

Aymestrey Parish Commons Association (APCA)

Minutes of Committee Meeting 27 September 2025

At Aymestrey Parish Hall

1. Present: Martyn Booth (Chairman), Ian Goddard (Secretary), Phillippa Alexander, Susanna Checketts, David Dunn, Ian Gardner, Pauline Hammond, Richard Hammond, Peter Wright.

2. Apologies: Apologies for absence were received from Nicola Kearton, Emma Kenchington, Will Lockett, Jackie Watkins, Alan Watkins.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes: The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 15 January 2025 were approved as the best available record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Reports from the Commons:

Yatton Marsh: black poplars believed OK but red oak does not look good; marsh has dried; Roe deer in Susanna's garden, a first; it has been a good year for bumble bees, 6 or 7 varieties, but just one fritillary sighted.

Yatton Hill: regular bird and butterfly life, perhaps a little down in numbers. No fritillary seen, lots of grey squirrels. Condition: paths recut with Robo-cutter – very successful.

Ballsgate: had been very overgrown. Path re-opened and entrance cleared.

Warning that the Leinthall Common is turning inexorably into woodland which is advancing towards Yatton Hill (sounds like the witches' prophecy in Macbeth!)

5. Finance and funding: Costs to date met from APC funds as required and within the sum budgeted by APC, of which some £600 remains subject to agreement of intended expense.

Chairman reports that funding may be available from Nature and Biodiversity Community Grant scheme: awards of £500 - £10,000; application by 13 October, announcements by end November. Support is available for such as hedge planting, wildlife corridors, wildlife support, wild flowers, equipment for maintenance, improving access.

Several possible projects discussed but each required further data/evidence of benefit before applying. Following success of brushcutter, resolved to apply for funding to purchase one, plus training in its use and safety for 4 individuals. Benefit is improving access, which is one of the grant criteria, as well as promoting biodiversity in cleared areas (already seen after brushcutting this year when 93% of YH area is covered by bracken).

RH to research and recommend a machine; MH will craft the application and send.

6. Reports on Previous Action Points: There have been two workparties – one at Ballsgate and one onn YH with Robocutter. Agreed that workparties are best organized by using the Whats App app.. Secretary and RH will rationalise contact lists and encourage joining Whats App group.

Strong support for improving availability and quantity of information for visitors. Seen as a positive attraction leading to more rewarding/better informed/better educated visits. Story board at top of YH is returning to nature

Proposed that APCA looks to place information posts around the commons as appropriate using QR codes so that visitors can look up what they might be able to see from the location of the post. This will require IT input (set up an app.) as well as information to place at each point. This will all take some time, so best get started! PA volunteered her husband to help with the IT aspects.

7. Work Parties proposed: one to cut the path from 'lower' pines diagonally to new centre path; Look to cut a second access to Ballsgate.

Other matters: get and survey now as planning for next year (MB, RH, member input invited);

Can we sell the incongruous and non-native Monkey Puzzle tree from Yatton Marsh? Needs consultation with the landowners (IG);

Acquire more hand tools to supplement our 6 broom handles. To finance from £250 donation from Running club (currently ring-fenced in APC account) (MB, RH to organise).

Outstanding action points

Check ash die-back behind Ballsgate Cottage and above Silver Birch Cottage	Richard H
Ask Chris Bolt to report sightings	Nicola K
Follow up letter on Japanese knotweed	Ian G
Contact National Trust	Martyn B and Ian G
Yatton Marsh tree survey	Richard H
Yatton Marsh outlet pipe	Martyn B with Josh Hurcomb
Website improvements	Ian B
AM notice re sightings and work parties	Martyn B and Richard H
Research possible grants	Nicola K
APCA advert signage on Yatton Hill	Ian G, Ian B, and David Dunn

Date of AGM and next committee meeting: 10am Saturday 21 February 2026, Parish Hall

Signed: Date: 21 February 2026

Chairman