

Sept. 2013

The management of the grassland in field 1 is becoming more of a problem – particularly the raking up and disposal of the grass which is cut but not baled.

This has been made worse by the weather but there are more fundamental problems:

- ⤴ **manpower to rake up the cut grass** – fewer of us and we are all getting older. Also much of it needs doing at a time when people are on holiday.
- ⤴ **disposal of the cut grass** which is building up to unacceptable levels in the areas where it has been dumped
- ⤴ **the waste of hay** – when cut later in the year the hay is not so nutritious but can still have value and some like the wildflower mix.

The cutting and baling done by Bonehills has worked reasonably well and we need to maximize the areas which are baled. I am not sure what CB does with the bales. (This year someone else baled it – when it was still damp!)

- ⤴ We might be able to extend the area they cut on the lower slope towards field 2 as there are not many ant hills there
- ⤴ the grass from at least one of the amenity areas, and preferably both, should be cut and baled each year at the same time as the main cut in late July/August

We have permission to manage the amenity areas by treating one area as we have done in the past cutting twice (May and August) and leaving the other until after July 15th (which could also be cut in April). The next year swap over so each area gets cut in July one year and in late May and August the next. Over the winter (in November) all the grass is supposed to be short – 2 to 10 cm!

The problem with any extra cuts is that the cut grass should be removed. So we really need to coordinate the cutting so that it is all cut and baled together in 2nd half of July (or early August).

If we just do an earlier cut in May on one or other (alternating) of the amenity areas we should be able to cope with raking up and dumping that much grass. The area left to grow long could have a winding path or even a 'maze' cut in it so there is a clear purpose to leaving it.

I also suggest a slightly larger area could be cut/strimmed regularly round the picnic tables.

There is no alternative that I can see at present to raking up the grass from upper anthill slopes which are strimmed in late August/ early September.

It might be possible to burn some of the cut grass rather than dumping it. Both methods of disposal have environmental consequences.