

Report from Waldringfield Church Field Trust To the Parish AGM April 14th 2015

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.

Parish Plan Results

The parish plan questionnaire was well supported with 252 respondents. The ways that they use the field are summarised below:

	frequently	occasionally	✓	Sum of all users
Walking	77	74	25	176
Dog Walking	47	30	14	91
Jogging	7	17	3	27
Bird/wildlife watching	26	36	5	67
Football/ball games	2	26	6	34
Kite Flying	1	23	4	28
Cycling	2	13	1	16
Basketball	1	14	4	19
Help with maintenance	7	12	0	19
Meeting friends	8	29	1	38
Quiet contemplation	25	44	7	76
Other	0	5	0	5

Further analysis showed the field use by all ages. The uses are divided between the more sporty activities and quiet appreciation of wildlife and the surroundings, which reflects what the objects of the development of the field have always been.

Maintenance:

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 in winter. The short grass areas were cut by a number of volunteers in the summer including the loan of a mower on one occasion when ours was being repaired. Duncan Andrew has kindly offered to mow regularly and it is intended to supplement this with occasional

cuts by the Norse group management team who have so far done it once in autumn. During the winter the mower has helpfully been stored by Oak Garage. The litter bins and dog bin are cleared by Suffolk Coastal District Council. A agreement was been entered into last year with the rural payments agency which will run for 5 years from 2014. In order to receive the standard £30 per acre we maintain hedges and grassland areas in ways which encourage biodiversity such as infrequent hedge cutting (not every year) and maintained long grass areas cut once per year.

Fly tipping:

One hopes it is not tempting fate to say that there has been no fly tipping this year.

Dog nuisance:

It appears that quite alot of people do not pick up after their dogs risking a £1000 fine - the field is a public open space and designated as a play space .

This is a particular problem for children doing cross country, joggers, footballers and really anyone hoping to enjoy the field. A dog bin is provided. **We do also have a policy of dogs on leads which is signed at all entrances.** This is to protect nesting birds and other wildlife enjoyed by many people visiting the field with or without dogs. As a large number of dog owners are known to visit the field (91 on the parish survey) it is important that they obey the notices as the cumulative effect of all these dog visits may well drive away nesting skylarks, warblers, woodcock, hares, and other wildlife. We would therefore like everyone to obey these notices.

Wildlife:

The field is a good place to see butterflies and dragonflies especially after a shower of rain in late summer. Again we have seen no hedgehogs at the field or had any reports of them. Birds sighted include barn owl, kestrel, common buzzard, linnets, woodcock, red legged partridge, whitethroat, goldfinches, swallows, swifts and house martins. A stock dove once more occupied the owl box. These are also a threatened species. Flowers at the field included a grand display of ox eye daisies and also speedwells, centaury, stitchworts and rabbits foot clover. The gorse has been flowering splendidly and is favoured for nesting by linnets. Hopefully it may do something to make up for the removal of gorse from the river wall.

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 insect life including butterflies which are part of the wildlife food chain, and it is not palatable to horses.

Proposals for the coming year:

The Trust has been promised some grant funding from Suffolk Coasts and Heaths to erect an interpretation board which will be sited near the car parking area. Quotes are currently being obtained for this.

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.

The Trust is grateful once more for a grant of £300 from the pc. which helps with insurance and with the cost of maintenance.

AGM:

This was held on 1st December 2014 and included a slide show of the field changing through the year. The trustees are now as follows: Helga Ballam (elected, Treasurer), Janet Elliott (PC, Vice chair); Serena Gold (PC) , Besty Reid (School), Christine Fisher Kay (Tennis Club, Chair).

Thanks are due to all the trustees for their assistance with many different tasks, including maintenance of prickly hedges, 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 very much to all those who have turned out to help with mowing and maintenance work parties. Anyone who would like to become involved in the running of the field or help with maintenance is welcome to contact me or any other trust member.

Christine Fisher Kay, Chair of the Trustees, April 2014
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