

LWP report 2008



The LWP is made up of a number of councillors who serve mostly on the larger Amenities Committee, together with the Head of our groundstaff, Phil King.

Throughout the village there are many 'bits of land' of varying size which have been ceded back to the Parish Council by developers when they have finished. These areas require attention just as much as the 8 acres of grass which needs mowing, 10 miles of hedges which need cutting, the upkeep of the burial ground, the preparation of football pitches on the KGV fields, not to mention the repairs needed due to vandalism and the maintenance of large trees on Council property. All of these are the responsibility of our permanent groundstaff and the aim of the LWP is to liaise with them and determine courses of action. It also importantly acts as a go-between the public and the Council when problems arise; for example, large trees near the perimeter of properties can understandably cause concern. Many of these have a TPO on them and therefore permission from WCC is needed before anything can be done, and this can take quite a while. Other complaints are about the frequency of mowing – which should be fortnightly – during the season but obviously this is weather-dependent and hedging which occurs over a three-year cycle. We receive several letters when this is done with comments ranging from 'gangs of cowboys' to 'destruction of habitat' issues. All that I can say is that hedges like trees need maintenance. To cut them back and thin them out not only encourages lateral bushy growth but is essential in maintaining hedgerow habitat.

As to the 'bits of land' mentioned earlier we deal with them on a rotational basis and do what is easiest to manage them in a tidy condition. There is an ongoing scheme for removing several species, for example, varieties of dogwood and goat willow and replanting them with better native species many of which are reared by Councillor Bendall and looked after by the groundstaff. Sometimes, however, members of the public might decide they would like to take on one of these areas and maintain it. We are delighted to look at this and issue 'licences to cultivate' to those whose aims coincide with the one or two conditions set by us. These are that any planting includes native species rather than the more exotic and that the parcel of land in question is not subsumed into the boundary of the property which could lead to confusion of ownership at a later date. Throughout the village about twenty of these licences have been issued and we are by and large very pleased with the results. For those who feel they may be interested in taking out one of these licences they are asked to contact the Parish Council Office to set in motion the relevant paperwork.

We also have links with Denmead in Bloom which, under the auspices of Liz Williams, aims to maintain the tubs and flowerbeds in and around the village. We are thankful to her for her consistent efforts but she would like some more volunteers to help. So again if people are interested in this or in the maintenance and upkeep of the willowdome on Harvest Field or the sadly rather neglected Rookwood nature reserve, and can spare a little time, they should contact the office so their names can be forwarded.

Despite the volume and variety of work involved, it is the intention of the LWP to set out a policy for the maintenance of all areas which require our attention, to answer the public's queries or concerns as soon as possible, to promote the uptake of LTCs and to try and encourage members of the Parish generally to be more aware of, and to take part in, the conservation of our environment. Thank you for listening and I hope that you are now more aware of what we are trying to do.

JLH