

## Wooburn & Bourne End Parish Council - Public Notification

Issued by Sue Wagner, Council Chairman 31/07/2020



### Sappers Field closed - Sink Hole and related Safety Risks

#### The Sink Hole - a major concern for the Parish

On Saturday 29. February this year, a large sink hole appeared close to the centre of Sappers Field, a well used recreation amenity, owned by Bucks Council and, for many years, leased by the Parish.

When Parish Council staff made a first inspection of the hole, further surrounding earth fell into it. Their initial simple test confirmed that the hole was deep... subsequent professional Surveyor tests have confirmed it is 140 feet and still active.

#### Wooburn and Bourne End Parish immediate action

To protect human life, Sappers Field was **closed and security fencing installed to block entry by any unauthorised people.**

Bucks Council and our Parish insurers were informed. Information and advice were sought from the **British Geological Society** which provided contact with **experienced Professionals** who made a site safety visit. They approved the steps taken to-date, suggested others and then carried out intensive surveys of the site.

Their 2 Survey Reports are posted in the Parish Website... <https://wooburnparish.gov.uk/news>

#### What the 2 Surveys indicate

The first, **Geoterra's Subsurface Laser Scan & HD Video Survey of a Sinkhole & Bell Pit** provides graphic details of the hole and its surroundings. The laser scan on page 7 is enlightening; it clearly confirms that this is not a trivial hole! It is large and dangerous.

The second, **TerraDat's GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT** is more detailed and technical and includes a terse description (below) of the site...

Historically the site was a **former brickworks** that includes both an **open-pit and potentially, several mine shafts.** The open-pit was then **backfilled in the 1960s' with waste material** and then remediated (by the Sappers) in the 1970s' to form a recreational park.

The map on page 23 illustrates the **7 locations of concern (i.e. potential further sink holes)** in Sappers Field and some of its immediate surroundings.

**Note:** all of these initial actions were funded by our Parish Council to avoid delay.

#### Subsequent actions

The Parish Council has met with Bucks Council (BC) - see the minutes of the meeting in the Parish Website at <https://wooburnparish.gov.uk/news>. It has been agreed that:

1. BC is responsible for management of Sappers Field and all further work.
2. The old lease held by our Parish no longer applies.
3. BC will arrange for the play equipment and Beacon, both owned by the Parish, to be removed from Sappers Field and returned to a space above the Town cemetery.
4. Sappers Field will remain closed to the public and sealed off with more substantial barriers while expert advice is sought on the available options.

The Parish Council has kept the local Residents Associations informed of developments.

#### An evolving situation

As we learn more about BC's options and plans for Sappers Field, further notifications will be issued. Parishioners who are potentially affected are invited to pass comments and raise queries via our Parish Clerk by telephone on 01628 522827 or via email... [clerk@wooburnparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wooburnparish.gov.uk).