

**Westleton Common Management Plan**  
**2023 – 2033**  
Issued *July 2022*

Westleton Common Advisory Group on behalf of Westleton Parish Council

**CONTENTS**

<b>1 GLOSSARY</b>		3
<b>2 WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT</b>		4
<b>3 SITE DESCRIPTION</b>		5
<b>3.1 Location and extent</b>		5
<b>3.2 Tenure and Legal Obligations</b>		5
<b>3.3 History and Archaeology</b>		6
<b>3.4 Geology</b>		6
<b>3.5 Wildlife</b>		6
<b>3.6 Public interest and community involvement</b>		7
<b>4 MANAGEMENT</b>		8
<b>4.1 Past recent management</b>		8
<b>4.2 Objectives of current and previous plan</b>		8
<b>4.3 Annual/routine management</b>		9
<b>4.4 One-off proposed management</b>		14
<b>APPENDICES</b>		15
Appendix 1 Location Map		16
Appendix 2 Boundary Map		17
Appendix 3 Compartment Map		18
Appendix 4 Timetable of works for Heathland Management		19
Appendix 5 Geological Information		20
Appendix 6 County Wildlife Site Information		24
Appendix 7 Research Activity		26
Appendix 8 Annual reports and Species Lists		27
Appendix 9 Westleton Common Advisory Group members at the time of drawing up this Management Plan.		28
Appendix 10 Acknowledgments		29

## 1 GLOSSARY

**Biodiversity Action Plan – (BAP)** Species or Habitat as being a Priority for Conservation in Suffolk and or nationally

**Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS)** - is a scheme under which farmers and land managers are paid for effectively managing their land in a manner which protects and enhances the environment and wildlife. Natural England has responsibility for delivering the scheme on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

**Higher Level Stewardship – (HLS)** – The higher tier of the Natural England Environmental Stewardship agri-environment grant scheme that helps to support conservation management of important semi-natural habitat.

**County Wildlife Site – (CWS)** A non- statutory designation that recognises a site’s high value for wildlife

**County Geological Site –(CGS)** A non-statutory designation that recognises a site’s high geological value

**Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) – (CROW ACT)** applies to England and Wales only, received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000, with the provisions it contains being brought into force in incremental steps over subsequent years. Containing five Parts and 16 Schedules, the Act provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Act is compliant with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, requiring consultation where the rights of the individual may be affected by these measures.

**Westleton Common Advisory Group (WCAG).** A subcommittee of Westleton Parish Council (WPC) appointed by WPC to advise it on the management of Westleton Common. The group consist of members of WPC and people from the wider community appointed with relevant skills and interests.

## **2 WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT**

### **Westleton Common**

#### **Information**

Westleton Parish Council is the owner of Westleton Common. The Common is a rich and varied habitat which is a valued community asset as it is an integral part of the landscape, and of the economic and social history of the Parish.

The Westleton Common Advisory Group (WCAG) is a sub-committee of Westleton Parish Council. WCAG is responsible for drafting and implementing the Westleton Common Management Plan which is designed to manage, maintain and protect the Common on behalf of the Parish Council. The Management Plan is prepared in consultation with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and is governed by the terms of the Stewardship Agreement with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Work on the Common to implement the Management Plan is largely funded by a grant from DEFRA via the RPA. The Parish Council has a duty to ensure this work – whether by volunteers or contractors – is conducted in safe and secure conditions.

The Minutes of WCAG meetings, the Management Plan and the Annual Reports are published on the Westleton Parish website. The Management Plan and the Annual Reports are published on the Westleton Parish website.

Advance notice will be given when major clearance work is to be carried out.

WPC/WCAG

June 2022

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1 Location and extent.**

The OS grid reference for the centre of the Common is TM442681 – OS Landranger series 1:50,000 – sheet 156. It is situated to the southeast of the main village of Westleton. See Appendix 1

#### **3.2 Tenure and legal obligations**

The Common is included on the National Commons Register and covers 17.95ha.

In 2003, Westleton Parish Council purchased the Common. The purchase was supported by Heritage Lottery Funding.

In 2012, Westleton Parish Council took on the Scheme of Regulation from Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and is now formally responsible for the Common's management. There are no longer any common rights registered on the land, but bylaws are in operation.

Since 2003 the Common's management is supported by Natural England's Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) held by Westleton Parish Council. The HLS agreement expires in 2023. Westleton Parish Council is considering applying for an extension to that agreement for the period 2023 to 2033 and is also investigating to see if an application to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme would be more appropriate.

Since 2006 the land has been designated as Open Access land under the framework of the CROW Act. The land is crossed by a number of permissive footpaths and a Bridleway runs along the south-eastern boundary.

The management of the Common is overseen by the Westleton Parish Council and implemented by the Westleton Common Advisory Group. The WCAG provide the Parish Council with a monthly update and an annual report.

The Parish Council is responsible for all matters of health and safety including tree safety, footpath safety, and maintenance of amenity infrastructure and litter clearance and is kept informed of any matters arising by the WCAG.

The Common has a high fire risk, particularly in periods of prolonged dry weather. So an important part of managing the Common is regularly assessing fire risk. It is also essential that all those working on the Common are aware of risks and know what to do in the case of a fire emergency.

### **3.3 History and archaeology**

The current Common boundary is broadly the same as shown on the 1840 Tithe map. However, some small areas have been taken into private ownership and they do not form part of this plan. See also the CWS Citation in Appendix 6.

This plan covers those areas of the common owned by Westleton Parish Council and shown on the boundary map in Appendix 2.

Westleton Common would originally have been a pasture common with open margins, typical of the impoverished sandy soils of east Suffolk. The Common's character would have been shaped by activities as grazing and minor local extraction rights. However, all such activity has now ceased and probably would have done so when gravel extraction began on a more extensive scale in the 1880s.

Gravel extraction began as supplying material for roads, but during WW2 large amounts of gravel were needed for the construction of airfields. The Common was also used as an army camp during WW2. Evidence of its historical use for gravel extraction and use as an army camp in WW2 are clearly visible on the ground in the form of derelict 'rock pools', former building bases and training trenches.

During the 1950s and 1960s sand and gravel extraction took place on a commercial basis and the Common was in the private ownership of the aggregate company.

Any further opportunities for extraction finally came to an end in the 1990s and the aggregate company put the Common on the open market and Westleton Parish Council purchased the Common in 2003.

### **3.4 Geology**

The site lies on a deposit of glacial sands and gravels overlying earlier deposits of crags and London Clay. The sands and gravels were deposited c.12,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age and have been subsequently leached of nutrients giving rise to a dry, acidic soil known as a "podsol".

The Common is designated as a County Geology Site for its important exposures of Norwich crag sands and gravels known as the Westleton Beds. The Norwich crag sands are also important for antlion. This invertebrate is confined to the Sandlings area of east Suffolk. See Appendix 4.

### **3.5 Wildlife**

Since the cessation of any large-scale gravel extraction in the late 1960s, no formal 'restoration' of the Common took place. The steep sides of the pits were left intact, along with damp areas where the washing pits were, a bank of washed sand, bare ground and hard standings where machinery once stood. To have retained such features is unusual, with many former quarries and pits tending to be infilled or restored to agricultural land.

The semi-natural vegetation that has since developed is, therefore, a very varied mosaic of relict heathland (BAP) that was not affected by quarrying; naturally regenerated heathland; scrub; woodland and early successional/ ruderal vegetation communities of the quarry floor.

In addition, former industrial /wartime activities and infrastructure such as soil dumping and hard standings have provided 'man-made' habitat niches that have been colonised by species not necessarily

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characteristic of the locality, but that none the less, add to the ecological diversity and varied character of the Common, e.g. wall pennywort on former soil dumps and lichens that have colonised concrete.

The Common is a designated County Wildlife Site (CWS) in recognition of the remarkable diversity of habitats and species it supports. See Appendix 5 re CWS.

Some of the habitats /species are widely recognised as priorities for conservation and targets for HLS, such as heathland (Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat) and associated species like silver studded blue butterfly (BAP) and adder (BAP). Other habitats are perhaps lower profile such as woodland, scrub and ruderal grassland but are equally important for wildlife and add value to the Common, by forming a varied buffer and graded edge to the main heathland habitats. All the habitats found are very typical of the Suffolk Sandlings.

### **3.6 Public interest and community involvement**

The Common has a long history of being integral to the parish and continues to be a valued local asset today.

The local community and visitors value the common for informal recreation such as dog-walking, wildlife observation and simply as a quiet outdoor space to spend time. Many local people have kept invaluable long-term records of the wildlife and history of the common and many others are involved in its physical management through the Westleton Advisory Group. This management plan has made reference and use of the local records. All the plans for the common are carried out with extensive local consultation to ensure any management meets the local community's needs/wishes as well as maintaining the wildlife and landscape value of the common.

Westleton Common has been granted Dark Sky Discovery Site status and has been used for several years by a local Astronomical Group (DASH Astro - Darsham And Surrounding Hamlets Astronomical Society).

Westleton Parish Council is licensed to burn waste vegetation from the common on the common. The annual community bonfire is built on the concrete slab in compartment 10 and provides an opportunity to burn much of the waste material generated by the management programme and to offer an enjoyable community event during the depth of winter.

It is therefore important that the management plan not only delivers biodiversity and landscape targets, but it also needs to be compatible with the wishes of, and what is feasible, for the local community. Following considerable consultation with the many who have an interest in the Common, it is hoped that the management plan achieves this aim and that the current balance of habitats which is so valued by people and wildlife is retained into the future.

## **4 MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 Past recent management**

Since the parish acquisition of the Common, management has followed the Management Plan drawn up by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 2003 which is linked to the Countryside Stewardship Agreement. Both the CSS agreement and the Management Plan expired in 2013. Since 2013 management has been in line with the HLS agreement and the 2013 to 2023 Management Plan.

As the Common was in private ownership until 2003, it is understood that no formal Management Plan was followed prior to this date.

### **4.2 Management Objectives of both the 2013 to 2023 and 2023 to 2033 Plans**

The primary objective is to set out the appropriate management of the Common to maintain and enhance its biodiversity as well as meeting the needs of parishioners and the wider public.

Following on from this the plan should have the following objectives;

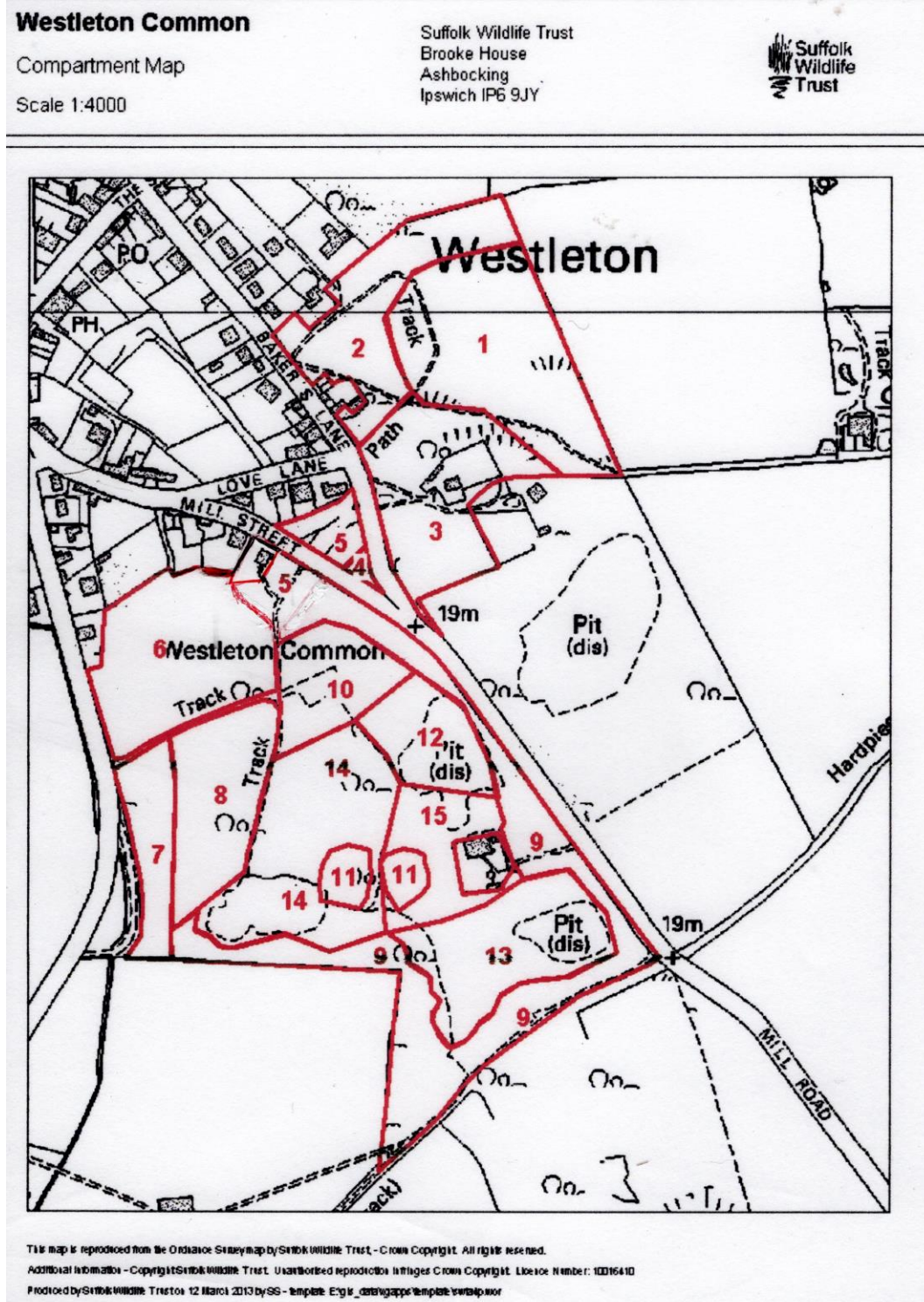
- Maintain the current mosaic and balance of habitat.
- The HLS agreement expires in 2023 (see para 3.2). Westleton Parish Council is considering applying for an extension to that agreement for the period 2023 to 2033 and is also investigating to see if an application to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme would be more appropriate. When, or if, a further grant is received this plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure it is compatible with, and meets the prescriptions and obligations of, any future agreement.
- Encourage public interest and community involvement in the Common.
- Encourage continued monitoring/recording/research on the Common (see appendix 6 re past research).
- Highlight some of interest features through appropriate interpretation etc.. The Village website can be utilised for this purpose.
- Meet all legal and health and safety obligations.



### 4.3 Annual/routine management

Set out in compartments – See plan below and Appendix 3

*This map shows only those areas of Westleton Common owned by Westleton Parish Council and subject to this management plan.*



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**4.3 Annual/routine management (continued)**  
**Maintenance work for all compartments.**

The annual programme of work is based on the timetable of works for Heathland Management (courtesy Graham Hart, Suffolk Wildlife Trust); see Appendix 4

<b>Management</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Compartment(s)</b>
Tree management (December – February)	Selection and removal of occasional trees/saplings causing shading issues e.g., self-seeded silver birch.	Compartments 1-15 inclusive as needed.
Scrub coppicing (December – February)	Rotational cutting of scrub such as bramble/blackthorn to encourage thicker re-growth and improve structure for nesting birds particularly nightingale.	Compartments 1-15 inclusive as needed, but never within 30 yards of previous year.
Control of invasive shrubs (December – February)	Removal of birch seedling and gorse.	Compartments 1-15 inclusive as needed.
Gorse management (December – February)	The management of the spread of gorse is an important objective of this Management Plan. It is important that gorse is not allowed to spread beyond its reasonable bounds to maintain a balance between gorse heather, grassland and other low growing plants.	Compartments 1-15 inclusive as needed.
Litter picking (All year round)	Formal litter pick in March done as a group and along main paths. Also, on-going informal litter picking by individual volunteers.	Compartments 1-15 inclusive as needed.
Monitoring and Recording (All year round)	On-going survey work and recording to monitor key species and effects of management e.g. silver studded blues, antlion, reptiles.	Compartments 1-15 inclusive.

**Maintenance work for each compartment.**

<b>Compartment</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1	<p><i>Heather management (start cutting in October)</i> Rotational cutting down to about 5 -10cm to maintain diverse age structure in heather. (Important to avoid scalping of ground when cutting) Cuttings must be removed. Amount to cut = 40% (percentage is for whole 10 years not per annum.) <i>Scrub removal/firebreaks (January - February)</i> Where necessary and feasible cut a 3m wide strip of vegetation down to ground to serve as a firebreak. This should be cut to a height of 5-10 cm and cuttings must be removed. West boundary – cut 3m firebreak every year. Other firebreaks – review annually and re-cut when required. Keep fire-breaks clear.</p> <p>Clear vegetation round beehives.</p> <p>Remove small trees round pond as required. Gorse control on paths as required. Rotational cutting of gorse and other invasive vegetation, e.g. new growth of birch, as required.</p>	<p>When cutting machinery is used someone will walk ahead of the machine to ensure that any reptiles in the path of the machine are scattered.</p> <p>Reduce risk to houses.</p> <p>To ensure hives are visible to common users for safety reasons.</p> <p>To maintain and improve damp conditions. To ensure paths are clear and obvious.</p>
2	<p>3M fire-break adjacent to Four Winds house. Clear gorse from September 2022. Control undergrowth. Ensure paths clear and obvious. Remove oaks under power lines. Keep fire-breaks clear.</p>	
3	Woodland only, minimal work needed.	
4	<p>Minimal work only to control gorse. <i>Gorse coppicing (October – February)</i> Rotational cutting of gorse to encourage thicker re-growth and improve structure and stability. Annual amount = 2%</p>	
5	Minimal work only to control gorse.	
6	<p><i>Gorse coppicing (October – February)</i> Rotational cutting of gorse to encourage thicker re-growth and improve structure and stability. Annual amount = 5% <i>Bracken management (pulling August, raking September – December)</i> Control of bracken though the pulling in August and raking litter in winter. (% to be done will vary</p>	<p>Check for ground nesting birds before bracken is pulled.</p>

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	according to bracken growth – to be agreed year by year.)	
7	<p>Cut back gorse and brambles substantially each autumn. Clear access to this area from track from Reckford Road.</p> <p><i>Grassland management (August – September)</i> Annual cutting and removal of arisings to maintain area of species diverse grassland. Amounts = Mowing 100%, Scrub 15%.</p> <p><i>Hedgerow management (December- early February)</i> Restore thickness of hedge by high coppicing to 2-3ft and gap up with hawthorn/blackthorn whips.</p> <p><i>Bracken management (pulling August, raking September – December)</i> Control of bracken though the pulling in August and raking litter in winter. (% to be done will vary according to bracken growth – to be agreed year by year.)</p>	<p>To reveal meadow and allow to recover. This will allow cover for birds and food and shelter for butterflies.</p> <p>Check for ground nesting birds before bracken is pulled.</p>
8	<p>Clear birch and undertake rotational gorse cropping. Clear and widen footpaths.</p> <p><i>Heather management (start cutting in October)</i> Rotational cutting down to about 5 – 10 cm to maintain diverse age structure in heather. (Important to avoid scalping of ground when cutting) Cuttings must be removed. Amount to cut = 30% (percentage is for whole 10 years not per annum.)</p> <p><i>Gorse coppicing (October – February)</i> Rotational cutting of gorse to encourage thicker re-growth and improve structure and stability. Annual amount = 5%</p> <p><i>Bracken management (pulling August, raking September – December)</i> Control of bracken though the pulling in August and raking litter in winter. (% to be done will vary according to bracken growth – to be agreed year by year.)</p>	<p>Check for ground nesting birds before bracken is pulled.</p>
9	<p>Rotational coppice and control gorse on bank adjacent to road. Along the track “Black Slough” – leave silver birch and control by rotational coppice as needed. Bank between the track and the common – control gorse and remove birch from lower area on common side.</p> <p><i>Gorse coppicing (October – February)</i></p>	

Westleton Common Management Plan 2023 - 2033

	Rotational cutting of gorse to encourage thicker re-growth and improve structure and stability. Annual amount = 5%	
10	Remove non-native Holm Oak to allow native species to recover and thrive ( <i>December to February</i> ). Annual bracken control on bank. <i>Bracken management (pulling August, raking September – December)</i> Control of bracken though the pulling in August and raking litter in winter. (% to be done will vary according to bracken growth – to be agreed year by year.)	Check for ground nesting birds before bracken is pulled.
11	These areas will be thinned when needed. Restore woodland glade and wet area in that part of compartment 11 to the left (on compartment plan) of the path.	When Westleton first took over the common it was clear that people wanted the little wood in the centre to stay. They wanted to keep the mosaic of habitats and not have everything revert to heathland.
12	Rotational birch control. <i>Gorse coppicing (October – February)</i> Rotational cutting of gorse to encourage thicker re-growth and improve structure and stability. Annual amount = 5%	
13	Remove gorse from cliff to allow sand martins to nest. Approximately every 3 years clear a 4M deep area. (See also note in para 4.4 below.)  Note advice from GeoSuffolk following their survey in 2021; Clear brambles and gorse on the talus to allow improved access to exposed geological features. Clear vegetated talus to reveal former quarry face. Rotational cutting down to about 5-10cm to maintain diverse age structure in heather. (Important to avoid scalping of ground when cutting) Cuttings must be removed. Amount to cut = 30% (percentage is for whole 10 years not per annum.)	<i>(For non-geologists; Geologists define talus as the pile of rocks that accumulates at the base of a cliff, chute, or slope.)</i> <i>Heather management (September- October)</i>
14	Coppice gorse to improve age and structure. Clear large block of gorse near path to allow heather to recover.	This clearance will make an overgrown path useable.
15	Remove 50% of trees. Coppice new growth of birch. Aim to keep scrub.	

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#### 4.4 Proposed one-off work management works

- **Antlion cliffs** (creation of angled cliffs of 2m by 30cm on south facing slopes)
- **Rock pools**  
Restoration of WW2 army rock pools in compartment 6
- **Sand Martin nest site**  
(See also note in compartment 13 in para 4.3 above.) Creation of 4M deep cleared area on cliff to maintain a nest site for sand martins. Re-clear approximately every 3 years.

All the above are subject to securing resources to proceed so detailed methodologies for each project have not yet been drawn up. If a further grant is received either under the Higher Level Stewardship or the Countryside Stewardship Schemes this plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure it is compatible with, and meets the prescriptions and obligations of, any future agreement. *(see note in para 4.2)*

#### Interpretation

There are two notice boards sited on the Common and seasonal topics are displayed.

In compartment 12 GeoSuffolk have installed a board explaining geological features of interest.

Subject to resources and funding there is interest in increasing the on-site interpretation. The GeoSuffolk geology board in compartment 12 is a useful contribution. The aim would be to provide information on the flora and fauna on the Common. This may take the form of:

- Self-guided walk leaflets.
- Continue programme of guided walks.
- Using a QR code to access more information on the Common pages of the Westleton website.
- Continue reporting results of surveys in the annual report.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Location Map

Appendix 2 Boundary Map

Appendix 3 Compartment Map

Appendix 4 Timetable of works for Heathland Management

Appendix 5 Geological Information

Appendix 6 County Wildlife Site Information

Appendix 7 Past research activity

Appendix 8 Annual Reports and Species Lists

Appendix 9 Westleton Common Advisory Group members at the time of drawing up this Management Plan.

Appendix 10 Acknowledgments

NB Additional information including past and present agri-environment agreements, biological data and contacts are held by Westleton Parish Council.

[westletonclerk@gmail.com](mailto:westletonclerk@gmail.com)



## APPENDIX 1

### Location Map

***Please note that this aerial image shows the location of the common but is not sufficiently accurate to define the boundaries precisely or to indicate ownership.***



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## APPENDIX 2

### Boundary Map

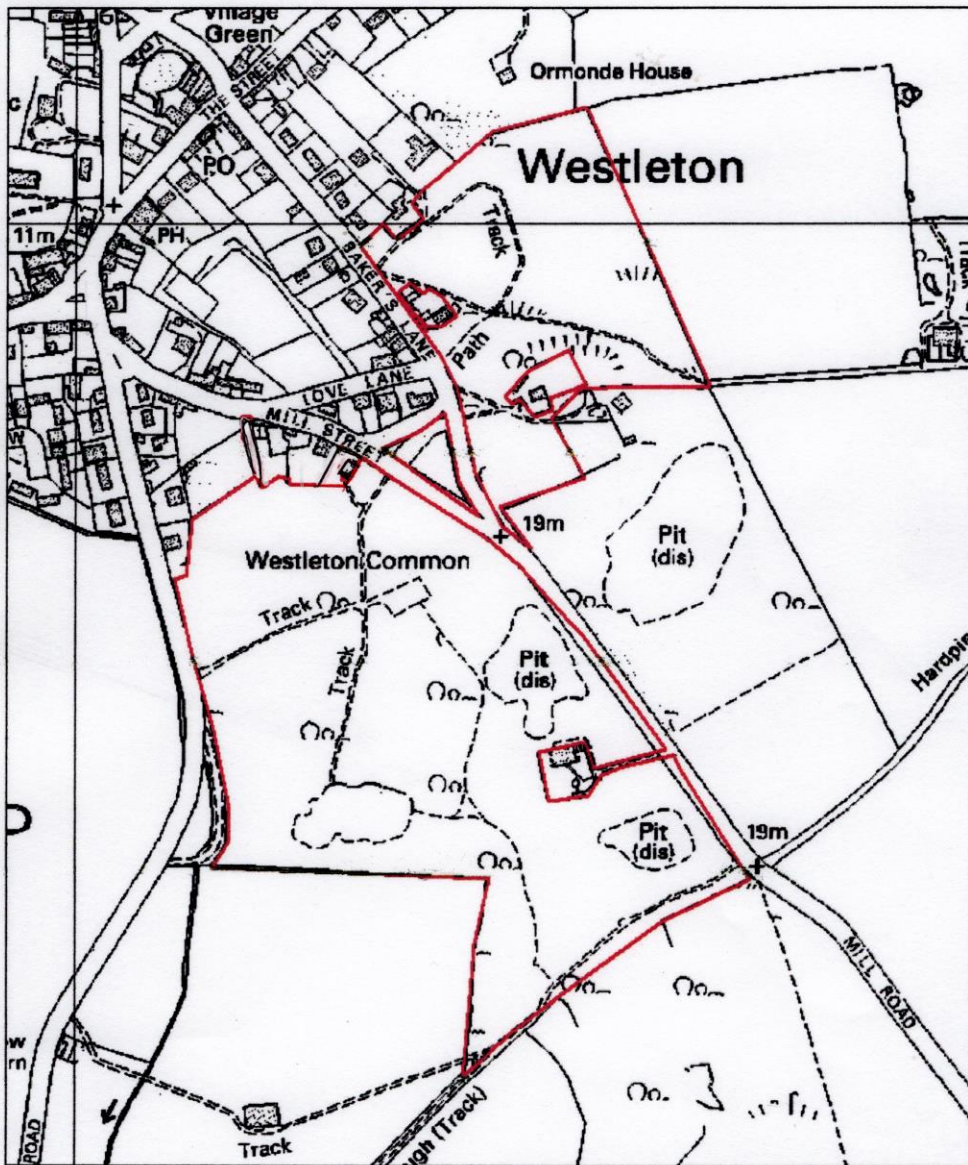
*This map shows only those areas of Westleton Common owned by Westleton Parish Council and subject to this management plan.*

#### Westleton Common

Boundary

Scale 1:4500

Suffolk Wildlife Trust  
Brooke House  
Ashbocking  
Ipswich IP6 9JY



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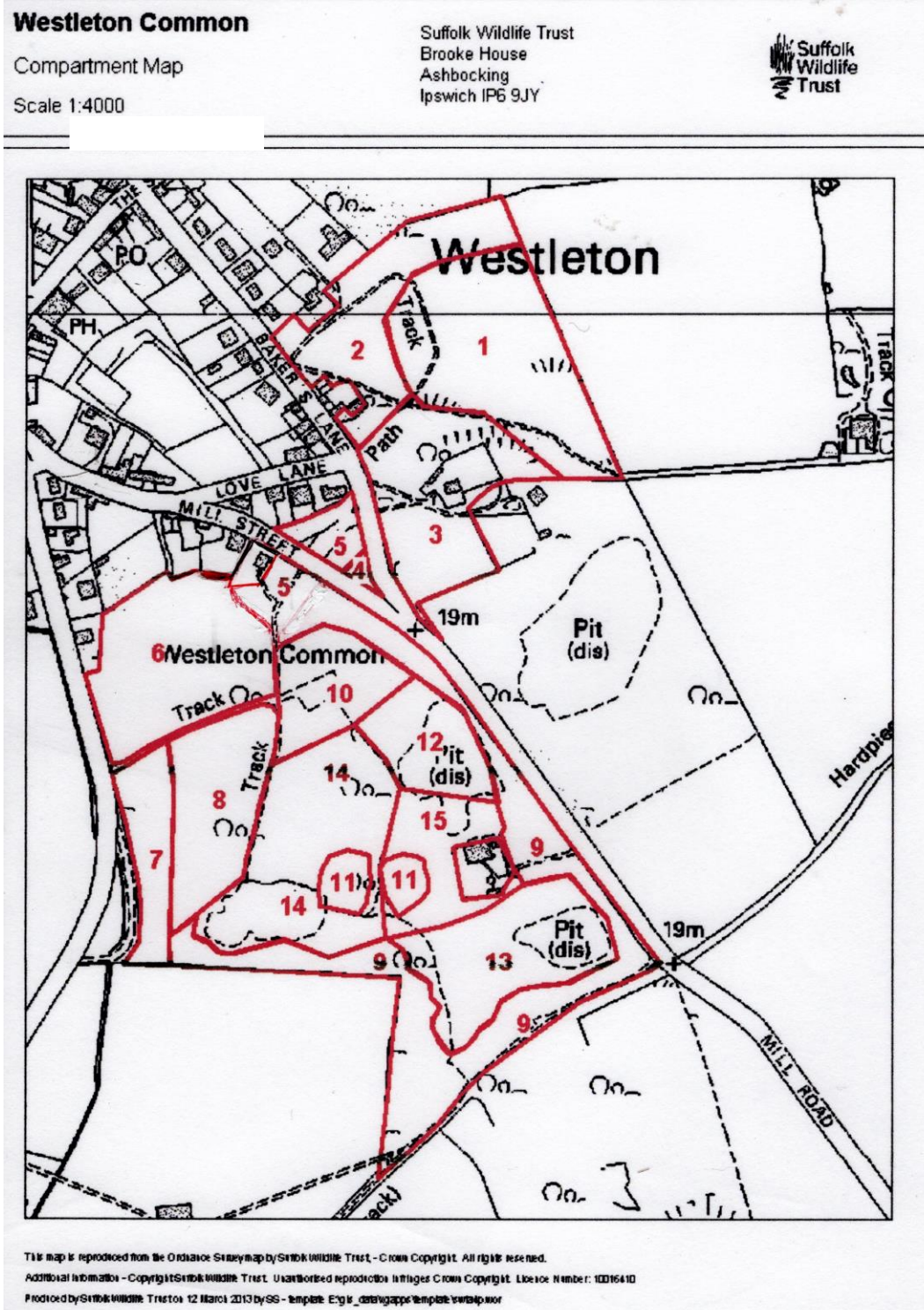
***Please note that this map is not sufficiently accurate to define the boundaries to the common precisely.***

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### APPENDIX 3

#### Compartment Map

*This map shows only those areas of Westleton Common owned by Westleton Parish Council and subject to this management plan.*



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**APPENDIX 4**

Timetable of works for Heathland Management (courtesy Graham Hart, Suffolk Wildlife Trust)

Action	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes
Heather cutting and clearing													
Gorse coppicing													
Gorse cutting and stump treatment													
Acid grassland cutting and clearing													Carry out pre-work checks for breeding birds
Acid grassland cutting and clearing to reduce purple moor-grass dominance													Carry out pre-work checks for breeding birds
Bare ground creation through rotovating or scraping													Carry out pre-work checks for breeding birds
Scrub management on the heathland and wet woodland													
Bracken control													Carry out pre-work checks for breeding birds

**APPENDIX 5**

Geological Information

Geology Record Sheet

<b>SITE</b>	
<b>Locality name</b>	Westleton Common pits
<b>Parish</b>	Westleton
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk Coastal DC
<b>NGR (accuracy)</b>	TM443686
<b>ACCESS</b>	
<b>Owner</b>	Westleton Parish Council (who should be contacted for all questions) <a href="mailto:westletonclerk@gmail.com">westletonclerk@gmail.com</a>
<b>Access details</b>	Open access
<b>Access notes</b>	Parking in layby off B1125 just south of Westleton TM 441685 Good footpaths throughout the site
<b>SITE STATUS</b>	
<b>Site use history</b>	Long history of common land with gravel pits. Commercial gravel extraction in WWII and 1950s, 60s (Atlas or RC Norman). Bought with Heritage Lottery Funding by Westleton Parish Council in 2003.
<b>Site description</b>	Area of old gravel workings, now heathland covering most of grid sq 4468

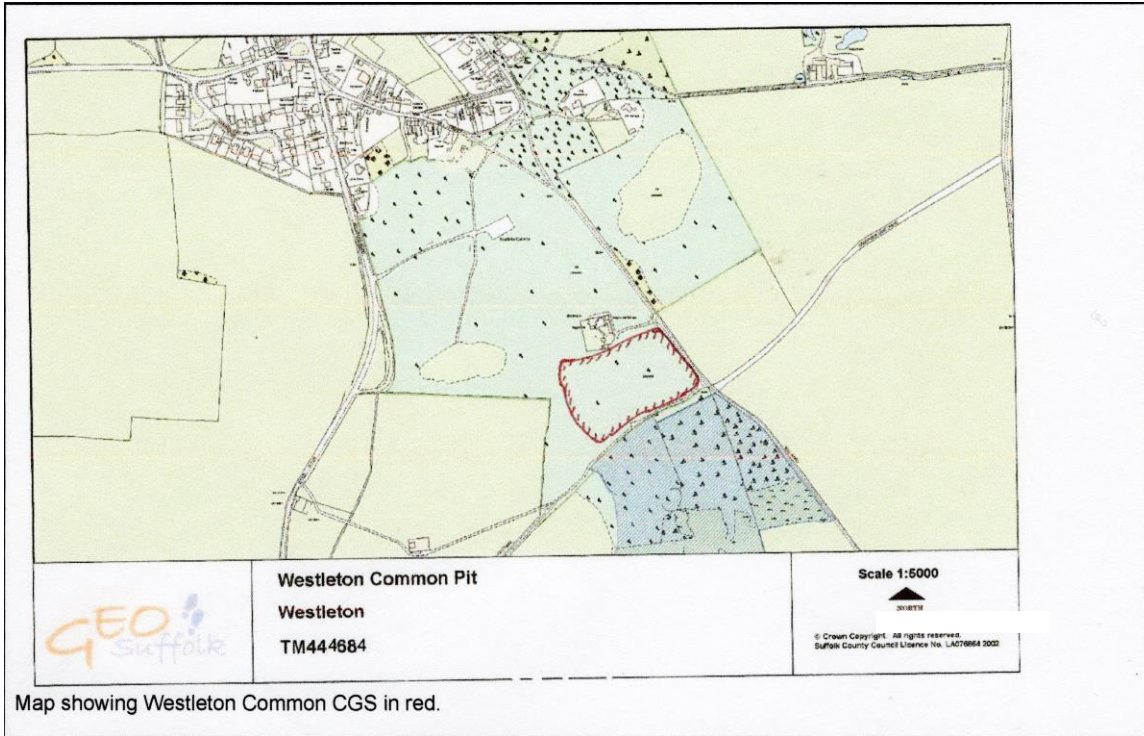
Westleton Common Management Plan 2023 - 2033

<b>Condition</b>	Recommend keeping faces open – Norwich Crag gravels support high angle of slope, so new scrapes could be successful in maintaining small sections at various levels.
<b>Conservation</b>	Management by Countryside unit of SCDC and SWT as public open space and for wildlife. Regular Saturday morning work parties from September to April. In SCH AONB. (GeoSuffolk site meeting with Westleton Common Group 17.07.10 discussed site management)
<b>RIGS</b>	CGS
<b>GEO FEATURES</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	Small exposures of Norwich Crag gravels & sands over a 1 km area of heathland.
<b>Stratigraphy</b>	Norwich crag sands and gravels (Westleton Beds stratotype – see Prestwich (1871))
<b>Geology</b>	Interbedded sand and gravel – rounded flints up to 6cm with chatter marks.
<b>Structures</b>	Closely interbedded sand and gravel, beds up to about 0.5m. Individual beds well-graded (large gravel, small gravel or sand). Apparent dip to SE.
<b>Geomorphology</b>	Gravelly layer of soil at top.
<b>OTHER FEATURES</b>	
<b>Educational</b>	Open public access, much gravel in evidence, so geodiversity very obvious.
<b>Historical</b>	“Westleton Beds” first described here. Accounts by early pioneers of east Anglian Crag/Quaternary (notably Prestwich and Whitaker). 2 windmills on the common– Rouse’s Mill (TM 445683) until 1880 and Ralph’s Mill (TM444685) until 1969 with a further one at TM 444692 until 1963.
<b>Wildlife</b>	Heathland – lichen, bell heather, gorse, silver studded blue butterfly (Westleton Common is a site of national importance for this species), antlions, trentepohlia (see Kirby & Francis (2009))
<b>Aesthetic</b>	Attractive gravel/heather mix.
<b>Leisure</b>	Common land much used by local people

Final version accepted by Westleton Parish Council on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022

<b>References</b>	<p>D Baden-Powell &amp; R West (1960) <i>Summer Field meeting in East Anglia 14-24 August 1958</i>. Proc.Geol.Assoc.vol 71,p61-80</p> <p>R Hey (1967) <i>The Westleton Beds reconsidered</i>. Proc.Geol.Assoc.vol 78, p427-445.</p> <p>M Kirby &amp; S Francis, <i>Trentepohlia on Westleton Common</i>, White Admiral Vol 73 (Summer 2009).</p> <p>S Mathers &amp; J Zalasiewicz (1966) <i>A gravel beach-rip channel system: the Westleton Beds (Pleistocene) of Suffolk, England</i>, Proc.Geol.Assoc.vol 107,p57-67</p> <p>J Prestwich (1871), <i>On the structure of the crag-beds of Suffolk and Norfolk with some observations on their organic remains, Part3. The Norwich Crag and Westleton Beds</i>. Q.J.Geol.Soc.London 27, p425-496.</p> <p>J Prestwich (1890), <i>On the relation of the Westleton Beds, or Pebbly Sands of Suffolk, to those of Norfolk, and their extension inland: with some observations on the period of the final elevation and denudation of the Weald and of the Thames Valley, Part1</i>. Q.J.Geol.Soc.London46, p84-119.</p> <p>H Spencer (1971) <i>A contribution to the geological history of Suffolk, Part5. The Early Pleistocene</i>. Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society vol15, p279-363.</p> <p>W Whitaker &amp; W Dalton (1887) <i>The geology of the country around Halesworth and Harleston. Explanation of quarter sheet 50NE</i>. Mem.Geol.Survey, p41.</p>
<b>MAP</b>	Attached
<b>PHOTOS</b>	
<b>SITE VISIT</b>	
<b>Name: Date</b>	C Markham, R Markham, H Mottram 22.08.09
<b>RECORD</b>	
<b>Name: Date</b>	C Markham 25.08.09 (addendum 17.07.10)

## Geological Map



Map showing Westleton Common CGS in red.





CWS Citation

**Parish** WESTLETON

**District** East Suffolk

**Overlap district**

**Area (ha)** 21.75

**Distcode** Suffolk Coastal 180

**Site Name** WESTLETON COMMON

**Grid Reference** TM443686

### **Description**

This CWS is situated to the south east of Westleton village. The majority of the site comprises Westleton Common, the extent of which has remained more or less as shown in the 1840 Tithe map, with the exception of a few small areas now in private ownership. The CWS boundary extends beyond the Common to include a disused pit to the east of the Minsmere Road. The Common and its immediate surroundings have a history of gravel extraction, dating back at least as far as the 1880's and continuing until the 1960's. Since the cessation of any large scale gravel extraction, no formal 'restoration' of the quarried areas have taken place. The steep sides of the pits remain, along with damp areas of former washing pits, a bank of washed sand, bare ground and hard standing. Such features are unusual as the majority of former quarries and pits have been in-filled and restored to agricultural land. The semi-natural vegetation present is a diverse mosaic of remnant and naturally regenerated heathland and acid grassland (both Priority habitats), scrub, woodland, early successional/ruderal vegetation communities and bare ground. These habitats support a wide range of wildlife including Priority species silver studded blue butterfly, bullfinch, nightingale, linnets and antlion. Four species of reptile are also recorded here, including adder., another Priority species. The CWS also supports a number of notable plant species including nationally scarce clustered clover and mossy stonecrop. In addition, past wartime and industrial activities on the site, including soil dumping and hard standings have provided 'man-made' habitat niches that have been colonised by species (such as pennywort on former soil dumps and lichens that have colonised concrete) that, although not necessarily characteristic of the locality, still add to the interest and ecological diversity of the site. The site is also a County Geological Site (CGS) for its exposures of Westleton Beds.



## **APPENDIX 7**

### Research Activity

#### Past research activity

Since approximately 2000, there have been extensive and systematic observations on gorse mites on the Common, (*Tetranychus lintearius*) and regular estimates of mite populations and observations of their behaviour have been recorded.

A number of papers have been published (e.g. Gorse mites and their predators, *British Wildlife* 16, 314. 2005).

Over recent years the populations have declined drastically, but in 2008, about 20 colonies of gorse mite were discovered and their progress closely followed. High infestations of gorse mite severely debilitate gorse bushes and may lead to death.

(Gorse mites have been exported to Australia and NZ where their biology has been extensively studied with a view to using them for biological control of gorse)

Studies of antlion biology and numbers have been made in and around Westleton including the Common (Kirby, 2001, *Antlions in the Suffolk Sandlings*). At present the number of antlions (based on the number of pits) seems to be in decline on the Common. The antlion is the subject of a SAP (Species Action Plan). It is important that certain south facing slopes with suitable sand soil retain some sheltering gorse overhang to encourage the Antlion's success. .

The current population of Silver-studded Blue butterflies is the subject of an annual monitoring programme along with the annual recording of vascular plants, bryophytes and cyanobacteria, fungi and lichens, butterflies, moths and dragonflies, mammals, reptiles amphibians, birds and insects.

While this type of research is not affected by the management of the Common, or vice versa, an acknowledgement of its value for natural history study reasons as part of the Common study activities is recorded as part of the Commons asset and biodiversity values.

#### Present and Future research activity

We intend to discuss ways of expanding the current survey programme with the Suffolk Biodiversity Service and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

## **APPENDIX 8**

Annual Reports and Species Lists are available on the DVD that accompanies this Management Plan and can also be seen on the Westleton website by following the links.

### **Annual Report 2021**

The Annual Report for 2021 is available on the DVD and on the Westleton Website. Please follow this link (ctrl click); [2021 Westleton Common Annual Report » Westleton \(onesuffolk.net\)](#)

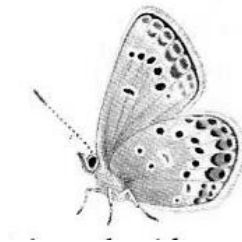
### **Earlier Annual Reports**

Annual Reports from 2010 to 2020 are available on the DVD and on the Westleton Website. Please follow this link (ctrl click); [Archive » Westleton \(onesuffolk.net\)](#)  
Earlier reports are available on request.

### **Species Lists**

Species lists included in the 2013 to 2023 Management Plan are available on the DVD and on the Westleton Website. Please follow this link (ctrl click); [Archive » Westleton \(onesuffolk.net\)](#)

Species lists from the years 2010 to 2021 are included in the Annual Reports for each of those years. These Annual reports are available on the DVD and on the Westleton Website. Follow the links to the Annual Reports above.



**APPENDIX 9**

Westleton Common Advisory Group members at the time of drawing up this Management Plan.

**WESTLETON COMMON ADVISORY GROUP**

**At**

**March 2022.**

**Westleton Common Advisory Group 2021**

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Julian Alexander: Member Westleton Parish Council

Roy Jones: Co-Opted

Joyce Burtenshaw: Co-Opted

Amanda Freeman: Member Westleton Parish Council

Chris Freeman: Member Westleton Parish Council

Andrew Turner: Member Westleton Parish Council

**APPENDIX 10**

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Graham Hart of Suffolk Wildlife Trust for his help and advice in preparing this plan.

This Management Plan is an updated version of the 2013 to 2023 plan written by David Rous of the, then, Westleton Common Friends Committee (chaired by Ivor Murrell) and Susan Stone of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Their hard work made writing this current plan far more straightforward than it would otherwise have been. We thank them and their colleagues for their invaluable contribution.

*Westleton Common Advisory Group*  
*26/05/2022*