

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 be set at a medium cutting level. There are wild flowers on the site (notably snowdrops and cowslips) in Spring and to encourage these, care should be taken to avoid cutting them until they have set seed usually by late June.

Upon completion of mowing volunteers are requested to clean loose grass off the mower. A small brush is provided in the garage with the mower (please refer to Basic Rules 13 and 14).
2. Strimming
Usually only carried out late in the season (year end clear up) and only to stop weeds encroaching on the main green from the surrounding rough ground.
3. Raking
Although not hazardous in its own right, stay vigilant and keep a watch for volunteers mowing or strimming nearby.

Site Specific Hazards

1. Working on slopes to the south of the site.
2. Old rabbit burrows to the north of the site.
3. Drainage ditch to the east of the site (near the entrance)
4. Concealed entrance to gravel pits

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.	$2 \times 2 = 4$ (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.
Working near the drainage ditch (east of site near entrance)	Slipping or falling resulting in sprains, broken bones, etc.	$2 \times 2 = 4$ (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Major Injury”	Work side-on – do not get too close to edge. 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.	$2 \times 2 = 4$ (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Major Injury”	Being aware of danger. Avoid tiredness. Vigilance and care.
Dangerous Machinery	Cuts or amputations sharp / moving parts	$2 \times 2 = 4$ (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Major Injury”	Never put hands into blade chamber or touch the blades. Being aware of danger. Avoid tiredness. Vigilance and care.
Hot Surfaces	Burns	$2 \times 1 = 2$ (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Minor Injury”	Do not touch hot engine or exhaust parts.
Concealed Entrance	Traffic or cyclists on the road	$2 \times 2 = 4$ (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Major Injury”	Being aware of danger. Take extreme care when emerging from the gravel pits onto the road – look both directions. Avoid tiredness. Vigilance and care.
Fire	Flammable Substances (petrol)	$2 \times 2 = 4$ (Low) where likelihood is “Possible” and result is “Major Injury”	Only refill the mower with petrol outdoors. Use the funnel provided to reduce the risk of spillage. Take care not to overfill the fuel tank.

BASIC RULES

1. No EVG work to start prior to reassessment of objectives and safety discussion.
2. First Aid box is stored with the Mower and is for use when working at Gravel Pits.
3. It is recommended that volunteers always carry a mobile phone for emergencies.
4. Undertake their own Risk Assessment of the site and clear away any stones and twigs prior to undertaking work.
5. Be aware of your surroundings and take appropriate action to prevent danger to yourself and others (e.g. from flying debris, windy weather, low overhanging branches etc.).
6. All strimming and mowing must **STOP IMMEDIATELY** if “visitors” (ie, non-Volunteers) enter the site.
7. Store surplus equipment thoughtfully to avoid tripping up;
8. Volunteers are requested to refill the mower fuel tank upon completion of the task. Replenishment of fuel **MUST** be undertaken outdoors (not in the garage) with great care using funnel provided to prevent any spillage – do not overfill. Re-seal the petrol container securely. If the fuel can is empty please advise the coordinator accordingly.
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. Operators should check that the motor stops immediately if the safety handle is released.
12. USE COMMONSENSE AND BE AWARE OF CONDITIONS AND SURROUNDINGS.
13. Before returning the mower to the garage, brush off the excess grass including the underside on the gravel pits (this helps keep the driveway and garage tidy). A brush is provided in the garage.
14. If it is required to tip the mower on its side it's very important to do so from the left hand side so engine oil doesn't run out through the carburettor and into the air filter.
15. Mowing as Couples vs Lone Working. Two volunteers are allocated to each mowing session such that they are available to act as each other's safety person. Where couples elect to work with one partner remote from the work area, the remote partner shall still be responsible for acting as the safety person. Furthermore, the volunteer who is working “alone” shall be required to undertake an additional risk assessment in line with the Ellisfield Parish Council's Lone Working Policy. [Lone working.pdf](#) (ellisfield.gov.uk).

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 is required of the task.

The operator **MUST** wear eye protection when strimming. It 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 (if strimming).
- f. Eye protection when grass cutting

Safety Notes:

The Operator:

- a. **MUST NOT** insert hands into the mower blade chamber or touch the blades. Operators should use a brush or stick to clear excess material from the blade chamber. A brush is available in the garage
- b. **MUST NOT** touch hot engine or exhaust parts
- c. **MUST** Undertake his/her own Risk Assessment of the site and clear away any stones and twigs.
- d. **MUST** be aware of other volunteers on site and keep alert to possible dangers (ie, look up regularly).
- e. **MUST** 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.
- f. **MUST** 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.
- g. **MUST** stop work **IMMEDIATELY** if volunteers or public enter the “restricted” area. Only recommence mowing when any danger is passed.
- h. **MUST** raise the blades (using the adjusters on all four corners) if the mower is struggling to cut the grass (e.g. if it is very long, too damp or lush). If it becomes necessary to clear the mower of excess grass, the operator must ensure that the mower motor and blades have completely stopped before lifting the mower from the Left Hand Side (Refer to basic rule 14). Operators may find that leaving the grass bucket off reduces the tendency to block-up.