

EAST GRINSTEAD MEMORIAL ESTATE – August 2024 Newsletter

Fortunately for us all, the monsoon like conditions of the early months of this year have given way to one or two less soggy weeks (months would be stretching it!) reducing the quagmires of the winter and providing somewhat firmer footing for those of us who use the Estate.

To bring you up to date on current plans being drawn up by Mid Sussex District Council in conjunction with their new ground contractors, Glendale, I can share with you the following recent comments (paraphrased) from MSDC:

East Court Football Pitches

As you know, the pitches at East Court have been out of use for a number of seasons and local clubs have been travelling to complete their fixtures. This has been discussed several times over the last few months with the East Grinstead Sports Council, the main East Grinstead Football Clubs and also East Grinstead Memorial Estate. At the moment, we're not able to say definitively whether it is a drainage issue but Glendale (who have engaged extensively with the sports clubs) have arranged for a detailed agronomy report to be completed in July - this will not only give a clear indication of the current condition of the sports pitches but also what improvements can be undertaken over the short and long-term. These improvements may include drainage solutions, but we are not able to say for certain right now.

The Council and Glendale are working collaboratively alongside the key stakeholders and, when we receive the agronomy report, we hope to have its findings presented (and the report shared) directly. Community development is an important part of our new arrangement for managing our green spaces and Glendale are very keen to (and have been) delivering on these objectives.

Notwithstanding the above and any improvements that need to be made, both the Council and Glendale intend to put the playing pitches back into use for the 2024-25 season and the condition of the pitches will improve over time. Hiring pitches certainly allows us to off-set costs by a small amount and, as the conditions of the pitches improve, we hope to see demand for the pitches grow.

We (the Council and Glendale) met with the clubs and East Grinstead Sports Council on 9 July and will meet monthly going forward to discuss sports pitch maintenance across East Grinstead.

Boardwalks (Ghyll Steps area)

We have successfully appointed our preferred contractor to undertake the installation of the boardwalk and await confirmation of a start date. We've requested a couple of weeks' notice, so hopefully we can advise in good time.

This looks most likely to be scheduled for the Autumn.

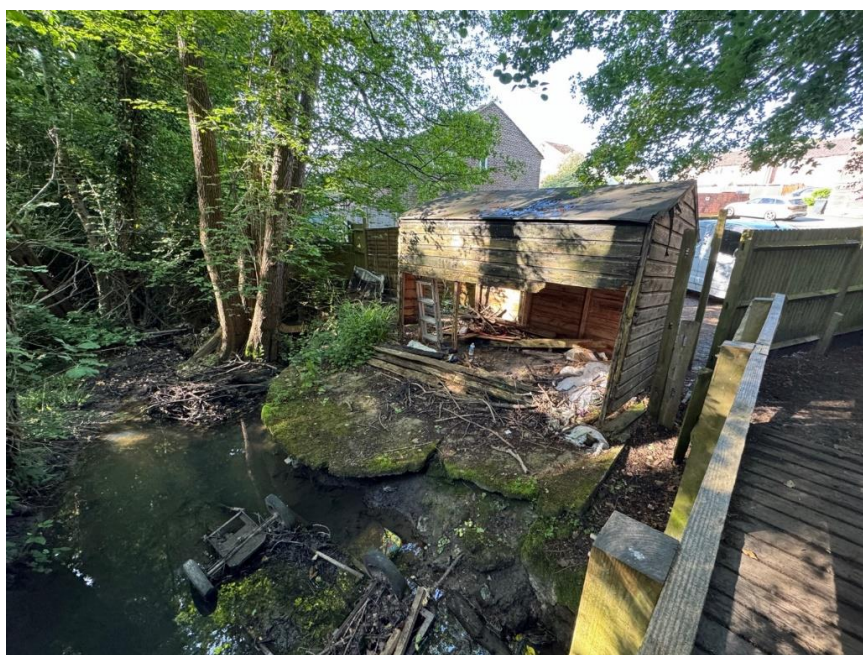
Ash Die Back

Our initial plan was to undertake large-scale felling but, following extensive review, surveying and consideration for less invasive approach (learning our lessons from the work undertaken at Eastern Road Nature Reserve) we will adopt a different approach.

Already a tree risk map has been produced by Glendale with risk categories colour coded into four categories – red, amber yellow and green. The intention is firstly to deal with the trees that fall under the red and amber categories (which seem to be around three dozen or so) by the autumn and those trees/ tree groups classed as Yellow and Green will have further recommended timeframes for removal or reinspection.

There are a number of other live issues upon which we are consulting with MSDC and met with them on the 24th July to reinforce our concerns – all of which have been acknowledged with actions being taken forward

- Understanding the new contract specification with Glendale.
- How best to mitigate the impact of the increasingly popular Parkruns.
- Current financial reporting of the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace funds.
- Future management plans (and remedying the delivery shortcomings of the existing plan).
- Planning application for 32 dwellings on the police station/law courts site – especially the impact on Estate roads and Parking (we have already lodged our concerns on the MSDC planning portal).
- Routine maintenance to ensure track and path widths particularly at this time of year.
- Post 2024, siting options for the now annual East Grinstead Bonfire.
- Whilst not on Estate land, there is an increasing problem of debris from land adjoining the stream at the bottom of the playing fields which we have raised with both the Town and District Councils and which is currently being investigated. On this basis, a picture is worth a thousand words, I think the shot below explains our concerns.



Annual General Meeting

We held our AGM at Chequer Mead on 9 July which was attended by 18 members and where I was able to report that our finances were strengthening year on year and that we had negotiated a new 15-year lease for the Target Shooting Club. I was delighted that two new Directors appointments were ratified, namely Steve Metcalfe and Philip Thomas, but as you know, if you or someone you know would like to be nominated, please do contact me at chair@egmel.co.uk

Under our rules, Directors can no longer serve as such for more than 9 years following appointment and accordingly, Lynn Graysmark, Melvin Philips and Chris Nunn have all retired as Directors. We owe a debt of gratitude to all three – Lynn particularly for her work on our grants scheme, Melvin for keeping us on the right side of the law of property and Chris for his exceptional contribution in the Chair leading the charity through some challenging periods over the last decade. I'm pleased to say that both Melvin and Chris have agreed to remain with us in non-voting volunteer positions.

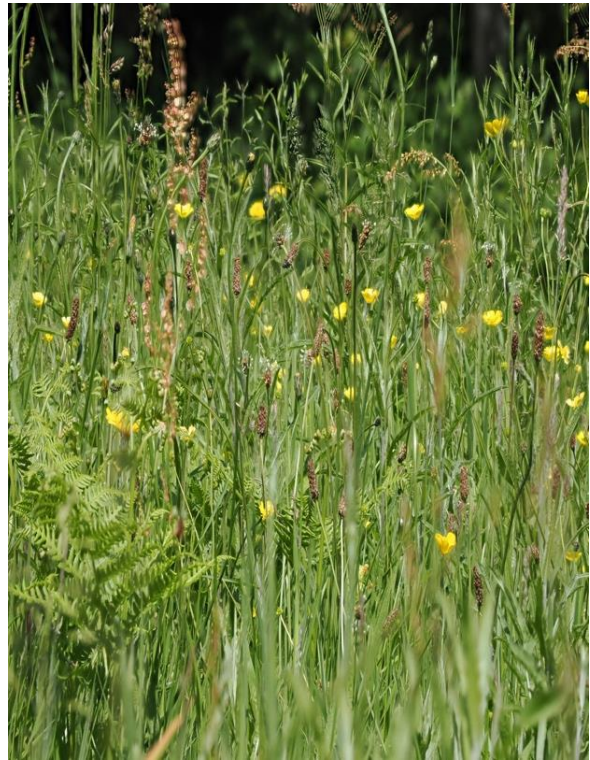
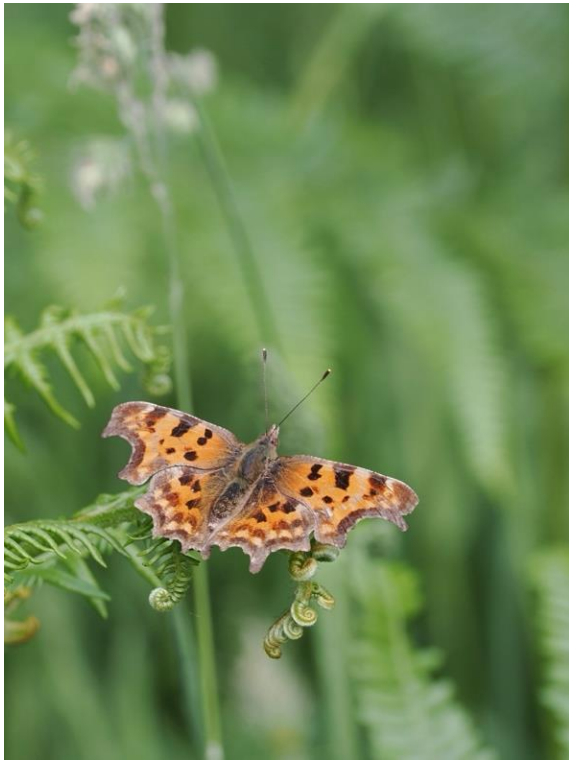
Feedback on our Grants programme

As members will know we publish on our website our annual grants in support of local voluntary activity see this year's allocation at <https://www.egmel.co.uk/grants/>

One of the organisations we supported this year was the East Grinstead Athletics Club and particularly the Sussex U13 and Quadkids Championship and here is a [link](#) to one of their regular bulletins so you can see that was money well spent.

In a similar vein, to commemorate our 75th year as a charity this year, the Board has agreed to sponsor two cups for the East Grinstead Schools Cross Country Champs (October) organised by EG Athletics Club. Secondly, and more widely, to promote an **Unsung Hero Award** to recognise the voluntary work undertaken by an individual in the sporting or recreational sector in the locality. Their contribution will be marked at the Mayor's reception in September by the award of a cheque for £750 (£10 for each of our 75 years) for the benefit of their organisation with £100 of John Lewis vouchers for the winner personally.

Finally, some summer photos (thanks to Ian Hacke) to remind us that it really is here!



And one below spotted on Facebook by Ann Hacke (our Treasurer) to see if you recognise anyone?

Thank you for your continuing support and let's hope we have some balmy consistency in the summer weather over the next few weeks



Lloyd Richards
Chair | East Grinstead Memorial Estate Ltd
www.egmel.co.uk

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Business Address for correspondence:
East Court, College Lane,
East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 3LT