

**Wheathampstead Parish Council  
Rights of Way & Commons Committee  
22 August 2011, 18.00h**

Present	Councillors	T Reason D Davies D Johnston	Chairman
		M Carter E Cornell P McNeill	Countryside Management Service Parish paths
		Julia Warren	Clerk
		Press Public	0 0

**2132-11 Apologies & Substitutions**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Brewster and Woodhams (personal), and Councillor Davies (late arrival because of work commitments).

**2133-11 Questions from the Public**

None

**2134-11 Specific Declarations of Interest**

None.

**2135-11 Management Plan for open areas managed by the Parish Council**

The meeting began in the Memorial Hall car park then progressed to Devil's Dyke to begin the review of the open spaces, as agreed at minute 2030-11. This meeting was a continuation of and followed the format of the meeting on 16 August

In brief the following was recommended for consideration:

**Devil's Dyke** (Statutory Ancient Monument)

- Remove dead wood and thin for light
- Contractor to move heavy trees as part of the grant project
- Remove some ivy and laurel
- Plant up gaps in hedge along Dyke Lane with native species

**Butterfield Local Nature Reserve**

(species seen included perforated St John's Wort, ribbed meadow and knapweed)

This area is managed for Wheathampstead Parish Council by the Countryside Management Service. It is leased from Hertfordshire County Council

- Maintain the 3 distinct areas – acid grassland, scrub and

woodland

- Strim, brush-cut and rake meadow – maintain as open space
- Continue sheep grazing of grassland area
- If feasible use narrow gang mower to cut a rough path parallel to playing fields on west side in scrub land
- Manage secondary woodland by thinning spindly trees (field maple, hawthorn, ash, elm) as at present (Boys School currently assist)

**Gustard Wood** (County Wildlife Site) – acid grassland (nationally a priority habitat), scrub and secondary woodland

- Cut acid grass glade annually & remove arisings
- Cut grass by Cross Keys twice pa
- Use reciprocating mower or similar to wider cut bridle path particularly at north end near to Cross Keys
- Open out / thin scrub woodland near Cross Keys
- Old 16<sup>th</sup> Green – mow perimeter as at Bower Heath – retain and encourage acid grass
- Clear brambles and scrub holly to open out acid grassland area
- Cut acid grass annually and remove arisings – perhaps by baling. (Members noted that following this the first year of this management white harebells, bent grass, tansy, knapweed and sheep sorrel were evident. There was also gorse)
- Conserve the ancient hedgerow bank and ditch and coppiced hornbeam at south end near St Peter's church. This was noted to be of agricultural historical value and for inclusion in Phase 2 of the Heritage Trail. Mr McNeill offered to research the age and origin of the ancient ditch and bank, and subsequent coppiced hornbeam hedge

Whilst at Butterfield Road Nature Reserve and playing fields the matter of celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on 4 June 2012 by lighting a beacon, as suggested by the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, The Countess of Verulam, was discussed. The hope was to light 60 Beacons throughout in celebration of the historic and important moment in The Queen's life and reign.

A site for consideration between football pitches was suggested. The area was open, high up and if the turf was rolled back the ground should recover acceptably.

Those present supported an application to the HCC for the playing fields and surrounding nature reserve to be put into Trust as part of The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge which will give communities an opportunity to vote for an outdoor space in their area to become part of the scheme and be permanently protected as a tribute to the Diamond Jubilee.

Clerk to approach HCC Footpaths officer to discuss formalising the permissive paths through the Nature Reserve.

**Recommendation 1 To approve the management plan for**

