**Commons Coordinater Report**

**Andrew Colchester**

**July 2016**

Due to the exceptional amount of precipitation through June the Marsh is extremely wet. I would estimate that 25% of the Marsh is now under water. On a recent visit I observed a heron feeding, teal swimming in the scape and a number of common striped orchids. While the amount of water may make it attractive to wading birds, it will no doubt make it unsuitable for grazing this year, unless conditions change drastically. The area available to graze has been reduced by the amount of flooded land and is also very wet. This could result in cattle poaching the ground (which is when the animals feet cause the ground to become churned up) which is not allowed under the stewardship rules. Mr Ted Ling has expressed his concerns that his cattle may be at risk of falling and becoming stuck in one of the dykes which have been made deeper within the stewardship scheme. The Parish Council have consulted Natural England who have agreed to allow Mr Ling to erect a fence on the Marsh to protect his livestock. They also advised that there is no funding available for any fencing work in 2016 as all funds have already been allocated, but there may be funding available in 2017. How the Brexit results will affect the allocation of funding remains to be seen. I visited Grange Farm Palgrave and met with Mr Jonny Ling to discuss the families concerns, and suggested that the best option for 2016 would probably be an electric fence.

The work that the Parish Council undertook earlier this year to alleviate the flooding on the road near the low railway bridge has proved to be a great success. Even with the very heavy and continuous rainfall the road has drained efficiently. Red and White Campion and Poppies can now be seen growing in the area of ground that the Parish Council cleared of black thorn at the same time as the drainage work was carried out.