

I write on behalf of the group set up by Aymestrey Parish Council to facilitate establishing a Commons Association for Yatton Hill, Yatton Marsh and Ballsgate commons. This note is being sent to Commoners of the three commons and those who have asked to be kept informed of the proposal,

Below is the report which will appear in the upcoming issue of Aymestrey Matters. It is a report of the meeting held on the 17 May and notice of a second meeting.

The date of the new meeting is Tuesday 5 July. It will take place at 7p.m. at the Parish Hall. The aim of the meeting is to set up the committee which will form the Association.

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First a reminder that there is a proposal to establish a Commons Association to introduce some active management of three of the commons in the parish – Yatton Hill, Yatton Marsh and Ballsgate.

43 people attended the meeting on 17 May. Two speakers gave presentations: David Lovelace (landscape historian and mapping expert) on topography and history of land use at Yatton Hill, and Andrew Nixon (Chairman of Ewyas Harold Commons Trust) on problems which can arise when setting up an association, but also highlighting some solutions and successes.

Discussion followed, from which these observations follow:

- There is great support for preservation and creating conditions for improving biodiversity and stopping the evident decline of the different landscape of each of the three commons.
- Those holding commoners' rights were supportive, subject to preservation of those rights
- Existing and anticipated problems were highlighted, both as a challenge to reduce the bracken on Yatton Hill, improve the marsh character of Yatton Marsh and halt the deterioration to scrub woodland at Ballsgate.
- Each of the commons had its own problems and each will require a separate management approach
- A show of hands indicated that a clear majority in the room were in support of setting up a Commons Association and no objection to an association was made by others, even if sceptical of success!

It is perhaps to be expected that, as this was the introduction to the aim of forming an association, not everyone was sure of its aims or the benefits which it might bring. If formed, it will be a priority for the association to work at public awareness as well as getting on with the work.

People attending the meeting were asked to complete a questionnaire about usage of the common and the broad aims of halting the decline in habitats, as well as any interest in joining the association or helping with its potential workload. (The questionnaire is on the Parish website [aymestrey.org](http://aymestrey.org) under 'news' – please complete it if you are interested in what we should be doing with the commons).

#### **Next step**

**There will be a meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 5 July 2022 at the Parish Hall, the aim of which is to form an association for the management of**

### **the three commons.**

It will be a public meeting and parishioners who have an interest in the future of the commons are encouraged to attend, particularly if they are willing to volunteer, either to serve on the committee, to help with fieldwork and surveys or to help with the physical work involved. We will be looking for names! We hope to see at the meeting those who were happy to express their interest in promoting an association at the meeting on 17 May or in their answers to the questionnaire.

Ian Goddard, Helen Hamilton, Mike Snoswell and Nicola Kearton, the Commons Working Group of Aymestrey Parish Council