



News and events

- Talks at **Welwyn Archaeological Society**: Friday 24 Jan. Victoria Ziegler 'Early Medieval London: from wic to burh'. Friday 7 Feb. Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews 'Royston Cave and the Templars?'. 7.45, United Reformed Church, WGC, opposite Sainsbury's.
- **Codicote Village Museum** (behind Peace Memorial Hall) is open on some Sundays from March to June 2020 from 2.00 to 5.00pm. Tel: 01438 821849 for details.
- **Next meeting**: Our next meeting will be at 7.30 on Wednesday 19 February when Kate Thompson will give a talk 'Housing the deserving poor in Hertfordshire'.

Notes and queries

First meeting of the Parish Council

Thirteen good men and true, honest denizens of Wheathampstead, met at the old school in Church Street on 2 January 1895 for the first meeting of Wheathampstead Parish Council, created by the Local Government Act 1894. The councillors (all men) ranged in age from 33 to 70 and included grocers, butchers, builders, blacksmiths, the rector Rev. Owen Davys, miller



George Titmuss, and Apsley Cherry Garrard (senior) of Lamer Park. Each councillor swore an oath that he would '...duly and faithfully fulfil the duties [of his

office] according to the best of my judgement and ability'. It was agreed that meetings would be held at 7.00 pm and that 5s. would be paid for the hire of the schoolroom.

Twelve meetings were held in the first year covering subjects ranging from the provision of allotments to the care of the fire engine and the supervision of apprentices under the terms of the James Marshall charity. There were letters of complaint about the state of the footpaths across John Ransome's land at Bury Farm, perhaps prompted by children from The Folly arriving at school with wet and muddy boots.

The Council actively sought for land that could be used as allotments, though this was not a legal requirement of local authorities until 1908. On 1 March it was proposed that a petition be sent to Mr Baxendale at Gustard Wood asking for a piece of land for allotments. This may have been the

land that is still known as 'Baxendale allotments' though at the next meeting of the council it was proposed that land at Gustard Wood belonging to Rev. Davys and to Apsley Cherry Garrard be taken for allotments. Land at the Folly belonging to Mr Robins of Delaport and tenanted by W. Seabrook was commandeered for allotments at 35s. per acre.

The Council spent much time discussing sewerage, the cost of which was covered by a sixpenny rate. In April it was proposed that 'a sewage cart be purchased for the sole use of the Wheathampstead parish' and in August that storm water should be taken out of the drains.

Feelings ran high about the widening of Mill Bridge. One can imagine the angry scenes when Apsley Cherry Garrard (later Major-General) 'withdrew his name from the council in consequence of Mr Odell contracting for the bridge, he being a parish councillor'. He was asked to withdraw his resignation and Mr Odell withdrew his contract. The job was done within a year at a cost of £135 with a highway rate of 3d. in the pound being raised to cover the costs.



Ruth Jeavons

Correction The date in the brickwork on 1, Church Street is 1746, not 1846 as I said at the Christmas Quiz. Mike Martin has deciphered the text as '17 I:H 46'. 'I.H' is Isaac House whose family owned land and property in and around Wheathampstead for many years.

Patrick McNeill