

Putford Parish Council

Dear Parishioner

This Newsletter is to update residents on activities that will impact Common Moor (East Putford) over coming years. Some of which you may notice, have noticed already or are likely to read in future press releases.

The Parish Council has entered into a ten year, Countryside Stewardship agreement with Natural England which commenced on 1 January 2019.

The Common Moor management plan covered by the above agreement was developed jointly by Natural England, Devon Wildlife Trust and the Parish Council. The Council has also appointed a Land Agent to manage the agreement.

It was entered into to facilitate the restoration of Common Moor's 55.06 Hectares (Ha) of Culm grassland. This will be achieved by the removal of scrub and bracken through clearance and controlled swaling (burning) and the subsequent management of the site through swaling to restore it to species rich grassland and return it to a favourable SSSI condition.

Common Moor was classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in its entirety in 1988 and since then its condition has deteriorated and was, over latter years, given the status "unfavourable declining" (the third worst status), and was unlikely to improve without local action, hence due to Common Moors ownerless status the PC stepped in to lead this project only, without assuming any ownership or Landlord responsibilities

The lack of management over many years has led to increased dominance of *Molinia caerulea* (purple moor grass) shading less competitive plants, with increased scrub encroachment leading to habitat reduction.

In recent years, Common Moor has received little to no management and has been burnt on occasion but these have been accidental burns and unmanaged, arguably causing more

Initial Planned Events

2019

Cutting Fire Breaks

Swaling 13.2 Ha

2020

Cutting Fire Breaks

Scrub clearance 1.8 Ha

Swaling 12.6 Ha

2021

Cutting Fire Breaks

Scrub clearance 0.41 Ha

Swaling 5.8 Ha

Important Announcement

Since the Plan has been agreed some work has commenced on cutting of 3.2 Km of Fire Breaks in Early February and weather dependent managed swaling should progress shortly.

The SSSI status has been reassessed in light of the agreement and plan and is now Classified as "Unfavourable Recovering"

damage than benefit. It is for this reason and to improve our local amenity that the Parish Council has entered into this scheme funded by payments from Natural England.

Additional Items

The PC is also looking to find better ways of communicating with parishioners (e.g. regular quarterly newsletter, welcome pack for new residents and we would welcome your thoughts/views to any Parish Councillor. Their contact details are on putford.co.uk or the Parish Clerk contact details below

In the interim we will post details on the putford.co.uk website and noticeboards in Putford and Colscott.

We would also like to advise people that PC meetings are open to the public. You can make representations on items that concern you within the first 3 minutes of the meeting, or attend as observers. Specific Items for inclusion on the Agenda should be submitted 10 days in advance of meeting dates to the Parish Clerk to allow time for inclusion. A list of 2019 meeting dates is included for your information

Parish Clerk contact details

Mrs Sue Squire E-mail (sue@suesquire.com)
Haxlea
2 Threeways
Bratton Fleming
Barnstaple
EX31 4TG

Future Parish Council meetings at Bradworthy Primary Academy Wednesday's starting at 19:30

20th March, 2019

22nd May, 2019

17th July, 2019

18th September, 2019

20th November, 2019