

Warden's Notes: December 2023

Hello

This is the latest of an occasional series of personal notes by me, Martin Stuart, the Parish Warden, where I talk about what's happening in Grappenhall and Thelwall, what work I've been doing recently and bring you some pictures of the amazing wealth of natural beauty and wildlife that I come across whilst travelling around the parish.

I work 16 hours a week patrolling the highways, footpaths and public places in the parish keeping them free from litter and clear of overhanging growth and weeds along with any other tasks that need doing. I also act as the 'eyes and ears' of the Parish Council by resolving problems that occur or reporting them to other authorities. I like to think that I act as an ambassador for the Parish Council, being out and about around the parish and being able to talk to lots of residents. So, if you see me around (wearing my hi-vis vest that says what I am) stop and have a chat or at least say hello.



The 2 of us

Now that there are 2 of us Parish Wardens, Bradley having joined the team as noted in my previous *Wardens Notes*, we do of course have a greater capacity for getting tasks done in a shorter space of time. Examples shown below are, Firstly the footway alongside Chester Road running up to the canal bridge. As is the case in many locations in the Parish, the footway was gradually narrowing due to the encroachment of soil and weeds which we were able to clear away and restore the footway's full width once more.



.We intend to take action to tackle this problem where it exists on various roadside footways throughout the Parish using a variety of tools and techniques. So watch this space.

If you are aware of a particular footway that has narrowed significantly in this manner, please report it in to the Parish Council office so we can deal with it.

Secondly, are *before* and *after* pictures of the footpath that loops round the Green at Grappenhall Heys.

You probably didn't even know that there is a rather nice brick edging to this path which, up until now, has been obscured by weeds and soil.

Unfortunately, the only way to remove this overgrowth is by hard manual labour with a shovel. Bradley and I are doing this work but it will take time.



Road Signs

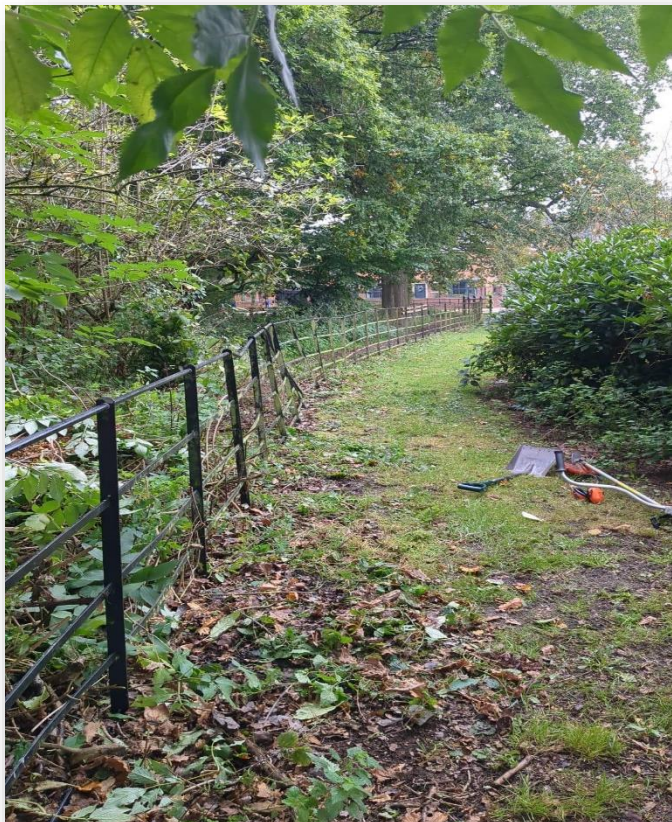
Another area of work that we continue to carry out is cleaning up road signs which can



quickly become illegible with the build up of dirt and grime, particularly where they are in wooded areas.

So again, if you are aware of any dirty road signs within the Parish, please let us know so we can deal with them.

Fence painting



You may have noticed painting taking place to the rather nice *estate and parkland fencing* at Grappenhall Heys recently. Our task was to clear the foliage and grass around the fencing to allow the painting to proceed.

What you may not realize is that the work is being done by the Community Payback team so that there is no cost to the Parish Council other than the provision of paint and equipment.

This seems to me like a 'win win' situation whereby we get a necessary job done at minimal cost whilst giving minor offenders the chance to repay their debt to society.

Hedges and Footpaths

Most of the footpaths leading in to Morris Brook Park in Grappenhall are edged with attractive dense planting belts. For several years now I have trimmed these hedges back in the summer, in some cases, to prevent the footpath closing up entirely. However, what most of them need is thoroughly thinning out, reducing in height back to the level of the adjacent fences as they were originally and self-sown saplings taking out.

Now that Bradley and I are chainsaw trained and equipped we are able to carry out this work and will be working our way through these thickets this winter.

The pictures below show 'before and after' views of the considerable thicket at the entrance to Menlow Close which we started on. Don't worry if it looks a little scrawny at the moment – the new growth in Spring will sort that out.



Nature and Wildlife

There's a certain sort of damp and mild weather that arrives in Autumn which usually produces an amazing '*crop*' of fungi in and around the woods and fields of our beautiful Parish. Below are pictures of some of the amazing specimens that I came across whilst out and about carrying out my duties.



Rant of the Month

This is the part of these 'Notes' where I let rip about a specific type of litter which is particularly irritating me.

I sometimes think I'll have to abandon 'rant of the month' as I've covered every possible type of litter or rubbish over the years so this time I've returned to an old favourite which I've covered before but which is both infuriating and puzzling.



And this is it – dog poo in bags hung in hedges.

I fail to see why anyone would go to the trouble of picking the stuff up and putting it in a special bag and then hanging it in a hedge. But the end result is that it is actually much worse than just leaving it on the ground as it will now take years to decay.

The message is the same as for all the other forms of litter, please take them home or put them in a litter bin rather than just tossing them on the ground or, in this case, hanging them in a hedge.

Fly tipping and litter

And finally, if you come across examples of fly-tipping or large concentrations of litter within the parish that I can clear up (or where there are larger items involved which Warrington Council will move) please let us know by contacting the Parish Council on **01925 264918** or info@gtpc.org.uk

I can't promise to always deal with everything reported instantly but can usually deal with most things reported within the week in order to keep the parish as clean and shiny as we all want it to be.