



Annual Report 2018/19

Woolmer Green Parish Council

Woolmer Green Parish Council was established in 2000 following its separation from Welwyn Parish. The Council has six Parish Councillors who are unpaid volunteers that live in the village and are dedicated to serving their community. Their four year term of office ends in May 2019.

Parish Councillors

Andy Gribble, Chairman

Transport, Staffing Committee, Young Person Liaison.

Phil Corke, Vice Chairman

Planning, Staffing Committee. Chairman of the School Friends Association.

Sarah Hall

Finance, Staffing Committee & Allotment Liaison. Treasurer of the Allotment Committee.

Jenny Hawkins

Parish Council grounds.

Grant Pinney

Village Hall, Community.

Tony White

Environment. A director of Twin Foxes Management Ltd.

Parish Clerk, Janet Pearce.

The Clerk is not an elected member but an employee who holds the statutory office of the Proper Officer of the Council and the Responsible Financial Officer. The Clerk is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the Council, managing its finances and facilities and ensuring it complies with the law.

Borough Councillors

Councillors Julie Cragg, Steve Markiewicz and Roger Trigg.

Your Borough Councillors hold regular Surgeries in Woolmer Green Village Hall where anyone is welcome to attend if they have an issue they want to discuss. In 2019 the Surgeries will be held on 1st June, 3rd August, 5th October and 7th December 10.00am-10.45am. A Parish Councillor will also be in attendance.

County Councillor

Councillor Richard Smith.

Member of Parliament

Grant Shapps MP

Hall & Grounds



During 2019 the ladies washroom in the village hall was refurbished by village plumbing company Frontline Plumbing. The walls were retiled throughout in white tiles; the basins were replaced with compression valve taps, a new mirror was installed as well as new toilet seats and soap dispensers. The Council is immensely grateful to Cawdor Stone who supplied and fitted a new stone vanity top free of charge. The total cost of the project was £5,500.

Herts County Council restructured Children's Centres from October 2018. The Parish Council agreed that the use of the hall facility could be extended so that the Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust (HCT) health visitors and school nurses could share the centre. Barleyfield's Children's Centre has been renamed Barleyfield's Family Centre and is administered from its hub in Welwyn Garden City. The lead agency providing services is One YMCA.

The showers in the changing rooms were descaled and the floor deep cleaned. The Council agreed this should be undertaken every two years.

The meeting room chairs, which looked very tired, were disposed of and donated to an organisation that could make use of them. Ten new banqueting chairs were purchased at a cost of £179.50.

The Council agreed to purchase a shotgun mic to connect to the hearing loop. This will soon be fitted to the hall ceiling.

The photocopier lease contract came to an end. The Council decided that, with modern, cheaper printing methods available, the photocopier was now obsolete and that it would be more cost effective to decommission the machine.

The Parish Council's solicitor wrote to all residents with gates leading directly into the hall grounds to ask that they sign a document to preclude a permanent right of way between residents' land and the hall grounds from being established after 20 years of regular use. To the same end the Twin Foxes gate was locked for twenty four hours from 12.00pm on Saturday 2nd February until 12.00pm on Sunday 3rd February. Going forward the Twin Foxes gate will be closed for one twenty four hour period each year.

Instances of fly tipping in the hall grounds were an issue during 2018. The Council worked closely with the police officer responsible for rural affairs which led to the rubbish eventually being removed.



Environment

Woolmer Green Parish Council is part of the Parish Paths Partnership (PPP) scheme administered by Groundwork Hertfordshire and funded by Hertfordshire County Council. It is an initiative that enables parishes to benefit the local community by making improvements to their public Rights of Way network.

The Council was again successful in its PPP grant application for £1000 to improve existing public rights of way which enabled 70m of footpath 24 to be resurfaced. Thanks to the Rights of Way officer who contributed a further £228.



The balance beam in the Garden Road playground was damaged and the two damper blocks had to be replaced at a cost of £500.

The Parish Council continues to follow progress of the Government funded trials by the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) into the control of *crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pygmy Weed), an invasive non-native plant, which has taken hold in the village pond. Laboratory tests have identified that a small mite, *Aculus crassulae*, can significantly reduce plant growth. Following ministerial approval the mite was released at a small number of sites during 2018. It is looking promising that a marketable product could be available in 2020.

Planning

The examination in public of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Draft Local Plan has been ongoing since it was submitted in May 2017. The Parish Council, in collaboration with Knebworth Parish Council, has employed the services of a planning consultant to represent it at the relevant Hearing Sessions and to compile planning documents setting out the Parish Council's case that building on Green Belt land does not meet the "exceptional circumstances" required in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) when previously developed land at the Entech site is available.

Borough Council Planning had designated the Entech site for employment but this land has now been granted planning permission for 72 houses, retail and employment units following a successful appeal. Also the owner of the land currently occupied by Marshalls is keen to develop this site when the lease expires which is within the period of the Local Plan. This site has been submitted for consideration to the Borough's 2019 "Call for Sites". The Parish Council will continue to argue that the two previously developed sites will satisfy Woolmer Green's quota of housing and preserve the Green Belt.

The North Herts Draft Local Plan is also undergoing its examination and Woolmer Green and Knebworth Parish Council have instructed their planning consultant to respond to the Main Modifications consultation.

The Parish Council responded to 15 planning applications during 2018/19

Transport



In April 2018 the B197 Feasibility Study carried out by Aecom was published. It contains a detailed description of the B197 and its current function as the main diversion route for the A1(M). The study was commissioned following a strongly supported and successful bid by County Councillor Richard Smith to the PCC Road Safety Fund in February 2017 and is currently being assessed by Highways officers.

The report states that the smart motorway scheme due to be delivered in 2020 could lead to the B197 being reassessed as less significant as the A1(M) diversion route which could lead to road safety measures being introduced in the future.

Conditions attached to the Entech planning application require that the developer introduces a pedestrian road safety crossing scheme on the stretch of the B197 near their site. This condition is in lieu of requesting a monetary contribution under an s106 agreement. The Parish Council is keen to ensure that the best possible scheme is achieved.

The Council is grateful for the support of our County Councillor, Richard Smith, for his continued support and who has held meetings with highways officers to discuss possible forms a crossing scheme could take.

Consultations

The Parish Council submitted comments to the following consultations:

Hackney Wheelchair Accessibility Vehicle Consultation

HCC School Admissions consultation

WHBC Hackney Carriage Vehicle Terms & Conditions Survey

Welwyn Hatfield Community Space Strategy

North Herts District Council's Draft Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation.

Newquay Town Council and NALC Survey on Parking

Community



The Wheels on Woolmer Green car show was held in May, now in its third year. The event is becoming increasingly popular and £450 was raised for children's charity SPACE. This Hertfordshire charity was suggested by a Woolmer Green resident and supports parents and carers of children and young people on the Autistic Spectrum, with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or a related condition. Thanks to Councillor Grant Pinney for organising the event.

Village Day took place in June and is always well attended by the community. Following the popularity of the pet show the previous year it was back again. A number of dogs entered as well as Billy the tortoise and Trinket the goat and thanks must go to Attimore vet Marianne Dorn for judging the event. As well as numerous stalls there was a dance performance by local children, a display by Wrestle Force and music provided by the Woolmer Green Band and the duo the 2FBs. Thanks to Councillor Phil Corke who has been organising Village Day for many years.



On Sunday 11th November the Remembrance Service commemorated the 100th Anniversary of the end of the First World War. All Councillors attended the wreath laying ceremony and Chairman Andy Gribble, laid a wreath on behalf of the community of Woolmer Green. Councillor Grant Pinney read a poem at the church service. The Parish Council donated £50 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

The market manager, Tracie Harris, turned the December market into our first Christmas Fair event and lots of new stalls took part. The Pre-school organised the Father Christmas Grotto and the school choir gave a performance. The Parish Council donated £100 towards a Christmas reception for all our regular stallholders to thank them for their continued support of the monthly food and craft market.

The Carols' round the Pond took place on Christmas Eve. It was well attended and £240.69 was collected and donated to the CJD Support Network.

The community New Year's Eve Party was organised once again by Councillor Grant Pinney. Residents who came along were very generous in bringing food and drink to share and a good time was had by all.

The Parish Council donated £750 towards maintenance of the church yard.

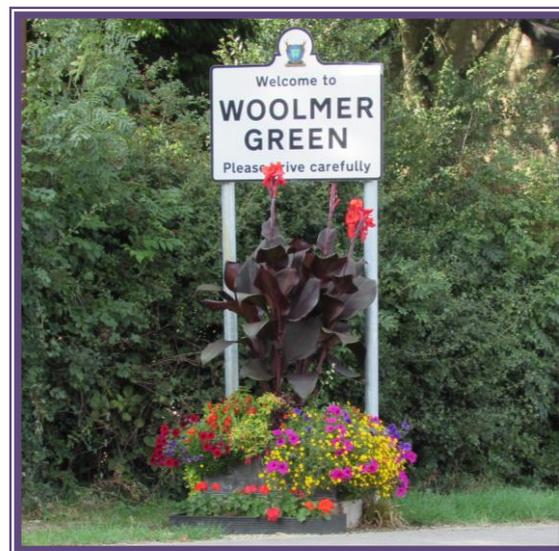
The Parish Council donated £200 to the school Friends Association to help towards playground improvements.

The Parish Council is grateful to Jackson's Garage which donated £500 to the Parish Council to help with playground improvements and to pay for the plants for the village planters. Thanks go to Councillor Jenny Hawkins for ensuring the planters provide a colourful display.

A couple who hired the village hall for their wedding reception donated £300 to the Parish Council as a thank you for our staff's support in helping to accommodate their requirements for their special day. We wish them well.

The Parish Council rebuilt its web site during 2019 to ensure it can keep residents fully informed of Council business and local information.

The Parish Council relies on help from volunteers so thank you to all those that deliver the newsletter or help with various tasks when required. Your support is greatly appreciated.



Statement of Accounts

2017/18	Receipts:	2018/19
43,612.58	Hall Lettings	45,878.30
6,652.58	Children' Centre	6,619.54
600.00	Security	825.00
1,819.27	Pitch Fees	1,662.27
460.00	Bar	425.00
567.50	Farmers' Market Income	758.30
2,094.45	Car Park	1,614.07
533.24	Allotments	554.34
164.15	Interest on Investments	138.86
296.12	Council Tax Support Grant	55.29
	Entertainment Fund :	
715.00	Village Day	884.78
636.00	Advertising	1,103.00
728.30	Other	691.13
2,580.00	Other income	1,503.00
61,459.19	TOTAL RECEIPTS	62,712.88
	Payments:	
35,465.45	Payroll	38,618.66
	Hall Maintenance :	
3,725.00	Insurance	3,874.00
6,719.73	Water, Gas, Electricity, Waste	5,690.20
4,038.39	License, Safety, Supplies	2,860.12
	Grounds Maintenance :	
4,895.84	Grounds	6,041.87
3,330.00	Playgrounds	2,925.17
533.24	Allotments	554.34
1,207.50	Office Expenses	1351.65
150.00	Publicity	150.00
1,107.10	Audit & legal fees	875.00
809.08	HAPTC, CDA, CPRE	805.70
1,106.82	Grants	1,200.00
668.75	Sundry Expenses	555.22
	Entertainment Fund :	
337.64	Village Day	754.46
645.00	Newsletter	540.00
532.00	Other	711.69
	Non Recurring Payments:	
4,319.44	Hall Maintenance	3,645.62
1,000.00	Hall Floor	-
11,671.66	Hall Windows	-
1,300.00	Wedding License	-
-	Toilet Refurbishment	5,500.96
-	Planning Consultant	1,193.60
1,865.00	PPP	1,000.00
0	Contingency	0
85,427.64	TOTAL PAYMENTS	78,848.26
-23,968.45	Income less Expenses	-16,135.38
24,721.00	Precept	25,190.00
752.55	Surplus	9,054.62
52,329.21	BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD	53,081.76
53,081.76	TOTAL FUND	62,136.38

