

Ellisfield Volunteers Group – Chairman’s Report 2012

Good Evening Everyone and welcome to the Volunteers AGM.

First of all I’d like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers for their support in the last year. I’m aware at times it has been frustrating with the weather but we managed to get to the end of year with all grass cut and the equipment intact.

I took over the chairmanship last year and since then it has reminded me that the Volunteers Group is not just a vehicle for maintaining the green areas but also a part of the village community that helps bring people together and for this reason I’m very happy to be part of this group.

It also reminded me that peoples' time is precious and that often they are reluctant to commit to supporting the group, thinking they may be consumed by an initiative that demands large amounts of their time. It is for this reason that I took the approach that no volunteer would be requested to cut the grass more than twice in a season (even one is acceptable) unless they volunteered to do more sessions. This appears to have been well received and I’m pleased to say that we have been able to fill the schedule in 2012 and the same volunteers have offered to support the group again in 2013, with others now coming forward.

Last year was exceptional in terms of weather conditions and this led to many sessions being called off, rescheduled and at times a lot of frustration when the grass became too long. I do recognise this frustration and just want to say thank you to all for being so accommodating. The effect of the weather also had an impact on the equipment with many repairs in addition to the normal servicing. As we will see in the Treasurer's Report this, along with the re-homing of the Lower Common equipment, has resulted in a significant increase in the 2013 PC budget request. I do hope that we will have a better year in 2013 ...

In April we took the step of moving the Lower Common equipment from its long standing location at the Taylors to Cannon Close. This resulted in a lot more cost, admin, tax and insurance in order that we can move the ride-on mower to and from Lower Common on the road. However, it is a more secure location and acts as a general storage for other parish activities. We also took the step of widening the bridge at Furzen Lane to allow safer access for the ride-on mower.

On the subject of Communication (apart from my emails!), we will be re-launching the EVG page(s) as part of the new ellisfield.org.uk website. Paul Turner has been helping put this together and over the next few months we will

launch an updated EVG version. This will contain information about how to volunteer, who to contact, risk assessments and FAQs.

Finally, I would like to thank the EVG group for all their support. Like any organisation, I am reliant on the team and the EVG is no exception and I'm very pleased to have the support of Margaret, Steve, Zani and a special thanks to Hannah for the tremendous effort in the work she does not just for me but also for the village as a whole. Thank you all.

The last person I would like to thank is Seumas Foster who is stepping down from the group after many years. He has provided (and I'm hope will continue to provide) guidance on cutting and clearing in order that we maintain our respect for the environment around Ellisfield. So thank Seumas for all your support.

And finally once again I would like to thank you, the volunteers, for your continuing support.

Andy Swanston
Chairman

11th January 2013