

Aymestrey Parish Commons Association

Minutes of committee meeting held **1 March 2023** at Aymestrey Parish Hall

Present: Committee: Ian Banks, Martyn Booth (Chair), Ian Goddard, Carla Goodwin, Richard Hammond, Dan Hurcomb (part), Nicola Kearton, Mike Snoswell.

Welcome observers: David Dunn

Apologies: Susanna Checketts, Domenica Dunne, Emma Kenchington

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023 were approved.

1 Collation of information

Historical information from known sources is now complete. Concentration now is on identifying species and plants now present on the three commons.

2 Access

Ballsgate: a work party of eight supporters have cleared a path from the lane (Gypsy Lane) joining a circular path at the higher end of the common (think balloon on a string for shape). There is still bracken on the north side. Carla Goodwin offered to press down bracken on the cleared path from time to time where accessible by ATV.

Yatton Hill: A circular path is now open (recording thanks to residents of The Hole cottage). Aim to keep it open during spring. Helping that it is walked regularly.

Yatton Marsh - east area: two 'spur' paths have been cleared, one on each side where the ground is drier. These allow reasonable access for observation. Unlikely that conditions will allow these to be connected on south side. A concern is that the marsh may dry out in summer, but some degree of control is possible by adjustment of the height of the drainage outlet. Need now is to observe species.

3 Surveying

All committee members, supporters and public are encouraged to observe and report sightings of identified species, flora, fauna, lepidoptera and entomology – anything which moves or grows. Photos would be fantastic, even sound files can be received. Request that reports are made by email to Martyn Booth (madbooth@hotmail.com) who will coordinate. Ian Banks will upload to APCA pages on aymestrey.org website. This is the start of a year-long programme of observation on each of the three commons.

Two trail cameras are available for deployment, plus bat detectors from HWT. We will look to set up a managed survey of flora; fauna will be anecdotal. Richard H will survey trees in spring when there are leaves to help!

4 Control of Invasive Species

Gatley Farms will deal with Japanese Knotweed along Deepmore. Yet to confirm identity of Himalayan Balsam/Rosebay Willow Herb on Yatton Marsh.

5 Purpose statement and constitution

Latest draft to go on website. Looking to secure approval at open meeting on 10 May.

6 Communications

Chairman will write up commons for Aymestrey Matters (copy date 6 March).

The website has the historic species information. We now seek to increase parish and public engagement by maps, walk guides, current photos, presentations. Ian B will find space for all on the website.

Open meeting will be Wednesday 10 May, committee please put date in diaries. APCA will also attend the Parish Annual Meeting on 18 May with a table and display along with other Aymestrey organisations.

Foundation for Common Land: recent webinar (sic) had limited relevance to small commons (it was looking at New Forest and Malverns), but the Foundation does have an on-line Common Land Toolkit which looks useful. Members are encouraged to view.

7 Finance: none to report! Currently have minor costs for admin, fuel, signage and sundries. Will approach Parish Council. Riverside Inn has some funds raised by its community charge, available to APCA preferably for tree planting. Beyond that we will be looking for grants and lottery funding, which emphasises the need for early adoption of aims and constitution.

8 Work parties: next dates, times, places.

None planned at this time. Upcoming work will be further path clearing at Yatton Marsh east, keeping current tracks clear and maintaining what has been achieved at Ballsgate.

A particular problem at Yatton Hill is walkers becoming lost/disoriented at the union of Croft estate and the common. Ian B can produce attractive signs when we have decided what and where. Aim to co-ordinate with National Trust; contact with our neighbour NT will be good in any event.

9 Other ideas

Why not an introductory walk of all three commons?

Why not an open day held *on* the commons?

Let's have a map of commons and walks in Aymestrey matters.

Undertake to maintain certain designated paths so that they can appear on maps and in walking books.

The **next meeting** will be at 7p.m. 12th April 2023 at Parish Hall.

Ian Goddard, Secretary.

Signed Chairman

Date

Action points

Sightings to Martyn – all

Bracken on Ballsgate – Carla G

Trail cameras – Martyn B and Richard H

Latest draft constitution to Ian B – Dan H

Contact with National Trust – Chairman/secretary