

Commons Coordinators Report

Andrew Colchester

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Capital works on the marsh will commence from mid September onwards. Following comments raised after the last parish council meeting regarding the forth coming capital works on the Marsh I met with Mr Andrew Barnes the contractor, David Whiting Natural England, Goff Hawes Thrandeston Parish Council Chairman on Monday 24th August to discuss and agree the final details of the works. David and Mr Barnes agreed that the best way to deal with the spoil from the scrape would be to create a mound no more than 1 meter in height to the south side of the area of the scrape away from the area of orchids. David gave permission for the water level to be lowered short term while work is carried out just enough to assist Mr Barnes without emptying the ditches. This contract will complete all the capital works up to date under the HLS agreement. There will be further work required in the future to maintain the ditches etc on the marsh. While on the marsh I pointed out ragwort growing along the hedge row. David said he was not concerned at this time but as it is a notifiable weed I think we should be aware that we may need to take measures to control it in the future, with the advice of Natural England, as it is poisonous to livestock.

David whiting has contacted me with a revised proposal for grass cutting on Thrandeston Little Green. He proposes that the area to the north of the green (field parcel 4953) be cut after 15th July every year to allow orchids to flower and seed. The main HLS management area on the Green (field

has also advised that there is a hay supplement available, that if the amended regime is adopted by the Parish Council, could be added to the agreement. The supplement would be worth £118.00 per year for the 1.08 ha of grassland on the green which would be helpful in covering the hay making costs. Cutting the green on 2 different dates could prove problematical, especially as it is likely to be difficult to find a contractor willing to take on 2 very small cuts. One local contractor has confirmed that he would be willing to cut all the grass after 15th July but would not be willing to take on the contract if it was divided into 2. He has agreed to provide a quote for the work. It may be more practical and cost effective to cut all the grass after 15th July with the option of cutting the main part of the green after 1st June if that becomes necessary for some reason in the future, as long as it does not happen more than twice in 3 years.

I expressed my concerns to David about thistles beginning to establish on the north side of the green and broadcast seed into neighbouring gardens. David assures me that this variety of thistle multiplies by rhizomes and not by seed! David is happy for the Parish Council to pass on his contact details to any parishioner who expresses concerns so that he can reassure them in person. David informs me that under the terms of the HLS agreement it is permissible to have thistles spot sprayed with a nap sack sprayer by a qualified operator should this be deemed necessary by The Parish Council. Any other form of spraying would require a derogation from Natural England.