

Wheathampstead Parish Council

Maintenance Committee 12 February 2018- 19:30

Present: Councillors D Johnston Chairman
G Clark
L Halford
S Haynes
O McKenzie
P Woodhams

J Warren Clerk to the Council

Press 0
Public 0

5486-18 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors E Habib and T Reason (personal).

5487-18 Public Speaking

None.

5488-18 Specific Declarations of Interest & Dispensations

None.

5489-18 Minutes of the Maintenance Committee of 8 January

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2018 be approved.

Resolved:

To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 8 January 2018 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

5490-18 IT provision

Further to Minute 5479-18 consideration was given to the IT provision for Council. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed to ratify the requirement for all parish councillors and office staff to have a Wheathampstead-pc.gov.uk email address and to explore individual requirements. Quotations to be sought.

Resolved:

To ratify the requirement for all parish councillors and office staff to have a Wheathampstead-pc.gov.uk email address and to explore individual requirements. . Quotations to be sought.

5491-18 Report of the Maintenance Contractor

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

Folly noticeboard installed
East Lane hedge pruned
Football pitch hedge pruned

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Folly perimeter hedge pruned
ELCP barrier repaired and replaced/ put back
Installation of CCG sign
Repaired wood surround at Rectory Meadow Play Area
Ant hill clearance at Marshals Heath completed

Outstanding jobs included:

Siding out of Rectory Meadow path
Loosefill top up for play areas
ELCP kerb
Clearance of fallen tree at Butterfield Road car park.

He recommended that the following tasks be undertaken:

ELCP barrier be painted (£120)
Clear leaves and tidy edges Memorial Hall car park (£22 per hour)
Cut and clear Butterfield £500
Tree work as discussed with ranger at Marshalls Heath £700

Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Haynes, and it was agreed, that these tasks be approved.

In addition the contractor had recommended the following tasks not agreed: clearing the steps at St Helens School and Four Limes (HCC responsibility) and the bank between Ash Grove car park and Rectory Gardens fences (further information to be sought) and repair of the seat on Nomansland (being undertaken by John O'Conner for Nomansland Joint Committee).

The Council's play areas had received their annual RPII inspection on 12 December. Reports were circulated. The Maintenance Contractor, whose team undertook weekly inspections of each play area, had reviewed the report and his recommendations were received and approved. Low risk items would be monitored and medium risk issues costed up for rectification. Zurich's Local Community Advisory Service to be contacted for advice on dealing with ropes which the public regularly tied to tree branches as an informal swing.

Resolved:

- **To thank the Maintenance Contractor for his clear and concise report**
- **To approve the tasks as recommended above.**
- **To contact LCAS regarding informal rope swings.**

5492-18 Work of Rangers, open spaces management

It was reported that after many years leading the Litterblitz team Eddie Cornell had stepped down as leader. His support for the Village and enthusiasm for a continuing host of activities was commended, agreed he was to be thanked for all his support.

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The Butterfield Rangers reported that WOSV have had 2 sessions at Butterfield Road LNR this winter so that with Richard Dawes' mowing, and Paul Grey's sheep there has been a concerted effort to cut and lift or graze wild flower areas this year. Areas to the west of the chalk bank and within the grazing enclosure are responding with a good variety and amount of wild flowers and insects. The east of the chalk bank is becoming less interesting because we aren't able to cut and lift arisings at the right time of year (i.e. September) . A request was made (and approved – proposed by Councillor Halford, seconded by Councillor Woodhams) for the filling in of the sides of the metal gate on the road side to stop motor cycles etc; and a further cut of the path from the metal gate towards the entrance of the sheep pen and the parallel path to the ploughed field plus a little more near the scrape and cowslip area (£180).

In relation to Devil's Dyke Statutory Ancient Monument, it was reported that a few limbs and trees blew over in the winds and snow. WOSV and the ranger had been trying to prevent this happening by reducing the holly and by careful tree surveying and then appropriate surgery. His view was that English Heritage would wish us to continue as fallen trees with their root ball exposed could cause significant damage to the integrity of the Monument.

The ranger for Bower Heath reported that:

- The lifted crowns on the Heath looked good, opened up the area
- Continuing complaints about dog fouling, and people knocking on her door (referred to WPC)
- Couple of home made bird boxes appeared screwed to trees – councillor were happy these remained.
- The ranger was still litter picking but the litter problem was reducing

The ranger for the Rectory Copse reported:

- The snowdrop clumps by the crinkle-crankle wall were looking fabulous once again, after flowering he would further divide and spread them.
- 20x hardy geranium *Rosanne* (and 6x ferns) were purchased recently, but were awaiting warmer soil conditions before planting out between the snowdrops to provide summer ground cover.
- White foxgloves were to be planted out at the back of the CCW, where they should flower next year and self-seed thereafter.
- The area on the Rectory Meadow side of the path needs raking over and weeding to give the bluebells a chance, but they were struggling and it may be a losing battle, even though they have been "established" for ~5 years.
- A few yellow aconites have escaped beyond the boundaries of the stone edging to the Cherry-Garrard grave: These were to be removed and planted alongside their predecessors at the edge of the scrub by the bridleway on the North side of the Meads.

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It was agreed that the WOSV co-ordinator be approached to organise a session in the Copse to remove some elder and other undesired shrubby growth.

The Meads Ranger reported that the Environment Agency watercourses Officer had twice cleared the boom of litter at the Mill, a tree fallen downstream on the north bank near East Lane Car Park had also been cleared. Winter pruning had been undertaken at the Meads Community Orchard.

Resolved:

- **To note the reports.**
- **To authorise works at Butterfield**

5493-18 River project update

The River ranger reported that Environment Agency consent for the works had been received on 16 January. Work had progressed well with volunteers using locally pollarded willows for spiling round the purchased chestnut stakes. Contractors had undertaken the work on the access points. It was hoped most if not all works would be completed by the start of the fishing closed season, 15 March.

Resolved:

To note the reports.

5494-18 Treework and vegetation management.

Further to Minute 5429-18 Mr Carter had completed his tree survey and provided a summary. The full report would follow. Quotations for works recommended for a tree surgeon to be obtained once full information available, Clerk authorised to approve work to be undertaken by RJ Dawes.

Resolved:

- **To note the reports**
- **Clerk to authorise more minor safety works, quotations to be obtained for larger scale work once specification was received.**

5495-18 Open spaces noticeboards

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the obsolete Memorial Hall sign and old noticeboard be removed and disposed of. The new board to be installed adjacent to the bench and close to the footway on Marford Road.

Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams, and it was agreed that 5 open space noticeboards to fit the artwork now finalised, plus a matching one for the Wheathampstead Wanderers FC be purchased. Chairman and Clerk to approve details.

Resolved:

- **That the obsolete Memorial Hall sign and old noticeboard be removed and disposed of. The new**

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board to be installed adjacent to the bench and close to the footway on Marford Road.

- **That 5 open space noticeboards to fit the artwork now finalised, plus a matching one for the Wheathampstead Wanderers FC be purchased. Chairman and Clerk to approve details.**

5496-18 Memorial Hall maintenance

Further to Minutes 5372-17 and 5431 -18 CCTV was to be installed within the month.

Resolved:

To note the reports.

5497-18 Use of the Memorial Hall

Concerns had been raised regarding animals brought into the Memorial Hall by hirers. Councillor Haynes proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams, and it was agreed that all animals, with the exception of assistance dogs, be excluded from the Hall unless specific approval had previously been obtained.

Attention was drawn to the community World War I project, members of which were considering applying for Lottery Funding. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that rather than gamble upon grant funding Wheathampstead Parish Council underwrite the project up to £4,300 and work with the group to facilitate and promote the event.

Resolved:

- **To exclude all animals, with the exception of assistance dogs, from the Memorial Hall.**
- **Wheathampstead Parish Council underwrite the World War I project up to £4,300 and work with the group to facilitate and promote the event.**

5498-18 Consultation on Nomansland Common Green Action Plan

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that a statement in full support of St Albans City and District Nomansland 5 Year Greenspace Action Plan be submitted.

Resolved:

To thank and fully support the Countryside Management Service and St Albans City and District Council for the Nomansland Greenspace Action Plan.

5499-18 Budget report

The budget monitoring report was noted.

Resolved:

To note the reports.

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5500-18 Exclusion of Press and Public

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Resolved:

To exclude press and public.

5501-18 Council Assets

A report from the Council's property consultants had been received
Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams and it was agreed to appoint a third party surveyor regarding the rent review in discussion.

Resolved:

To appoint a third party surveyor regarding the rent review in discussion.

5502-18 Readmission of Press and Public

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, to readmit press and public.

Resolved:

To readmit press and public

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:55

Dated this day of 2018

Chairman