



Coming soon to Wheathampstead

A red phone box

Imagine the difference that a traditional red telephone box would make in the centre of the village. Now, after many months' planning, WDPS in partnership with Wheathampstead Parish Council is set to reinstate a red phone box in front of St Helen's Church in the High Street. It will replace the regular BT booth which stands there at present.

The scheme has the backing of Wheathampstead Parish Council, who have generously contributed £2,000 towards the cost of the work. The remainder of the costs will be found from a mixture of sponsorship by local businesses and some funds from WDPS.

WDPS will take responsibility for the project and the *Continues on p.3*

Annual General Meeting:
Friday, 24th February 2012
8 pm, Memorial Hall, Marford Road, Wheathampstead
All are welcome.
Felicity Brimblecombe will talk about the history of the gardens at Luton Hoo

WDPS to create new riverside garden

WDPS is leading a project to open up land by the river in the centre of the village as a public garden. The new garden, to be called the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Garden, will open in 2012 and is by the village sign, just across the river from *The Bull*.

Opening up more of the river bank to the public has been a long-standing WDPS objective. The owners of the site, David Payne (Hammersmatch Properties) and Ray Borrás (T & B Construction Ltd), are happy to allow the public access to the land. In November Wheathampstead Parish Council agreed to provide £8,000 of funding towards the project, and this means that work on the project can start in the New Year.



One of the stunning views of the river and village that will be opened up by the creation of the new garden.

Where and why

The land occupies a key location on the High Street overlooking the river, extending from the pavement by the village sign nearly as far as the office building, Riverside House. It will be a place where all members of the community as well as visitors to the village can walk, meet, eat their lunch or simply sit and watch the river. As the photograph above shows, stunning views of the river and the village will be opened up as people are able to view familiar sights from a different angle. It is perhaps the nearest we shall achieve to a central village green.

Much of the existing fencing will be replaced by simple railings that will allow the garden to be clearly visible from the road. *Continues on p.2*

Community Notice Board for Wheathampstead

You may recall that a few months ago we said we wanted to donate a notice board in the centre of the village for use by all members of the community.

We have given a lot of thought to the best location for the board, taking into account the number of people who will walk past, the safety of individuals when reading the board, and where necessary the need to obtain permission from the building owner.

The overall consensus is that the wall of Jessamine Cottage adjacent to Tesco is



Alongside Jessamine Cottage, in front of Tesco, is considered the best position to site the notice board,

the best location, as shown in the mock-up below.

However, because Jessamine Cottage is a Grade II listed building, it is vital to avoid causing any damage to the brickwork, and this rules out fixing the notice board to the wall.

We shall therefore mount the board on posts, but this has the added complication that we need to seek permission from the owner of the land immediately in front of the wall.

That, we hope, is the final hurdle before we can go ahead and place an order for the board.

WDPS to create new riverside garden

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This will greatly improve the appearance of the area around Mill Quay, already one of the most widely photographed and recognisable parts of the village. It will also provide an attractive backdrop to the village sign.

How the garden has come about

The basis of the arrangement is a deal brokered by WDPS under which a licence is drawn up between the owners of the land and Wheathampstead Parish Council. This is for an initial period of three years but the licence can then be renewed.

Wheathampstead Parish Council have also kindly agreed to donate £8,000 to the project from the compensation that they received following the removal of trees at East Meads. This has provided a much-needed boost to the project as we now have the sufficient funding to start the work almost immediately.

For WDPS this is the outcome of many years' planning. It has long been one of our objectives to make more of the river accessible to the public. The present Committee is very grateful for the work done in the past by Terry Holden and other former Committee members in laying the foundations for the present arrangement.

What needs to be done

WDPS will manage the project to transform the land into a garden that people will enjoy visiting. As the garden is to be named in honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, it is important that it should be open to the public by the time of the Jubilee bank holiday in June, and so in the next few months we shall be very busy! Once the garden has been created, we shall take responsibility for some of the gardening and necessary maintenance work.

The plan for the garden involves several stages. The undergrowth on the river bank opposite *The Bull* will be thinned out and where appropriate the shrubs and trees will be pruned. Railing similar to estate fencing will replace the fence behind the village sign and for reasons of safety will extend along the top of the river bank. We shall make the most of the existing lawn and trees, adding a new border for shrubs and flowering plants. A circular path will take visitors through the garden and there will be benches to sit on.

If you would like to take part in any of this work, we should be delighted to hear from you. Please either email info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk or phone Sue Johnston on 01582 833679.

Lorry Ban Zone: Monitoring Update

A lorry unlawfully travels along Lower Luton Road about once every ten minutes. That is the conclusion that WDPS monitors have drawn from their survey of lorries using the road between Wheathampstead and Luton.

WDPS has long been concerned about the number of lorries that contravene the 7.5 T. lorry ban by using Lower Luton Road as a through route. Lorries in excess of this limit are permitted to use the road only if they have business within the lorry ban zone.

WDPS members acted as monitors and record the number of lorries (in both directions) at the Station Road roundabout and also at a point near Luton Parkway Station. By noting the time a lorry passed each spot, it was possible to determine how many had turned off to businesses en route, which course is acceptable, and how many had unlawfully driven straight along the road, probably using it as a cut-through to the motorway network.

The findings so far, based mainly on the volume of traffic at mid-morning, is that a lorry contravenes the ban roughly once every ten minutes. This suggests that during a normal working day at least 50 lorries ignore the ban.

We shall be reporting our findings to the Police. We would be interested, however, in members' views, and in particular the opinions of people who live on or near Lower Luton Road. Is this level of violation serious enough to take further (which would entail additional monitoring)? Please contact Sue Johnston if you would like to register your view (01582 833679 or info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk)

The Heritage Trail is launched



We are sure it will not have escaped your notice that the village centre Heritage Trail is now officially launched.

As mentioned in our last

newsletter, three WDPS Committee members have played an active part in the eight-strong core project team along with representatives from WEB (the local traders' association) and from the Parish Council. The Heritage Trail directly reflects the aims and objectives of WDPS and we are very proud of the achievements of the whole team. By drawing attention to the rich heritage of the village, we hope that greater concern will be shown in future for the need to respect and conserve the many important features that make Wheathampstead special.

A website is dedicated to the Heritage Trail – www.wheathampsteadheritage.org.uk – and copies of the village centre walking map are available from most High Street shops.

The project team are now beginning to plan Phase 2, and we shall report further in future newsletters. If you would like to become involved—and in particular if you have memories of old Wheathampstead or if you know someone who does—please either email info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk or phone Sue Johnston on 01582 833679.

A red phone box Continued from p.1

ongoing management and maintenance of the phone box. We will enter into a ten-year contract with BT for the provision of a "Managed BT Payphone", and we are looking to recoup the cost of this through a strictly limited amount of advertising within the phone box.

It has long been one of WDPS's ambitions for a red telephone box to be installed in a prominent position in the village. We hope it will add significantly to the distinctive feel of the village and complement the new Heritage Trail board which stands close by.



If you walk along Mill Walk and look down from the bridge, you may notice that something has changed. No longer is the river bed strewn with bits of rusty metal, bricks, tiles and other builders' rubble.

It all happened on Sunday, December 4th. A group of WDPS volunteers led by Mark Carter of Countryside Management Service assembled on the river bank while the ducks moved temporarily upstream.

We then waded into the river, removed as many of the alien objects as possible and filled a skip (kindly provided by the Parish Council) with the assortment of rubbish that we had collected.

Amongst the rubbish was one item that we did not put in the



Left. The working group. Right. Part of the old millstone.

skip: part of a millstone that would once have been used for grinding in the Mill.

We believe that much of the rubble had been carried downstream by the river and, unable to pass the Mill, had accumulated in the water immediately upstream from Mill Walk. As a result of removing it, the river is now a little deeper, is closer to its natural state and is certainly more appealing to the eye.

Dates for your diary

Friday, 24 February 2012, 8 pm

WDPS AGM at the Memorial Hall, Marford Road.

In the year when WDPS will be creating a new riverside garden in Wheathampstead, Felicity Brimblecombe will give a talk on the history of the gardens at Luton Hoo.

**Thursday, 22 March 2012, 7.30pm
Memorial Hall**

Alan Willmott of Windjammer Films will present an evening of old films with local interest.

**Sunday afternoon, 13 May 2012
Castle Farm, Lower Luton Road**

One of our founder members,



Chris Coles, and his wife Ruth are very kindly allowing WDPS to hold a picnic in their spectacular garden at Castle Farm, Lower Luton Road. With its well-stocked borders, abundant trees and magnificent lakes, the garden will look stunning in the spring.

There will be a small entry charge and all the proceeds of the picnic will go to WDPS.

More details about these events will follow nearer the time.