

Commons Coordinator Report

Andrew Colchester

27th June 2015

As the newly appointed Commons Coordinator and in response to concerns regarding the management of Thrandeston Little Green i.e. a complicated grass cutting regime resulting in difficulty finding contractors willing to carry out the work and the cost of cutting the grass exceeding the HLS income generated by the green I arranged a meeting with David Whiting of Natural England on 2nd June. The objective of the meeting was to seek advice on what options were available to the Parish Council regarding management of the little green within the HLS scheme and to find out if it would be necessary to withdraw the green from the HLS scheme in order to manage it more cost effectively. Goff, Alison and Sharon also attended the informal meeting with David. David was extremely helpful and explained that there was no need to remove the Little Green from the HLS agreement in order to manage it in an efficient and cost effective way. If this proves to be the case it would enable the Parish Council to fulfil their obligation to manage the village budget effectively. To withdraw from the HLS agreement at this stage would prove extremely costly to the village as The Parish Council would have to repay all grant money received for capital works carried out on the marsh and all HLS income received so far.

No arrangements for cutting the green had been put into place for 2015 by the previous parish council. David agreed to grant the new Parish Council derogation to cut the green early in 2015 which enabled us to secure the services of a local contractor who had generously agreed to cut and remove the grass from the green free of charge for this year. This allows us time to explore our options with David regarding a new grass management scheme for the future without incurring any grass cutting costs for this year. As well as being cost effective and efficient, ideally the new management scheme should secure the biodiversity of Thrandeston Little Green while also allowing the green to be used for tradition village events which bring people together and help maintain a community spirit.