

MURTON AD HILTON VILLAGE GREEN MANAGEMENT PLAN

Background.

This plan was prepared following a number of representations to the Parish Council concerning the village greens in Murton. At the parish meeting in May 2014 it was agreed that Murton residents should be consulted concerning the maintenance of the village greens in Murton, and a plan would be prepared. Subsequently the plan has been expanded so it is relevant to all village greens within the parish. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that responsibilities and agreed actions are clear, and that there is a framework for ongoing monitoring to ensure the greens are used and maintained in line with the legal framework that exists for their protection, and with the wishes of residents.

The Greens 2015

This plan was originally primarily concerned with two areas of green known as the upper green and the middle green in Murton. Further areas of green were deemed to be in a satisfactory state, and not to lend themselves to any changes or enhancements.

Following the annual inspection by councillors and residents in 2015 the following points were noted:

The upper green is a large area of which a part has been mown regularly to provide an area suitable for children to play, and to provide a mown path to a seat overlooking the fell. The play area is well used, and it is agreed that it should be maintained. The rest of the area is grassland, and several residents have expressed an interest in improving the diversity of wild flowers in this grass; this will require an annual cut.

The middle green is bounded by houses and the beck. At the time of inspection in 2014 the green, which was not mown was very over grown and residents were agreed on the desirability of improving the appearance and amenity value of this area. Since then volunteers have worked hard to maintain the green. When inspected in 2015 the area was tidy and being used by children and dog walkers.

The greens in Hilton were generally tidy and well maintained, with the exception of the triangular piece of green towards the top of the village. There was a consensus that this would be much improved if a greater variety of wildflowers could be encouraged.

An area of green at the top of the village adjacent to the open fell is frequently used for car parking. A resident later made the point that this shouldn't really be permitted. The PC will consider if any action is needed.

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is actively encouraging management of gardens and public spaces to provide habitat for pollinators. A group of residents met their representative who will offer help and support to improve the greens in Murton and Hilton. The commoners will need to be consulted before any action is taken.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Parish Council

The Parish Council (PC) is the registered owner of all the village greens in the parish. The PC is therefore responsible for ensuring that the greens are used and managed in accordance with the statutory framework that exists for their protection.

The PC as the representative of the residents is also responsible for ensuring as far as possible that the wishes of the residents in respect of enhancing the amenity value of the green sand maintaining the greens can be realised.

The PC will consult with Commoners, to ensure that their rights in respect of the village greens throughout the parish are respected.

The PC will meet the residents annually to look at the greens with them and discuss any issues in respect of maintenance.

The PC will offer any help and advice that is wanted, and will welcome any ideas for improving the greens.

Residents

Residents have agreed on a voluntary basis to maintain various areas of the green:

Alan and Eileen Ormerod have for some time voluntarily cut the upper green play area. This is much appreciated by the PC and all residents.

A group of residents have agreed between themselves to cut and maintain the middle green. Again the PC is very appreciative of their efforts.

Residents should consult the PC in respect of any planned changes to any of the greens. In particular residents will not erect any structure or plant any trees or shrubs on the greens without consultation with the PC.

Residents should consult the PC in respect of any planned driveway across or parking area on a village green even if in connection with a successful planning application.

The Commoners

The commoners have a right to be consulted in any matter that may affect their rights to graze livestock on the greens and pass livestock across the greens.

November 2015