

## **Ellisfield Volunteers Group – Chairman’s Report of 2014**

Good Evening Everyone and welcome to the Volunteers AGM.

Difficult to believe another year has passed – seems only a few months ago that we were having the AGM. Once again we had a good turnout in terms of Volunteers and were able to keep all the three areas under control.

This year we had approaches for two special projects. Hill Farm Pond renovation and also replacement of the Notice Board at College Lane. For me this raised an interesting question as to what the role of the EVG should be for such requests. On the face of it, it would appear to be an obvious area to be involved with. However, I’m always conscious of the demands on our volunteers and the priority is always to maintain the three areas. So should we actively pursue such special projects or play a more passive role that responds to requests as they arise? After consultation with the Committee and a review of the Constitution we decided a more passive role was the right direction on the basis that Volunteers can come forward where they have the desire to be involved (but not feel obligated) and equally it would not impact our running costs as a result of additional equipment and Public Liability insurance costs. So going forward as requests arise, I’m happy to send out calls for Volunteers to be involved as they so wish.

Turning to the 2015 season, all volunteers have once again committed their time plus we have had a number of new people in the village come forward to offer their support namely, Dirk and Janette Bacon, Paul Brown and April Carroll and Carl and Sonia Gilbert. Having a pipeline of volunteers is useful for many reasons not least because it ensures volunteering remains an enjoyable (and not onerous) activity to not only participate and meet with other villagers but also when ad hoc requests arise such as Hill Farm Pond, there are people (at their own discretion) available to support these projects.

On the equipment side we have replaced one of the Burial Ground mowers and latterly found that the other one needs replacing also. Fortunately we have been able to get by with the current mower to the end of the season but have budgeted for its replacement in 2015. Repairs/Servicing to equipment for the other areas was general wear and tear.

On the Finances, we have agreed to maintain the parish grant at the same level as 2014. There was some scope for a reduction but given the need to replace the other mower at the Burial Ground, we felt it prudent to make provision for this. Zani will provide more details in her report.

On the safety side, I can confirm the Risk Assessments have been through their annual check by the area co-ordinators and there is no change to the Risk Profile although there is a minor update to the Burial Ground.

Looking forward, the current committee has remained largely unchanged for the last 3 years and while I don't anticipate a mass exodus(!), I would like to offer the opportunity for other members of the group and indeed the wider village to take on Committee roles. I would include myself in that request. The roles are not onerous but do require good organisation and interpersonal skills. So if you would like to come forward to support the Group in a wider capacity, please contact either Hannah or myself.

As always I would like to say a big thankyou to you the volunteers – your support is what makes the group what it is and key component of village life. Without your help the EVG would not exist. I would also like to thank the EVG committee for their support in the day to day running of the organisation.

***Andy Swanston***

EVG Chairman

January 16, 2015