

ASPLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL



Summer 2017 newsletter

This year has seen quite a lot of activity on the Heath, logging, building etc, so the Parish Council has produced a parish newsletter to keep residents informed of what is going on in the parish, and to raise the profile of the work of the Parish Council.

We have one vacancy for a Parish Councillor. We hope this newsletter will give some idea of what being a Parish Councillor entails, and will encourage somebody to step forward. If you are interested please contact the parish clerk at clerk@aspleyheath.org.uk

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Your Parish Councillors and their roles are:

Chairman: Piers Wilmott	Finance
Vice Chairman: Sally Smith	Footpaths including Aspley woods
PCllr. Jack Hobbs	Planning
PCllr. Liz Morris	Homewatch coordinator
PCllr. Gill Clough	Newsletter
PCllr. Paul Temp	Friends of St Michael's
PCllr. Alison Shirville	Signage and Jubilee Gardens
PCllr. John Towriss	Footpaths including Aspley woods

R Robson remains as link to George Wells Educational Trust (ex-councillor)

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the new vicar of St Michael's Church, Diana Young.

WHAT DOES THE PARISH COUNCIL DO?

We meet on the last Wednesday of the month excluding the months of August and December. Meetings last about an hour and a half and it is a good way to meet your neighbours and get involved in looking after the Heath. Meetings are held in the Woburn Sands Town Council Offices to the rear of the Ellen Pettit Memorial Hall.

The Aspley Heath Parish Council website contains news, parish information and minutes from all the Parish Council meetings. The website URL is:

<http://aspleyheathparishcouncil.bedsparishes.gov.uk/>

Residents can attend Parish Council meetings to raise any concerns they have. The Parish Councillors liaise with residents and try to help

find answers. In addition, the Parish Council gets involved with a range of aspects of Aspley Heath parish life.

SANDPIT

The Parish Council is responsible for the Aspley Heath Sandpit, ensuring that the trees are regularly maintained.



PLANNING

The Parish Council receives copies of all planning applications for the parish.

Councillors discuss them during meetings, listen to the views of members of the parish who come along to meetings to speak, review the applications against planning guidelines and send our comments and recommendations to Central Beds Council Planning department.

JUBILEE GARDEN

The Parish Council decided to refurbish the jubilee garden at the entrance to Church Road outside Aspley Court. To keep costs to a minimum, Parish Councillors cleared the beds and then employed professional gardeners to restore the planting and maintain the garden.



AGM & LOGGING UPDATE

In April the Parish Council held their AGM which was well attended by more than 50 people. There were several speakers including Paul Williams who spoke for the Bedford Estates, updating us about the recent tree felling in the woods.

Paul explained that the trees should be harvested on a 40-year cycle, but that these areas had not been touched for 80 years. The areas that have been felled will be cleared of brush and loose cuttings and replanted. He assured us that the footpaths and bridleways that had been churned up by the large vehicles would be returned to a useable state and that no more tree felling is planned for this year. The Parish Council are following the footpath issue up with the Bedford Estates, pointing out where the footpaths remain in a poor state.

SPEEDWATCH

In response to complaints by residents about speeding on Church Road, the Parish Council will be running a community speedwatch.



This is a scheme to help residents reduce the dangers, and impact, of traffic speeding through their neighbourhood. Bedfordshire speedwatch groups consist of local community volunteers, all police trained and insured. They will use a police speed indicator device (SID) to monitor the speed of passing vehicles, reporting details of speeding vehicles to Bedfordshire police.

Please contact PCllr Smith smithbeeches@aol.com if you are interested in getting involved.

SANDY LANE RESURFACING

The developer of the new properties in Sandy Lane and Narrow Path has offered money for Central Beds Council to use to resurface Sandy Lane with tarmac. The Parish Council spoke to affected residents and took their concerns and questions to Central Beds Council. As a result, the proposed design has been changed to include more rainfall sumps and fewer speed bumps, and Central Beds Council has initiated drainage calculations to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to deal with the regular flooding during heavy rainfall. The results of the consultation were:



<i>Residents of Sandy Lane -</i>	<i>8 in favour of the proposed surfacing</i> <i>5 opposed to the proposed surfacing</i>
<i>Residents of Church Road and Narrow Path -</i>	<i>4 in favour of the proposed surfacing</i> <i>4 opposed to the proposed surfacing</i>

The Parish Council have passed on the results of the survey of residents to Central Beds who plan to have the work done.

HOMEWATCH

We have a Homewatch scheme that operates on The Heath. The police publicise crime information via Beds Alerts. Anyone can pick up messages from Beds Alert via the Internet, but only a small proportion relate to Aspley Heath. Homewatch uses volunteer coordinators for sections of lanes and roads and for the blocks of flats. The coordinators email alerts and crime information relevant to Aspley Heath to group members. This keeps us aware of possible criminal behaviour in our area.

Please email Liz Morris morrisrl@btinternet.com to join one of our Homewatch groups and receive updates on crime in the area.

LITTER PICK

As part of the GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN, Aspley Heath Parish Council organised a litter pick on the Heath.

Originally organised to coincide with the national litter pick at 10am on Sunday 5th March, the Aspley Heath litter pick was rescheduled at the last minute to 10th March due to appalling weather. Despite this last minute change, the litter pick was well attended and a great success with many bags of litter collected and disposed of.

As we now have all the equipment, we are planning to run another Litter Pick on 24th September, 2017, meeting at 10am in the car park at the top of Church Road. Please bring gloves.



CONCERNS

Rubbish & fly tipping

The Parish Council are concerned about garden waste dumped on the verges, particularly at the south end of Sandy Lane. Please dispose of rubbish in bins or in the new Tidy Tips in Leighton Buzzard or Ampthill, and report anybody you see dumping waste or fly tipping to the police. Last year it cost the parish council over £350 to have this removed.

Crime

The Heath is a low-crime area, but crimes do occur. This year we have had a violent attack in which a resident was knocked to the ground by two men hiding in his garden as he returned from the fish-and-chip van. He may have disturbed a burglary. There has also been a carefully coordinated theft of tools worth £3500 from one of the building sites. Please be vigilant and lock doors when going out.

Hedges

Grow vigorously in Aspley Heath. Sometimes they encroach on the pavements which can make it challenging to pass – particularly with fat prickly hedges! Let's keep our hedges in check, including height.

Enjoying the hot and sunny weather – noise and bonfires

Residents have made observations about the number of noisy machines on the Heath, particularly when used at weekends and evenings in hot weather when people have windows open. Let's keep the Heath a pleasant place to live by trying not to use noisy garden machines if possible on Sunday afternoons and also avoid lighting bonfires on hot days when people have windows open, washing out or are enjoying the weather sitting in the garden.

Please get in touch to let us know what is important to you on the Heath by contacting the parish clerk at clerk@aspleyheath.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

Aspley Heath is a designated conservation area. This aims to protect the area from inappropriate development. This applies not just to house building, extensions, sheds etc, but also to what we are permitted to do in the garden.

Did you know that work on trees with trunks over 7.5 cm diameter measured 1.5m above the ground may need planning permission if you live in a Conservation area? Even if you planted a small tree in your garden that, over the past 10 years has outgrown its location, you may still need to apply for planning permission to have it pollarded, reduced in size or felled.

Did you know that work on trees with trunks over 7.5 cm diameter measured 1.5m above the ground may need planning permission?

All reputable tree surgeons will be aware of this and many will take care of any necessary application as part of the work. Prior to the work being approved, you may receive a visit from the tree officer from Central Beds Council. There are heavy financial penalties for failing to comply with this requirement.

Contact the Parish Council

Denise Batchelor
clerk@aspleyheath.org.uk

