PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT – PORLOCK MARSH SIGNAGE AND GROUND NESTING BIRD PROTECTION

Date: 1 September 2026 **Author:** Clerk

Councillor Don Heath has reported on a meeting held with representatives of the National Trust (NT) and Savills (Porlock Manor Estate) to discuss measures to protect ground nesting birds on Porlock Marsh. Both organisations acknowledged concerns regarding a marked decline in ground nesting bird populations in recent years, with some species no longer being observed on the marsh.

It was agreed that action should be taken to raise awareness amongst visitors. The National Trust has offered to produce signage, and Savills has agreed to adopt the same design. The proposed signs will promote a joint partnership approach between the National Trust, Porlock Manor Estate and Porlock Parish Council, reinforcing the message that dogs should be kept on leads during the nesting season. The signage is expected to be installed along the marsh corridor from Porlock Weir through to Bossington. The Parish Council will be kept informed as the project develops.

The National Trust is also currently recruiting volunteer dog wardens to patrol the marsh and assist with public engagement. A copy of the recruitment poster was posted on village noticeboards and the council's website.

Marsh Memorial

During a separate discussion with a representative from Savills, concerns were raised regarding the condition of the fence surrounding the memorial on the marsh. Savills reported having received enquiries from members of the public regarding its state of repair. As the fence was originally installed to prevent grazing cattle from accessing the memorial, and cattle are no longer present on the marsh, Savills is considering whether the fence remains necessary.

Councillor Don Heath suggested that, before any decision is taken, local residents who have been involved in maintaining the memorial, together with any known relatives connected to it, should be consulted. Further updates will be provided as discussions progress.

Recommendation

Council notes the update and requests that Cllr. Heath continues to monitor developments regarding both the proposed marsh signage initiative and any proposals affecting the memorial site, reporting back when further information becomes available.