

Wroughton Parish Council

Open Spaces Meeting 5th December 2023

7. The old Swan car park, Priors Hill.

Introduction

WPC understands that the old Swan car park belongs to SBC and/ or the pub landlord (depending on the perimeter). It is surrounded by hedge/ shrubs. Every 2 or 3 years, the hedges need cutting back in order to maintain good visibility and to stop the hedge encroaching into the parking spaces. It used to be maintained by SBC. Some of the Greens Lane residents have also tried to tidy the area in the past. WPC has been advised that SBC no longer has a streetworks team, so there is no longer any SBC resource to maintain this type of area. WPC has supported a resident to ask Royal Mail to remove the pouch box from the site. The resident has advised that the hedges now need a good cut back and has asked whether WPC would help by carrying out this work.

Looking forward

It is likely that SBC will seek to devolve more functions to parish councils during the next year. There are various areas around Wroughton which have not yet been devolved and which need ongoing maintenance, including this site. It would be useful to carry out some maintenance to tidy up this site and assess the impact on both the Grounds Team, and also on that area of Priors Hill.

Reports coming out of the covid lockdowns hi-lited that outdoor space plays a vital role in people's physical and mental health. There has also long been a school of thought which advocates that our environment has a profound impact on our wellbeing, and that an environment which looks cared for reduces stress & anxiety, and encourages people to take pride in their local neighbourhood, whilst 'litter begets litter' – ie: cues within our environment determine people's behavior.

The car park is within Wroughton Conservation Area. The Appraisal advises at P16 the car park is listed as one of the three significant open spaces in the conservation area. It is described as 'an unkempt car park that gives prominence to Swan House, a characterful typically late Victorian building in brick and tile'. It also states at P20 that 'The parking area in front of Swan House would benefit from landscaping on the fringe'. The Conservation Area Appraisal and the Map of the Conservation Area are available to view on VSM.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to approve:

- 1. That the Grounds Team:**
 - a) Take before photos**
 - b) Carry out maintenance of the site**
 - c) Log the hours worked**
 - d) Log the amount of green waste and any rubbish removed from the site, and how this is disposed of**
 - e) Take 'after' photos showing the difference made to the neighbourhood.**
- 2. The Clerk & Deputy Clerk to work with the Grounds Team Manager to try to assess the impact in financial/ resource terms, to give some context to any request by SBC to devolve additional outdoor maintenance functions.**