

**Wheathampstead Parish Council
Maintenance Committee
13 April 2015, 20.00h**

Present	Councillors	T Reason L Halford S Haynes D Johnston	Chairman
		Julia Warren	Clerk
		Press	0
		Public	4

4056-15 Apologies & Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillors A Brewster and G Clark (SADC meetings) N Clements, J Shardlow and P Woodhams (personal reasons).

4057-15 Public Speaking

Mr Cornell, organiser of the Litterblitz team, reported on their most recent litterpicking event adjacent to the Cory Wright Way. The entrance to the entrance of the old Blackbridge Tip had become a dumping ground for litter, both substantial as well as food or drink wrappings. Much of the rubbish had been covered by undergrowth.

He requested that the Parish Council contact the landowner, Lafarge, to clear the site of rubbish and install bollards or similar to prevent vehicles pulling up and flytipping.

Councillors thanked the Litterblitz team for their work in improving the appearance of the Village. It was agreed that the Clerk write to Lafarge.

Mr Johns spoke of his concerns regarding the vegetation work undertaken at the station sidings which made his property more visible and decreased his and his neighbours' privacy. He acknowledged the beech whips and dead hedge but felt these insufficient screening.

Mrs Walford was concerned that the removal of the vegetation buffer impacted on the noise buffer to the housing and that wildlife had been disturbed. She preferred a wilder area to a tidy park type environment adjacent to her home.

4058-15 Specific Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

None.

4059-15 Station sidings

In view of the public speakers' interests the Chairman took the item on Station Sidings next.

It was noted that previously Wheathampstead Parish Council had been criticised for poorly maintaining the Station Sidings and complaints had been received regarding trees overhanging or shading properties in Kingfisher Close. Open Space management plans were now in place for most of Council owned open space, some maintained as parkland, some more environmentally managed.

The reduced privacy for the two adjacent properties was acknowledged, particularly in the winter season when deciduous trees were without leaf. Leaves also provided a noise baffle. The need to manage space was discussed, including thinning out trees and vegetation to encourage healthy growth and avoid sterility of the land, as was now in part the case at Bower Heath. Assurances were given that those working in the area were mindful that slowworms had been spotted, but none found, possibly as they preferred the warmer south facing railway embankment.

It was agreed that any barrier between the houses and embankment of Station Sidings needed to fit the surroundings. The opinion of the public present was sought regarding further dead hedging, saplings and fast growing tall grass for greater screening. It was noted that *Arundo donax* (grass) was not native but grew strongly and dead stems remained tall all winter; this was the preference of the public attending. As previously noted there was a broad range of tree species in the locality, mapped by the ranger, many reached by an informal path along the embankment.

The neighbours present were invited to join a working group to consider development of the site.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed:

1. To thank the public speakers
2. To ask the ranger to undertake further dead hedging to the west end.
3. To purchase tall grass plants *Arundo Donax* to the east end, budget £50
4. To invite Mr Johns and Mrs Walford, representing the local residents, to join a working group to discuss future development plans for the site.

*Post meeting note, mindful of comments raised a less invasive species of fast growing grass, *Miscanthus x giganteus* was purchased.*

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Resolved | 1 To thank the public speakers |
| | 2 To ask the ranger to undertake further dead hedging to the west end. |
| | 3 To purchase tall grass plants <i>Arundo Donax</i> to the east end, budget £50 |
| | 4 To invite Mr Johns and Mrs Walford, |

representing the local residents, to join a working group to discuss future development plans for the site.

4060-15 Minutes of Maintenance Committee meeting of 2 March 2015

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2015 be approved.

Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2015 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

4061-15 Report of Maintenance Contractor

The breakdown of work undertaken by the maintenance contractor had been distributed and was considered. He had met with Council and Committee chairmen and clerks. The presentation of invoicing information had been discussed and a 'proforma' provided, he would supply a quotation for 2015-16 for 'routine' type tasks, ad hoc maintenance items to be separately quoted. Invoices would follow this format and include details of tasks.

It was acknowledged and applauded that the levels of maintenance of the open spaces showed marked improvement over the year and through the works of the volunteer group the maintenance contractor coordinated. The proportion of litter picking and play area inspection remained high, consideration was given to increasing public awareness of the costs of litter collection in an attempt to reduce costs and instigate civic / community pride.

Resolved To note the report and agreed actions

4062-15 Maintenance Contractor programme of works

The current list of ad hoc tasks was reviewed and prioritised, acknowledging that priority did not necessarily determine order of delivery as some tasks were, for example, weather dependent. He was to be asked to look at the feasibility of installing a French drain at the Devil's Dyke car park. Current ad hoc tasks were agreed as:

	priority
Butterfield Pavilion roof - paint	1
Maydencroft - bridge snag	1
MH hall light	1
Melissa raise crowns	1
library railings - paint	1
refresh correx on noticeboards	1
Document Richard Dawes work schedule - itemise monthly/seasonally	2

volunteers schedule	2
Meads BBQ - set slabs	2
refill playarea woodchip	2
Mill Quay - Paul Edmunds	2
Baxendale allots & orchard - rewrite mgt plan	2
letter box MH	2
Devil's Dyke car park	2
Melissa access	4
ELCP Mgt plan	4
bin by tarmac path - ATP?	4

Resolved To approve the prioritised list of adhoc tasks

4061-15 Work of rangers

It was reported that whilst the majority of homeowners backing onto Butterfield Local Nature Reserve had now cleared garden debris, one garden in particular retained an extension. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that letter be sent to all properties once again advising that garden property would be removed if remaining by 1 June 2015. The Maintenance Contractor to remove any offending items remaining after 1 June. Advice to be sought from environmental specialist regarding possibility of slowworm presence and subsequent necessary action

- Resolved**
- 1 To write to Butterfield Road properties adjacent to the LNR advising that any garden property would be removed by 1 June 2015**
 - 2 Maintenance contractor to clear site of garden items including vegetation after 1 June.**
 - 3 Advice to be sought regarding possible slowworm presence**

4062-15 HMWT projects

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that this be deferred pending report from HMWT.

Resolved To defer to a later meeting pending report.

4063-15 Tree work and vegetation management

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the Clerk write to Jarvis prior to removal of the tree stumps in the triangular area adjacent to the Crinkle Crinkle Garden as these probably marked the boundary.

It was noted that permission to fell the sycamore adjacent to the station had been approved.

- Resolved**
- 1 Clerk to write to Jarvis regarding boundary to triangular area by Crinkle Crankle Garden.**
 - 2 To note the report.**

4064-15 Marshalls Heath

The ranger for Marshalls Heath had reported on the positive transformation of the west side of the Heath following bramble and scrub clearance, and requested that similar work be undertaken on the east side. A quotation for this work had been received for £350. Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Johnston, and it was agreed, that £350 be allocated to clear the east side of Marshalls Heath

- Resolved**
- To 'bramble' clear the east side of Marshalls Heath at a cost of £350.**

4065-15 Wheathampstead Open Spaces Volunteers

The work of the volunteers was acknowledged and much appreciated (see also Minute 4061-15). Volunteers met the second Saturday each month. It was noted that in July this clashed with Village weekend. It was agreed that there would be no WOSV on the second Saturday in July, if volunteers were so minded an alternative July date could be fixed

- Resolved**
- That the WOSV would not meet on Village Weekend.**

4066-15 East Lane Car Park extension

It was noted that work to extend the car park had begun on 7 April. The contractor recommended an additional 40tonnes Type 1 to give a compressed surface depth of 200mm and provide a long lived surface, additional cost £900, also that green waste was removed from site and composted rather than burnt in situ, cost £400. Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Haynes and it was agreed that 40tonnes additional Type 1 be obtained and waste removed from site.

A working group, to include nearest neighbours to the car park, meet to discuss planting.

- Resolved**
- 1 To purchase an additional 40tonnes Type 1 surfacing , cost £900.**
 - 2 To remove green waste from site, cost £400.**
 - 3 Working group to meet early May to discuss planting.**

4067-16 Bench maintenance

Bench maintenance was discussed and further to Minute 4008-15 referred to Council.

Resolved To refer to Council.

4068-15 Rose bushes and East Lane Car Park

The good work of parish volunteer John Burgess was commended. It was noted that he was currently planting rose bushes in East Lane adjacent to the public toilets on District Council land. He had suggested that the japonica by the car park entrance be replaced by a rose, but councillors favoured letting the bush regenerate. Councillors agreed that parish council support should be for work on its property. Councillor Johnston proposed, seconded by Councillor Halford, and it was agreed that the damaged post by the entrance be removed and replaced by a bollard in the Forge, budget £200.

Resolved

- 1 To consider support for Mr Burgess' work on Parish Council property.**
- 2 To replace the damaged post by East Lane Car Park entrance with a bollard in the Forge**

4069-15 Butterfield Road Play Area

Further to Minutes 3702-14 and 3756-14, 3819-14 and 3866-14, 4010-15 it was reported that progress on the s106 variation and agreement on the new lease had been chased, a meeting had taken place with HCC on 19 March. A response from HCC was awaited.

Resolved To note the report

4070-15 CVS use of the Memorial Hall

Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Haynes, and it was agreed that the CVS have a 3 hour free of charge hire of the Hewitt Room for community grant training sessions. The Council for Voluntary Services offered a free service to the community and this offer was on a par to the use by the Wheathampstead Community Group for the Christmas Singalong or the CAB.

Resolved To agree a free 3 hour Hewitt Room hire for the CVS.

4071-15 Memorial Hall – Maintenance and refurbishment

It was reported that the kitchen sink had been unblocked and the toilet overflows attended to. CCTV was being investigated to address the issue of vulgar graffiti to the Hewitt Room windows.

Resolved To note the reports.

4072-15 Forge

The communal use of the Forge was discussed and need for users to cooperate and maintain a level of corporate tidiness. The Forge warden had made a previously unused space extremely useable and good.

Resolved To note the report

4073-15 Open spaces signage

A report from Councillor Shardlow as awaited

Resolved To note the report.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.10h.

Dated this day of 2015

Chairman