Wheathampstead Parish Council
Rights of Way & Commons Committee
17 November 2009, 20.05h

Present	Councillors:	N Page	Chairman
		A Brewster	
		J Burgess	
		D Hills	
		T Reason	
		K Stammers	
		S Walford	
		A Waterfield	
		M Carter	P3 CMS
		D Watson	WDPS
		Julia Warren	Clerk to the Council
		Press	0
		Public	0

666-09 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Begg (personal reasons), Julian Thornton (HCC Footpaths) and Rick Sanderson (WDPS)

667-09 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr Watson enquired whether printed copies of the Walking Map for Wheathampstead, published in 2005, were still available. The Clerk confirmed that these had all been distributed over the years, a master CD was available in the Parish Council office. The Parish Council owned the copyright to the leaflet of which 5,000 were printed. It was agreed that this matter be discussed further under Minute 671-09 as it required update to include for example reference to the Heartwood Forest and greater emphasis on Nomansland

Resolved:
1. **To note the request for hard copies of a walking map to be available from local shops, St Albans Tourist office etc.**
2. **To consider putting the map on the Parish Council website (subject to permission of those photographed) and at a future date to update version 1 of the parish walking map**

668-09 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

669-09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2009 were approved.

Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2009 as a true and accurate account of the meeting and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

670-09 MARFORD ROAD FOOTPATH EXTENSION

The Marford Road footpath extension formed part of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Mr Thornton had advised that this footpath extension from Water End was in hand by Herts Highways and currently undergoing a safety audit

Resolved To note the report.

671-09 CMS MATTERS – Devil's Dyke

Mr Carter reported that the Devil's Dyke vegetation management plan proposal, discussed at Minute 448-09, had been submitted to English Heritage and that Scheduled Ancient Monument consent was awaited. The project was discussed including the need to improve footpaths within the Dyke, removal of arisings and access to the site. The committee expressed concern over the absence of a footway access along Dyke Lane and the limited parking facilities provided. With no footway the site was not easily accessible by pedestrians. It was confirmed that a review of the entrance to the Dyke would be included as part of the technical specification for grant funding.

Consideration was also given to advertising of the Devil's Dyke project, encouragement of community involvement and potential for the public to obtain felled and otherwise unwanted logs. This could be communicated through the Pump/website as appropriate.

Resolved:
1. **To thank Mr Carter for his work to date**
2. **To authorise CMS to process the application**
3. **To consider advertising available timber logs in the Pump/website**
4. **<u>To recommend to Council</u> that**
   In conjunction with the application for Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent the Council consider writing to Herts Highways requesting that they install a footway by the roadside to Dyke Lane

672-09 CMS MATTERS P3 GRANT 2010

Application details for the 2010 P3 grant had been circulated. A number of prospective projects for this £1,000 grant were discussed including stiles, ideas around the heritage trail, removal of the fence on the former Helmets site and the Wheathampstead walking map.

Resolved: **That the £1,000 grant be applied for to go towards an update and supply of a walking map for Wheathampstead including the Heritage Trail.**

673-09 RIGHTS OF WAY WORK

It was reported that the tarmacing work to Waddling Lane, BR12 and the car park strip at the entrance to the Old 16th Green was complete. The Clerk was asked to write to Herts Highways to clarify the parking limitations on Mount Road.

The need for gates on BR12 was discussed – one 10' farm gate and one 5' bridleway gate consistent with the wooden gates further along the bridleway.

Councillor Page proposed that wooden gates at an estimated cost including installation of £700 be installed at the 'Murphy' end of the bridleway.

The motion was defeated, the majority of committee members did not wish the Parish Council to bear this expense as the bridleway gates were believed to be the responsibility of Herts Highways.

It was then agreed that a site visit be set up to include Julian Thornton

Resolved: **That a site meeting on BR12 to discuss gates be set up to include the HCC Footpaths Officer, Julian Thornton**

Mark Carter left the meeting at 21.40h

674-09 ACCESS TO SCOUT HUT

As agreed at minute 456-09 access to the Scout Hut and Meads Lane had been investigated. It was reported that permission to secure laminated 'private land, access required' signs had been obtained and signs installed to the adjacent fencing. The feasibility of yellow line marking the private road to the scout hut had been discussed with Herts Highways. The Highways engineer did not support this use of public money for unenforceable yellow lining. The committee agreed to abandon the idea of yellow line marking the access road.

Resolved: **Not to pursue yellow line marking the access road**

675-09 COMMONS RE-REGISTRATION

Members had agreed at Minute 457-09 to visit the parcel of land 0.74 ha at Cutts Green. Registration of this copse on Ayres End Lane (west of Ayres End House) had not been previously successful. Members agreed not to pursue registration

Resolved: Not to pursue an application for Cutts Gren wood as Common Land

676-09 REQUEST FOR WATER SUPPLY WAYLEAVE ON NOMANSLAND – HILLEND FARM

A request for wayleave for a water supply across Nomansland to Hillend Farm to a new farmhouse and farmyard had been received and had been referred to the Committee by Council, Minute 637-09. A similar approach has also been made to Althorp Estates for access across their land. This was debated at some length, considering also FP32 and rights of way to the new Heartwood Forest. The committee's preference was for an annual renewable wayleave, subject to advice from the Parish Council's solicitor.

Resolved: Clerk to seek solicitor's advice on an annual renewable wayleave prior to responding to the wayleave request.

677-09 BOWER HEATH CLEARANCE & CREATION OF NEW FOOTPATH/BRIDLEWAY

Councillor Page reported that through the removal of trees and nettle clearance a footpath had been all but voluntarily way-marked between FP50 and FP53; the former bridleway having been blocked by a large tree which fell some years previously. It was agreed that the Clerk write to the HCC footpaths officer requesting that this new stretch of footpath be formally adopted and thus maintained in perpetuity

Resolved: Clerk to write to Footpaths officer requesting that HCC adopt the new stretch of footpath

678-09 DOG BINS & SIGNS

The problem of dog fouling along the narrow stretch of FP73 at the Sheepcote Lane end had been discussed at Minute 450-09 and signage reminding dog owners of their responsibilities to clearup after their dogs installed. Residents of Sheepcote Lane had been subsequently consulted for their views on the positioning of bin(s) to service this footpath and the nearby bridlepath to the Meads. The need for a sign pole for BR12 was agreed to accommodate a metal 'no dog fouling' sign.

It was agreed that a dogbin be installed on FP73 north of Glebe South horse grazing field

Resolved: **1 Clerk to write to Mr Thornton, HCC footpaths, requesting a sign pole for BR12 at the Palmerston Road end of BR12**
2 Clerk to ask Mr Dawes to install a dog bin on FP73 north of the Glebe South grazing field

679-09 MEMORIAL BENCH REQUESTS

Requests for memorial benches/ trees on Folly Fields and East Meads had been referred by Council (Minute 637-09) and were discussed. Underground cabling work scheduled by EDF was anticipated in the spring 2010. It was agreed that no bench be installed until this work was complete, this delay had previously been discussed with the applicant, Marie Hlne Hunter by Councillor Page.

It was unclear which location on Folly fields was preferable, the committee agreed that Councillor Page would contact the applicant, Sally Hunt, to agree details

Resolved: **1 To note the report**
2 To postpone installation of a memorial bench on the Meads until EDF underground cabling complete.
3 Councillor Page to contact applicant to agree details of the memorial on Folly Fields

680-09 RECTORY MEADOW LEASE

The Diocesan Solicitors had returned the Rectory Meadow draft lease amended to include WPC comments. This had been circulated. Agreed that this be signed by Council Chairman and Clerk on behalf of Council. Once in place treework could commence

Resolved: **Councillor Begg and Clerk to sign Rectory Meadow Lease as amended on behalf of Wheathampstead Parish Council**

Councillors Hills, Stammers and Walford left the meeting at 22.30h.

681-09 TREE MAINTENANCE

Councillor Page reported that he anticipated that treework within budget limits would be completed during the financial year. Councillors agreed the budget ceiling for 2009-10 to be £6,602 and approved work as agreed by ROW chairman, tree surgeon and authorised through the Clerk. This would include clearance in the East Meads and Bower Heath.

Three horse chestnuts on Marford Field, suffering from bleeding canker, had been felled. A budget up to £300 for a mature Norway maple and possibly one other replacement tree was approved.

A copy of St Albans Tree Strategy and Policy had been obtained through the CPRE for consultation. Agreed that Councillor Page comment on behalf of WPC through the Clerk.

Resolved:
1. **Treework including in East Meads and Bower Heath as agreed between chairman and tree surgeon, and work issued through the Clerk be approved up to the annual budget limit of £6,602**
2. **A budget spend up to £300 for mature tree(s) including a Norway maple to replace the diseased Horse chestnuts felled on Marford Field**
3. **Councillor Page to prepare a response to St Albans DC's Review of Tree Strategy and Policy**

682-09 FABRIC MAINTENANCE

The committee recorded its thanks to Councillor Burgess for his work, particularly tidying the Forge. As the hour was late other matters were deferred.

Resolved: To thank Councillor Burgess

683-09 VOLUNTEER WORK

Councillor Page reported upon the refurbishment work in the Forge undertaken by Councillor Burgess (Minute 682-09 refers).

Councillor Page had undertaken ragwort pulling parish wide over a number of years and reported success in terms of decline, averaging 60% in a year, in vigour of plants through removal. He had removed 4,439 plants in 2009.

David Johnston had lead a number of volunteers in clearing the former railway station platform. WEB/WDPS had been supplemented by a workgroup of 5 sailors from HMS St Albans, facilitated by the Mayor of St Albans, and lead by 3 trained CMS volunteers on 12 November. They had created a significant impact, the entire platform clearly visible, vegetation removed, to those able to scramble up the former railway embankment. The committee agreed, in principal, to provide the cost of materials to provide access to the station and enable the project to progress as part of the heritage trail.

Resolved: **1 To note the report**
2 To thank Councillor Page for his ragwort control success
3 To provide the cost of materials for access to the former station (detail to be agreed through work group to be set up)

684-09 BUDGET 2009-10

Councillor Page provided a breakdown of the £16,525 annual budget for 2009-10 and including expenditure to date which was agreed. Consideration of further projects for the current year was deferred due to time constraints.

Resolved: **1 To approve the budget breakdown for 2009-10**

685-09 BUDGET SUGGESTIONS FOR 2010-11

It was agreed that committee members consider budget items for 2010-11 and a later budget meeting be set.

Resolved: **1 Committee members to consider items for 2010-11 budget**
2 Budget setting 2010-11 to be deferred, additional meeting to be called

686-09 PROGRESS AGAINST VILLAGE PLAN TARGETS

Deferred to next meeting

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 23.11h.

Dated this day of 2009

Chairman