

## **Telscombe Tye**

### **Background**

Telscombe Tye consists of five areas of land situated between Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean along the coast and stretching back to the village of Telscombe. Most of the area is improved grassland with some remnants of species-rich chalk grassland. There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) on the site. There are several Rights of Way across the site and it is well used by residents and visitors.

### **History**

Telscombe Tye was purchased by Telscombe Town Council in 1989 following consultation with residents and funding from an additional charge to local taxpayers. The Tye is now part of the South Downs National Park.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ambrose Gorham became the squire and benefactor of Telscombe village. He owned between 300 and 400 acres. He died in 1933 and bequeathed all his land to the Ambrose Gorham Trust.

- In 1978 the Tye was designated as a Common Land under the Commons Registration Act 1965.
- In 1989 Telscombe Tye was purchased by Telscombe Town Council.
- It inherited all the existing legal rights retained by commoners
- The Sussex Downs Conservation Board took on some management responsibilities for the site in 1996 including grant aid to restore the dew pond. In 2011 the SDCB was superseded by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).
- In 2004 the main Tye was fenced to protect grazing animals, improve biodiversity and prevent unauthorized vehicles from accessing the Tye. This followed a referendum in March 2001 with 2,685 Telscombe residents responding and 82% in favour of the fencing. This had to be agreed by the Secretary of State.
- In 2010 the Tye became part of the South Downs National Park.
- A second dewpond restoration occurred in 2012 with a grant from SDNPA.
- In 2012 The Council acquired a community flock to graze the Tye.
- In 2019 Telscombe Town Council sold the flock.
- In 2013 the Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement was put in place. This is due to expire this year.

### **Current position**

Telscombe Town Council has a management plan for the Tye with the following objectives:

- To maintain, conserve and protect Telscombe Tye, its habitat and archaeology as a unique area of Sussex Downland returning it to an area rich in wildlife.

- To ensure that Telscombe Tye is accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone to use.
- To increase the understanding and awareness of the importance of the site by all visitors.

Telscombe Tye is protected by development by the Commons Registration Act 1965.

Since 2019 ongoing discussions have been held with Stud Farm as the only commoner exercising their grazing rights. These discussions concern achieving satisfactory use of the Tye for the residents, commoners and Council.

### Legal position

Telscombe Tye is registered as common land. East Sussex County Council keeps the register, and the register unit numbers are CL2 and CL23. The following entries relate to ownership and rights:

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| 02/03/67 | Provisional registration by Telscombe Town Council as Common Land.   |
| 18/12/69 | Right claimed by Seeboard for an electricity substation, high voltage overhead line and underground cable.   |
| 17/05/79 | When Telscombe Tye was registered as common land under the Commons Registration Act 1965 it stated under Part 1 of the registration that Charity (later Stud) Farm could have 222 ewes plus 77 tegs and estovers on the common. However on the 17th May 1979 the Chief Commons Commissioner decided that 252 sheep was the number permitted under the register to graze on the Tye. This dates back to use of only the word “sheep” in the original allocations and allotments of land under the Inclosure Act 1810. |
| 30/06/80 | Registration became final, subject to decisions and directions by the Commons Commissioners that confirmed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a right of common exercisable by the Trustee’s of Gorham’s Gift in respect of <b>Telscombe Farm</b>, also known as Charity Farm and now known as Stud Farm, for the open and common pasturing of 252 sheep.</li> <li>- a right of common exercisable by the owners of <b>Kirby Farm</b>, Telscombe for grazing up to 100 sheep.</li> </ul>                      |
| 22/10/08 | This details 252 sheep allowed on Telscombe Tye – Page 6 - 452935 <a href="#">TELSCOMBE TYE - TELSCOMBE NO.CL.2.pdf</a> <p>When Telscombe Tye was registered as common land under the Commons Registration Act 1965 it stated under Part 1 of the registration that Charity (later Stud) Farm could have 222 ewes plus</p>   |

77 tegs and estovers on the common. However, on the 17th May 1979 the Chief Commons Commissioner decided that 252 sheep was the number permitted under the register to graze on the Tye.

**Lewes DC has a dog fouling public spaces protection order.** The order means people must clear up after their dogs. The order applies to any land open to the public within Lewes district. Failure to do so could result in a maximum fine of £1000.

### **How we can use the Tye**

Telscombe Tye is well used by the public. There is open access, on foot only, throughout the site and there are several rights of way that exist across the site consisting of bridleways and footpaths.

The Tye is registered common land. This means that those with rights can graze their sheep on the land. They include Stud Farm who can graze 252 sheep and Kirby Farm 100 sheep. Currently only Stud Farm exercise their grazing rights. The grazing rights allow them to graze their sheep for 365 days of the year.

The activities listed below are NOT ALLOWED and where offences are disclosed, will be prosecuted. For full details visit:

<https://www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk/telscombe-tye/>

- Dog Fouling
- Offence of 'Livestock Worrying'
- Hang Gliding & Kite Boarding/Kite Surfing/Power Kiting
- Firearms, Shotguns & Air Weapons
- Hunting
- Driving Motor Vehicles
- Metal Detecting
- Golf
- Camping or lighting fires