in compartment 5 – CF advised wooden posts and will work out and cost what is needed. Estimate about £300.

CF will also cost levelling the bund from the concrete pad in compartment 10 and will aim to do this work in October 2022.

DR and NS will look at a couple of overhanging oak branches that need cutting down. There was also some damage reported as having been done to overhanging branches by (legitimate) vehicles. This is unfortunate but probably not worth worrying about.

10 – Date of next meeting.

March 2023 date to be confirmed.