

Village Green Working Group Meeting

24 June 2019

Participants:

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

Apologies:

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

- 1, The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
2. 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. The parish council has approved more cuts and this is proving to be a success. The committee did recommend that the maze is cut a month later in July in order to preserve habitats for insects longer. Keith will speak to the contractor.

3. Maintenance schedule and working groups

Over the past year we have had two working parties on the 22nd July and 28th October 2018 when the projects listed below were carried out. There is also a monthly working party which carries out all the maintenance on the maze. The Hillipson tree on the green was vandalised however it has started to recover so we will monitor it. The committee thought that the benches could do with some varnish so Keith will do this.

Gill Goodwin and Sally Woolhouse have put together the following which clearly shows all the many tasks that are carried out on the village green by volunteers and contractors and illustrates the large amount of work involved in keeping the village green in tip top condition.

VILLAGE GREEN & MAZE

CHECKLIST OF ANNUAL MAINTENANCE TASKS

Month/Year 2019 - 2020

Description of area	Planned tasks	When to be Done	By Whom
Cricket pitch	Mow and roll, to Cricket Club requirements		Contractor/Cricket Club

Football pitch	Mow, as required for sports use		Contractor/ Football Club
Outfield alongside eastern boundary:	Mow	Monthly, approximately, leaving rough grass close to the trees	Contractor
Winding grassy pathways through area of mixed growth which extends from beech hedge to the south end of cricket pitch	Mow	Monthly or Bi-monthly	Contractor
Long grass around mature lime trees	Cut	Once a year in late summer: Late July/August when seed has set	Contractor

Description of area	Planned tasks	When to be done	By Whom
Laurel hedging at car park entrance	Trim top and sides to keep to reasonable and manageable dimensions.	Once a year, in late spring or early summer.	Work Party (WP)
Car park	Check and remove weeds	As necessary	WP
Holly hedges at western and northern boundary of car park	Trim top and sides to fence height	Once a year, in April-May.	WP
Deciduous mixed hedge on eastern boundary of car park and to north of Little Croft	Trim top and sides to fence height. Forward-growing shoots cut back to 1m for neat profile.	Once a year, in dormant period: Dec. to early March	WP

Beech Hedge along southern boundary	Trim top and sides to approx. 1.5m Also remove any overgrowth of ivy from trunks, and/or cut ivy stems at base.	Once or twice: Main cut in August or September. If untidy, an early summer trim advisable. As necessary	WP
Southern side of beech hedge Beside road/pathway	Remove troublesome plants from where obstruct pathway (e.g. nettles, thistles, dock, goosegrass, brambles)	As necessary	WP
Area of mixed growth which extends from beech hedge to the southern end of cricket pitch	<i>Please see Comments and Recommendations below</i>		WP
Spinney/shrubbery and adjacent plants	Light cut all	Late summer: August/September	WP
Outfield on northern boundary	Cut back brambles, nettles and any invasive scrub	Once a year, late autumn	Football Club?

Comments and recommendations

The area from the beech hedge to southern edge of cricket pitch is of particular interest for the great variety of plants which have grown there particularly since the tall beeches were cut to hedge height in February 2018. See species list attached.

THE MAZE:			
Grass areas between brick circles of the Maze and the pathways and areas surrounding both tables	Mow	Approx. every 10 days throughout the season	Pete Woolhouse
Grass edges next to tables and seats Grass edges next to brick circles and the 'clock'	Strim to neaten Edge with lawn edging tools	Monthly	Maze WP

Remaining outer rough grass areas (unless taped off specifically to protect rare plants e.g. white helleborines). Note: advance warning of when cut is to be done would be helpful please	Cut	Once a year in late July/August when seed has set	Contractor
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UPDATED June 2019

Guidelines for maintenance of The Village Green SJW and GG

Description of area	Vegetation	Management	SJW and GG comments	Rationale
PITCHES:				
Cricket pitch	Grass	Regular mowing and rolling	This frequency is entirely at the discretion of the CC – not of concern to WoTHabs	
Football pitch	Grass	Regular mowing. Goal posts moved as necessary to reseed/lay new turf and allow for new growth	ditto	To provide good surface for play
BOUNDARY HEDGES and adjacent plants		Use wood chippings and prunings under.	Best in winter or spring before weeds start but not terribly critical	To reduce weed growth
Laurel W. boundary of car park entrance + area behind hedge between house drive and Lane	Mature Horse Chestnut, adjacent Maple, Laurel + ivy, and other perennials	Summer/early autumn. Prune laurel hedge top and side to fence level. Spring/early summer Removal of nettles, thistles, bramble, goosegrass etc. Removal of ivy from trunks, but left where provides	PC officially responsible for maintenance of laurel hedge: planted as part of their plan	To maintain healthy Horse Chestnut and Maple.

		ground cover.		
<u>Holly hedges</u> E and N. boundary of car park	Some perennial plants, esp. nettles and thistles Gaps near southern boundary.	April-May: Trim hedge to approx 6in. above fence height. Suppress weed growth with wood chippings.	Dig up stray adjacent hollies and pot to bring on and use for infill. Plant infills in Autumn	Area around car park should be neat and surrounding fences and hedging appropriately secure.
<u>Mixed Hedge</u> W. boundary of car park and N. of Little Croft	Deciduous mixed hedge of hawthorn, buckthorn, dogwood + rough grass	Dec- Feb Trim hedge top and side to fence height. Forward-growing shoots cut back to 1m for neat profile.	Avoid use of tools which leave ragged ends. Use wood chippings to suppress weeds	Ragged ends liable to cause dieback and rotting.
<u>Beech Hedge</u> S. boundary:	Beech hedge	Remove concrete posts. Remove ivy. Trim to approx 1.5m and sides Remove troublesome plants from pathway/base of hedge: e.g. nettles, thistles, dock, goosegrass, brambles	As necessary	Control hedge height to maintain a clear view; to allow sunlight into wild area; to retain entry/access point for the children; to provide a wildlife corridor.
AREA OF MIXED GROWTH at S. from beech hedge to edge of cricket field.				

	A variety of plants including small saplings, tree seedlings, annuals, bi-annuals and perennials and a variety of grasses	May/June 1. Remove mainly sow thistle, goose grass and some other pervasive plants.	Of particular interest for the great variety of plants which have grown there since the tall beeches were cut to hedge height in Feb. 2018 Much of this has already been done (23/06/19) after a species count made by our expert local botanist, Sandra Parkinson	To encourage a wide variety of flora and fauna: moths, butterflies, bees and other pollinators, other insects, birds and small mammals
	Spinney/shrubbery and adjacent plants	Late summer/ Aug-Sept. Pruning + light cut/mow adjacent plants	After seed has set.	
Winding grass pathways		Monthly or bi-monthly: Mow	Contractor	
Area of grass around mature lime trees		Once a year in late summer/Aug-Sept	After seed has set Contractor	
YOUNG TREES:				
S. end of VG and beside seats on east side	Indian Horse Chestnut Sponsored and donated trees: whitebeam, beech, bird- cherries	Remove lower branches of in autumn , if necessary.	GG seeking advice for best management Tree planting and/or removal should be agreed rather than ad hoc in order to avoid overcrowding.	To encourage straighter growth. To encourage strong upper/canopy growth. To maximise sports/play space. To discourage overcrowding.
OTHER VEGETATION:				
Spoil heap	Nettles including White Dead Nettles,	Leave for the time being	The children periodically	Varied habitat for wildlife and for the

	Thistles, Forget-me-nots, Dock, Herb-Robert, Goose Grass, etc.	what has spontaneously developed an interesting flora (and probably fauna too).	make a track running the length of the heap.	children too.
Vegetation alongside E. boundary:	Rough grass, mature trees: Sweet Chestnut, Poplar, Oaks, young elms (both Wych Elm and English Elm), Spindle, etc.	Mow leaving a small fringe of rough at the boundary		Varied habitat providing natural corridor which encourages diversity of wildlife.
N. boundary	Trees (including Hawthorn, Hazel, Sycamore, Spruce, Ash, Elms, Copper Beech) + a fringe of perennial plants	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.
OTHER ITEMS				
Wire Fencing along E. boundary		None has occurred for some time	Any repairs carried out should allow for openings opposite school side gate, allotments' gate and mid-way.	Restoring the VG boundary would help restore the thicket and encourage wildlife.
Seats (4)		Repair/repaint as necessary		
Stile (adjacent to football pitch)				
Suggested ADDITION: 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

VILLAGE GREEN MAINTENANCE June/July 2019 GG

Working Party

- Trim laurel hedges (check this with Leslie)

- and remove goosegrass, brambles, nettles etc. from area behind those hedges, but leave ivy as groundcover.
- Remove ivy from Horse Chestnut trunk
- Trim beech hedge
- and, selectively, weed base of hedge on south side: e.g. dock, nettles, thistles, sow-thistles, goosegrass, dandelion. Leave e.g. willowherb, plantain, primroses.
- Weed in car park: alongside fences and wherever else necessary
- Find and dig up several small hollies and use to fill gap in holly hedge.

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Eastfield Lane verge (E. end S. side)

- Clear to approx. 1m back from kerb where overgrown.

4. Beech Hedge

Since the beech hedge was formed Gill reported that many new species of plants have appeared. It is planned to trim the top of the hedge. It was also mentioned that the concrete posts need removing however this will take a lot of organising as we need to evaluate the site and it will require heavy duty equipment and possibly funding from the PC.

5. Football pitch

Alistair told us that there was a work party in March which planted a copper beech at the top of the field to replace the one that had to be removed as it was getting in the way of playing football. It was mentioned that the old stump is still there so this is another project requiring assessment and heavy duty equipment together with PC funding. The new tree was paid for by Whitchurch AFC and placed there in memory of Stephen Trinder.

6. New pavilion

Keith informed the committee that the planning permission for the erection of the new pavillion had been granted by SODC. Warren Beard is heading up the committee entrusted to oversee the procurement of finance, quotations for the building work and the build itself together with Neil Huntingdon who has done so much to get to this stage. The next stage is to employ a quantity surveyor so we have the specifications which we can put out to tender. We also will have a brochure showing the planned layout and appearance on the village green of the new pavilion in order to help in the fund raising we will need.

7. Security

The committee discussed whether there were any security issues for the village green as some people had expressed a concern that people might enter the field and set up camp there. Leslie said he had been there 6 years and no incidents had occurred, Gill told us that new holly bushes were being placed to aid the fence in discouraging people from entering with vehicles, Alistair made a valid point that well of course anything is possible but highly unlikely. Lastly Keith told the committee that the gate had had a problem in that it could have been lifted off but now that has been fixed. We did hav a roller in front of the gates over the winter but now that has been removed as access is required for grass cutting and cricket club use.

8. Dog mess, litter and clothes bank

We discussed whether there was a problem with dog mess on the village green and everyone agreed that this was not the case with the village green – all dog owners who exercise their dogs there seem to be conscientious. We will monitor the situation and keep open minded about this. The committee did not think that a dog waste bin was required for the village green car park. Also there seemed to be no evidence that an extra litter bin was required since litter did not appear to be accumulating anywhere on the village green even, as Gill pointed out, in the newly revealed section by the beech hedge. A request for a clothes bank in the village green car park was not approved since there is one outside the school.

9. Change of terms of reference

Keith proposed that the terms of reference be changed from 'at least 4 meetings a year and an AGM' to at least 1 meeting a year and no AGM since it was not possible for committee members to commit that much time. This was approved. It was suggested we have a meeting in January every year.