

OPEN SPACES UPDATE

For the Parish Council Meeting on 13th September 2023

[Collated by Cllr Anna Bowes – individual reports conducted by Jim Culkin, Cllr Bob Hooper, Lynn and Gordon Mayer, Chris Attenborough and Carolyn Ford]. This report will be annexed to the minutes of the PC meeting and available on the website.]

This report will summarise the individual reports helpfully compiled by our open spaces volunteers and at the conclusion, there is a task list of new issues and outstanding issues, which will be revisited at the next meeting.

Once again, on behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to express our thanks to our volunteers.

Report from Jim Culkin:

1. Hursley Park.

Nothing to report. The park and central green are well managed.

2. Welham Lane.

There is a bag of waste fly tipped at the gate entry to Hursley Park and some occasional waste elsewhere.

The trees and verge has been cut back on the LHS approach to the over-bridge.

3. Welham Road.

The temporary entrance off Welham Road still has issues. Plastic sheet is slowly getting buried and needs to be removed as do the shards of plywood, the remnants of the temporary hard surface.

There is also a fallen tree adjacent the entrance blocking the verge.



Report from Carolyn Ford

Spent the morning walking the greens and commons with Debbi Payne from LCC, while doing that I notice an addition post that needs replacing on the Langton Rd side of the common - next to the newly refurbished / extended 'bungalow'. (See photos.) The previously reported post on the Manor Rd side is also still adrift! [CF supplied two photos which for some reason, my computer does not like! Photos clearly that the post is well and truly out of the ground and needs replacing].

Bob Hooper

No issues to report

Chris Attenborough

Group 3 – Chris Attenborough

Main Street from bridge to junction with Lang Rd excluding Gunnsbrook Close itself; Manor Rd: both sides, verges & open spaces (Common land by Chater: SP 74419 88701) (Common land between Langton Road & Manor Road SP 74399 88955); Langton Rd: from Main St/The Green end to junction of Welham Rd; both sides, etc. (Common Land at Langton Road SP 74444 88865).

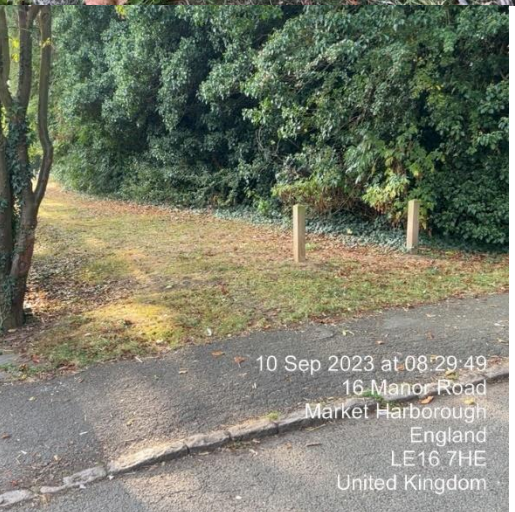
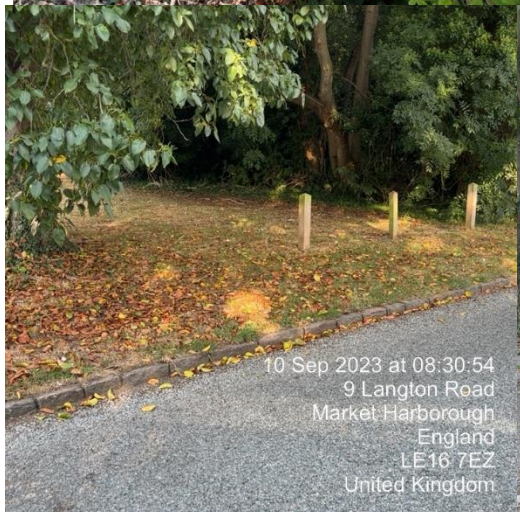
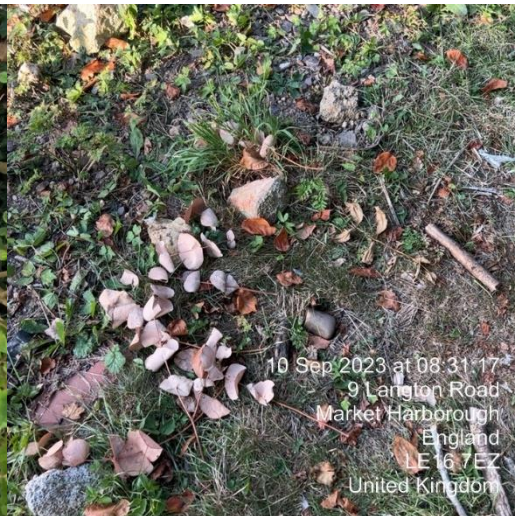
The walk was conducted on 10th September with the following route. The walk takes approximately 1 hour with some photos and 30 mins to organise and write up the report.



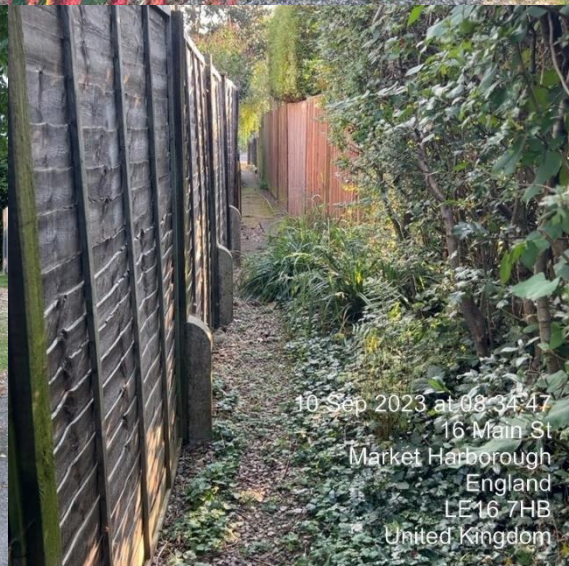
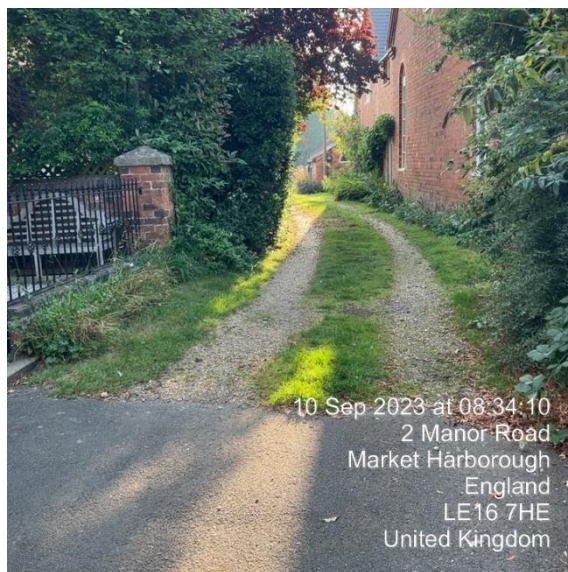
Points to note.

- Manor Road common land - as previously reported, there is the ivy covering the trees, probably very good for wildlife but for awareness.
- The paths either side look a bit of a mess and could really do with a tidy up, removing rubble etc. It's a shame as this area could look quite nice if it was tidied up. It would be good for wildlife if it were allowed to grow wild but with an accessible path through the middle.

- There are also posts missing at both sides (Manor Road and Langton Road) which have broken and should be replaced.



2. The posts were not individually inspected as I didn't really have time and with the dry weather, the hard ground makes it more likely that the bollards will be loose. I will inspect the bollards closely next time.
3. All footpaths now adequately sign-posted and all found to be clear and accessible. These are the footpaths between main street, manor road and Langton road. These are particularly interesting and striking at this time of year.

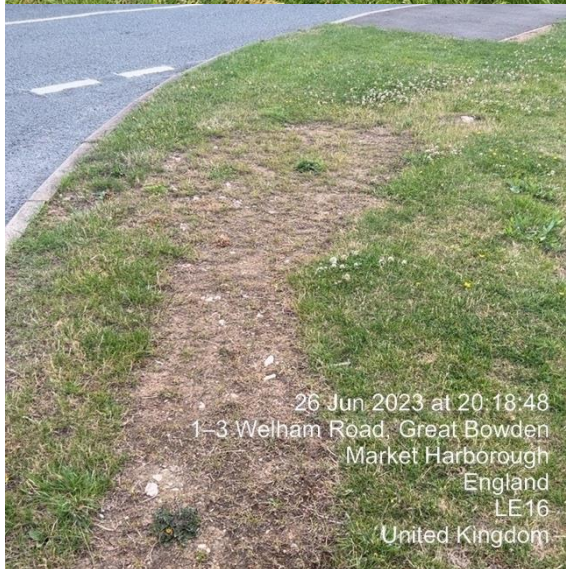




1. The common land, which still seems to still appear as common land on the Village Green maps as held by LCC solicitors, CL71 still seems to be registered as common land but is currently enclosed and has been for some time?
2. Other common lands were visited and observed as being as per the register - CL72, CL73, CL74, CL77.
3. Ground here seems to have improved although it is hard to see the grass at this time of year. The carpet of leaves in the sunshine looks stunning.



4. The reseeding before the bus stop (at the Welham road / Langton road corner) was not inspected so I will check this next time (old photos).



5. The bin next to the phone box is overflowing and needs emptying.



6. Has the telephone box adjacent been adopted? I understand these will be removed at some point but the village can opt to adopt and keep them. I am not sure if this has happened? ([Adopt A Kiosk | BT Business](#))

Great Bowden, Route 5 report for the Parish Council September meeting

We walked the route on the 9th September - a glorious hot sunny day.

The newly laid hedge on Dingley Road has filled in nicely. The large entrance to the field on the left before the delimit sign has had its gates removed and a trench dug in their place to stop ingress of vehicles.

We noticed several tiles missing or damaged in the listed mud wall at the back of the church and round the corner.

There is no obvious change to the land behind the listed wall with the planning notice although the grass and much of the undergrowth has been trimmed.

The verges to the entrance of the new faux Tudor building is dry but still in need of remediation.

The fenced common land off Welham Road is very presentable and is a credit to whoever is looking after it. We did notice an area of reseeded being undertaken in the centre.

The land at the junction of Welham Road and Lime Tree Place is wild. We're unsure as to whether the next piece of land is on our route but we have included photographs of the fallen tree and the builder's rubbish left from a previous project.

In general the verges throughout the route are very neat.



Update on routes 1 & 2 – Carolyn Ford

Route 1 (Leicester Lane inc Heathcote Grange & allotments; Top Yard area and bottom of Burnmill Rd to village boundary; Main Street from Burnmill Rd to railway bridge both sides)

Route 2 (Green Lane + Upper Green Place (whole of, except frontage on Main St is in Route 1))

These items, copied from the July previously ‘outstanding list’ are perhaps still... outstanding?

- Upper Greens: Awaiting ‘Do not drive on the grass’ signs. Have these arrived yet?
- Rotten post further down Main St - (already reported by Open Spaces report). Awaiting replacement – or awaiting a ‘Do not drive...’ sign?.

Leicester Lane

- Even in dry periods the road edges on LL continue to deteriorate (see below) causing hazards

for unsuspecting motorists and cyclists. The worst instances are on the outbound side from approx the Heathcote Grange entrance to Great Bowden Hall. *Was this raised with Highways Maintenance as a result of the last report?*

- **Can the PC give an update on progress** re two replacement benches (to mark Coronation Year) agreed to be included in the next round of S106 claims please? New benches to replace the now dangerous HDC ones – see below. (Requires negotiation with LCC via HDC to allow us to replace them under the existing Licencing.)
- **Footfall** on both sides of the Lane continues to be high.



A48 footpath as accessed from Leicester Lane: We have an ongoing issue with antisocial behaviour(?) – otherwise known as motocross bikes tearing up and down both the northern and southern parts of the path; and also making excursions into the arable crops. On 4 August we noted a different incident involving a group with a quadbike - this resulted in criminal damage to the landowner's fencing and Highways footpath signage. (The Police recorded it as 'antisocial behaviour' – case number 230004843331.

We reported on this issue in the September issue of the village newsletter – please see page 2. Subsequently Lynn Mayer (Heathcote) and myself had a meeting with John Gray, the LCC Footpaths Officer covering the HDC area. The nuisance is ongoing but it seems capable of resolution at least on the northern stretch of the footpath. Please see Item 17 on the PC's Agenda for its meeting 14 September.

Heathcote Grange/Barwood/Cora Specific:



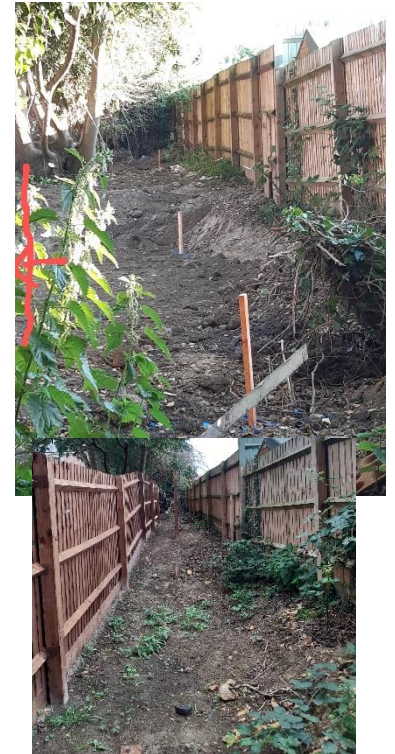
(Historical) Barwood/Cora specific issue – the 5 metre corridor – about 2m in reality - which Mulberry were 'conditioned' to leave as a wildlife - 'environmental gain' - corridor on the eastern side of their site (boundary with Saw Mill) was decimated during Barwood's construction efforts – photo left.

Update 1: Barwood/Cora's land grab action resulted in a boundary dispute with the adjoining residents. Next photo shows the extent (on 15 June) of the land grab – basically Barwood/Cora claiming all of the environmental buffer of the Heathcote Grange estate of the estate's eastern side. In my estimation, the correct boundary is to the left of the red arrow in pic on right.

Update 3: Partial inspection on 4 July shows as below left which, given the Mulberry boundary is approx where marked by vertical red arrow in photo below, looks to have returned a greater section of the 'environmental gain' buffer than the 'claim' shown by ground pegs in photo the right.



Update 4: on 14 August Lynn Mayer (Heathcote management team) and myself carried out another inspection. The width of the corridor is indeed better than expected (about 1.5 – 1.8m; see photo below right) but not as wide as it was before the and grab. I understand the Heathcote Management team are making efforts to clear the debris from the new corridor; create small wildlife refuges / hibernacula; and will then allow the space to naturalise; monitoring and reporting on the results.



Until such time as the LPA has a proper inspection and enforcement regime local developers will continue to push every boundary (literally and figuratively) in pursuit of expedient solutions to the density/layout difficulties they themselves create and which planners fail to mitigate. It's depressing, no win situation despite the legally enforceable Planning Conditions.

Barwood Homes (now Cora) – Old Sawmill development

Severe damage to Leicester Lane verges, parking bays, road edges, etc – action already taken

- By Cllr Champion, myself and Phil Andrews, LCC's Streetworks Inspector.
 - *Second update: the first licence obtained for the work was cancelled by RM Contractors; the second licence under the same numbers:*

GQ550HMS887819 Permit ref:GQ550HMS887819-02
 - Due to operate – with traffic control: 9 to 11 May
 - *Third update (9 May)* contractors have arrived on site and traffic control in place; remains to be seen how much 'remediation' takes place and to what standard.
 - *Fourth update (10 May)* – what can you say about this which doesn't contain expletives? See R M Contractors' idea of adequate remediation here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/4ELrfcKD1FkQktCC9>
 - *Fifth update (early June)* RM contractors escape blame when western Power Distribution's contractors arrive early June to tear up the same piece of verge! We await further remediation via the Streetworks Inspectors' powers! Kier's standard of work is just as dire as that of the previous contractors – how our mowing contractor is supposed to safely mow over a surface left strewn as shown below is beyond me. They even leave the hazard tapes buried in the backfill! (*See photos in previous*

report.)

- **Sixth update (August)** and believe me, this remediation work is every bit as tedious to get rectified as it is to read about!

In the interim, Cadent Gas had a 'verge event' when they replaced a gas main on the opposite side of the road; their remediation has been judged satisfactory. Meanwhile we still await remediation of the damage done by Kier, Western Power Distribution's contractors. The latest report from Phil Andrews to Barry Champion and myself is:

Cadent Gas completed their works, and on inspection, they had reinstated the verge accordingly where they had set up their cabin etc, this had been cleared with topsoil and seed reinstated.

Following the above, I notified NG Power via email and associated issued reinstatement defect, informing them, as Cadent had now left site, they could now submit a remedial permit for approval to rectify the verge trench etc via blading/scraping the surface level/removal of all aggregate and topsoiling and seeding. This is in the process of being resolved as I have been informed by NG Power, they will submitting a permit for the remedials in accordance with their works programme.

Please be assured, I will make sure this is concluded in due course. [Ends]

Green Lane – Barwood/Cora - action (and research) is ongoing

- Contractors are still parking in the adjacent field under permitted development rights;
- The spoil heap has been removed (see photo right). Footpath is fully accessible.



- **Note:** Upper Green footpath walked 9 September as recorded (see below) Please walk this historic highway/footpath often – it must be kept open.



Main Street itself

- Parking in front of Nos 102 -108 – at last meeting, it was proposed a letter be sent - **was that actioned?**
- Some improvement re hedges that overhang the footpath on Main St – a couple of hedges have been cut back;
- As noted previously (often) this open space in the photo right (part of our Neighbourhood Plan Policy: other open spaces) is rapidly becoming an enclosed garden. (I keep reporting it – and walking through it as it is an open verge – thus an historic record may be required if an adverse possession situation arises.)



Main St, Wildflower verges

- Very successful season for our Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) – much seed on the triangular verge.
- “These verges will be hand cut sometime during August” – this action has suffered a few setbacks (weather and other unforeseen ‘misfortunes’); however, I believe we are now fully equipped to complete the cutting.

Please see the addition report, circulated separately, re my meeting about verges, on 1 September, with Debbi Payne, Environmental and Preventative Manager, Highway Operation Control, Leicestershire County Council

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED/TASK LIST

1. Fly tipping on Welham Lane – one bag of waste identified at the Hursley Park entrance – who can be contacted about this? PC to report to HDC ... **The Police have been made aware of this by the person who spotted it and the outcome is contained in the report of Laura Bolton.**
2. Temporary entrance off Welham Road needs attention – plastic sheeting becoming embedded in the ground and fallen tree causing a hazard. **Paul Claxton to have a word with the owner of the property Louise Humphrey. It has been suggested that the tree that fell down could be used to create a hedge.**
3. Post on Langton Road needs replacing as identified by CF. Missing posts on Manor and Langton Road also identified by CA. **When Richard the tree surgeon starts up again he will do this. Paul Claxton to speak to him.**
4. Manor Road – messy paths – need a bit of a clean up. **To be kept under review.**
5. Phone box (on Main Street) issue identified by CA – this has already been sponsored by the GBPC (some boxes are being decommissioned and villages have the option of adopting them). The fact that it has already been sponsored by GBPC means that it will remain in use. JA has reported that a report is sent to GBPC every year to show use of the phone box – it is used quite a lot and it is thought therefore that it would not be in the interests of village residents for the phone box to be decommissioned. If at any stage in the future the use should dwindle significantly, GBPC will investigate the possibility of changing the sponsorship to an adoption and repurposing the phone box (eg as a box exchange et...). No action needed at present.
6. Missing tiles in the mud wall – **Anna Bowes to have a word with the footpaths officer and ask him to go and visit the wall (John Grey LCC).**
7. Welham Road/Limetree Place builder's rubbish etc – **this appears to have been moved.**
8. Potholes on Leicester Lane – **Paul Claxton to mention to Leicester highways and to take photos over the weekend. These run from the entrance to Heathcote to GB Hall. There are about 6 potholes undermining the edge of the road. They aren't in the road but they are undermining the edge.**
9. Wild flower verges – **an alternative route will now be taken. They will be cut and it will be raked. CF had a successful meeting with Debbi Payne from LCH who is the operations manager ... it was a very useful meeting, ended in good spirits and agreeing to cooperate on the wild flower verges and greens and commons and because she came out and orientated herself by walking round, it brought the issue to life. The Leicester Lane verge issue has also been resolved. A very successful meeting between Carolyn Ford and Debbi Payne.**

Outstanding items from the last meeting:

- Upper Green Place do not drive on the grass signs – **Jon Almond to keep this under review – it is an ongoing issue.**
- Posts outside the shoulder of Mutton are being monitored on an ongoing basis.

