

Hedgehog Sanctuary visits

Hornbeam Hedgehog Sanctuary is not normally open to visitors, but following proprietor Martin Maylin's talk at our AGM (see page 2) WDPS members were invited for a tour in June. This proved very popular and we managed to secure a second date so that everyone who wanted to come could be accommodated.

Martin gave visitors an informative talk



about how we can all help hedgehogs, followed by a tour around the hospital and pens

where he carefully nurses sick hogs back to health. One of Martin's ambitions is to create small individual gardens for hedgehogs that cannot be released back into the wild – because they are blind, for example – and WDPS are keen to sponsor one of the gardens.

Our thanks to Loafing

The visits raised more than £300 for the sanctuary and we have had lots of positive feedback.

It was a lovely surprise when *Loafing* told us that they were donating £900 towards four community projects in the village.

The money was divided equally between the WDPS *Don't Mess with Wheathampstead* litter-picking campaign, the Chapel Gym, the Crinkle-Crankle garden and Wheathampstead Business Group (WEB).

New plants have been bought for the Crinkle-Crankle garden while WEB and *Don't Mess with Wheathampstead* are collaborating over a trial of a state-of-the-art litter bin that compacts rubbish and sends a text message when it is full. And as we know the Chapel Gym have a great deal of money to raise to get the gym operational. We are all very grateful to *Loafing* for their generosity.

Cherry Trees Restaurant Demolition

Many of us were shocked to hear the news that the Cherry Tree Restaurant was granted planning approval to be demolished and replaced with two houses, not only losing a landmark building but also a restaurant that has served our community for over 20 years. Therefore, WDPS decided to investigate.

- The Cherry Tree decision was taken under what is called “delegated powers” which means it was decided by the Planning Department not by the Planning Committee. The majority of planning applications are determined this way unless the application is “called in” which means it would be debated by Councillors in a Planning Committee.



- The Cherry Tree land is in the Green Belt and the approved permission is for two small houses with a similar footprint to the existing building (including outbuildings) and is hence deemed acceptable under Green Belt policy.
- Whilst it is a prominent landmark building, The Cherry Tree is not a “listed” building meaning there is nothing to protect the building from demolition. In the future our Neighbourhood Plan (currently in draft) has identified buildings around the parish that are “non-listed heritage assets” giving them more protection from demolition.
- A proposal to demolish business premises and replace with residential housing is an implicit “Change of Use” but unfortunately the desire to retain commercial premises was not sufficiently strong on this occasion. These arguments will be strengthened once our Neighbourhood Plan is approved since it will introduce policies specifically aimed at supporting our local economy.

Was there an alternative?

We explored whether there was any alternative solution that the owner would agree to which would save the building and the business. Over a period of around a month we held numerous meetings and phone calls with the land owner, his planning consultant and local residents,

Cont'd on p.2

Cherry Trees Restaurant Demolition *Cont'd from page 1*

then we held a detailed meeting with the Parish Council to discuss the options. Sadly we reached the end of the road in our attempts to negotiate a solution that would gain enough support as there are simply too many ifs, buts and maybes. In conclusion, the Parish Council decided they could not envisage an alternative that they could support due to the risks involved. There are concerns over setting precedent, the recent sale of the field adjoining the Cherry Tree and whether saving the business long term was achievable.

We can honestly say that the committee have done everything possible and left no stone unturned although we knew from the outset that there was only a slim chance at best.

What did we learn?

We learned valuable lessons from this investigation so in the future we will make these changes:

- WDPS will attend the Parish Council Planning meetings giving us a louder voice and the opportunity to request “call in” if needed.
- WDPS (in collaboration with WEB) must be vigilant in identifying impacts to our local economy (such as the implicit “Change of Use” resulting from an application to demolish a business premises).
- WDPS will support the Parish Council to complete the Neighbourhood Plan as soon as practicable.

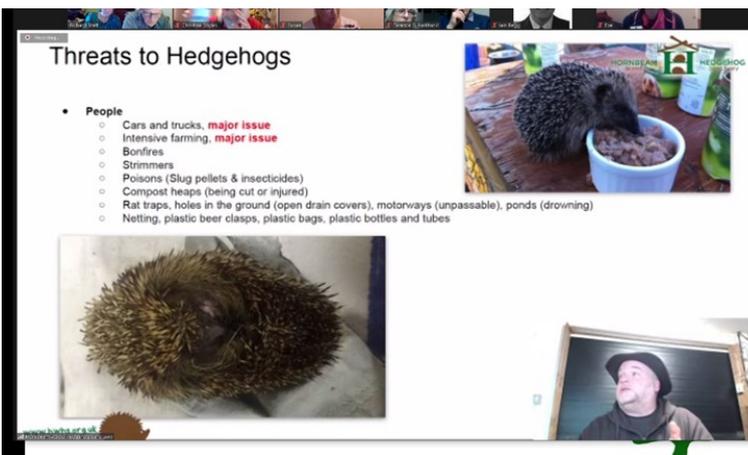
WDPS 2021 AGM goes online

The 2021 AGM was for the first time held online on 26th February, our 2020 AGM having been held shortly before the start of the first lockdown.

We were delighted at the AGM to welcome two new Committee members. Christine Boyles had already made a significant contribution by organising the speaker at the AGM and has since been involved in bulb planting and our membership campaign. Many of you have probably seen Jan Knights on her extensive litter-picking activities in and around the village, and Jan is now also monitoring planning applications.

Eve Richardson had been a Committee member for four years before leaving us at the 2021 AGM. During that time she helped WDPS in many ways. Our particular thanks go to her for monitoring planning applications and vigorously supporting our campaign against aircraft noise. Eve has now moved to Harpenden and we wish her every success in her new ventures.

The full Committee for 2021 -22 is:		
Christine Boyles	Diane Black	Iain Begg
Jan Knights	Julie Bell	Nigel Oxley
Richard Brett	Sue Hemming	



Helping hedgehogs thrive

The speaker at the AGM was Martin Maylin, who runs the Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary, based not far from Wheathampstead. Martin gave a fascinating talk on what we can all do to help hedgehogs thrive in the hostile world of heavy traffic, pesticides, bonfires and impenetrable boundaries between gardens.

As you will see from the article on page ???, many members have since taken the opportunity to visit the sanctuary.

Bulb Planting 2021

As you may know, WDPS plants bulbs in the village each year. This year we decided we would concentrate on snowdrops and we planted them at the bottom of The Hill (close



to the Swan) and in the Diamond Jubilee Garden. We also planted some Nerines (late-Summer flowering bulbs) in the DJG, so watch out for some bright pink blooms.

WDPS launches new website



WDPS is proud to announce we have a new website. The website address is unchanged – still **wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk/** – and much of the content is as before. But the new website uses up-to-date technology and should be easier and quicker to use.

One of the main changes is that the website now works as well on a mobile phone (see right) as on a tablet, laptop or desktop.



We have taken the opportunity to review and update the content. Although the areas covered are broadly similar to before, we have added a page devoted to the litter-picking campaign.

Please take a look and, if you have any suggestions or other feedback, please just email us and we shall be very pleased to hear from you. The email address is still **info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk**

Anglia in Bloom deferred till 2022

It is disappointing that the *Anglia in Bloom* competition has not been able to take place physically again this year. As 2020 (originally) and then 2021 would have been the first year that the village was entered in the competition, we decided not to take part virtually this year but rather to wait until we can participate fully in 2022.



Preserving our verges

In recent years members have expressed their concerns about churned up grass verges in the village. It is not always easy to find out how the problem has occurred and what can realistically be done to correct it.

We recently however had some success along Wick Avenue (see right) where builders' vans had parked and killed the grass. We spoke to the house owners who had commissioned the work and they arranged for their builders to reseed and restore the verge.



If you are aware of other similar areas, please let us know and we will see what is possible.

Dog Portraits raise money for WDPS

When the second lockdown began local photographer Jo Barnes got in touch with an idea to raise money for WDPS.

Jo volunteered her time and photography prowess to offer a **Dogs of Wheathampstead Pet Portrait session** for 20 mins with a suggested donation of £5 for a digital image.



Following a huge response, Jo met with dog owners from the village in a Covid-19 safe location and took some amazing photos of our Wheathampstead Woofers and made £300 in the process.

All proceeds have gone into our Keeping Wheathampstead Wonderful campaign and have been used to buy bulbs and plants for the village.

We'd like to thank Jo for all her continued support and hard work. To see more of her amazing photography visit photographybyjoannab.co.uk