



# **WOOLMER GREEN PARISH COUNCIL**

**Annual Report 2013/14**

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## The Council

Parish Councils are an elected corporate body that have been granted powers under Parliament to raise money through taxation and make decisions on behalf of the people that it serves. Woolmer Green Parish Council was formed in 2000 having previously been part of Welwyn Parish Council. Woolmer Green has six Councillors who are elected to serve a four year term of office and each have an area of responsibility and represent the Council on outside bodies.

**Phil Corke, Chairman,** Village Hall & Staffing Committee.  
Represents the Council on the Policing Priorities Forum.  
A member of the School Friends Association.

**Gareth Lloyd, Vice Chairman,** Village Hall, Planning, Staffing Committee.

**Andy Gribble,** Transport & Young Person Liaison.  
Represents the Council on St Michael's School's Travel Forum & Barleyfields Advisory Group.

**Sarah Hall,** Finance, Staffing Committee & Allotment Liaison.  
Treasurer of the Allotment Committee.

**Alex Tobin,** Planning & Communications.

**Tony White,** Environment. A director of Twin Foxes Management Ltd.

**Janet Pearce, Clerk,** Proper officer of the Council and Responsible Financial Officer. An employee who is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the Council, managing its facilities and ensuring it complies with the law.

Councillors attend meetings with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the Clerk has occasional meetings with Welwyn Hatfield Head of Planning. Councillors also attend the Highways Liaison Meetings and Welwyn Hatfield Association of Local Councils Meetings.

In July 2013 Judith Watson retired from the Council having previously been a member of the Woolmer Green Residents Association that campaigned for Woolmer Green to become a Parish Council in its own right and which was finally achieved in 2000. Judith was the first Chairman of the Council and in all held the position on two occasions for a total of seven years. We are indebted to Judith for her drive, commitment and dedication to Woolmer Green and who has been instrumental in laying the foundations for the development of an active and effectual Parish Council which will continue into the future.

A reception was held for Judith in August 2013 which was well attended by residents, Borough Councillors and Parish Councillors from across the borough.

**Borough Councillors:** Councillors Julie Cragg, Steve Markiewicz and Carl Storer.  
Your Borough Councillors hold three Surgeries a year in Woolmer Green Village Hall where anyone is welcome to attend. In 2014 they will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 5<sup>th</sup> July and 4<sup>th</sup> October 10.00am-10.45am

**County Councillor:** Richard Smith.

## Hall & Grounds

On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2013 Woolmer Green welcomed the Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield to perform the opening ceremony of the orchard. Volunteer Jenny Hawkins, with the help of the school children, planted wild flowers in the area and the resulting summer display was spectacular. Thank you Jenny for your enthusiasm and hard work.

A new mixed native hedge was planted at the back of the orchard during the Autumn.

The orchard project was entered into the CPRE Rural Living Awards and was highly commended.

An open event was held in February 2013 to get an idea of what sort of equipment children and parents would like to see installed in the hall playground. A number of companies were approached to design the playground and the brief was for it to compliment the adjacent orchard and natural surrounding area. Wicksteed produced a superb scheme and we have been working with them throughout the year to perfect it and to make it work within our budget. Grant applications were submitted and we were successful in obtaining £25,000 from SITA Trust, £3,500 from Fields in Trust and £2,000 from our County Councillor, Richard Smith's Locality Budget. It is expected that the new equipment will be installed near to the 30<sup>th</sup> April.

The stop net at the far end of the football pitch was replaced with the help of a £750 grant from Stevenage Community Trust.

From Easter 2013 the WHBC Play Rangers programme for children over six years was extended to include one day a week at Woolmer Green during school holidays. The scheme has proved to be very popular and is set to continue.

The Parish Council would like to thank the three members of staff that keep the hall running smoothly throughout the year. The village hall remains as popular as ever and is far busier than the average village hall. Hirers come from across the country to use the hall as a training venue and conference centre as well as to hold parties and weddings. Ensuring the hall is clean & tidy and catering for the requirements of a diverse range of uses keeps us all on our toes but our staff are at the front line and cope tremendously well with customers demands.

## Environment

The Parish Council was successful in its application to the Parish Paths Partnership for a grant of £1,000. This paid for a section of footpath number 2 to be resurfaced; this is the footpath that connects London Road with Garden Road. Herts Highways repaired the curb stones at the entrance to footpath 24, Bridgers Path. The County Council paid for work to be done to footpath 10.

The Council has carried out a survey of the village's trees with a view to getting important amenity trees protected.

# Transport

After three years of talks with Herts Highways we were informed that the whole B197 road scheme is to go ahead during the summer of 2014. A formal consultation was conducted in September 2013 and received one of the highest responses Highways had seen with an overwhelming majority in favour of the scheme. Thanks must go to all the residents that responded to the consultation and helped raise money for the plans, Nick Collingridge and Paula Deane who have been instrumental in the success of this project as part of the B197 Action Group and also to our County Councillor, Richard Smith for his support throughout.

# Planning

The Parish Council are consulted by the Borough Council on all planning applications in Woolmer Green. During 2013/14 the Council submitted comments on twelve applications.

# Shopping

Sadly the Spar shop in Woolmer Green closed in November 2013. The opening of a Tesco petrol station at the Roebuck proved too much competition for Marshall's whose takings dropped by 50% and its Head Office decided it could not continue operating this facility at a loss.

Thanks must go to Libby & Steve at the Red Lion who are supplying a morning paper to order.

It is hoped that a small village shop can be set up in the near future and options are being considered.

## Food & Craft Market

The Market takes place on the fourth Sunday of the month except August from 9.00am until 12.00pm. It is run very efficiently by Managers Debbie & Lisa who supply sausage or bacon rolls and refreshments. Every month there is a regular vegetable stall, meat stall, cheese stall and fish van as well as a range of crafts.

Some Parish Councillors will always be in attendance at the Market should a resident wish to discuss anything with them.

# Consultations

## **The Council submitted a response to the following consultations:**

WHBC Planning Application Validation Consultation.

WHBC Contaminated Land Strategy 2013-18.

Affinity Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan Consultation.

PRS & PPL Survey.

HCC Setting Local Speed Limits consultation.

The Future of Hertfordshire Library Service consultation.

Future of the Children's Centre Consultation

# Finance

## Statement of Accounts at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014

<b><u>Total Receipts</u></b>	<b>£</b>
Hall Lettings	40,991.53
Children' Centre	4,881.75
Security	530.00
Pitch Fees	1,600.00
Bar	485.00
Farmers' Market Income	848.50
Allotments	493.70
Interest on Investments	111.14
Council Tax Support Grant	1,564.27
Other	7,153.24
	<u><b>58,659.13</b></u>
<b><u>Total Payments</u></b>	
Payroll	34,117.59
<b>Hall Maintenance:</b>	
Rates	3,932.30
Insurance	4,527.61
Water, Gas, Electricity	5,323.27
License, Safety, Supplies	3,600.82
<b>Grounds Maintenance:</b>	
Grounds	6,615.79
Playgrounds	2,945.00
Allotments	493.70
Office Expenses	1035.19
Publicity	141.00
Audit & legal fees	405.00
HAPTC, CDA, CPRE, FIT	821.26
Grants	730.00
Sundry Expenses	461.77
<b>TOTAL RECURRING EXPENSE</b>	<b>65,150.30</b>
Hall Maintenance:	3,082.23
Wedding License	1,300.00
Election	0.00
PPP	1,283.33
Contingency	0.00
<b>TOTAL NON-RECURRING EXPENSE</b>	<b>5,665.56</b>
	<u><b>70,815.86</b></u>
<b><u>Income less Expenses</u></b>	<b>-12,156.73</b>
<b>Precept</b>	<u>21,500.00</u>
	9,343.27
Balance B/Fwd at 1.4.13	<u>31,040.04</u>
<b><u>FUND</u></b>	<u><b>40,383.31</b></u>