

Report from Waldringfield Church Field Trust For Parish AGM April 17th 2012

Waldringfield Church Field is a public open space established in 2003 with 5.2 acres of land donated by Dr Tom Waller. The field is run by a Trust and not by the Parish Council although the PC has two nominees on the Committee of Trustees. There are three members voted on by the public, one school representative and one nominated by the tennis club. All our names and some contact details are on the noticeboard at Church Field.

The year has progressed peacefully at Church Field so far as we know. The school continues to use it for cross country and the football club has made good use of the space on Saturday mornings. Otherwise it is a lovely space to walk or jog round with the views of the river from the higher end and the many trees and shrubs planted over the last few years starting to grow significantly and produce their flowers, fruit and autumn colours through the year. There are plenty of benches to pause at on the way round and two picnic tables. The skylarks are always there and many other birds are seen through the year especially acrobatic displays from swallows and house martins in summer.

At the AGM in November there was as usual a powerpoint display of activities and wildlife on the field through the year and detailed reports from the Trustees followed by mince pies and mulled wine. The committee and one other villager enjoyed it very much. It is advertised in the parish newsletter, in Focus and on Waldringfielders as well as on posters round the village and it would be good if more people could come along.

Activities: I understand from Duncan that the Saturday morning **football club** has ceased during the winter but will be re-starting and anyone whose children are interested should contact him(Tel:811713)

We have been getting quotes for enlarging the **basketball** area and re-siting the post to the north of the square, also getting a more substantial post less easily damaged. We are in the process of applying for funding for this work which we hope will take place in the summer. This will make it possible for groups of adults to make better use of the basketball area.

Wildlife: The barn owl box was last year occupied by a stock dove, one up from the great tit the year before. Stock doves are also a threatened species but hopefully a barn owl will take up residence this year.

Please let one of us know if you see interesting wildlife on the field. From the footprints in winter we know of foxes and rabbits, and hares are often seen.

The **unimproved acid grassland** now developed on the field is a scarce habitat in East Anglia and of great value to many insects, birds and small mammals (and hence raptors). We have been advised by Suffolk Wildlife Trust and by FWAG in developing this valuable wildlife resource. Other wildlife habitats developing on the field are the new hedges, maintaining existing hedges to benefit wildlife (by not cutting too often or too hard), bramble and gorse scrub, shrubby woodland and hedgerow trees. These all benefit different wildlife communities. Recently buckthorn plants were acquired through the Butterfly Conservation Trust to plant as foodplants

for the brimstone butterfly. We also are building habitat piles (made up of different sizes of logs and twiggy branches) and a stag beetle pile.

Maintenance: Tim Burslem continues to do a sterling job cutting the grass in the football area and all the paths. The mower is getting a bit old now and if anyone has a ride-on mower they no longer need then the Trust might be interested in purchasing it. Please contact Tim or me if you do.

Workparties have been active in winter removing redundant rabbit guards from around trees and shrubs and clearing competing weeds around oak trees in the hedges. We also benefited from three volunteers from the National Trust who pruned the hedge we planted in 2005. All the hedges we planted have a mixture of flowering and fruiting plants to benefit wildlife.

The hedge and verge along Mill Road have again been cut by Allan Parken who kindly does this every year for us as well as topping the long grass where necessary.. The entrance to the field has been repaired by John Nunn so that we now have a stone entrance no longer subject to flooding.

Accounts: There was at the end of March 2011 a total of £1977 in the account. The accounts were checked by Stan Baston and are now due to be again. The Trust is grateful for a grant of £300 from the pc and £66 for the Rural Payments Main outgoings are the insurance of the field both public liability and for damage.

Events: In view of the Jubilee celebrations taking place in the village the Trustees decided not to hold the usual barbecue at the field this year as we felt there was already plenty going on. Last year and the year before there was a very poor turn out for our barbecue possibly to the constant run of other events in the summer. Next year the committee may look at this again. We would welcome ideas and suggestions and even offers of help to run an event if anyone is interested.

Dog nuisance

Dogs on Church Field are meant to be kept on leads. There is a constant problem of dog mess not cleared up. Many dogs are visiting the field with and with and without owners and disturb ground nesting birds such as skylarks. A fresh lot of notices have been put up reminding people to clear up after their dogs. Failure to comply can incur a fine of up to £1000.

Scattered Orchard

Although the field is on poor soil we have found spaces for two of the more hardy apple trees in the Thorpeness and the Dunwich Heath Apples, which form part of the scattered orchard and were planted on the field on 29th February.

Thanks

I would like to thank all the trustees for their assistance with many different tasks, Rosa Waller for acting as minutes secretary, Stan Baston for doing the accounts, Duncan Andrew for running the football club, Allan Parken for hedge cutting and John Nunn for sorting out the drainage problems. Thank you.

Christine Fisher Kay, Chair of the Trustees, April 2012 Tel:01473-736384