



Cornwall

Report into the stockproofing options of Tregonetha Downs

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Introduction

Tregonetha Downs is an area of common land and SSSI which is in the ownership of Cornwall Wildlife Trust. The Trust are planning to reinstate grazing to the common after a gap of some fifty years with the aim of returning the SSSI to favourable condition. The following report is based on fieldwork aimed at finding the most visually sympathetic means of ensuring the common is stockproof. In addition to fencing, cattle grids are also planned in order to reduce the need for fencing of the Kernick road so as to maintain some of the open nature of the common. Other livestock requirement such as gates, watering points and handling facilities are also included in the findings. Due to this site being crossed by two roads it has effectively been divided into three compartments named 1, 2 and 3 which will be described separately.

Findings

Cattle grids

In order to reduce the overall amount of fencing required cattle grids could be installed on the Kernick Road. This road runs approximately east-west and forms the boundary between compartments 2 and 3 of the common.

The B3374 is thought to be too fast a road to be suitable for cattle grids.

Eastern cattle grid

At the eastern limit of the Kernick road there is a well used farm gate with a large lay-by. The road at this point is straight and so suitable for a grid (Photo 1) but the grid would have to be positioned several meters to the west so as not to impede access to the gate and lay-by. There is ample space for pedestrian/equestrian by-pass facilities at this point.

Western cattle grid

A second cattle grid near to the junction of the Kernick Road and the B3374 would reduce the need for fencing on the Kernick road (Photo 2). Although the Kernick Road is straight at this point a cattle grid would need to be positioned several meters back from the junction so as not to present a hazard to vehicles turning off the B3374 (Photo 3). The exact position of a western cattle grid would need to be decided following thorough consultation with the relevant Highways Area Manager.

Fencing and gates

Compartment I

Compartment I is the largest area of Tregonetha Downs. There is a stone cross within this section which may require additional fencing to prevent stock damage (Photo 4).

Eastern boundary

The eastern boundary of Compartment I is formed by the B3374. For much of its length there is a bank approximately 1 meter high running alongside the road (Photos 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) which would obscure a fenceline to some degree but it is likely that it would still be visible in places especially to the south east, less so to the north as the bank is fairly scrubby in this area.

At the northern limit of the road the scrub becomes dense and semi-mature. A new fenceline would need to head west at this point in order to exclude stock from the

scrub. Close to the northern limit of the eastern boundary there is a public footpath marked on OS maps, this would necessitate the inclusion of a stile at this point. A further stile would be needed within this fenceline opposite the junction with Kernick road to allow walkers approaching from this direction access to Compartment I without having to walk along the road.

Northern boundary

The northern boundary of Compartment I is formed by a small stream (Photo 10). This stream is lined with scrub which would allow a new fence to be hidden. Approximately half way along the northern boundary, to the north of the stream, there is infrastructure in place to take water from the stream to water stock (Photo 11). It is unclear whether this is still operational but Cornwall Wildlife Trust may be able to utilize this to service stock in this compartment. Failing this a similar system could be set up on the Trust owned bank of the river.

Western boundary

Due to the large amount of scrub in the northern section of this compartment (Photo 12) a fence line would need to be positioned approximately 10-15 meters away from the existing boundary until it reaches the track leading to Castle Farm. There is currently a farm gate on this track which would provide the Trust with a useful point of entry to the western areas of the site (Photos 13 and 14) and the potential to install stock handling facilities. A second gate would be required where the track enters Trust land. The farm track continues into the common for several meters and eventually becomes a public footpath as shown on the maps; the presence of the public footpath would necessitate either a stile or kissing gate to be installed at this point. From this point on the boundary runs east-west to form the southern boundary.

Southern boundary

The southern boundary comprises of a Cornish hedge approximately 1 meter high which runs all the way to the eastern corner to meet the B3374. Although this would not hide a new fenceline it would mask its silhouette (Photos 15, 16, 17 and 18). At the far eastern corner of the site there is an interpretation board and a flat area where visitors are able to park. In order to maintain visitor access to the common a new fenceline should allow parking to continue and include a kissing gate or stile and a farm gate to allow the Trust vehicular access to the eastern areas of the site. If a farm gate were to be placed at this location it should be a wooden gate which would be more aesthetically pleasing than a galvanised gate.

Compartment 2

Eastern boundary

The eastern boundary of Compartment 2 is currently formed by a Cornish hedge approximately 1 meter high (Photo 19). Although this hedge would not hide the hedge it would mask its silhouette. To the south there is an area of scrub which offers the opportunity to hide the fenceline.

Southern and western boundaries

The southern and western boundaries of Compartment 2 are formed by the B3374. As with its borders with Compartment 1, the road has a bank running along side it for most of its length which would hide a fenceline to some degree although it would still be visible in places (Photos 20, 21 and 22). If a car parking area is to be maintained in Compartment 1 as suggested above, a stile or kissing gate would be fitted in the southern boundary of Compartment 2 to allow access across the road. A fence line along this boundary would need to tie in with the fencing and gate associated with the western cattle grid.

Northern boundary

The northern boundary of Compartment 2 is formed by the Kernick road. Two cattle grids placed on the Kernick road will negate the need for fencing the western section of this boundary. The eastern section of the boundary will require fencing, there is currently a Cornish hedge running the full length of this boundary which will hide the fenceline from the road. Close to the western limit of this boundary there is a gap in this hedge which offers a good opportunity to place a farm gate to allow the Trust vehicular access to this compartment (Photo 23). A farm gate should have an associated kissing gate or stile fitted to allow pedestrian access.

Compartment 3

Eastern boundary

The eastern boundary of this compartment is comprised of a Cornish hedge which to the south is topped with mature vegetation (Photo 24). A fenceline running close to this feature would be well hidden for most of the southern section of this boundary. There is a gap in this hedge with a tack leading to the north eastern section of the SSSI (Photo 25). There is currently a pool of water within this gap which appears permanent. This section of the SSSI is not in our ownership but is part of the common therefore it would be appropriate to install a farm gate and style into in this gap.

Northern boundary

The northern boundary is similar in character to the eastern boundary. Although the hedge is less well defined (Photo 26) it does offer the opportunity to hide the fenceline. The north western corner of this compartment is completely scrubbed over with gorse and blackthorn and would allow the fence to be well hidden.

Western boundary

The western boundary is formed by the B3374. There is less of a bank along this boundary than at other roadside boundaries and so a fenceline would be quite obvious

in places (Photo 27) although there is some scrub in places which would hide the fence to some extent.

Southern boundary

Compartment 3 is bordered to the south by the Kernick road. Installation of two cattle grids on this road would negate the need for extensive fencing of the southern boundary. Some fencing would be required however in order to link up fencing with the cattle grids. Where fencing is required there is a bank of scrub in place which would obscure fencing for the most part (Photo 28). At the far eastern limit of this boundary, a track enters Compartment 3. In order to maintain access to this compartment a farm gate should be installed at the entrance to the track.

Fencing lengths

The figures shown below are dependant upon the installation of cattle grids on the Kernick road.

Compartment	Approximate fencing length in meters
1	2436
2	943
3	784
	Total = 4163

Conclusions

Cattle grids

Although consultation is required with the highways department, two cattle grids are proposed for the Kernick road.

Fencing

Compartment 1

Fencing of the southern boundary of this compartment would be placed in front of a Cornish hedge so as to mask its silhouette.

Fencing of the eastern boundary would be obscured from the road for the most part by a bank which runs for most of the length of the road.

Fencing of the northern and western boundaries could be hidden within scrub.

Compartment 2

Fencing of the B3374 boundary to the south and west would be hidden from the road for the most part by a bank which runs most of the length of the road.

Fencing of the eastern boundary would run parallel with a Cornish hedge which would mask its silhouette.

Cattle grids on the Kernick road negate the need for major fencing of the far western limit of the northern boundary. Fencing of the eastern limit of this boundary would be hidden from the road by a Cornish hedge.

Compartment 3

Cattle grids on the Kernick road negate the need for major fencing of the southern boundary of this compartment. Any fencing required would be hidden for the most part by a bank of scrub running along the road.

Fencing of the eastern and northern boundaries would run parallel with a Cornish hedge which would mask its silhouette.

Fencing of the western boundary with the B3374 would be hidden to some extent by scrub but for the most part would be visible from the road.

Gates and stiles

A total of five farm gates would need to be included in the fencing proposals, one (wooden) at the parking area in the far eastern corner of Compartment 1, one in the western boundary of Compartment 1 where it meets the track to Castle Farm, a gate at this point could provide stock handling facilities. One gate would be required in the northern boundary of Compartment 2 where there is a gap in the Cornish hedge and the final gate would be placed in the eastern boundary of Compartment 3 where there is a gap in the hedge leading to land not under Trust ownership. The final farm gate would need to be installed at the eastern limit of the southern boundary to Compartment 3 where a track leads from the Kernick road into this compartment; a gate at this point could provide stock handling facilities.

There should be a total of five stiles or kissing gates included in the fencing plans. Four of these would accompany the gates mentioned above with a further two placed within the eastern boundary of Compartment 1, one opposite the junction with Kernick road and one at the point where the public footpath to the north exits this compartment. A further stile should be placed in the south eastern corner of Compartment 2 to allow people access to this compartment from the parking area in Compartment 1.

Watering points

The northern boundary of Compartment 1 is formed by a small stream stock watering infrastructure could be installed at this point to be used by stock within this compartment.

There are no streams within Compartments 2 and 3 and so a reliable water source may need to be mains fed.



Photo 1. Proposed location of northern cattle grid on the Kernick Road.



Photo 2. Proposed location of southern cattle grid on the Kernick Road



Photo 3. Junction of the Kernick Road and B3374



Photo 4. Stone cross within Compartment I



Photo 5. Eastern boundary of compartment I facing north west



Photo 6. Bank along roadside forming eastern boundary of Compartment I



Photo 7. Eastern boundary of Compartment I facing north



Photo 8. Eastern boundary of Compartment I from the south eastern corner



Photo 9. Eastern boundary of Compartment I facing south east



Photo 10. Scrub forming northern boundary of Compartment I



Photo 11. Location of a possible watering point within scrub of the northern boundary of Compartment 1



Photo 12. Mature scrub forming northern section of the western boundary of Compartment 1



Photo 13. Track to Castle Farm within western boundary of Compartment I



Photo 14. Track to Castle Farm within western boundary of Compartment I providing a potential access point to this section of the downs



Photo 15. Southern boundary of Compartment I leading south from Castle Farm



Photo 16. Southern boundary of Compartment I facing east, showing existing Cornish hedge



Photo 17. Detail of Cornish hedge forming southern boundary of Compartment I



Photo 18. Southern boundary of Compartment I facing east, showing existing Cornish hedge



Photo 19. Eastern boundary of Compartment 2 facing south, showing existing Cornish hedge



Photo 20. South eastern corner of Compartment 2 showing B3374



Photo 21. Southern boundary of Compartment 2 formed by a bank running along the B3374



Photo 22. Western boundary of Compartment 2 showing raised bank.



Photo 23. Northern boundary of Compartment 2 showing gap in hedge suitable for a gate



Photo 24. Eastern boundary of Compartment 3 showing overgrown Cornish hedge



Photo 25. Gap in hedge forming eastern boundary of
Compartment 3 leading into north eastern section of the SSSI



Photo 26. Northern boundary of Compartment 3 showing
existing Cornish hedge



Photo 27. Southern boundary of Compartment 3 showing B3374 in background



Photo 28. Kernick Road forming the southern boundary of Compartment 3 (right) and Northern boundary of Compartment 2 (left). The installation of cattle grids on this road would negate the need to fence these boundaries.

All photos by Jason Appleby.