

Village Organisations Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 2017

1. Wheatley Playing Field Trust

The Trust has undertaken, in anticipation of a lease, to manage the playing field and pavilions as follows:

- Day-to-day management (seven days a week) of the playing fields.
- Organisation and monitoring of maintenance of fields, including weekly liaison with the contractor including cancellation of works where weather and lack of use prevail.
- Promotion of the facilities.
- Taking bookings from users, arranging heating and hot water to be available for users as needed.
- Checking premises are left clean after use and ready for the next user.
- Maintenance of showers and showerheads.
- Deep cleaning of floors and walls generally during half term and holidays.
- Providing an out of hours contact number for repairs, fault reporting and issues with facilities.
- Monitoring risk.

In addition over the past year, the Trust has:

- Met on several occasions with Holton and Wheatley Cricket Club who are very keen to return to playing at Holton again.
- Met with Wheatley Tennis Club, currently playing at Oxford Brookes, to discuss requirements and feasibility of return to Holton.
- Met with Oxford Softball to discuss their moving from Rover Sports and Social to Holton.
- Discussed with Premier Tennis the feasibility of promoting tennis to the community and running coaching classes.
- Met on several occasions with Oxfordshire Football Development to establish good quality junior football in Wheatley based on delivering football within the school and community. These youth teams are now nearing the end of their first season playing on the Parish Council's sports field.
- Met on several occasions with Oxford Ladies American Football to set up training facilities and game development.
- Established a basis whereby football, rugby, American Football and cricket use, share and help to maintain the clubhouse facility within the legal framework of licensing.
- Met with Wheatley Park School on a regular basis to agree facilities needed by the school.
- Met on a regular basis with potential users and agreed hire rates for the coming year.

One exceptional matter that the Trust dealt with was the incursion onto the field by the travellers last summer. The Trust monitored events on a daily basis and, together with the Parish Clerk, worked towards their eviction from the field and supervised the subsequent clean up.

The Trust is working closely with the Parish Council to help manage the Council's responsibilities for the maintenance and upkeep of the field and, in particular, the aged pavilions. It is hoped that these will be replaced within the next few years.

The one unfinished business we have is the lease to the Trust from the Parish Council. Both parties have agreed a draft and it is hoped that this will be finalised soon.

For contact and further information, including bookings, please visit the website:

www.wheatleyplayingfieldtrust.co.uk or email: enquiries@wheatleyplayingfieldtrust.co.uk

Paul Willmott, Chairman

2. The Wheatley Society

Since the mid-1970s The Wheatley Society has existed as a social and cultural resource for those living locally. We organise a year-round series of events including talks by local experts on a wide range of issues, visits to places of interest not always accessible and very popular social evenings.

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Joining The Wheatley Society is an excellent way to meet others interested in Village issues and for newcomers we extend a warm welcome to the Village and all it has to offer.

2017 started very well. So far we have organised a very successful Welsh Evening and a sold out trip to Evita There have been two talks; one on "Are your affairs in order?" a presentation on health, legal and financial choices to inform the planning of your future care, which will be rerun in the autumn, the other a fascinating insight into Lightning – a Fatal Attraction. Last but not least the customary Tea Tent provided refreshment during the sunny May Day event.

Mary Hall - Chair maryelizabethhall@hotmail.com
David Harverson – Secretary david.harverson@outlook.com

3. Wheatley Care

Wheatley Care was founded in 1981, in an attempt to meet the needs of elderly/disabled residents. Since then we have grown now offering transport to **anyone** from the following villages Wheatley, Holton & Littleworth, mainly to Hospitals, Doctors, Dentists or any type of medical appointment.

Beryl Smart & Kath Lamont are the current co-ordinators and we hold a list of volunteer drivers who kindly offer their time taking the clients to their appointments.

How it works: - When the co-ordinators receive a request from anyone requiring transport we telephone round to find a volunteer who is available, we then pass over the details to them; the driver will then contact the client to confirm time and arrangements. Wheatley Care reimburses the drivers for their petrol cost and the clients contribute to this.

Volunteer Drivers are always needed please contact Kath on 876609.

4. Wheatley Village Archive

2016 / 2017 has been another busy year for the Archive Team, they have been visited by people from all over the country and, which is very pleasing by students from the Language School, who have been in more than once. There was also a visit from the daughter of the Reverend Groves who was the vicar in Wheatley from 1927 – 1032. Quite a bit of research is engendered by enquiries both personal and by e-mail.

Thanks to the Lottery Heritage Grant, we have been able to purchase a new printer, laminator and various computer ancillaries which will greatly help us both in storage of archive material and in producing information for exhibitions.

The Archive Room is open each Thursday from 2pm to 5pm and is run by a dedicated team who would very much welcome additional members to the team. The Archive Room can also be open at other times by prior arrangement. The Archive room can be contacted by email wheatleyarchive@gmail.com

The website www.wheatleyarchive.org.uk continues to grow and has now become an established source of information.

Pam Harverson

5. The Merry Bells Management Committee

Repairs to the roof and brickwork were carried in May 2016 when solar panels were also fitted. The committee are working through a structural survey carried out in 2014 to repair and improve The Merry Bells which was built in 1888. At present we are considering improvements to modernise the Main Hall and Annex where damp proofing will also be carried out.

The AGM will be held on 4th May at 7.00 p.m. In the Coffee Room when a full report on the year will be given and it is hoped to elect and co-opt further members to the committee

Mary Blake, Chairperson

6. The Emma Wilson Memorial Fund

The Memorial Fund was set up in January 1990 to commemorate the life of Emma Wilson. Monetary awards are made to young people who have given their time on a voluntary basis to help individuals, groups or organisations of any kind in our community.

This year we have as usual sponsored a prize for a pupil who has contributed to the community life of Wheatley Park School.

Awards were made to two young members of St Mary's Church who have assisted as servers at the Eucharist services throughout their secondary school years. Financial support has also been given to the Primary School to help fund brass band instruments, teaching and performing.

Jan Raynor

7. Sustainable Wheatley

Sustainable Wheatley is a voluntary group with the aim of promoting sustainable living through waste reduction, re-use, recycling and use of resources. We are part of a network of around 60 similar groups in a project initiated by Oxfordshire County Council with a 'Sustainability' mandate as part of the County's obligations under "Agenda 21". Oxfordshire is a lead county in this area and OCC still provides some funding to support the network despite the pressure on its budget.

Our group was set up in March 2006, and our first activity was to organise a Swap Shop as part of a County-wide event and we are still best known for organising 4 Swap Shops a year in the Merry Bells on a Saturday morning.

Swap Shops

Swap Shops are intended to reduce the volume of material going into land fill by encouraging reuse of unwanted material. Local people are invited to bring usable items which they no longer need, and they can look at what others have brought and take whatever appeals to them. There is no direct "swap", and no money changes hands. At the end of the session the volunteers sort what is left into different categories; saleable items go to charity shops around the locality, sorted material to be recycled through Redbridge, and inevitably some goes to land fill. Since January 2009 we have been able to carry out Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) on electrical equipment; and there is a significant number of TVs, kettles, phone chargers, vacuum cleaners and computers being taken.

In the last 12 months around 600 people came to the Swap Shops we ran and they took away over 2.5 tonnes of "stuff" which otherwise would have gone to landfill

Recycling Information

We have continued to maintain and regularly update a useful fact sheet listing where to take unwanted items for reuse or recycling in the locality. It is available at the Swap Shop and/or can be downloaded from our website www.sustainablewheatley.org

Village Fruit Harvesting

Last autumn for the second year we ran a project to try to use as much of the fruit that grows on local trees as possible, rather than let it go to waste. We put out an appeal for anyone who had any fruit they were unable to pick themselves to let us know and we went round armed with ladders and pickers to help harvest it. We were especially grateful to John Watson School who brought along some of their pupils to help. We went out about 10 times and picked about 500 kg (half a ton!) of eating apples, cooking apples, pears and quinces. And there was a lot more we could have picked with more time and volunteers.

What do you do with that much fruit? Well, apart from giving it away outside Cornfields and Ochre, we also gave some to John Watson, St Mary's, Siblings nursery, the Triangle Nursing Home and Stanton St John WI, all of whom made good use of it in various ways.

We also held a Juicing Day at The Merry Bells where we had the use of a press and pasteuriser; we were there most of the day and many villagers came along, some bringing their own apples and we were able to prepare and press the fruit before bottling the juice. During the day we made well over 100 bottles of juice, using empty wine bottles saved by members of the group. We ran a cake stall

made by members and friends to help with the cost of hiring the Merry Bells and also sold some apple chutney made by John Watson to help with their funds. We plan to do all of this again this year.

River Thame Conservation Trust

We also met with this group whose objective is to improve the water quality of the river that flows through our village. Currently the quality is surprisingly poor and domestic households are responsible for much of the contamination because of what we pour down our sinks or flush down our toilets. Look out for more on this in the future.

Contact

Anyone interested in getting involved can contact us via email admin@wheatleycag.org the website www.sustainablewheatley.org Facebook page [sustainablewheatley](https://www.facebook.com/sustainablewheatley) or our twitter feed [@suswheatley](https://twitter.com/suswheatley)

Gill Blightman, Co-Chair with Tim Blightman of Sustainable Wheatley

8. Wheatley Scout Group

I am pleased to report that during 2016 we have retained our existing warranted leadership team, enabling us to maintain the membership numbers of each unit at the maximum we consider safe and sustainable within our existing facilities (Beavers: 20, Cubs: 24, Scouts: 25). Each unit meets once a week. We continue to have a waiting list which highlights not only the need for the type of activities that scouting can provide but also endorses the suitability of the activities offered by our group. It would be wonderful to think that we could offer additional spaces by succeeding in our endeavours to enhance our premises and recruiting additional leader / helper support, more of which below.

The Group's strategic plan remains and is based upon three key principles, namely:

1. To identify options and then implement a programme to secure appropriate premises within the next 2 - 5 years
2. To ensure there is a uniformed leadership team that allows us to increase numbers and provides effective succession
3. To appropriately support the leaders to enable them to continue to provide exciting and challenging activities

I have said many times that leadership succession and suitable premises are key issues for the group's long term success. Our current experienced leadership team offer a full programme of activities in line with the Scout Association's guidelines for children (boys and girls) from the age of 6 to 14 locally and, through the District Explorer Scout Unit based here in Wheatley, to age 18. I am grateful to all of them for their continued commitment and support. I am also grateful for the continued support that we receive from District and other local Scout Groups. In addition to our group programmes, all units actively participate in District and County Events and continue to enjoy success in competitions organised at these levels.

We currently have vacancy for a Group Scout Leader and Quartermaster and Fundraising co-ordinator and we hope to have some positive news by the AGM, which will take place on the 15th May. In addition, if we are to make progress with updating our premises, we shall need to recruit support for the project in roles such as: community liaison, design, development, project management and specialised fund raising.

I would, therefore, like to renew the challenge I set each year and ask anyone who feels they could help us in any way, to put their names forward so that we can discuss how they might be able to become part of the Wheatley Scout Group team.

Through the Scout Association, we own the freehold of our Holloway Road premises and any future new site will require us to negotiate terms that retain value for the group – the Scout Association view is that a lease agreement would have to be a minimum of 99 years. Whilst both junior and senior schools have given positive responses to the option of our siting a new HQ on their land, we still have to test the acceptability of a 99 year lease with them.

We have sought professional advice regarding the value and potential sale options of our existing HQ. This comprises reports from Oxfordshire CC Highways, Planning Consultant report and Agent valuation. Not surprisingly, these reports have identified a number of potential restrictions to any

planning application for redevelopment, directly impacting the likely value - now expected to be between £100k - £170k.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported us over the last year, be they leaders, executive committee members, parents or anyone else who I may have missed!!

Graham Colverson, Chairman

9. Wheatley W.I.

Wheatley W.I. has been providing companionship and social activities for the women of the village for almost 100 years. Our programmes have always been varied and interesting and cover a wide range of subjects.

Our community is at the heart of everything we do. We had a float in the parade at the Wheatley Ceilidh celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. We also held a successful coffee morning with a royal theme. We support local charities and always serve the refreshments at the Remembrance Day service. www.wheatleywi.com

Stephanie Brooklyn, Vice Secretary

10. The Not So Young Club

The club has been running for many years, probably before the 1980s, and during that time has changed according to the numbers, age and interests of those involved. Originally it was held in the Merry Bells and then in the coffee room as numbers declined. More recently, with numbers growing again, we moved to the URC Hall which gives more space for people and any walking aids.

The club gives older people an opportunity to socialise. Many are not housebound but are less able to be involved in evening events in the village. About 25 members now meet on alternate Mondays from 2.00 - 4.00pm and enjoy much chat and laughter, small bingo prizes and a break for tea, cakes and a raffle. New members are most welcome any time and should just come along.

In April 2016 a representative from Wiltshire Farm Foods told us about the range of meals they produce and their arrangements for ordering and delivering them. The tasters they provided proved very popular! In July Ann Bettess gave an interesting talk with slides on Sustainable Wheatley, with a complimentary glass of apple juice.

On a beautiful summer's day in July, we took a coach trip through the Chilterns ending with tea at the Waterfront beside the Thames. In November, we went to the retail outlet at Yarnton for the opportunity to do some Christmas shopping. Also the theatre outing to see Annie at Aylesbury was much enjoyed.

Christmas was celebrated with party games and a special tea and the New Year Lunch was held this year at the Harvester.

Frances Simpson, Chair (873248), Carol Sprent, Secretary (872593).

11. Wheatley Newsletter

The newsletter continues to pay for itself with income from advertisements adequately covering the production and printing costs. Most issues now have a colour front cover which does increase costs but is still covered by revenue.

Many thanks to everyone who takes the time and effort to contribute articles to the newsletter. It's great to have a mix of regular and occasional contributors but it would be fantastic if more contributors, either individuals or local organisations, could send in articles (max. 250 words, please) to newsletter@wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk or to the Parish Office.

The centre 'Noticeboard' page is always very popular and anyone can submit items for inclusion. It is primarily for village activities but, for example, people have put notices in to thank people for birthday wishes and to publicise items lost and found.

If you have a great picture of the village or events, past or present, which could go on the cover, please send it in! (Photos will be returned.) The format of the newsletter has basically remained the same but a new 'Key Contacts' page has been added inside the back cover. Suggestions for improving future editions are always welcome.

Around two thousand copies are printed for each edition and are distributed to all households in Wheatley and Holton. A big thank you goes to Christine Vernede and her team of volunteer deliverers for the distribution of the newsletter in all weathers.

The email subscribers list is growing and available to anyone outside of Wheatley. This is free, so if you know anyone who would like to receive the newsletter, ask them to contact newsletter@wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

The newsletter can also be found on the Parish Council's website: www.wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk along with previous issues. Spare paper copies of the latest newsletter are available from the Parish Office.

Annette Richards

12. Friends of Wheatley Library.

The Friends of Wheatley Library has been running for just over two and a half years. We became a volunteer group after meetings with Oxfordshire County Council about funding in the library service. We originally set up to coordinate volunteers who are needed to support the library.

The library now has over 20 volunteers who support the staff in support work. All the volunteers have training. Volunteers also do outreach work and visit people in the area who cannot get to the library. The Friends also organise events such as coffee mornings, where local authors come and give a talk, ICT support, craft group and other activities in the library. We also have major fund raising events to help buy new books. These have included book sales and storytelling. We also run a website, wheatleylibrary.org, and a FOWL Facebook page.

We are very grateful for all the support given by the volunteers, staff and members of the public in making Wheatley Library such an important vibrant place. Please come in and visit our beautiful library.

Vivien Vernede, Chair

13. Wheatley Flood and Drainage Committee

A major flooding issue in Wheatley is the periodic flooding of the High Street. South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) are keen to address the problem and have allocated a budget to creating a flood storage area to the West of Wheatley to reduce the flood risk. The Flood and Drainage Committee have been active in encouraging dialogue between SODC and local landowners about the location for a flood storage area.

In September 2016 an early morning intense rain storm led to flooding of the London Road in the area near ASDA. The flooding appeared to be caused by a drainage pipe that had become blocked by a hard deposit. The Floods and Drainage Committee liaised with the local landowner, the Oxfordshire County Council and Anne Purse, the local County Councillor. The pipe was cleared by a contractor paid for jointly by Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. The Floods and Drainage Committee continue to press the Environment Agency to carry out investigations into excessive storm discharges of dilute but untreated sewage from the Wheatley Sewage Treatment Works and into the fish kill that took place in a watercourse in Wheatley in 2015.

Roger Bettess

14. Wheatley Charities - Grants for Apprentices, Students, Trainees

The Trustees of Wheatley Charities offer education grants to residents of the Parish of Wheatley, which includes Littleworth, and are prepared to consider making grants in support of any of the costs of study or training. Applicants must be under the age of 25, and will normally be awarded up to three annual grants but additional grants may be made at the discretion of the Trustees.

Application forms are available from the Secretary, Janet Redfern (tel. 873389, email janet.redfern@ntlworld.com), to whom they should be returned no later than 13th September 2017.

15. Fusion – St George’s Fun Day

This year was our 12th annual Community Festival and, once more, around 700 gathered in the spring sunshine to celebrate our community, meet old friends and hopefully make a few new ones too. Most were from Wheatley but one lady had driven from Witney with her children on the recommendation of her husband who’d been passing!

This year’s theme was Celebrating Diversity, both in our local community and wider afield too. This was reflected in our wide range of imaginative craft activities, including a huge map on which people were invited to place a star showing where their grandparents were born. At the end of the afternoon the map was covered with coloured stars, the furthest away being Hawaii. Children also contributed to collaborative artwork which was to be displayed at the primary school the following week.

The face painting and bouncy castle were as popular as ever and the centre games team served up some great activities, some – of course - very wet! There were tug of war competitions for children and adults once again and of course the ever-popular climbing wall. Many chose to just sit and chat in the sun, relaxing with a cup of tea and home-baked cake or headed for the BBQ.

As ever, sincere thanks must go to our many sponsors, including a significant grant from the Parish Council and generous contributions in so many ways from the local churches. A huge thank you to everyone who helped to make this event happen and, of course, to everyone who came along on the day and helped to create such a special occasion.

Gordon Ewbank, Fusion Youth & Community

16. Wheatley Village Produce Association (VPA)

Is celebrating its 77th year this year making it one of the longest running organizations in Wheatley. Back in 1940 a school master from Islington called Mr Earnest Knowles established the Society that has carried on today. Whereas many other Village Produce Associations have watched their numbers dwindle and finally ceased, Wheatley is proudly carrying on, and is committed to doing so with energy and vigour.

With a membership of approximately 100 households in the village we run a full program of events. Our challenge is always to attract new members and particularly younger members and so our many activities in the village are designed to provide the best information that we can in order to encourage more people to get involved in what can rightly claim to be one of Britain’s best loved hobbies.

Our regular meetings are held at the Merry Bells on the second Tuesday of each month where we engage a speaker on different areas of horticulture and botany to provide a varied program.

This year we have continued this tradition in the same vein and already we have had highly qualified professionals deliver presentations on subjects as diverse as raised Beds & Photographing Wildlife. There is also our annual Quiz which takes place every January.

In addition we run trips and a holiday each year. This year we shall be visiting RHS Malvern in May and Kew Gardens in July with our holiday this year visiting a series of public and private gardens of East Sussex. This is set for June.

Aaron Savage, Chairman

17. Wheatley Rugby Club

Wheatley Rugby Club is committed to developing the game of rugby in the local community and although we are a village club we feel we 'punch above our weight'. Our 1st XV team have secured promotion into the Bucks, Berks and Oxfordshire Premiership League next season and our 2nd XV came second in their league. In addition our vets side won the Veterans County Floodlight Cup Competition last week.

We are based opposite Wheatley Park School and cater for all levels of senior rugby. We are currently playing touch rugby on Tuesday evenings and will start full training again at the beginning of August.

For more information please look at our website <http://www.pitchero.com/clubs/wheatleyrufc>

Peter Ramsdale, Chairman Wheatley RFC

18. Wheatley Productions

Very sadly, for the first time in over 30 years, Wheatley Productions didn't manage to put on a show in the previous 12 months. Following our hugely successful Pantomime, 'Sleeping Beauty' in January 2016, we were very excited about our return to the Primary School for our next Pantomime, 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

Unfortunately, due to some production difficulties and the sudden and tragic death of one of our Company, we decided to postpone the show to December 2017. With the support of the school, we have enlisted and retained our Junior Chorus plus most of our leading cast members, although we could be looking for a Dame!

As we were returning to our 'spiritual home', Clive Hallett our resident Dame was the most excited about once again strapping on the famous costumes but the postponement has meant he is unlikely to continue his comeback. So if you see Clive, try and persuade him.

So our next Show, will be Jack and the Beanstalk on **8th and 9th December**, with other shows already planned for 2018. Auditions and read-through, and the date of our AGM will be published in the next newsletter.

Ian Germain

19. Royal British Legion: Wheatley and District Branch

The Branch had another successful year and now has 68 members – a viable number in comparison to some Branches which struggle to maintain membership. Meetings with a speaker were held at lunch time every two months at the New Club. Lunch time meetings are popular as many members do not like to attend evening meetings. However, this does mean that younger members still in employment find it difficult to attend the lunch time meetings. Monthly informal socials were held in the evening at the New Club. During the year there were four visits to places of interest - Portsmouth, Hook Norton, Bletchley Park and RAF Brize Norton. A major activity of the Branch every year in October and November is the Annual Poppy Appeal which again raised over £14,000 for 2016-17.

The welfare of members is a major activity for the Legion, which the Poppy Appeal is designed to support financially. The Wheatley Branch aims to keep abreast of the welfare of its members and to provide day to day support. Home visits and hospital visits are a priority for the Branch.

Lastly, please note that anyone may join the Wheatley Branch – not just ex-Service personnel!

Jim Watson, Branch Secretary

20. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan - Update and Road Map

The last 15 WNP months might be summarised as *'Two Steps Forward, One Step Back'*. The unexpected delays whatever we expect!

1. On 22 Feb. we tabled the Emerging WNP before our Committee. On 27 Feb. we passed it to SODC advisers (as agreed) to sharpen policy wording. We met them on 06 March, but the expected agenda gave way to proposals that we could not accept, especially with the Emerging Local Plan 2033 (Preferred Options 2) due out on 29 March. We had already skated hard to table the Draft WNP in time and we were due to put it before the two Parish Councils on 13 March. We did keep that appointment, but to share confidentially with Parish Councillors our concerns, not to present our Neighbourhood Plan. We had a good hearing and felt supported. John Walsh, District Councillor was present and Toby Newman, District & Parish Councillor and WNP Committee member, (attending an SODC meeting), knew the score. Between parish councillors, district Councillors and higher command at SODC, the more contentious changes put to us on 06 March disappeared.

Thanks for the tangible support, Parishes and WNP Committee. It was also good to have WPC and HPC in the same room, with a shared agenda.

2. The Emerging LP2033 (Preferred Options 2) is much clearer and more readable than its predecessor of last June-August. I hope you agree. It is also more integrated, talking freely about traffic concerns and responsibilities, whichever authority is involved, and the latest steps and regulations in Design and other positive moves since 2015. It seems a sound and rounded basis for Consultation. [www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan]

a) 'At least 300 dwellings' on the OBU Campus was explained to me by the Chairman of SODC on 28 March as conditional on the design variety proposed by the eventual developer (e.g. terraced homes; low apartment blocks).

b) The removal of Green Belt status proposed for Mrs Tombs Field and the industrialised land east of that, raises the issue of increasing HGV traffic on the entire London Rd, already without weight restriction, coming up against new traffic from Brookes, Mill Green and the Waterperry Rd. Also the evolving 'Industrial Estate' still contains residential bungalows, a pub and a motel.

c) I also raised the absence of a Wheatley venue in the list of four hosting displays during Consultation. John Cotton apologised, insisting that it was neither oversight nor money-saving, but a result of Council short-staffing. I accepted this, remembering last July in the Merry Bells, when few staff were on hand, some of them temporary and had difficulties responding.

3. The WNP Road Map

April The above adapted WNP text will be submitted by SODC to English Heritage, Natural England and similar bodies for vetting. SODC still uncertain as to whether an environmental Impact Survey might be required. WNP hope to table NP before PCs and the community as soon as possible.

May-June Six weeks Local Consultation on the WNP.

[This allows us time to polish the document, plan the publicising and include an Open Day on Emerging WNP and Emerging LP2033 together.]

July submission of final draft of Emerging WNP along with responses from Consultation, to independent Gov't Planning Inspector, via SODC.

September Holton and Wheatley Referendum to 'Make' or 'Reject' WNP.

Thank you all for your support and patience. Believe me, when WNP is at its quietest, a great deal is happening behind the scenes.

John Fox and Roy Gordon, Chairman and vice Chairman, WNP Committee

21. Howe Trust

Name of the Trust. Until recently, the trust was officially registered with the Charity Commission as "Wheatley Common Allotments - The Howe Trust". This was not only a bureaucratic handful in official documents but caused confusion with respect to the name of the Allotment Association. Wheatley Common Allotments referred to the time when the allotments were on Wheatley Common which was

off Old Road and is now part of the Shotover Estate. To simplify things, the trust is now registered as The Howe Trust (Wheatley). (Howe is a middle English term for a hill).

History. Thanks to work by Caroline Dalton, we now have documented information as to the origins of the Howe Trust. An indenture was drawn up and signed on 5th February 1878 whereby The Howe 'being a parcel of land containing 27 acres and one rood and 21 perches or thereabouts, situated in Wheatley in the parish of Cuddesdon near the Wycombe and Thame Railway and adjoining the Windmill Road' was donated by John Miller of Shotover Estate in exchange for 'a parcel of land known as Upper Common or Poors Allotment situated in the parish of Shotover and containing 20 acres or thereabouts, surrounded by the Shotover Estate.'

The Howe trustees at the time were William Earle Biscoe, Alexander Samuel Lysaght Newington, Edmund Ruch-Keen and William Henry Ashurst. It was stipulated that the land was for 'recreation and allotment ground' or for such other purpose as may be established by the Board of the Charity Commissioners.

Work on the Howe. Over the past 5 years the trustees have established a programme to improve access to the Howe and to enhance biodiversity. This year work has focused on two areas, a long neglected hedge and a small wooded area. The 'copse' consisted mainly of dead and dying elders and of overgrown hawthorns. With the help of a grant from TOE2 (The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) and financed by Grundon Waste Management, these areas were coppiced and replanted with whips (bare rooted saplings) donated by the Woodland Trust thanks to a team of volunteers who planted 180 trees in 2 hours. During the year volunteers have also repaired or replaced much of our fencing. Many thanks for all their hard work.

The allotments. The allotments are managed by the Allotment Association Committee which is accountable to the trustees. Allotment holders are tenants of the Howe Trust. Demand for allotments has decreased recently and there are a few vacant plots. However the majority of plots are well tended and productive. The rents are £20 and anyone interested in renting an allotment should contact the Allotment secretary Mr E Morgan-Jones (tel 874413).

Charitable giving. As funds permit, one remit of the trust is to provide for 'the poor of Wheatley.' This can prove difficult to identify but support has been given to the Primary School to help towards trips and outings which for some would be unaffordable. A grant has also been made to help the local 'Forest School' to continue to function.

Future events. On Sat. June 24th we are planning a lunchtime 'community picnic' (weather permitting). Just turn up with your picnic. There will also be a nature trail and a den building area for children. It is encouraging to see the land being appreciated by walkers. Those with dogs are asked to keep them on a lead on the allotments and in paddocks where there are animals. We appreciate it if dog 'mess' is removed but please do not leave plastic bags with their contents, festooning nearby bushes!

Malcolm Benson Chair Howe Trust May 2017