

Wheathampstead Parish Council

Maintenance Committee 29 October 2018 19:30

Present: Councillors D Johnston Chairman
S Haynes
T Reason
P Woodhams

J Warren Clerk to the Council

Press 0
Public 0

5842-18 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors G Clark (SADC meeting) and L Halford (personal).

5843-18 Public Speaking

None.

5844-18 Specific Declarations of Interest & Dispensations

None.

5845-18 Minutes of the Maintenance Committee of 10 September

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 be approved.

Resolved:

To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 September 2018 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

5846-18 Report of the Maintenance Contractor

The Maintenance Contractor had reported that the following maintenance jobs had been completed:

- Wood chip topped up at Marford and Rectory Meadow play areas.
- All allotment water pipes frost protected
- Cut East Meads North
- Cut Meads Dell
- Cut and cleared Old 16th Tee.
- Cut Melissa Field
- Cut hedge at Butterfield
- Litter picked Butterfield several times
- Collected traveller rubbish at Butterfield
- Fitted new nets at 3G pitch
- Dug holes for posts at Rectory Meadow

Outstanding tasks included fitting the posts at Rectory Meadow, a gate closer on the 3G pitch, painting of gates of East Lane Car Park

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and removal of kerbs at East Lane Car Park; cutting and clearing of Bower Heath, and Meads Dell, and with winter hedge cut.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that new wheel brackets be purchased for the 3G pitch; and that Butterfield and Marshalls Heath be cut and cleared.

Resolved:

To approve the tasks as recommended above.

5847-18

Work of Rangers, open spaces management

The Rectory Copse Ranger reported that the Copse had been strimmed of overgrown nettles by volunteers. As regrowth was slow the WOSV work group scheduled for November would meet elsewhere. Mrs White had planted some white cyclamen.

The Meads Ranger reported on the effect of the drought on the grass and willows. The former was recovering well but some of the newly planted willows had died. A meeting with William McAlpine was scheduled for the near future to discuss the way forward. Pollarding of the established eastern plantation had been successful.

The Meads Community Orchard was also flourishing, fruit had been picked and left for people to help themselves.

A couple of dead trees in the Dell had been removed, it was agreed that willow whips be planted, and potentially later laid to hedging, to fill any gap so created.

The river bank anti-erosion project, tested by the heat of the summer sun, had been the focus of a guided walk for the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's AGM. As a result the project was held as an example of the Trust's work to protect Hertfordshire chalk streams, show cased by their Chief Executive to the local MP, and would also feature in the winter Pump magazine.

A potential offsetting project at Nomansland had been put forward by the Countryside Management Service (CMS) to enhance this locally important heathland site. It could be shown to deliver discrete biodiversity gains in terms of habitat improvement and formed part of the Nomansland Greenspace Action Plan. There were currently no other comparable projects identified.

Councillor Woodhams proposed, seconded by Councillor Reason, and it was agreed, to support the request for the offsetting project at Nomansland.

The discussion highlighted a disparity in the Parish Council's plans: there were advantages to having previously identified and agreed projects in case of funding availability.

Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams, and it was agreed, to talk to the rangers, Wheathampstead Open Spaces Volunteers and CMS about potential projects. A meeting to be convened in the new year.

Resolved:

To note the reports.

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5848-18 Tree work and vegetation management.

It was reported that the dead/ dying cherry trees on Cherry Tree Lane had been felled, as had the dead willows on the Meads. Crown lifting at Melissa Field was now also complete.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed to source and replant cherry trees along Cherry Tree Lane.

Resolved:

- **To note the reports.**
- **To source and replant cherry trees along Cherry Tree Lane.**
- **To support the offsetting project at Nomansland.**

5849-18 Hedgehog Survey

The report of the 2015 Hedgehog survey including observations at Butterfield had been published on 6 Sept 2018 and circulated.

The main conclusions from the survey were:

- Hedgehogs were widely distributed across England and Wales but the overall occupancy was low, with hedgehogs only present at 21% of sites.
- Hedgehog presence was negatively related to badger sett density. However, over a quarter (27%) of the sites surveyed had no badger setts or hedgehogs present.
- Hedgehogs were also absent from >70% of sites that had no badger setts, indicating that large areas of the rural landscape are not occupied by hedgehogs.
- Hedgehog presence was positively related to the amount of built land within the survey square.
- Collectively, this suggested that a wider landscape management issue was affecting both these generalist species

It was further noted that a hedgehog sanctuary operated locally at Bower Heath. It was agreed that both the survey results and details of the sanctuary be publicised.

Resolved:

To note the report and to publicise both this and the local hedgehog sanctuary.

5850-18 Marford Pavilion

It was reported that the Marford football pavilion was in need of some care. In particular the roof, windows and double doors required attention. Agreed to speak to the Wheathampstead Wanderers FC and bring back to a future meeting, including details for budget provision in 2019-20.

Resolved:

To investigate further and bring to a future meeting.

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5851-18 ATP fence extension

Quotations had been sought to increase the southern goal end of the ATP by 2metres as it was hoped that raising the fence higher would prevent footballs straying onto the tennis courts. No budget provision had been made and it was noted that on a number of occasions the tennis courts had been left unlocked, thus enabling ready retrieval of occasional stray balls. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that he speak to the Tennis Club.

Resolved:

Chairman to speak to the Wheathampstead Lawn Tennis Club.

5852-18 Memorial Hall – emergency lighting

It was reported that the majority of the older emergency lights had failed the annual inspection. The report and quotations had been circulated.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the lights be replaced at a cost of £1,595.

Resolved:

To replace the failed light fittings at a cost of £1,595.

5853-18 Memorial Hall – hot water

The hot water cylinder serving the kitchen had suffered airlocks and become blocked by age and hard water lime scale deposits, preventing hot water from running through the taps. Replacement was urgently required. This boiler was at the end of its life and over 20 years old. A report with quotations had been circulated.

Councillor Haynes proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams, and it was agreed to replace boiler and hot water cylinder with a modern combi- boiler. This should in the long term be more economic as unwanted standing water was not heated, water would be available on demand and feed the central heating system through Hewitt Room and library corridor.

Resolved:

To replace boiler and hot water cylinder with a modern combi- boiler at a cost of £2,885.

5854-18 Wheathampstead water borehole

Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Haynes, and it was agreed to approve installation of a water borehole and wayleave at Folly Fields. This to be installed proud and with a request for a pump to be installed after the five year period.

Resolved:

To approve wayleave and installation of a water borehole at Folly Fields, and request a pump after the five year period.

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5855-18 Environment Agency boom across the River Lea at the Old Mill

The issue of unsightly debris collecting on the Mill boom was ongoing. Volunteers, under the umbrella of Wheathampstead Open Spaces Volunteers and the Meads Ranger, were prepared to remove small litter and debris as the Environment Agency only cleared significant obstructions. To date this had been undertaken as part of an informal agreement between parties. It was reported that this agreement was being formalised to enable keyed access to the EA enclosure by the Parish Council's volunteers.

Resolved:

To note the report.

5856-18 Benches

Further to Minute 5796-18 the Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, to refurbish the bench recycled from the bus stop opposite Rose Lane and reinstall it at Rectory Meadow. A commemorative plaque could be installed for an agreed donation.

Resolved:

To refurbish the bench recycled from the bus stop opposite Rose Lane and reinstall it at Rectory Meadow, potentially with a commemorative plaque.

5857-18 Dog gloves

It was reported that a dispenser for bags to collect dog waste was situated on Butterfield Playing Fields near the pavilion to encourage dog owners to clean up after their dogs. The supply of 16,000 bags, purchased in November 2017 has been exhausted. Parish Council dog waste specific bins were located at 21 locations in the parish and collected at a weekly charge of £2.50 per bin per week. In addition there were 23 Parish Council owned general bins from which mixed waste was collected. The volume of use of bags for this single location seemed high and it was agreed that consideration was to be given to a dispenser which gave out individual bags.

Resolved:

To reconsider at a subsequent meeting.

5858-18 Project and task review

The report as circulated was considered. Further to Minute 5798-18 it was agreed that noticeboards at Butterfield Road, the Broadway, Castle Rise, East Lane Car Park, the Elephant and Castle and Hilldyke Road be prioritised, quotations for A1 sized boards with legs and a latchable cover to be obtained.

Resolved:

To note the report.

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5859-18 Budget report

The budget report was considered, and items for potential inclusion in the 2019-20 budget were requested.

Resolved:

To note the report, expenditure was within budget.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:30

Dated this day of 2018

Chairman