

# Village Green Working Group Meeting

## 25 June 2018

**Participants:**

Councillor Keith Brooks - Working Group Chairman  
 Gill Goodwin – WOTHabs representative  
 Alistair Aitchison - Football Club representative

**Apologies:**

Cormac Neeson - Cricket Club representative  
 Gavin Jones - Whitchurch Primary School representative

**Agenda**

Grass cutting contractor feedback (frequency, schedule, etc.)  
 Next working party  
 Improvements to football field: new tap installation, returfing of goal mouths  
 Beech tree cutting  
 Update on Pavilion plans Village Green input for the Village Plan  
 Security of village green

**Grass cutting contract**

Councillor Brooks reported that the grass cutting schedule was now published on the web site as part of the village maintenance schedule which he is managing. The cutting schedule takes into account the fixtures of the cricket club and ensures that the grass is cut just before the match occurs so it is of minimum length. There has been some criticism of the amount of grass clippings left. This is because of the infrequency of the cuts. He has informed the council that to guard against this the grass would have to be cut every week and this would cost £1200 extra per year and is waiting to hear what the council has decided. He has liaised with the school for the sports day and this has resulted in a possible extra cut with white line painting to follow.

**Next working party**

These are the guidelines for the maintenance of the Village Green and Maze area for the year ahead put together by Sally Woolhouse and Gill Goodwin who we are greatly indebted to for their careful analysis of the requirements of these areas.

**A) The Village Green**

Description of area	Vegetation	Current management practice (2018)	SJW and GG comments	Proposed management	Rationale
<b>PITCHES:</b>					
Cricket pitch	Grass	Regular mowing and rolling	This frequency is entirely at the discretion of the CC – not of concern to WoTHabs	Continue with current practice	

Football pitch	Grass	Regular mowing. Goal posts moved as necessary to reseed/lay new turf and allow for new growth	ditto	Continue with current practice	To provide good surface for play
<b>BOUNDARY HEDGES:</b>			Best in winter or spring before weeds start but not terribly critical	Use wood chippings and prunings under.	To reduce weed growth
S. boundary:	Beech hedge	Dead hedging in gaps to protect newly sprouting twigs and foliage. Removal of ivy growing on trunks where this impedes new growth.	Foliage growth greater on south (sunny) side. Review proposed management as growth progresses.	Remove concrete posts. Remove ivy. Trim (a little) in August to 5ft.- 5'4" in. top and south side 2018; top and north side (possibly south side too) 2019. Infill gaps with beech saplings, as necessary.	To maintain a healthy hedge which encourages wildlife but retains 2 entry/access points for the children) Also to maintain a clear view by limiting the hedge height.
W. boundary of car park entrance + hedged in adjacent area between house drive and Lane	Mature Horse Chestnut. Laurel and rough grass including perennial plants, esp. ivy, nettles, thistles, brambles and various saplings		Laurel should be cut late spring/early summer.  The weeds and ivy on mature trees needs removing.	Summer/early autumn. Prune laurel hedge top and side to fence level.  Spring/early summer Cut back weeds except for the ivy on the ground, which can provide cover. Cut ivy on trunk of Horse Chestnut (to achieve die-back) Cut back ivy-covered Maple branch.	The laurel was planted as part of the Council's plan so PC responsible for maintenance.  To maintain healthy Horse Chestnut and Maple.
W. boundary of car	Deciduous mixed	Dec- Feb	Dec-Feb is	Continue with	Ragged ends

park and to north of Little Croft	hedge of hawthorn, buckthorn, dogwood + rough grass	hedge trimmed annually top and side to fence height. Forward-growing shoots cut back to 1m for neat profile.	probably best. The rest of the wood chippings (from beeches) need moving. Use to suppress weeds under the hedges.	current practice of annual hedge-trimming. Avoid use of tools which leave ragged ends. Remove large weeds.	liable to cause dieback and rotting.
Holly hedge at E and N. boundary of car park	Wood chippings. Some perennial plants, esp. nettles and thistles Gaps near southern boundary	<b>April-May:</b> hedge trimmed to approx 6in. above fence height.	Dig up stray adjacent hollies and pot to bring on and use for infill. Stake crooked hollies.	Continue with current practice of hedge trimming. Cut back/remove weeds (including e.g. oak sapling). Suppress weed growth with wood chippings. Plant infills in Autumn	Area around car park should be neat and in particular have regard to the owners of 'Little Croft'
<b>YOUNG TREES:</b>					
S. end of VG and beside seats on east side	Indian Horse Chestnut  Sponsored and donated trees: whitebeam, beech, bird- cherries	None (newly exposed to light and space following the reduction of the beeches)  The planting of these saplings has not always been planned and agreed first. (e.g. a sponsored tree died and was kindly replaced ad hoc with a different species)	GG seeking advice for best management  Autumn/winter is OK for this.  Restaking needed for Phillipson's tree.	Remove lower branches of saplings <b>annually in autumn</b> , if necessary.  Tree planting and/or removal should be agreed rather than ad hoc in order to avoid overcrowding.	To encourage strong upper/canopy growth  To avoid overcrowding and allow more space for sports and play.

<b>OTHER VEGETATION:</b>					
Spoil heap	Nettles including White Dead Nettles, Thistles, Forget-me-nots, Dock, Herb-Robert, Goose Grass, etc.	none	The children have made a track running the length of the heap.	Leave for the time being what has spontaneously developed an interesting flora (and probably fauna too).	Varied habitat for wildlife and for the children too.
Vegetation alongside E. boundary:	Rough grass, mature trees: Sweet Chestnut, Poplar, Oaks, young elms (both Wych Elm and English Elm), Spindle, etc.	Mown leaving a small fringe of rough grass and a few nettles at the boundary		Continue with current practice.	Varied habitat providing natural corridor which encourages diversity of wildlife.
N. boundary	Trees (incl Hawthorn, Hazel, Sycamore, Spruce, Ash,Elms) + a fringe of Brambles and Nettles			Late autumn cut back straggling brambles and nettles. Allow spring and summer growth, but with due regard to pitch users.	Food plants/habitat for insects incl. moths, butterflies and which support birds, small mammals etc.
<b>OTHER ITEMS</b>					
Wire Fencing along E. boundary		None. Damaged fencing and pathways made through it, breaking it down further.	Tall posts and additional netting above and attached to what fencing remains in the damaged areas could discourage break-throughs.	Repair allowing for openings opposite school side gate, allotments' gate and additionally mid-way.	To restore the integrity of and respect for the VG boundary and to maintain the thicket which forms a corridor for wildlife.
Seats (4)		Some vandalism. Repairs carried out	Bird Droppings need cleaning off		
Stile (adjacent to football pitch)		Some damage. Repairs carried out.			
<b>Suggested ADDITIONS:</b>					
Compost Heap.				For grass mowings and deciduous	For grass mowings and hedge

				hedge trimmings (not too woody).	trimmings.
Green Gym/Regular Working Parties of Volunteers.				to e.g. help with Maze and/or VG maintenance.	To encourage a pride in and respect for these areas and minimise costs

(B) The Maze

Description of area	Vegetation	Current management practice (2015)	SJW comments	Proposed management	Rationale
Centre circle and surrounding concentric rings (4) making up the Maze structure	Grass	Closely mown approximately fortnightly throughout the growing season (April to October) using powered petrol mower, clippings collected into grass box and left on site (unobtrusively scattered). Grassy edges of the brick circles are edged monthly with edging tools	As per Pete's current practice	Continue with current practice (although might be better to put the grass cuttings in a compost heap)	The grass needs to be kept close cut and edged to retain the visibility of the brick paths. It cannot be done by a larger machine because a heavier vehicle could damage the bricks
Concentric intermediate circles	Tall rough vegetation	Not cut at all except for cutting down wild carrot and hogweed plants by hand as necessary during growing season (using secateurs or sickle)	I agree with this	Continue with current practice	The tall plants provide a pleasing contrast to the close mown grass paths of the Maze; the wild parsnip can cause skin rashes so needs controlling; the hogweed is too prolific and so needs cutting before seeding
Access paths in surrounding field (marked in green on plan)	Grass	Closely mown approximately fortnightly throughout the growing season (April to October)	As per Pete's current practice. The paths will probably realistically be done by Pete . He	Continue with current practice	The grass needs to be kept close cut for visitors to easily walk around the Maze environs and

		using powered petrol mower	tends to only do the ones nearest the circle. The others can be done when the hatched areas are mown.		to access the wooden tables
Rough grassy areas adjacent to both tables (marked by hatching on the plan)	Grass	Mow approximately monthly during the growing season	I agree with this		For easy access, as above.

Areas of field (marked in orange on plan)	Rough grassland including perennial, biennial and annual plants	Mown once or twice during growing season using large ride-on mowing machine or small tractor (timings of these cuts have varied somewhat year on year);	I think this should be twice, July & Sept	Mow in first half of July and again in September; cut material to be picked up within 7 days of cutting and removed to composting site (TBC). Possibly introduce yellow rattle to suppress grass growth to the benefit of flowering plants	Aim to improve diversity of plants, reduce fertility of soil which should reduce the vigorous growth of the taller grasses and plants. <i>Long-term aim to produce attractive mixed flowering meadow with less dominant perennials, hogweed particularly.</i>
All remaining areas not covered above	Rough grassland, areas of nettles and scrub, spinneys of small to larger trees with woodland understorey	Some parts have been mown this year	I agree	As a general rule, it is preferable not to mow these areas, especially those with small trees (could be damaged accidentally) or nettles	Scrub areas are good for small mammals and other wildlife; nettles are excellent habitats for many invertebrates. It is not advisable to mow within the woodland areas either.
Recently planted young trees	Individual specimens – one bird cherry planted in memory of the Seagers by their son (Dec2017) and two Elms planted by Butterfly Conservation to encourage White Letter Hairstreaks (Feb 2018)			These should be regularly checked for damage and secure supports and during dry spells should be watered until well established Could be done on Maze Maintenance days	To ensure successful establishment

(C) Muddy Lane

Description of area	Vegetation	Current management	By whom	Proposed management	Rationale
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		practice (2015)			
Boundaries to path from allotment gate to school entrance (both sides)	Rough grass including perennial plants, esp.hogweed and nettles	These strips have usually been mown at the same time as the maze area; this year they were mown early by Ian Smith because the children were getting stung by the tall nettles bending over the path	I agree. Ian Smith seems to have taken this upon himself to do (he mentioned it when I spoke to him). I think he sees it a helpful thing to do for the school, and as a parent, it is his contribution.	Mow in late spring, then first half of July and again in September; cut material to be picked up within 7 days of cutting and removed to composting site (TBC).	The vegetation on these boundaries to the Footpath needs to be managed so that it doesn't grow to tall and then flop across the path (very well used path for parents & small children)

It was decided that the next working party would be on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July and this would cover the immediate requirements (detailed below) with further work parties later in the year. This will be advertised in the Bulletin, Village Web Site and communicated through email to the PC, Cricket Club, Football Club, Primary School and other interested parties. Alistair suggested that families could adopt an area and look after it in the long term.

#### Beech Hedge

Remove ivy. Remove concrete posts. Trim top and south side.

Laurel Hedge Trim top and sides to fence level (and see below: 'vegetation')

Holly Hedge Trim top and sides to approx 6in. above fence height. Cut back/remove weeds (including e.g. oak saplings) . Use chippings to suppress weed growth).

Stake crooked hollies.(Plant holly infills where necessary in Autumn)

Deciduous Trees W. side of CP and N. of Little Croft Remove weeds.

#### Young Trees

S. end (newly exposed to light and space following the reduction of the beeches). Observe what develops. GG to seek advice on management.

E. side Restake trees by benches where necessary.

Vegetation in enclosed area behind laurel hedge On the ground: Cut back weeds, except for ivy which can provide ground cover. To remove ivy from Horse Chestnut, cut at base of tree to achieve die-back. Remove the ivy-covered Maple branch.

#### Vegetation along E. and N. boundaries

Maintain fringe of rough grass and other growth, but with due regard to pitch users. (Weed killer not to be used.)

#### Wire Fencing along E. boundary

Repair allowing for 3 entry/access points

- opposite side school gate
- allotments gate
- and approx. midway between the two.

Other: Shift remaining heap of wood chippings from beside CP (if not used up under the holly hedge (see above)).

Improvements to football field: installation of new tap, returfing of goal mouths

A new water tap has been installed at the top of the field near to the football field which has been used to water new turf which has been laid in the goal mouths after goal posts were moved. The turf and the taps and grass turf have been funded by the PC after Councillor Brooks arranged for this and oversaw the delivery of the turf and installation of the tap. The turf was laid by the football club. He has been watering the turf on the village green and this is thriving.

Beech tree cutting

The beech trees have been loped near to the school after Councillor Brooks organised for quotes and then the PC decided on which contractor they would fund. The tree work was carried out following recommendation from WOTHabs and in conjunction with the SODC tree officer.

Update on Pavilion

Councillor Brooks is the councillor for driving the new village green pavillion forward. He informed the meeting that following the withdrawal of the submitted plans in December due to mistakes in the original plans the PC had decided to employ an architect to redo them with corrections and resubmit to obtain planning permission. Once planning permission is obtained then funding will be sought.

Security of village green

Following some concerns that the village green might be subject to unauthorised occupation Councillor Brooks liased with the cricket club and groundsman to provide extra protection of the gate by arranging for a roller to be placed in front of the gates. this will be moved when access is desired for village green grass cutting.