

Waldringfield Church Field Trust

Report to the parish meeting 2nd April 2019

The Trust was established in 2003 to manage the bequest of the late Dr Tom Waller of a field of 5.2 acres to the village.

The trustees are now five with two having joined at the AGM in December 2018.

They are now: Barry Cross, Janet Elliott, Serena Gold, Christine Fisher Kay, Vicky Marsh and Betsy Reid.

The field is available for everyone to use for walking and jogging, playing games and practicing basketball and football skills. The goal net is damaged and will be replaced. There is a lot of wildlife to be seen and at the moment kestrels are very evident.

During the year we had two meetings plus our AGM and a number of work parties. These concentrated on cutting back gorse and bramble in some areas. We also have to reduce the number of seedling trees which pop up as we are maintaining areas of low input grassland to encourage biodiversity. This grassland which is never sprayed or fertilised is good habitat for many insects and spiders, small mammals such as voles and field mice and predators including kestrel, marsh harrier and barn owls which have all been seen hunting over the field during the year.

Although it was very dry in the summer the following butterflies were seen: Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Grayling, Red Admiral, Peacock, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Large White and Green veined White. When it became wetter later in the year more dragonflies and damselflies appeared.

The field is regularly used and enjoyed by many people. We do ask that dogs are kept on leads to avoid the disturbance of wildlife such as nesting birds in the long grass areas, and to prevent problems with other users which have occurred from time to time. It also helps with proper clearing up after the dog.

The Church Field Trust is grateful for a grant of £400 from the Parish Council which assists with the public liability insurance. Our maintenance costs are kept down with the help of Allan Parken who has again cut the hedges and given an annual cut to areas of long grass which now will be left until next winter. Paul Barrell maintains the mower and has been cutting the shorter grass areas and paths through the year and we are very grateful to both of them, and to all who attended the work parties. Volunteers from the AONB scheme also helped us in scything and reducing the hedge on the north side of the field. Maintenance is an ongoing process and what we are doing is mimicking the activities of grazing animals which in the past would have kept the area as open heath and grassland and prevented it returning to woodland.

The groups of trees planted in 2003-5 are maturing now and we have sweet chestnuts and hazel nuts providing food for wildlife, as well as all the fruits of sloes, hips and haws, wild apple and brambles, not to be missed.

Christine Fisher Kay

2.4.2019