

ELLISFIELD VOLUNTEER GROUP

GRAVEL PITS INSTRUCTIONS AND RISK ASSESSMENT

If in doubt - ASK!

This document combines scope of what is required to keep the Gravel Pits in good order, together with details of what is required to minimise the level of risk to all volunteers (and public).

The contents might seem, at first glance, to be “over the top” for what essentially are tasks that many of us regularly perform in our own gardens. However, consider how many thousands of injuries happen in private gardens across the country when there is just one person working alone and in totally familiar territory. At the Gravel Pits, there can be up to four or five volunteers who are unused to working together, some perhaps who have never worked the Gravel Pits before. There is also the extra risk of other residents and/or visitors appearing without warning, possibly without understanding the dangers of approaching someone strimming or mowing.

Please read this document thoroughly before you start work. For further information talk it through with the EVG Area Contact. See EVG website for further details – www.ellisfield.org.uk/evg.html

INSTRUCTION SUMMARY:

The Gravel Pits Green is at the junction of Green Lane with Berrydown Lane.

Two separate tasks are undertaken:

1. Mowing
Gravel Pits is designated meadow, therefore mower cutting height should not be set at a medium cutting level. There are wild flowers on the site (notably cowslips) in Spring and to encourage these care should be taken to avoid cutting them until they have set seed usually by late June.
2. Strimming
Usually only carried out late in the season and only to stop weeds encroaching on the main green from the surrounding rough ground.

Site Specific Hazards

1. Working on slopes to the south of the site.
2. Old rabbits burrows to the north of the site.

The hazard in both cases is of slipping/tripping or falling, resulting in sprains or broken bones. Be aware of the dangers and if in doubt avoid these areas. **Work side-on to the slope.**

“Hazard likelihood” multiplied by “Hazard result” equals RISK LEVEL (where 1 to 6 = Low)

Hazard	Risk	Risk Level	Site Precautions
Working on slope (south of site)	Slipping or falling resulting in sprains, broken bones, etc.	2 x 2 = 4 (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Major Injury”	Work side-on. Being aware of danger. Avoid tiredness. Stop work if condition of slope becomes dangerous. Vigilance and care.
Old rabbit burrows (north of site)	Tripping or falling, resulting in sprains, broken bones, etc.	2 x 2 = 4 (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Major Injury”	Being aware of danger. Avoid tiredness. Vigilance and care.

BASIC RULES

1. No EVG work to start prior to reassessment of objectives and safety discussion.
2. The EVG current insurance policy for Use of Power Driven Machinery only covers volunteers between 18 and 80 years of age.
3. First Aid box is stored with the Mower and is for use when working at Gravel Pits.
4. It is recommended that volunteers always carry a mobile phone for emergencies.
5. Undertake their own Risk Assessment of the site and clear away any stones and twigs prior to undertaking work.
6. Be aware of your surroundings and take appropriate action to prevent danger to yourself and others (e.g. from flying debris, windy weather, etc.).
7. All strimming and mowing must **STOP IMMEDIATELY** if “visitors” (ie, non-Volunteers) enter the site.
8. Store surplus equipment thoughtfully to avoid tripping up; replenish fuel with great care using funnel provided to prevent any spillage, and re-seal petrol container securely.
9. Come suitably prepared for the task noting weather conditions. Clothing, footwear and eye protection are all important both for mowing and strimming.
10. Take care when collecting the mower and crossing Green Lane (public highway) to Gravel Pits.
11. Carry out a full safety check on the machine prior to use and during work at convenient intervals. If faulty or damaged, the machine should not be used and reported to the Area Co-Ordinator for repair.
12. USE COMMONSENSE AND BE AWARE OF CONDITIONS AND SURROUNDINGS.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Strimming and Mowing

Strimming and Mowing are potentially hazardous activities (e.g., from flying stones, injury to hands and feet from the cutting blades, etc!). These tasks can only be performed by those volunteers who have been shown and given a verbal explanation of what’s required.

The operator **MUST** wear eye protection and is recommended to wear:

- a. Ear protection, preferably full ear “muffs”.
- b. Solid boots, preferably steel toe capped.
- c. Gloves.
- d. Trousers or overalls, preferably thick.
- e. Full harness or shoulder strap, to avoid muscle strain.

The operator **MUST**:

- a. Undertake his/her own Risk Assessment of the site and clear away any stones and twigs.
- b. Be aware of other volunteers on site and keep alert to possible dangers (ie, look up regularly).
- c. Be experienced in the type of equipment being used. If unsure of any aspect of use, refer to the Operator Manual before using the mower.
- d. Carry out a full safety check on the equipment prior and during use. If faulty or damaged, the machine should be fully repaired or not used.
- e. *Stop work IMMEDIATELY if volunteers or public enter the “restricted” area. Only recommence mowing when any danger is passed.*