

Report from Waldringfield Church Field Trust To the Parish AGM April 8th 2014

Waldringfield Church Field Trust was established in 2003 to manage the Church Field, an area of 5.2ha which was given to the village by the late Dr Tom Waller. The field has a maintained open grass area for activities such as football and kite flying, different habitats for wildlife including hedges, shrub and tree plantations and grassland and maintained short grass pathways for walking or jogging. There are three picnic tables and several benches, some sponsored by individuals from the community.

There is a junior size practice goal for football and a basketball practice area which was enlarged in 2012-3 and the post replaced with a stronger model. This was funded by Suffolk Coastal District Council sports fund.

The field continues to be used by Waldringfield School for cross country and by the football club organised on Saturdays by Duncan Andrew. It is also frequently used by villagers for walking and jogging.

Maintenance.

The hedge and verge along Mill Road have again been cut by Mr Allan Parken who kindly does this every year for us as well as topping the long grass in winter. The short grass areas for football and walking were cut at least 6 times last summer by Tim Burslem. Tim has now retired from the committee and from mowing and so we need to find new volunteers to mow and to store the mower, or employ contractors. The litter bins and dog bin are cleared by Suffolk Coastal District Council. Some 10 fence posts which had rotted at the base were replaced in the summer by Kiwi Fencing who also renewed the wires.

A new agreement has been entered into with the **rural payments agency** which will run for 5 years. In order to receive the standard £30 per acre we maintain hedges and grassland areas in ways which encourage biodiversity.

Fly tipping

After a whole year without any fly tipping a pile of rubbish appeared in the car park on March 9th. Several villagers notified me and it was cleared by Suffolk Coastal who prefer to do it themselves, possibly because they might be able to identify where it came from, but also as there is an insurance risk- in this case there was broken glass among the rubbish.

Dog nuisance:

This seems to be less of a problem than formerly however there is still sometimes dog mess on the field which is bad news for children playing sports and running. We have a policy of dogs on leads to protect children and wildlife from harm or disturbance. Incidents were also reported of dogs running after people when jogging and even attacking them. We would like everyone to obey the notices in order to prevent all of these problems occurring, as we believe most do.

Events:

The summer event was cancelled when it was discovered that the school was having a very similar one (barbecue with rounders) the day before our advertised date.

The wildlife group arranged to use the field for their annual picnic. It was a day of torrential rain but the group was able to use the Church Room and afterwards some of them enjoyed a walk round the field looking at the different vegetation, butterflies and dragonflies.

Wildlife:

It was a good year for butterflies and there were lots of meadow browns, small blues, gatekeepers, skippers and small coppers plus the many dragonflies hunting over the long grass and blue damselflies. We have seen no hedgehogs this year. Rabbits have been around as they dig burrows in some areas. A common lizard was seen on one of the log piles. The winter snow revealed footprints of fox and muntjac plus lots of rabbits. Sightings of barn owl and kestrel are reported as well as linnets, oyster catchers, swallows, swifts and housemartins. A stock dove occupied the owl box. These are also a threatened species.

Of the plants, our bee orchids expanded their colony to over 20 spikes. The flowers of ox eye daisies, speedwells, centaury and stitchworts brightened various areas. The policy has been not to sow flowers but we have allowed non natives to seed into the field including the two buddleia bushes and some golden rod and garden campanulas which have appeared.

Ragwort is tolerated following advice from FWAG (farming and wildlife advisory service) who told us that pulling it out leads to an increase as the plantlets around the main stem all grow. It does attract lots of flies and butterflies which are part of the wildlife food chain and it is not palatable to horses.

Proposals for the coming year: The car parking area has become very worn and will need some work to make it more weatherproof. This may require grant funding. The issues around the mower storage and maintenance will have to be resolved.

Accounts: The accounts were again checked by Stan Baston. These are made up to the end of March. These are given out at the AGM in November.

The Trust is grateful once more for a grant of £300 from the pc.

Main outgoings are the insurance of the field both public liability and for damage.

AGM: This was held in November and included a slide show of the field as it has developed through the ten years since 2003. We were glad to welcome a few parishioners to this and hope for more next year. We welcome Joyce Forsdike (elected) to the committee. The following were re-elected: Helga Ballam (elected, Treasurer), Janet Elliott (PC, Vice chair); Serena Gold (PC), Besty Reid (School), Chris Baldry (elected), Christine Fisher Kay (Tennis Club, Chair).

Thanks are due to all the trustees for their assistance with many different tasks, and to Rosa Waller for acting as minutes secretary, Stan Baston for doing the accounts, Duncan Andrew and friends for running the football club and Allan Parken for hedge and grass cutting. Thanks to Tim Burslem for several years service as a trustee and much mowing, and to all those who have turned out to help with work parties.

Christine Fisher Kay, Chair of the Trustees, April 2014 Tel: 01473-736384