

**Wheathampstead Parish Council
Rights of Way & Commons Committee
23 February 2010, 20.00h**

Present Councillors:	N Page	Chairman
	A Brewster	
	J Burgess	
	D Hills	
	K Stammers	
	S Walford	
	D Johnston	Station WG
	Julia Warren	Clerk to the Council
	Press	0
	Public	0

875-10 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors Begg, Reason & Waterfield (personal reasons), Councillor Brewster (for delayed arrival) WDPS and Mark Carter (CMS).

876-10 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

877-10 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

878-10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010 were approved.

Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010 as a true and accurate account of the meeting and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

879-10 OLD STATION PLATFORM WORKING GROUP

The Station Working Group was formally set up by the November Council (Minutes 694/5-09 refer) to build upon successful partnership working between WPC, Royal Navy (facilitated through SADC), CMS and local volunteers. The aim was to improve the heritage site of the former station platform and bring vibrancy to the Village. In the absence of Cllr Reason David Johnston gave a fascinating presentation into progress and aspirations of the group together with an update on approaches for external funding.

It was noted that the current access to the former station platform was via the railway embankment. Councillors agreed that consideration should be given to access both for volunteer 'workers' and public access particularly once the site was tidied up and cleared of overgrown vegetation. Members agreed that a site visit should be convened followed by a special formal meeting to consider access for example by extended ramp or steps.

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the report.**
 - 2 To thank David Johnston**
 - 3 To convene a special Rights of Way & Commons committee meeting to consider access beginning with a site visit.**

880-10 BUDGET 2010 - 11

It was reported that the budget put forward by the Rights of Way & Commons Committee (Minute 768-10) of £15,701, split £11,201 and £4,500 between maintenance and projects, had been approved by Council (Minute 818-10).

Resolved To note the report.

881-10 BUDGET 2009-10

A report showing expenditure to end of January and including known commitments had been circulated

Resolved To note the report.

882-10 GIRLING REPORT & CONTRACTS

Mr Girling's arboricultural consultant report, as agreed at Minute 767-10 had been received. It reported upon three particular trees in Rectory Meadows, 2 conservation area trees and one subject to a tree preservation order (TPO). His summarised recommendations were that the Rectory Field sycamore was in very unsatisfactory condition and should be removed without delay. The American Red Oak had a limited future but was in moderate conditions and the Ash Grove Ash tree required skilled pruning and at regular interval over the next three years. Two quotations to fell the sycamore had been obtained. It was agreed that the lower quotation be accepted and the tree removed as soon as practicable.

The two maple trees on Brocket View behind the Drama Society workshop were discussed. The chairman had spoken with the residents about felling these trees which both obstructed the

highway and impaired the development of the nearby Cedar tree. They supported the removal of the trees and one requested planting a replacement tree in memory of her late husband. Councillors agreed that the quotation for £350 to remove the two maples be accepted.

Consideration was given to planting some specimen willow trees along the North Meads to complement those planted approximately 20 years previously on the south side of the River Lea. Varieties would include white, purple and weeping willows. Agreed that a budget up to £300 be allowed to source 8 or 9 trees.

It was reported that when the HMS St Albans sailors attended in November the chairman had hoped for assistance in deadwood clearance in Bower Heath as well as the former station platform area. A smaller team had attended than initially expected and no work was undertaken in Bower Heath. A quotation for 2 days deadwooding had been received from Garden City Trees. This was approved

- Resolved:**
- 1 To fell the Rectory Field Sycamore as recommended by Arboricultural consultant Henry Girling**
 - 2 To fell the two Maples on Brocket View.**
 - 3 To plant a variety of approximately 9 willows on the North Meads**
 - 4 To approve 2 days deadwooding at Bower Heath**

883-10 FISHING ON THE RIVER LEA

It was reported that fishing on the River Lea at the Meads was recognised as good quality and advertised as such in fishing literature. On Parish Council land this was enabled free of charge and did not appear to be policed to ensure fishermen held permits. From the WPC perspective a serious litter/dumping problem existed which was less of an issue for neighbouring riparian owners. It was agreed that investigations into the feasibility of monitoring fishing on the Meads be undertaken

- Resolved: To investigate cost-effective means of monitoring fishing in the River Lea from the Meads.**

884-10 HILLEND FARM

An update following Council's discussions at Minute 832-10 was given

- Resolved: To note the report**

885-10 FORGE

It was reported that a more secure cover to the lock had been manufactured and fitted to the Westwood Forge and that the corroded post on the first barrier had been repaired. The chairman believed that security was now significantly improved.

Resolved: To note the report

886-10 BUTTERFIELD ROAD NATURE RESERVE & CMS

Councillor Brewster arrived during consideration of this minute.

The Butterfield Road Nature Reserve is leased by HCC to WPC and thus the Rights of Way & Commons Committee has an interest in its maintenance and management. Members noted Mr Carter's report that it was currently managed by volunteers following an old CMS management plan. CMS Wednesday volunteers visit twice a year to cut and rake grass and scrub it and a group of local 'friends' meet twice a year to cut and remove vegetation. St. Albans Boy's School visit two or three times a year to coppice young trees in the secondary woodland. As had previously occurred CMS were trying to attract a grazier to put sheep in the fenced enclosure.

Agreed to thank Mr Carter for his report and ask that he makes the appropriate grant application for work at Devil's Dyke. Work at the Dyke could then commence winter 2010.

**Resolved: 1 To note the report
2 Clerk to write to CMS**

887-10 BOUNDARY OF COMMON LAND AT CROSS KEYS GUSTARD WOOD

An enquiry regarding the boundary of the Common Land by the Cross Keys in Gustard Wood had been received. The Common had been purchased by the Parish Council in 1994. It was reported that most of the strip of land fronting the Cross Keys public house was conveyed to the owners of adjacent White Cottage to guarantee their access in perpetuity. The land remains Common Land.

**Resolved: 1 To note the report
2 Clerk to write to Mr Nevell.**

888-10 STUMP AND ASH SAPLINGS TREATMENT

It was reported that a large number of self set ash samplings were growing in the amenity areas of Rectory Field and Old Station Yard. During the dormant winter season the Chairman was trimming the unwanted saplings and treating with Roundup stump killer. The committee thanked the Chairman for his voluntary services.

Resolved To note the report

889-10 PROGRESS AGAINST VILLAGE PLAN TARGETS

