

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
ELLISFIELD VOLUNTEER GROUP HELD AT 8PM ON FRIDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2025  
AT THE ELLISFIELD MEMORIAL HALL**

**Present:**

**Committee**

Andy Webb (Chairperson)  
Andy Swanston  
Chris Cole  
Seumas Foster

**Apologies**

Michael Hosford-Tanner  
John & Charlie Hellewell  
Debbie Foster  
Susie Deane  
Graham Simpson  
Steven Gould

**Volunteers (non-committee):**

11 members

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**1. Introduction and Apologies**

The Chairperson opened the meeting at 20:05 and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He informed the attendees of apologies received.

**2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were approved (proposed Seumas Foster, seconded Andy Swanston), with thanks to Theresa Webb for producing them.

Attendees were reminded once again that there is no longer a Treasurers report as finances are now dealt with directly by the Parish Council.

**3. Matters Arising**

**a. EVG WhatsApp**

Last year's AGM had proposed a trial of a WhatsApp group for volunteers to arrange swaps, reminders and schedule updates. This was to be an alternative to using email rather than an addition in order to not duplicate workload. This had not happened as there had not been a lot of support amongst volunteers, partly as people had not wanted a lot of extra numbers in their phones, and there were concerns about the overhead of managing it. Therefore, the current system of using emails has continued. The matter could be considered again at a later stage if there was sufficient interest, but it was agreed to not progress it any further at this point.

**4. Chairperson's Report 2024/25**

The Chairperson read out the report as attached at the end of the Minutes.

**5. Proposals**

**a. Lower Common Mower**

The trial of only using a strimmer on the Lower Common was not successful. As the Lower Common mower is showing signs of age now, the group will look into the options for buying a new replacement mower for that location. Andy Swanston has got some brochures and started looking into options. He will get quotes and look into whether it could be purchased by the Council using reserves, or whether the Council could apply for a grant.

## **6. Election of Officers**

Andy Webb has stood down as Chairperson and Gravel Pits Coordinator. As no-one put themselves forward for the role of Chairperson, it will revert to the Parish Council and be managed by Andy Swanston on the Council's behalf until such time that another person is willing to stand. The Parish Clerk will provide admin support for the role.

Chris Cole has agreed to remain as Coordinator – Lower Common and Seumas Foster as Coordinator - Burial Grounds.

Andy Swanston on behalf of the Council will cover the role of Coordinator – Gravel Pits until someone else comes forward to take it on.

## **7. Any Other Business**

A few points were noted: the first aid kit and risk assessment are up to date. The mowing schedule will shortly be uploaded onto the website.

It was noted that Ted Dowson has died and thanks to him was recorded.

The Committee gave a vote of thanks to the Chairperson.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm

## **EVG AGM Chairman's Report**

**20<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Good evening and welcome to this year's Ellisfield Volunteer Group Annual General Meeting.

I am pleased to report that over the last year the group has continued minimal drama.

Mowing ran smoothly throughout the year with only a few volunteer swaps required. Whilst there was the occasional week when mowing was suspended due to dry conditions and low growth the wet summer meant that mowing happened most weeks.

Last years' proposal to allow couples to mow together seems to have helped keep the number of mowing slots down to a minimum. This proposal has once again been used for the draft mowing schedule for 2025, and together with starting mowing one week later, this has avoided Easter weekend and kept most people's commitment to twice a year.

The other proposal to have a "start of the year tidy" to encourage new volunteers to meet us was less successful. Thanks go to those who turned out, but alas there were no new volunteers.

We recruited no new members this year, and as we move into 2025 unfortunately a few existing members have asked to be removed from the rota for personal reasons. This means that the total number of volunteers has once again dropped slightly. There are a few new people moving into the village, so maybe they can be persuaded to join us – something for the new committee to consider.

By and large the machinery worked well once again, helped by Steve Gould's pre-season maintenance service. I have requested that the EPC arrange pre-season maintenance to be undertaken again this year.

Following discussions at last year's AGM, you will recall that it was agreed to trial taking the mower at the lower common out of service and use the strimmer and reassess this year. Chris has indicated that the trial was unsuccessful, and the committee have therefore put a request to the Parish Council for them to consider the purchase of a new mower for the Common.

To finish the year's activities, a good number of volunteers once again turned out on a late November morning to help with the end of year clear-ups at two of the areas. Unfortunately, the tidy-up at the common the following weekend had to be cancelled due to wet weather. This left two of the areas looking neat and tidy for the winter. The committee agreed not to reschedule the common tidy as the common is not as affected by leaves as the other two areas. It will be interesting to see whether the wildflowers at the back of the Common appreciated the lack of strimming or not, before a decision on the end of year tidy up this year.

The committee would like to thank Marcus & Lucinda Rule and Julian & Margaret Evans for continuing to house the burial ground and gravel pit mowing equipment respectively in their garages and also to Terry and Carly for their help accessing the mower at the burial grounds. To say thank you, we have some small tokens of our appreciation for them.

I would like to say thank you to Chris and Seumas for acting as area coordinators and supporting me over the last year, and also to our Parish Clerks for their administrative support over the last year.

Finally, as I mentioned at last year's AGM, I will be stepping down as Chairman and Gravel Pit Coordinator at the end of this AGM. I would like to thank all the volunteers for your time and effort and support during my tenure in both roles.