

Making Wheathampstead wilder!

Representatives from WDPS are taking part in a new Parish Council initiative to make Wheathampstead wilder! This means finding areas – however big or small, and whether publicly or privately owned – that can be returned to nature. The aim is to encourage native flora and fauna and improve the environment.



We hope to report more on this project in future editions and also at our AGM on Friday, 25 February. You can also watch out for updates on the Parish Council website: <http://wheathampstead-pc.gov.uk>

Everyone with a garden can get involved by rewilding part of their garden. For instance, you can allow parts of your lawn to grow longer, or leave piles of leaves, logs and prunings to rot down naturally. There is plenty of advice on this at <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/explore-rewilding/rewilding-the-land/15-ways-to-a-wilder-garden>

Luton Airport: More passengers, more traffic, more noise



We are sure you will have noticed very many more planes passing over Wheathampstead from Luton Airport now aviation has resumed. Unfortunately, this has brought with it much more noise. If the noise from planes is affecting you, then complain about it! It may seem a small thing to do but it does make a big difference.

You are probably aware that Luton Airport submitted a planning application to Luton Borough Council to expand the passenger number to 19 million per year (from 18 million). This does not sound much but it will make a large difference in the number of planes. Also the application includes modifying the day and night time noise contours. This will mean more night flights and the associated noise that goes with them.

We are sad to say that the Council approved the application – despite over 20 groups and individuals, including WDPS, speaking at the Planning meeting and pleading with the Council not to allow the current expansion. Our MP Bim Afolami, along with various organisations, is asking the Secretary of State to call in the application so that it can be assessed fairly and independently rather than by the airport owners.

Luton Airport is also intending apply to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Control Consent Order to increase the passenger numbers to 32 million passengers per year (virtually doubling the size of the airport). This application is to be submitted next year. It would have a huge impact on Wheathampstead and the surrounding areas.

Complaints do matter as they are taken into account when applications are submitted by the airport for expansion. There are a number of ways to complain: the easiest is to email noise@ltn.aero giving the date, time and location of the incident and describing why the noise affected or annoyed you – for example it may have woken you up, disrupted conversation or spoiled a quiet walk in a peaceful area.

So, if a particular flight is unusually loud, or flies on a different track to normal, or wakes you up, then by all means complain about it. Equally, if the sheer number of flights is affecting your quality of life, or you have noticed the noise impact getting worse, again, do please complain. Make sure you add your name, address and postcode or the complaint won't be logged.

It really is very easy for all WDPS members to help us by submitting one or more complaints on a regular basis then we can hopefully try to curtail further expansion of the airport.

An Open Letter to all local Litter Pickers

Dear Wombles,

I'm delighted to report that 10 of our hardy Wombles braved the late October weather and collected a pile of litter from Bower Heath and the surrounding area. As you can see, the sun came out in the end and two of our keenest Wombles were still busy litter picking when this photograph was taken.

Thankfully there wasn't a huge amount of litter but much of it was very old so clearly this area hasn't had much litter picking action for many years and it's pleasing to see it cleared.



Sadly we found several fly tips which were later picked up when our bags of litter were collected later in the day by our friends at Veolia.

This was our last planned litter pick for 2021 but please keep using your Womble Sticks around your own neighbourhood or on country walks because although the litter problem has been hugely improved through our collective efforts, it will never go away. So keep on Wombing even if you only pick up a couple of pieces each time.

Thank you! Iain Begg



Gardens for Hedgehogs

WDPS is continuing to support Hornbeam Hedgehog Sanctuary. You may remember that Martin Maylin, who runs the sanctuary, delivered a fascinating talk at our 2021 AGM.

The main activity that WDPS is actively engaged in is helping to establish six small 'gardens' for individual hedgehogs that for various reasons cannot be released into the wild. WDPS has donated £500 to sponsor one of these gardens, and other organisations such as John Lewis and Waitrose are financing other gardens. Each garden will have its own small pond

and some suitable shrubs. We are also working with Martin to design and install fencing to separate each garden from the others. The project is expected to proceed apace in the New Year.

Martin has also liaised with Wheathampstead Parish Council, and they have agreed to support the campaign to make Wheathampstead a hedgehog-friendly village. A poster competition was held to help promote the campaign, and the winner will be announced shortly.

There will be some public space initiatives, but we can all support the campaign. The Hornbeam Hedgehog Sanctuary website (<https://www.hornbeamwood.org.uk>) contains tips on how to make your garden attractive to hedgehogs.

Preserved church will soon be a gym

What a lot of progress has been made since the last report on the Chapel Gym (in the December 2020 edition of the newsletter).

Both the former church and the church hall are hardly recognisable inside and out since this time last year, and it is all thanks to the amazing support that the project has received from the community.

The exciting news is that the *Wheathampstead Chapel Community Hub*, a legal entity set up to administer the gym and the whole site, was recently awarded charitable status. Eight trustees oversee the charity representing a broad cross-section of the community and including two members of the WDPS Committee.

So it is that the site has been preserved for the community, while the Victorian church has been lovingly restored and repurposed. The stained-glass windows have been repaired, the ceiling replaced, the floor strengthened and the damp problem resolved. With these tasks completed, the expectation is that the gym will open its doors early in 2022.



The church hall, now called the Chapel Halls, is now being restored after many years of unoccupancy. Work on the main hall area is almost complete. Wheathampstead United Church has moved back on to the site and is now worshipping in dedicated rooms at the back of the hall. (For more information on the church, contact



j_deller@btinternet.com) Refurbishment work will start soon on the vestibule, kitchen and toilets at the front of the hall.

A survey was carried out on social media in 2021 which confirmed that there is a great deal of interest in health-related classes, such as pilates and yoga, and the plan is to use the Chapel Halls for classes that complement the fitness facilities in the gym.

As the project enters the New Year, there are two main strands of activity. One involves a team of people who are actively planning the opening and operation of the gym, and several new volunteers have offered their services. The other critical activity is the final push for funding: funds need to be raised to pay for heating and gym equipment. A further £30,000 needs to be raised, but as over £100,000 has been raised to pay for the work completed so far, that does seem achievable.

The project team is currently running a Crowdfunder campaign and is quietly confident that organisations like *Sporting England* will match the donations received from amazingly supportive public in and around Wheathampstead. Match-funding by large organisations is however dependent on evidence that donations – however large or small – have come from a large number of individual supporters. If you would like to make a donation, please go to: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/chapel-gym-the-last-push>

*Right:
The Chapel Halls,
before and after*



Christmas Cards and 2022 Calendars

WDPS is delighted to be selling our Christmas Cards (see right) and new format Calendar (see below right), again with photography from the wonderful Jo Barnes.

We've gone for a bit of colour in the cards this year. They are A6 postcard size and you can purchase a pack of 12 with 3 of each design for £5.

The new format calendar is Booklet A4 size when folded out and is £10. It has a theme this year and features 13 of Wheathampstead and District's historic buildings.

Both are available at Manor Pharmacy or you can order online at <http://www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk>

All proceeds will go towards Keeping Wheathampstead Wonderful!



And a date for your 2022 Calendar . . .

The next WDPS AGM will be at 7.30 pm on **Friday, 25 February 2022.**

Covid restrictions permitting, it will take place in the Memorial Hall, but if that is not possible we shall hold it on *Zoom*. As usual, everyone is welcome.

We hope to include an update on the *Wilder Wheathampstead* project (see page 1).

Oct 2022

Sat	1	Mon	17
Sun	2	Tues	18
Mon	3	Wed	19
Tues	4	Thurs	20
Wed	5	Fri	21
Thurs	6	Sat	22
Fri	7	Sun	23
Sat	8	Mon	24
Sun	9	Tues	25
Mon	10	Wed	26
Tues	11	Thurs	27
Wed	12	Fri	28
Thurs	13	Sat	29
Fri	14	Sun	30
Sat	15	Mon	31
Sun	16		



The Swan, Wheathampstead
The Swan dates from about 1500 and as an Inn from at least 1617. In the past it has had its own brewery, malt house, accommodation for travellers, barn, stables and a blacksmith's forge. In 1860 it provided rooms and dinner for 60 cricketers and their guests following an all day cricket match at Nomanland.



Let's plant some trees!

You may have heard about the Woodland Trust's Plant a Tree for the Jubilee campaign to encourage everyone to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 by planting trees.

WDPS has been giving some conscious thought to where locally it would be appropriate to plant more trees. We have identified some sites and are in discussion with the landowners to see if these plans can come to fruition.

If you would like to suggest any suitable sites, please email us and we shall be delighted to hear from you. You can also find out more on the Woodland Trust website:

(<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/queens-green-canopy>).