

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ELLISFIELD VOLUNTEER GROUP
HELD AT 7.30PM ON FRIDAY 29th JANUARY 2021 VIA ZOOM**

Present:

Committee:

Graham Simpson (Chairman)
Zani Robinson (Treasurer)
Paul Brown
Andy Webb
Janette Bacon (Secretary)

Members:

Ali Swanston
Andy Swanston
April Carroll
Dirk Bacon
Julian Evans
Margaret Evans

Apologies:

Chris
Gordon Dunse

1. Introduction and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed them of apologies received:

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 7th February 2020

The Minutes from the meeting held on Friday 7th February 2020 were approved. Proposed by Zani Robinson and seconded by Julian Evans. The Minutes were agreed and duly signed.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report EVG 2021

Hello everyone and welcome to the first (and hopefully the last) Ellisfield Volunteer Group virtual AGM.

It's good to see so many faces and thank you both for tuning in! Actually, that's not quite true, I can see a few more but it's interesting what effect not having the post meeting wine and nibbles has.

Anyway, I've already started on my refreshment – so cheers!

Let me start the year's round up by mentioning Gavin who gave the lower common a going over around the perimeter in the spring with his heavy-duty mower. A job that didn't get done on the previous year's clear up, so thank you to him.

Thank you, also, to Steve Gould who gave all the machinery a service at the start of last season and will be doing the same for this year. It's great that Steve is doing this and since he has we have had no mid-season machinery issues.

No sooner had the mowing season got under way when the dreaded virus meant we were forced into a cessation of activities. Some individuals, however, took it upon themselves to mow our areas to ensure things were kept tidy and not over grown until we were allowed out again.

Which we were, but with the precautions we have all become familiar with – that is social distancing etc - and with an addendum to the risk assessments to emphasise this and ensure we comply with the insurance.

Speaking of insurance: with a bit of phoning round I managed to get the ride-on mower insurance renewal quote reduced by £100 – which should please Tim Guinness! And this year it is my intension to have a go at our public liability insurance before it's due in November and see what reductions can be made there.

Towards the end of last year Janette and I took a Sunday afternoon cycle ride around the village, knocking on the doors of newcomers to explain what the volunteer group was about and invite them to get involved. We got a mixed response but did get Hayley and Colin Hall and Chris Cole to help out with the end of year clear up. With a bit of cajoling I think we should be able to get a couple more to help for the coming season.

I'd like to talk about the burial ground. Comments have been made about how tricky it can be to cut and one or two have asked to move to other areas instead. I fully understand this and know how hard it can be, especially if there's been a lot of growth and if strimming is involved too. I'm also aware many people only ever get to cut one area. So, for this year I'm going to try and work the schedule, so people don't cut the burial ground more than once a year and for their other sessions mow the other areas and get a better understanding of what's involved elsewhere.

At the beginning of December we had our end of year clear up. Ashley, Gordon and Pauls Brown and Turner were at the burial ground. Andy Swanston, Sharon and Chris Hack, Gavin and I tidied up the lower common with tea and coffee supplied by Sharon and cakes by Janey and the kids. Andy Webb with Chris Cole, Phil Self and Hayley and Colin Hall were at the gravel pit.

This is Andy's summary for the gravel pit:

With lockdown coinciding with the start of the mowing season, the lack of keen volunteers meant that the various wild flowers that grace the Gravel Pits each spring took full advantage and made a visit to the Gravel Pits a worthwhile venture from the house. Thank you to Julian and Margaret for taking extra turns at keeping the weeds and excess grass growth under control until normal service could be resumed, and the volunteers could do their socially distanced bit to ensure the grass looked good for the remainder of the year.

Finally, Thanks to the four volunteers who braved a cold but sunny December morning armed with leaf rakes to assist in the end of year clear up. They certainly earned their mince pies!

This leaves me to say thank you to you all for your help and support last year and continuing to do so in the year ahead.

Let's hope for a more normal life in the coming months and that next year's AGM we can meet in person.

5. Treasurer's Report

EVG's main expenses are insurance followed by maintenance and the shared rental of the Cannon Close garage where the Lower Common equipment, including the Ride on Mower, is stored. EVG has not had to purchase any new equipment since 2017. EVG continues to service mowers and strimmer in March, prior to their use. Our Chairman negotiated a reduction in the Ride on Mower insurance of £64.46. Zurich kindly gave us a three-month holiday from August to November on the renewal of our Public Liability & Tool insurance.

In view of the above saving and the unincurred 2021 AGM expenses, EVG is able to reduce the Grant request to Ellisfield Parish Council by £250.00, from £1,450.00 to £1,200.00 for 2021, while keeping an optimum balance in the account to allow for contingencies.

Action: It was agreed that the Secretary would prepare the formal request for a Grant of £1,200 to the Ellisfield Parish Council, for signature by the Chairman.

6. Election of Officers

Chairman: Graham Simpson expressed a willingness to continue as the EVG Chairman.

Treasurer: Zani Robinson expressed a willingness to continue as the EVG Treasurer.

Area Manager Gravel Pits: Andy Webb expressed a willingness to continue as the Area Manager Gravel Pits.

Area Manager Burial Ground: There remains a vacancy for the position of Area Manager Burial Ground.

Secretary: Janette Bacon expressed a willingness to continue as the EVG Secretary.

A collective proposal for the continuation of the above officers was proposed by Julian Evans, seconded by Dirk Bacon and unanimously agreed – all duly re-elected.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Ellisfield Pond

Janette Bacon enquired about the decision around the request for support from the EVG in some maintenance work in respect of the Pond.

The outcome is that the Pond has been adopted by the Parish Council, with Gordon Dunse assuming responsibility for the strimming the front area of the pond.

8.0 Closure

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.15.