

**Wheathampstead Parish Council  
Rights of Way & Commons Committee  
14 April 2011, 19.30h**

Present	Councillors	T Reason A Brewster N Page K Stammers S Walford A Waterfield	Chairman
		E Cornell J Murray J Thornton	Parish Paths Marshalls Heath Warden HCC Footpaths
		Julia Warren	Clerk
		Press	0
		Public	1

**1837-11 Apologies & Substitutions**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Hills (meeting) and Cllr Brewster (late arrival – prior commitment).

**1838-11 Questions from the Public**

Mr Cornell, Parish Paths representative had produced a list of paths where signage was absent or incorrect which he had previously shared with Mr Thornton (HCC Footpaths) and the chairman of the Rights of Way and Commons Committee. Mr Thornton agreed that most signage could be rectified with stick on signage which Mr Cornell was prepared to install. This was an acceptable solution to all. Mr Thornton would contact the Parish Council regarding any additional signage requiring posts.

Mr Cornell referred with concern to Minute 1714-11 and the recommendation that barriers be painted red. This recommendation had been overturned by Council (Minute 1748-11), barriers to be painted Land rover green.

Mr Rogers spoke of the leylandii trees at the Four Limes and their need for topping and pruning. It transpired that the trees were on his property. Councillor Stammers proposed that WPC instruct its solicitor to check the legal liability. The proposal was not seconded and fell. Councillors were sympathetic to his problem but not in a position to help – he had confirmed that he was the legal owner of the trees. As Mr Rogers left the meeting he referred to his laurel tress with which he was experiencing similar problems

**1839-11 Specific Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Stammers declared a personal interest in Marshalls Heath as he lives on the Heath (Minute 1846-11)

**1840-11 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 were approved.

**Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 as a true and accurate account of the meeting and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**1841-11 Footpaths**

Some of this had been covered at Minute 1706-11 above by Mr Cornell's Questions. Mr Thornton further confirmed that he would investigate the absent kissing gate on FP51 and if it met the HCC criteria for replacement renew it. He spoke of dialogue with the new owners of Lamer Park Golf Club regarding FP42 and FP31. He would be in touch with the Parish Council. He confirmed that HCC were happy to accept the bridleway across Bower Heath.

**Recommended To note the report to Council**

**1842-11 CMS Matters**

Members noted that as in 2010 and previous years the CMS had arranged for short term sheep grazing at the Butterfield Road Local Nature Reserve. A request had been received for the CMS to have an open evening on 28 June. The chairman proposed, and it was agreed that this be approved. Members believed this would be a pleasant way to integrate the community including the new estate.

**Recommended 1 To note the report of sheep grazing on the Local Nature Reserve to Council**  
**2 To approve the open evening on 28 June 2011**

**1843-11 Station Platform Working Group**

It was reported that work continued to improve the site, 40 feet of rails and sleepers would soon be installed

**Recommended To note the report to Council**

**1844-11 Review of Expenditure 2010-11**

Members had reviewed the 2010-11 budget at the March council meeting at which point (minute 1806-11) the credit card payment

for native willows had been queried and a VAT receipt sought – and subsequently received. This showed £184 expenditure on trees, of which £117 for Salix Alba was agreed and £220 delivery. Councillor Stammers emphasised the need for all proposed expenditure to be voted on and agreed upon and that expenditure should go through the Clerk. Members agreed.

**Recommended To note that report  
to Council**

**1845-11 Fernery**

Councillor Waterfield proposed, seconded by Councillor Reason, and agreed that the area previously known as the 'Fernery' from henceforth to be called 'Rectory Glebe Copse'.

**Recommended To change the name of the area  
to Council previously known as the 'Fernery' to  
'Rectory Glebe Copse'**

*Mr Murray joined the meeting(20.30h)*

**1846-11 Marshalls Heath**

Mr Murray gave an impassioned presentation on Marshalls Heath and a prioritised suggestion for works to manage the area. He provided the clerk with an electronic version as no laptop and projector was available. In 2010 he advised that Marshalls Heath was the only UK site where the endangered pale shining brown moth was recorded.

A) cut grass on eastern side of heath ASAP as it was becoming overgrown with brambles and thorn scrub and would lose its character as heathland

B) ant hills – the vegetation/grass on these had been cut in 2010 (and arisings removed so ground did not become enriched) and were looking good. Agreed that WPC's contractor would work with CMS and John Murray, who would rake up the arisings.

C) northern clearing on west side – becoming overgrown with brambles

D) Fallen trees and dead trees in various locations – unless obstructing footpaths – suggest leave

E) Ash tree west side – previously coppiced now growing strong, producing shade and ash keys and many saplings – suggest coppice again

F) large oak at south end of ant hills – shading and dropping leaves on anthills and thus altering the habitat.

Councillors were divided regarding any work with the oak tree. There was debate about the vigour of the ant colony. The suggestion was made that this be investigated – Clerk to contact the ant recorder for Hertfordshire.

Councillor Stammers, declaring a personal interest in the area where he lives, also drew attention to the matter of regular car parking on the heath which was destroying the heathland. He suggested that WPC may consider installing small wooden bollards

Members thanked Mr Murray for his input. He left at 21.00h

**Recommended  
to Council**

**To note the Marshalls Heath Warden's  
report**

#### **1847-11 Other Tree work and maintenance**

Members agreed that a number of trees particularly newer planted trees, would require watering during drier periods. Quotations had been received from the contractors used for grass cutting and for village centre hanging baskets during budget preparation. The chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the grass contractor be asked to water the trees, at the Meads as required.

Consideration was given to the request to move the dog bin at Butterfield Road further down the road. Agreed that this be reconsidered after members had conducted a site visit.

Councillor Page advised that there was plenty of treework outstanding from the list he compiled for the February meeting. Concerns were raised regarding treework in bird nesting season.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the new Council develop a Management scheme for tree work and more open spaces (including Marshalls Heath at Minute 1846-11). This would include a stewardship scheme. She then proposed, seconded by Councillor Stammers and agreed, that no treework be undertaken after the end of March, unless urgent

- Recommendation to Council**
- 1 To ask the grasscutting contractor to water trees on the Meads as necessary**
  - 2 To consider the repositioning of the Butterfield Road dog bin following a site visit**
  - 3 New Council to develop a Management Scheme to encompass trees and more open spaces and include stewardship and consideration of timing of routine works.**
  - 4 Not to undertake treework after March unless urgent**

#### **1848-11 The Forge & North Meads**

Councillor Waterfield proposed, seconded by Councillor Stammers, and agreed - that no further work or parish council money be spent on the Forge and North Meads until a strategy had been agreed by the new council

- Recommendation to Council:**
- no further work or parish council money be spent on the Forge and North Meads until a strategy had been agreed by the new council**

#### **1849-11 Smallholding on Meads**

This had been referred from Council (Minute 1805-11). It was reported that the polytunnel on the smallholding had clearly been in situ many years. Various birds were kept there and pigs on the adjacent land (not WPC owned). The chairman proposed and it was agreed that Council routinely review the rent for the smallholding as part of its budget setting process.

- Recommendation to Council:**
- 1 To note the report**
  - 2 To routinely review the rent as part of the budget setting process**

#### **1850-11 Registering Parish Land**

It was reported that a list of parish owned land had been compiled by Clerk and Rights of Way chairman and with assistance of the Council's solicitor. Some was registered. The chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that a meeting be arranged with the Land Registry and further assistance as necessary be sought from the solicitor in order to register all Council land

- Recommendation to Council:**
- 1 To note the report**
  - 2 To arrange a meeting with the land Registry**
  - 3 To subsequently seek further assistance from Council's solicitor**

**1851-11 Progress Against Village Plan Targets**

It was noted that the following targets were in hand.

E Improve existing Improvements at  
7 footpaths & provide all- Bower Heath  
weather paths

E8 Trees and bushes appropriately managed

E26 The River – pathway to open up access to river at Melissa  
Field

E29 Publicising walks – New Walking maps

L14 – Leisure facilities for Youth – new walking maps.

**Recommendation To note the report  
to Council**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21.40h.**

**Dated this day of 2011**

**Chairman**