



## Dangerous activity at Blackbridge Tip

WDPS has been monitoring developments at Blackbridge Tip for many years.

It is a significant plot of land close to the village, lying between Codicote Road and the Ayot Greenway. Waste was tipped on the site from around 1910 until 1973, when a Tripartite Agreement was made between the tip owners, Redland Gravel Ltd. (which became Lafarge Redland Aggregates), Hertfordshire County Council and St Albans Rural District Council (subsequently absorbed into St Albans District Council). Under the terms of the agreement, no further refuse or material would be deposited on the site after 1975. The site thus lay undisturbed for many years amid serious concerns that the land remained contaminated and the vast quantity of waste material had been covered with only a thin layer of soil.

In recent months, however, many sightings have been reported of earth-moving activity on the site. This is potentially dangerous as it can expose or dislodge noxious material and it increases the risk that contaminants could leach into the water table.



*The photo shows the extent of the earthworks, deep enough that a large digger was almost entirely below the level of the surrounding land*

Sharon Hollingsworth, District Councillor for Sandridge and Wheathampstead, has taken the matter up with St Albans District Council, who in turn have reported the activity to the Environment Agency. Sightings of children playing around the disturbed areas have also been reported.

It is so far not clear who was responsible for the recent activity, which we believe has now ceased. WDPS will keep a close eye on the situation and keep you informed of any further developments.

## The Old Bakery eyesore

We are as disappointed as everyone else that the multi-coloured tarpaulins are still disfiguring the frontage of the Old Bakery.

We understand that negotiations are taking place to sell the property and, until this happens, our requests to improve the appearance of the building will fall on stoney ground. We are therefore keeping close eye on developments.



### Information sign for Bury Green Garden

The long-awaited information panel has finally got planning permission and been erected in the Bury Green Garden. WDPS takes responsibility for the upkeep of the garden.





## Monitoring aircraft noise in Wheathampstead

When Luton Airport put out a request for Wheathampstead locations to take part in their Noise Monitoring Programme, one of the WDPS committee agreed to host the equipment in their garden for a three month period.

A microphone atop a 5 metre telescopic mast is currently tracking aircraft noise, which is especially perceptible in this location when planes take off, as well as a few minutes into the flight when the aircraft loops over Wheathampstead when following the easterly flight path. A report of findings will be published in due course.

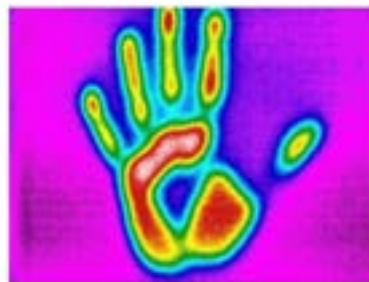
## WDPS loans thermal camera again

Earlier this year, WDPS was delighted to partner with Sustainable St Albans in bringing a thermal imaging camera to Wheathampstead. For two weeks, WDPS loaned the equipment to St Helen's Primary

School and Beech Hyde Primary School for pupils to use during science lessons. The children had lots of fun learning about hot and cold surfaces and thinking of ways to prevent heat loss, particularly during the cooler weather.

For the remaining time, WDPS enabled 15 households around the village to use the thermal equipment to help detect heat loss and pinpoint areas needing insulation or draft seals to improve energy efficiency.

WDPS plans to partner again this autumn/winter with Sustainable St Albans to borrow their thermal imaging camera. If you would like to be the first to hear about this initiative and others, please do consider joining WDPS (only £5 per household per year, with no obligation to be a volunteer!) More info is on our website—address below.



## Unauthorised development in Gustard Wood

One of our aims is to preserve what is best and where possible improve the environment and oppose inappropriate development in Wheathampstead and the surrounding area.

We have been working with the District and Parish Councils and the local community to oppose the development at 39 The Broadway, Gustard Wood.

The property is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt which is an area of land around London protected to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open around urban areas. Local Planning Authorities have strict controls on new building with development only permitted if its appearance protects or enhances the particular character of the part of the countryside within which it is set, or if there are special reasons why the development in the form proposed needs to be there. WDPS are committed to protecting the Green Belt and our open spaces.

The owner has applied for planning permission on four separate occasions to extend the existing property and has been refused by St Albans City & District Council Planning Authority on all occasions. The main reasons given are that the proposed development is outside the property curtilage and would result in the loss of existing open amenity land adjacent to the dwelling, and that any change to the use of that land would result in a loss of openness causing harm to the character and appearance of the street-scene in this location. One of the planning applications is currently undergoing an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate.

Despite the refusals the owner, who is the founder and director of HAAST Ltd, a construction company, has started development on the site. They have already removed a mature oak tree and constructed a large outbuilding and perimeter wall, and they continue to build extensions to the main property. This has already had a significantly negative impact on the openness of The Broadway and Dale Avenue.

*Before and  
After*



We have written to the Planning Inspectorate to oppose the appeal, and if the appeal is refused we will continue to work with the District and Parish Councils to request enforcement action to remove the unauthorised development.



## WDPS brings Repair Fair to Wheathampstead

On 16th March, WDPS hosted a Repair Fair at the Chapel Halls, welcoming 12 volunteer fixers from the St Albans District Fixers team. The talented fixers were on hand to repair powered and unpowered items including a printer, electric saw and necklaces, plus fabric items such as coats and a cat bed. Out of 51 items brought along, 30 were fixed completely, 11 would be mendable if a new part could be purchased (these items can be brought back to a future fair around the district) and only 10 were irreparable.

Aside from keeping numerous items out of landfill and the environmental benefits that brings, the icing on the cake was the incredible buzz during the whole event, the appreciative response of the attendees and the wonderful camaraderie of the repair team. WDPS plans to host another Repair Fair next year, with members being sent a priority booking link.

## New WDPS Notelets

We are delighted to be selling our **new design Notelets** with photography from the forever wonderful Jo Barnes.

We've chosen some of Jo's best photographs of the village, which include stunning pictures of St Helen's Churchyard, Devil's Dyke, the Crinkle Crankle Gardens and the Meads.

The notelets are available in packs of 8, with 2 of each of the 4 designs, for £5.

They will be available at village events or you can order online at the website address below. All proceeds will go towards Keeping Wheathampstead Wonderful with a donation to Cancer Research in memory of Jo.







It had been a while since we had arranged a working party at the Diamond Jubilee Garden, although it has to be said that Nigel Oxley and Graham Andrews continued to work their magic on a regular basis.

So it was we noticed that the laurel bush in the centre of the garden was getting rather unruly. As you can see from the photos, we gave it a good trim.

And while we were there, we turned our attention to the brambles and weeds that had been growing along the top of the river wall.

### Working parties

It is amazing how much can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time by a group of volunteers. If you would like to be notified when we have a working party, please email us on [info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk](mailto:info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk)



## Next year will be our 30th anniversary!

It does not seem long ago that we celebrated our 21st anniversary, but the truth is that in 2025 it will be 30 years since WDPS was formed.

We are developing plans on how we should celebrate this milestone, but for now we can announce that our AGM will be on **Thursday, 6 March 2025** and we have invited Gail Stuart to be our guest speaker and reminisce about her childhood with her father, Eric Morcambe.

If anyone has some ideas for other ways in which we can celebrate 30 years of WDPS, please email us at [info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk](mailto:info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk)

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### WDPS nominated for 2024 Mayor's Pride Award

WDPS was proud to be an Environmental Champion finalist at the St Albans Mayor's Pride Awards in March. Although we didn't win, we were delighted to be recognised for our work on environmental issues.



*Julie Bell, Fiona Duggett and Nigel Oxley represented WDPS at the Mayor's Pride Awards*



## WDPS AGM 2024



WDPS held its 2023 AGM on 1 March and the Committee was delighted to welcome so many members who later joined us for cheese and wine. The committee for 2024-25 was elected (see below).

The guest speaker this year was **Louise Palmer** from St Albans District Council, who gave an informative talk about how recycling works in the District.

We this year reintroduced the practice of making awards to individuals and organisations in the village. The members who were present voted to choose the winners. The **Community Kitchen** won the Community Award, and **Wheathampstead Chapel Community Hub** won the Preservation Award for preserving the former chapel in Brewhouse Hill.

*Left: Community Award nominees. Right: Preservation Award nominees*



<b>The Committee for 2024 -25 is:</b>			
Den Parker	Diane Black	Fiona Duggett	Iain Begg
Jan Knights	Julie Bell	Nigel Oxley	Richard Brett

### And a date for your diary: AGM 2025

7.30pm on Thursday, 6 March 2025

*Our recent AGMs have been held on Fridays, so please note the change of day.*

**THURSDAY**  
**6**  
**MARCH**



## Good to meet everyone on Village Day



The weather was not kind on Village Day, but there were gaps between the showers and WDPS once again had a stand. Many people braved the rain to come and enjoy the day, and as always it was a good opportunity for those on the committee to discuss local issues with members. As usual

a few people took the chance to join WDPS.

We revived our litter-picking challenge, and the two fastest children to remove all the litter from the box of sand using a litter-picker won prizes of cinema ticket vouchers.



## WDPS Sign Cleaning



Back in February a group of WDPS volunteers identified the dirtiest signs they could find in the village, and with mops and cloths removed as much of the grime as they could. It is sadly a recurring problem, so please email us if you know of any particularly dirty signs or if you would like to volunteer for the next cleaning session.





## Nurturing trees at Coleman Green



In 2023 WDPS planted trees at Coleman Green, close to the John Bunyan, to replace those that had blown down because they had lost the protection of other trees which had been felled. Maintaining the site so that the saplings grow into healthy trees involves cutting back brambles and ensuring the grass does not grow too high. A small working party recently tackled the problem.

## Bulb Planting and tending the Village Planter



*Above:* Last autumn WDPS planted over 1000 daffodil bulbs around the village. We were delighted to see them flower this spring.

*Right:* In June 2024 Margaret Newland and granddaughters Thea and Fern tidied and planted up the flower bed around our village sign.

