



WDPS Diamond Jubilee Garden Tea Party



We were delighted that so many WDPS members came to have some tea and cake and to share their views about what is important to conserve the character of the village. Appropriately the event was held in the Diamond Jubilee Garden, and it took place on Saturday 10th October.

We were pleased to welcome existing members, those who had heard about the event and wanted to learn more, and people walking past who stopped to find out what was going on.

The idea behind the event was to give the WDPS Committee a chance to meet members, explain what we do, outline our future plans and find out what people think our priorities should be. We achieved all this—with the added benefit of recruiting some new members, to whom we extend a warm welcome.

Among the issues raised were Lower Luton Road (both the volume of traffic and the narrowness of the footpath), parking, cycle routes, the risk of development at Castle Rise, flooding and the future of the area around the Crinkle Crankle Wall.

Our thanks go to Janine Oxley for help with the electricity supply, the loan of a tea urn, etc. and to Committee members and families.

Shaping Wheathampstead – the 20 year plan

As one of the largest societies in Wheathampstead, WDPS has always been at the cutting edge of local changes. We are sure that our members will be interested in the latest change initiated by the Wheathampstead Parish Council: the forming of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Since the Localism Act (2011), local people have been given new rights to shape their communities by formulating their own Neighbourhood Plan.

What does that mean? Essentially the Neighbourhood Plan will set out our vision for Wheathampstead. Put another way it gives us, the residents, more say in what we want our village to look like, giving us influence over planning. Although we must support the St Albans Local Plan, we will have the chance to guide developments rather than stop them. In effect it means our Neighbourhood Plan will carry equal weight with the St Albans Plan. Certainly this is an exciting prospect, but equally it carries with it a degree of responsibility. It is not enough just to say 'No'; but it gives us the power to find a constructive way of saying 'Yes'!

So how will this work? The Neighbourhood Plan will bring together residents, businesses, local groups and landowners to share ideas to improve our community. With local knowledge, we will have the chance to

share ideas, build on consensus and decide on development, perhaps adding details that will help us all feel a part of any changes.

Is it just to do with planning? No. A Neighbourhood Plan can address a variety of relevant issues: setting up businesses, creating new cycle ways and footpaths, identifying sites for community use, preserving and enhancing our historical assets etc. etc. The list is endless...

This is something the Parish Council can manage on its own, but it will not be successful without our involvement too. We need to represent the views of the whole community and will be looking for active participation from residents.

We suspect there is a great deal of expertise in our village: planners, surveyors, IT experts, graphic designers etc. However, equally we need skills and enthusiasm: volunteers to organise meetings, drop leaflets, fill in surveys and collate information. In fact we need people of all ages, from a variety of backgrounds, with diverse opinions to create a balanced plan.

Over the next few months you will be hearing more about the Neighbourhood Plan through the Parish Council web site, letters, social media, The Pump and word of mouth. Please can we encourage you to 'get involved', so together we can build a plan for the future of our village.



At our successful AGM in February we took a moment or two to reflect on the achievements of WDPS during the year 2014–5.

- Identifying that improvements were needed to Bury Green Garden and, in a joint project with the Parish Council, beginning work on a complete re-design.
- Maintenance of the Diamond Jubilee Garden.
- Launch of the WDPS Calendar
- Wheathampstead’s War evening, a joint project with the History Society
- Launch of Phase 2 of the Heritage Trail, a joint project with the Parish Council and WEB (Wheathampstead Business Group)
- Working alongside Transition St Albans on Village Day.

Linda Halford reported on the WDPS accounts, confirming that we had a reserve at the end of 2014 of £9,972.23. This stands us in good stead to achieve our immediate plans, while leaving us with enough money in case urgent funds are unexpectedly needed.

How St Albans views Wheathampstead

Our guest speaker was Cllr Annie Brewster, who as well as being the Vice Chairman of Wheathampstead Parish Council is Portfolio Holder for Sport, Leisure and Heritage at St Albans District Council. Annie talked about how St Albans see the



work that goes on within the community of Wheathampstead. In acknowledgement of the progress that we have made, Wheathampstead is in many different ways viewed as the leading edge among all the communities in the District. Annie also outlined the plans for the Heritage Centre at the old Town Hall in St Albans.

The Award winners

It was once again a pleasure to recognise notable local achievements during the previous year. The 2015 winners were:

Individual Award: Paul Grey for creatively improving the appearance of the smallholding alongside Lower Luton Road.



Team Award: Wheathampstead Heritage Trail Team for creating six amazing walking trails to help promote the beauty of Wheathampstead’s lovely countryside.

Community Award: Terry and Margaret Pankhurst for producing and enacting *Wheathampstead’s War*, an event that truly engaged the whole community.



Plans for Wheathampstead United Church



You may recall that WDPS had some concerns over the application to build a new building adjoining St Helen's Church, particularly regarding the size, position and design of the proposed new structure. The United Church in Brewhouse Hill submitted plans to replace the existing buildings which also proved controversial, in part because of the limited car parking facilities. In both cases opinion was torn between not wishing to see the splendour of the existing buildings compromised and recognising that the community needs more amenities.

After both St Helens Church and Wheathampstead United Church have had planning applications refused, they are looking to refurbish the present buildings on Brewhouse Hill to a high standard as part of a joint project. The project is at an early stage of discussions at present but if it goes ahead it is likely that it will proceed in phases. It will also be dependent on fund-raising as there will be no housing to generate funds.

The plans include a hall and a variety of rooms, intended for use by the community and both churches. Crucially, under the plans the car park will stay and its capacity will not be reduced. The proposed first stage will be the existing church hall.

The churches assure us that the village will benefit from the development and are hoping for community support in many ways. More definite plans should be available soon, and the intention is to keep the village informed about progress.

Bury Green Garden latest

In our last newsletter we mentioned our wish to work with the Parish Council to develop Bury Green Garden, on the corner of Bury Green and Old Rectory Gardens.

It has been lovely to see the garden slowly take shape. Yet again this is a great community project, involving a team made up



of parish councillors, WDPS representatives and working party volunteers, with handsome support from Borrás Construction to whom we are very grateful.

Over the next few weeks we shall be planting shrubs and trees and installing a horse trough at the front of the site.

Opportunity to sponsor a bench

An important feature of the garden will be three wooden benches. There will be three sponsorship opportunities for anyone interested in sponsoring a bench with a suitable plaque. This is a concept that proved very popular in the Diamond Jubilee Garden.

One is for a bench positioned under the existing yew tree. The other two are for the two limbs of a corner bench to be sited on the patio at the back of the garden. The sponsorship cost is £300 in each case.

If you would like to know more, please contact Julie Bell at julie.bell@can-do.co.uk or on 01582 833789.



Membership Subscriptions

As we come to the end of the year, please can I take this opportunity to ask you to check that you have paid your membership subscription for 2015. Subscriptions are still only £5 per household per year. Although we have suggested it would be very helpful if you were able to add a donation to that amount, helping us to fund our ongoing projects, we do not want to discourage anyone from remaining in WDPS because of a financial commitment.

If you have not yet paid your subscription, you can send this to:

The Membership Secretary, 35, Marshalls Way, Wheathampstead, HERTS AL4 8HZ

If you are unsure as to whether you have paid your subscription, please contact me on 01582 760593 or e-mail me at linda.halford@mail.com. Once I receive your renewal, I will then adjust my records accordingly.

Your subscription is important to us! So far we have over 350 households signed up for WDPS, representing approximately 15% of Wheathampstead residents. As this enables us to have significant voice when speaking on village matters, I am sure you will agree it is £5 well spent.

Thank you for your continuing support; we couldn't do it without you!

Linda Halford



WDPS Website



The east side of the Crinkle Crankle wall, part of the Wheathampstead Heritage Trail, has for many years looked neglected. WDPS thought they should rectify the situation.

A group of members dug out the long bed adjoining the wall, which has not been cultivated for over twenty years, and planted 130 Petunias.

With help from the Parish Council and with water kindly given by King Edward Place residents, it is now looking a picture.



Village Day

Village Day is always great fun and very well supported, and this year was no exception.

It started as usual with a lovely parade of floats through the High Street which culminated at Marford Playing Fields. This whole area was full of stalls selling all sorts of goodies as well as fun-fair rides, food outlets and lots of interesting events in the main arena.

The sun shone for most of the day, always a bonus, and everyone there seemed very happy.