

Air quality in and around Wheathampstead

WDPS is keeping its eyes on air quality in and around the village. We might think that we have a right to clean air where we live but unfortunately this is not the case.

We need to be vigilant and argue against any development proposals which might worsen the quality of the air which we all breathe and depend upon. WDPS objected to the proposal to build a giant incinerator on the Lower Luton Road north of Harpenden and supported the local lobby group of residents who were against this proposal. The emissions from this incinerator would have had serious air quality implications for our area. This proposal has now lapsed.

So, what is the situation at the moment as far as the quality of our air is concerned? WDPS has been investigating and looking at ways in which you can find out at any time what the outside air quality is in and around Wheathampstead, and indeed at your address.

The quality of the air in and around Wheathampstead varies from season-to-season, from day-to-day and during the day. Over the past year our air quality has varied from 'Excellent' to 'Fair/Moderate'



and to 'Poor', although most of the time it is categorised as 'Fair/Moderate'. For air quality which is 'Fair/Moderate' and 'Poor', health advice is available for those who are vulnerable (e.g. babies and the elderly and those with cardiac and/or respiratory issues). Advice is also available for those of any age exercising outdoors, for example cycling or running, and it is possible to choose the best days or the best times of the day to take outdoor exercise.

How does one get air quality readings and the health and exercise advice mentioned above? Well, there are several very useful free apps which can be downloaded to mobile phones or other devices which provide this information for Wheathampstead and environs and for addresses in the village, or for that matter for locations which you may be planning to visit in the UK or elsewhere for holidays. The WDPS website <https://wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk/environment> provides full details of these apps and how to interpret the data presented on them. Why not download one of the apps? It only takes a couple of minutes and provides you with fascinating and, hopefully, useful information.

The main air pollutants affecting our air quality in and around Wheathampstead are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter and ozone. The largest source of NO₂ is road vehicles and it is the main pollutant of concern around airports such as London Luton Airport. It emanates from aircraft engines, airport operations and movements and surface road traffic which are all set to increase significantly if the airport's expansion plans are approved.



All the fun of the beach

Sunday 9th July saw the WDPs participating at ‘The Day at the Beach’ Village Day festival, the annual celebration held on the Marford playing fields. Aside from proudly displaying slides to illustrate recent WDPs achievements and future aims, this year we ran a timed litter picking challenge which proved very popular with adults and children alike.

Some people had never used the long reach litter grabbers before, so we were delighted by their enthusiasm to collect ten pieces of litter in the quickest possible time from our pretend beach. We hope that the fun experience will boost the numbers of litter picking Wombles around the village, and we were also extremely happy to sign up a number of new WDPs members.



*Right:
The happy winners of the litter picking challenge*

WDPs AGM 2023

WDPs held its 2023 AGM on 24 February, just after the Memorial Hall had reopened. We were delighted to welcome an unprecedented number of members: around 80 people attended and joined us afterwards for cheese and wine. The committee for 2023-24 was elected (see below).

The guest speaker this year was Brian Legge, who gave us a very informative and fascinating talk about Heartwood Forest and how the flora and fauna have been transformed.



The Committee for 2023 -24 is:			
Den Parker	Diane Black	Fiona Duggett	Iain Begg
Jan Knights	Julie Bell	Nigel Oxley	Richard Brett

And a date for your diary: AGM 2024

7.30pm on Friday, 1st March 2024—*More details to follow!*

FRIDAY

1

MARCH

St Albans District Council's Draft Local Plan

After being informed by Central Government that they needed to build an additional 15,000 homes in the District by 2041, St Albans City and District Council (SADC) went about producing their 'draft Local Plan' – this is their initial 'blueprint' for future development over the next 20 years or so – and they prepared the draft for widespread public consultation earlier this year.

After its publication WDPS wrote to all members and leafleted the approximately 500 households that could be most affected by the proposals as set out in SADC's draft Local Plan. We advised of the consultation sessions and the 5 main sites included for potential development in and around the village.

SADC arranged 8 exhibition events throughout the District and over 1,200 people attended in total. They came to Wheathampstead on 7th September – the session in the Memorial Hall was well attended by interested and concerned residents. All were keen to learn about the proposals to build on the Green Belt Land that surrounds our village and to find out more about other developments close by that could potentially have a further huge impact on our day-to-day lives!

The consultation period lasted from 12th July until 25th September. This included online surveys in which residents of the

District were asked to highlight and prioritise the issues they felt most important. There were 1,240 respondents to the main questionnaire plus 600 'identical' 'proforma' responses. 1,057 people also responded to the 'quick' survey. All the responses are currently being processed and will be uploaded onto the Council's website where they will be available to read.

There are also many letters and reports on the website listing some major concerns about all aspects of the proposed Local Plan - for example:

- ◇ the potential loss of precious Green Belt land,
- ◇ the potential harm to biodiversity,
- ◇ the lack of detail regarding future infrastructure such as roads, schools, doctors and hospitals,
- ◇ the impact on existing roads, cycle-ways and public transportation and how the local roads

Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society

**ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL
DRAFT LOCAL PLAN & PROPOSED
SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT**







St Albans City & District Council have produced a Draft Local Plan setting out the planning policies and proposals for future development of the district to 2041. **This will affect you.**

Consultation will run until 5pm on **25th September 2023** and details of the plan can be found at www.stalbans.gov.uk/new-local-plan

The plan includes **5 sites in Wheathampstead:**

1. Hill Dyke Road for 85 housing units (Appendix Page 23 M2)
2. Amwell Top Field for 60 units (App. Page 30 M9)
3. North of The Slype for 49 units (App. Page 33 M12)
4. South of Codicote Road for 12 units (App. Page 45 M24)
5. South of Lower Luton Road for 7 units (App. page 47 M26)

WDPS have produced some guidance that may help you comment on the local plan. Please see www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk/SADC-local-plan

URGENT - the proposed plan will have a major impact on our environment, services and infrastructure. Make your voice heard by registering and commenting on the proposal by completing the questionnaire on the consultation site by 5pm on 25th September 2023.




JOIN WDPS to be kept informed – the more members we have the greater our voice:

www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk/join-wdps

Follow:  @WDPSS

Email: info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk

would ever cope with the increased number of vehicles.

If you would like to find out more, go to St Albans City & District Council’s website:

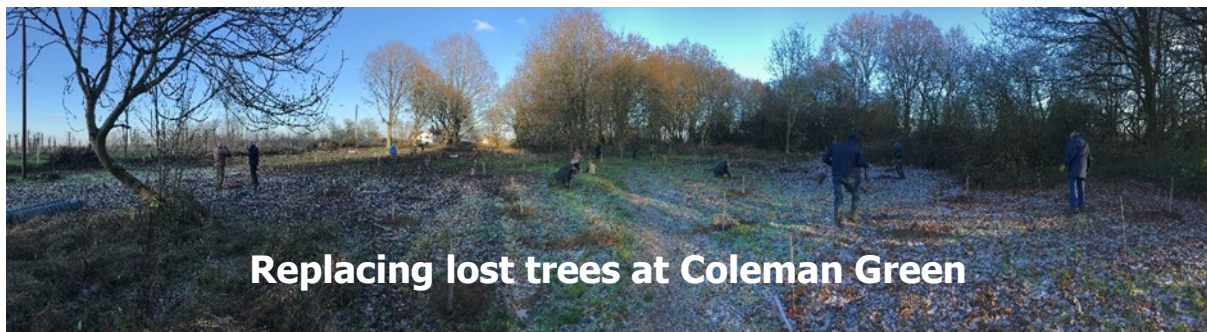
<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/new-local-plan>

What will be happening next?

PREPARATION	DATES
Regulation 19: Public consultation – Final Draft	July – September 2024
Submission of Local Plan to Central Government	December 2024
Examination of Local Plan by Government appointed Inspector	December 2024 – November 2025
The Local Plan is adopted and becomes legally binding	December 2025

Let’s not forget that, if and when the new Local Plan is approved, normal planning processes will still have to be followed. Planning applications will still have to be submitted, and either approved or rejected by Planning Officers, and any concerned residents will continue to have the opportunity to comment on individual applications.

During the consultation period WDPS submitted comments on behalf of all our members (who total about 15% of the population of the parish of Wheathampstead), and rest assured that we will continue to keep you informed of any important developments over the coming months.



Replacing lost trees at Coleman Green

On a cold but sunny day in January, WDPS volunteers planted 175 saplings in the woodland area to the south west of the John Bunyan Public House. Part of the late Queen’s Green Canopy Project, the aim was to replace trees that were blown down by strong winds in February 2022. The land belongs to Althorp Estates, who provided the saplings.

At the end of a hard afternoon’s work, refreshments were kindly provided by the *John Bunyan*.

As is usual, a proportion (around 50) of the newly planted young trees have died, and WDPS plans to replace them during the coming winter.



Trouble at the Old Bakery

Wheathampstead residents and visitors are dismayed that the Old Bakery, a building which should rank among the finest in the village, has become an eyesore, its battered frontage covered with multi-coloured sheets of tarpaulin.

The Old Bakery is a Grade 2 listed building and so is protected under planning rules. The current owners have applied to St Albans District Council to undertake some initial remedial work. This is mainly internal but includes repairing the decorated plasterwork known as pargetting on the front wall. Unfortunately the plasterwork repair can only be carried out in dry conditions and, even if planning permission were given immediately, work on the front wall could not begin until next spring at the earliest.

In the meantime the Conservation team at St Albans District Council have covered the front of the building with tarpaulin to prevent any further damage to the pargetting and to stop and plaster falling on to the pavement.

The owners of the property are no doubt eager to sell it. Longer-term plans for the site have been discussed with Wheathampstead Parish Council but are still in the early stages of formulation. It is most likely that the Old Bakery, which is within the flood plain, will remain in commercial use when it is finally re-occupied.



The Old Bakery now (left), as it was after damage occurred to the pargetting earlier this year (below left) and as it was in 2020 (below)



New Members and Volunteers

Our membership is what enables us to continue our work Keeping Wheathampstead Wonderful and we would like to thank you all for your continued support and donations.

The more members we have, the louder our voice. If you know anyone else who would like to join or donate then please tell them to:

Visit: www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk Follow: Facebook @WDPSS

Email: info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk

We are also looking for more volunteers to join our Steering Committee and Working Parties:
Steering Committee - we are looking for new members who can dedicate a few hours a month to attend our monthly Steering Committee to discuss WDPS priorities and task forward actions - these can range from drafting a note to leasing a project depending on individuals other commitments.

Gardening Working Party - meets regularly to maintain the Diamond Jubilee, Bury Green and Crinkle Crinkle Gardens and other open spaces around the village. The group also meets annually to plant trees and bulbs.

Village Events - help on the WDPS stall for 1-2 hours at Village Day and Christmas Lights Up

Litter Picking - group meets regularly to litter pick around the village

Sign Cleaning - group meets a few times a year to clean road and village signs.

You do not need to attend every working party session and are very welcome to bring along friends and family. If you are interested in joining the Steering Committee or one of the working parties, then please just send an email to info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk



WDPS took part in the open day organised by the Parish Council to celebrate the re-opening of the Memorial Hall after it had been closed for refurbishment.

Walking tours for WDPS members



In May and June WDPS organised two walking tours of the village centre for members. The guide on each occasion was Tony Berk, who in addition to being a Wheathampstead resident and WDPS member himself is also a St Albans Blue Badge Guide.

Both walks were very popular, and members were surprised about how many interesting facts about Wheathampstead they had been unaware of.

Above: The walking tour pauses by Mill Quay . . . poses at the end of a fascinating afternoon.



Thermal Imaging Camera can be borrowed

A few years ago WDPS arranged to borrow a thermal imaging camera that members could use. With rising energy prices, it seemed like an appropriate time to revisit the problem of heat loss in our houses. We borrowed a camera, once again from Sustainable St Albans, and it has been available recently for members to use.

The camera has proved very popular, and we are planning to borrow it again in the New year, probably in February. If you would be interested in using it for a day or half-day, please email us on

info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk



LADACAN holds its 2023 AGM in Wheathampstead

LADACAN is the organisation which campaigns against the expansion of Luton Airport and the noise and environmental impacts which that expansion causes. This year (on 20th October) it held its AGM in Wheathampstead.

Chairman Andrew Lambourn spoke of Luton Airport's two bids to gain permission for increasing the maximum number of passengers per year who pass through the airport. The first application, to increase the number from 18m to 19m, was finally agreed by the Government Inspector, though subject to three important conditions. It must devise and implement a strategy to reduce its long-term noised footprint, a transport plan and a carbon reduction strategy.

WDPS spoke at the hearing in support of LADACAN. We also made a small contribution to the cost of LADACAN's campaign, which totalled a staggering £100,000. This sum is however tiny compared with the millions of pounds that between them Luton Airport and Luton Borough Council are believed to have spent on their fight to get the increase agreed.

The next battle is against a proposal to increase the annual number of passengers to 32m, an increase of around 70% over the 19m that has just been agreed. If Luton Airport are given the go-ahead, the increase will entail an enormous escalation in the number of flights that disturb communities like Wheathampstead, There will be much more noise, much more traffic, and much greater pollution.

This sadly is a battle that LADACAN will not be able to fight on its own, and Andrew Lambourn emphasised how essential it will be for Hertfordshire County Council to commit itself to opposing the proposed increase with vigour and determination. LADACAN and WDPS have both written to Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, and he has given his assurance that the County Council will be taking the matter very seriously.

LADACAN's contact details are:

Website: <https://ladacan.org/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GoLadacan/>

Christmas Cards and 2024 Calendars

WDPS is delighted to be selling our Christmas cards and calendar again this year, with photography from the wonderful Jo Barnes.

We have packs of cards in colour and packs of black and white cards. They are A6 postcard size and you can purchase a pack of 12 with 3 of each design for £5.

The calendar is A4 size when you display it, or A3 if you open it out, and it costs £10. The theme this year is local open spaces.

Both will shortly be available at **Manor Pharmacy** and the **Post Office**, or you can order online at

<http://www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk>



Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society
Calendar 2024