

**Wheathampstead Parish Council
Maintenance Committee
17 November 2014, 19.30h**

Present	Councillors	T Reason G Clark S Haynes D Johnston	Chairman
		Julia Warren	Clerk
		Press	0
		Public	1

3857-14 Apologies & Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillors G Clark (late – SADC meeting), L Halford, J Shardlow and P Woodhams (personal reasons).

3858-14 Public Speaking

Patrick McNeill spoke about maintenance of the Meads including the Meads Community Orchard. He advised that he was trained and had experience of using brushcutters and requested that the Council invest in one that he, as ranger, could utilise. Councillors suggested that this request be added to the next agenda for consideration.

3859-14 Specific Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

None.

3860-14 Minutes of Maintenance Committee meeting of 20 October 2014

Councillor Johnston proposed, seconded by Councillor Haynes, and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2014 be approved.

Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2014 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

3861-14 Report of Maintenance Contractor

Councillor Clark arrived following her District Council meeting.

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. Priorities were agreed as painting the office and Butterfield Pavilion roof, drains by the Forge, installation of the Meads bench, topping up

Folly play area woodchip, creating a 'flowerbed' at the Memorial Hall in place of the former ramp, installation of posts adjacent to the Memorial Hall car park and East Lane Car park extension.

Resolved **To note the report and methodology to prioritise tasks.**

3862-14 **Work of rangers**

Further to Minute 3858-14 it was reported that the Wheathampstead Open Spaces Volunteers had cleared large areas of Devils Dyke. Their endeavours were much appreciated. The annual Rangers' Social meeting was scheduled and many had indicated their availability to attend. It was advised that damage to willows on the Meads was the work of squirrels.

Resolved **To note the reports.**

3863-14 **Tree work and Vegetation management**

It was reported that a dead and dying sycamore awkwardly situated on the river bank adjacent to the youth shelter in East Lane car park had shed a branch in recent high winds. Further limbs could damage shelter, pedestrians, vehicles or block the river. The tree had been inspected by the tree surgeon with recommendation it be felled. Councillor Johnston proposed, seconded by Councillor Haynes, and it was agreed that a budget of £2250 be put aside for felling once permission was granted by SADC. An application to fell had been made.

Ash die back disease, a fungal pathogen specific to Ash trees. was reported in county. It was a disease management issue. Advice had been circulated. It was agreed that an article be included in the Pump. Rangers and volunteers were to be made aware and a survey be undertaken in the summer to look at and monitor infected trees.

Resolved **1 Following approval of the District Council to approve a budget up to £2250 for tree felling at East Lane car park.**

2 To include an article on Ash Die Back guidance in the Pump.

3 To undertake a survey of ash trees in the summer and monitor trees

3864-14 **Play Area Maintenance**

The Play Area Inspection Company had undertaken an annual inspection of all Parish Council play areas. The Maintenance Contractor had accompanied him. The reports plus overall synopsis had been circulated, some recommendations had already been undertaken (replenishing woodchip at Folly Fields – Minute 3861-14, removal of rocker at Maltings Drive), others were in hand.

The maintenance contractor, having spoken with the Play Area Inspection Company, recommended removal of the fence around the Maltings Drive and Rectory Meadows play areas which were in need of constant attention. The Maltings Drive play area was scheduled for upgrade so removal of this fence could help determine the design of the new facilities. It was noted that no fence existed at Marshalls Heath play area with no apparent issues. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the fence at Maltings Drive be removed.

Councillor Haynes proposed, seconded by Councillor Johnston, that Wheathampstead Parish Council continue to appoint the Play Area Inspection Company.

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the reports.**
 - 2 To remove the fencing around Maltings Drive Play Area.**
 - 3 To continue using the service of the Play Inspection Company for play area inspections.**

3865-14 Butterfield Road Play Area

Further to Minutes 3702-14 and 3756-14 and 3819-14 it was reported that progress on the s106 variation and agreement on the new lease had been chased, concerns were raised about the likelihood of a December 2014 completion and handover.

- Resolved To note the report.**

3866-14 Memorial Hall – fence posts to field

Councillor Haynes proposed, seconded by Councillor Johnston, and it was agreed that the previously approved 500cm posts be located on the existing fence line, budget £3 380 plus reflective discs.

- Resolved To replace dilapidated fence to Marford Field by the Memorial Hall car park with 500cm posts located on the existing fenceline.**

3867-14 Memorial Hall – Maintenance and refurbishment

Further to Minute 3820-14 it was reported that work to the wall of the library steps and removal of the slope to the north side of the Memorial Hall would commence next day. Councillor Clark had offered, assisted by Councillor Woodhams, to plant the new flower/shrub bed

A leak to the water mains (Council side of the mains tap) had been located and fixed (to south west end of building).

Quotations had been received to plaster skim the main hall walls and ceiling. Ideas for house lighting were being sought. Consideration was given to acoustic baffling and members

requested further details on projector and av options. A meeting with the architect was being arranged to consider holistically future refurbishment work.

Resolved **To note the reports.**

3868-14 **Annual Fish Survey**

The Environment Agency's annual fish survey of the River Lea had been received and circulated. Specifically mentioned were the good spawning habitat for barbell, chub and dace; and the increase of fish density in 2014 compared to 2007. The reduced management of the river banks had had a positive effect on the suitability of the site, juvenile fish enjoyed the additional marginal habitat. Wheathampstead had the largest population of dace species of sites surveyed on the Lea and showed good fish growth rates

Resolved **To note the report.**

3869-14 **Budget review and suggestions for 2015-6 budget**

The income and expenditure report had been circulated and was noted. Councillors noted the expanding workload from maintenance and new projects and recommended increasing the staffing costs. On the project front priorities were refurbishment of the Memorial Hall, The Crinkle Crinkle Garden and adjacent area development, Bury Green Triangle redevelopment and East Lane Car Park extension.

Resolved **To note the report.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.20h.

Dated this **day of** **2015**

Chairman