

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Environment and Leisure Working Group

Meeting Minutes Monday 8th April 2024

First meeting since the Environment and Leisure committee was dissolved by WMPC in March.

1. Attendees

Cllr Niki Fowler
Cllr Robin Cooke
Cllr John Horsnell
Cllr David Chenery
Cllr Pauline Huggins

Anne Westover Tree Warden
Andy Baker AA Representative
Simon Harrington Footpaths Warden
Sonya Exton; would like to join the working group

2. No apologies
3. No public in the room
4. Cllr Huggins kindly offered to investigate funding opportunities and grant schemes which might apply to environmental work.
This is in response to concerns expressed over lack of WMPC funds for environmental and biodiversity projects.
5. Cllr Cook agree to chair the working group at least for the current time.
6. Anne Westover agreed to take notes of meeting at least for this meeting.
7. Working group terms of reference will need to be agreed, it was unclear whether they would accord with the current E&L Committee ToFR, noting that some terms have been removed during last year e.g. Markets. Concern was expressed about the decision to dissolve the E&L Committee and what that would mean for dealing with environmental matters.
8. **Allotments** Update from Andy Baker
Simons Cross and Glebe plots almost fully booked.
Water, low pressure at Simons Cross, supply link will be investigated.
Problem appear to relate to the former SX allotment site still owned by James Holland.
Funding for repairs and future management/replacement may lie with site developer unless supply is re-routed.
All matters are in hand with Andy Baker and landowner.
Tea Party to be planned at Simons Cross.
Andy has planted hazel bushes for coppice.

Glebe Allotments John Eldridge unable to attend. Anne advised that she has recommended to AA that there is a need to clean up and replenish the southern boundary hedge. There is a significant amount of debris on the allotment side.

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Concerns are still being raised regarding sycamore seedlings coming from the trees by John Eldridge, these also spread into nearby plots but can be easily removed.

Plot 39 The remains of Hazel copse still in place, since most was grubbed out. It is hoped that the remaining copse will be managed as coppice. JE has tenancy agreement which requires coppicing so this will be monitored by AA. It was generally agreed that no further hazel should be removed and the need to consider wood source and biodiversity is important. Anne suggested that new hazel and other shrubs could be planted on the site/s. To raise with AA.

9. Simon Harrington Footpaths

Simon has prepared a report, circulated as paper copy and attached to the minutes.

Trees alongside footpath to tennis courts from Dallinghoo Road and within SX sports field.

Flooding issue, possible water leak. Type 1 material may be needed for surfacing.

SCC seem unwilling to re-surface public footpaths/rights of way.

Logged on reporting tool but little action from SCC.

A resident, J Ault is planning to top up surface on PRefW bordering west boundary to Glebe Allotments using hardcore and woodchip. Contact passed to Simon.

Sonya to double check the overhanging tree matter at SX field and whether the school academy will deal with these. Fence line has been amended by the school which leaves the trees 'outside' the fence line. Pauline had mentioned this previously.

Several members expressed concern about the possibility of WMPC having to pay and carry out surfacing work on the footpaths when others should be/are responsible. WG would prefer Simon to follow up further with SCC rights of way team.

Footway from High Street to Parkway can be a problem from litter and dog waste, noted this is not a designated PRefW.

Lamp column dog poo stickers, more are needed. It is hoped that WMPC Clerk can obtain these from ESC.

Sonya raised the Border Cot Lane B1078 hedge along footway and verge. The hedge can become overgrown but Simon has done some clearing recently. Other often clear the signs and footway. Landowner usually cuts back once a year in Autumn.

Funding for new walks leaflet from ESTI.

David to check with Clerk whether the funding can be carried over so that the leaflet can be progress with SCC, redesign and new print run, plus Discover Suffolk web site.

10. Cemetery

Anne advised she has considered applying for the ESC Quality of Place Awards, agreed to include a link as some were not aware of this award scheme.

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<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/design-heritage-ecology-trees-landscape-and-rights-of-way/quality-of-place-awards/2024-quality-of-place-awards/>

Deadline 28th June for this current year.

East Suffolk Council's 'Quality of Place' awards recognise efforts across the district to enhance the quality of the environment, by creating high-quality designs in both the built and natural environment and helping to conserve historic buildings.

Cemetery working group to meet in due course.

Anne to email Paul Tynan regarding dates and attendees.

Maintenance contracts; WG need to be sure of role in input into contracts.

Artificial flowers; how to discourage their use, general discussion took place.

Further consideration needed.

Promotion of a donation scheme for bulb planting / wildflowers could be an option to follow up. Several members were supportive of this idea to raise cemetery funds.

AB Trees work completed on various trees second week of March.

11. Tree Wardens update

Simons Cross playing field, three poplar trees will need management in next year or two. These were last pollarded some 20 years ago and management will be needed to prevent branch failure.

Sonya to check other trees as referred to above.

David Chenery risk assessments for trees, discussion took place. Anne can advise on how to progress such work; and has previously advised a rolling fund for WMPC tree management. £2k per year would be beneficial.

Tree survey maps will be needed for all open spaces in WMPC ownership, note Pightle tree survey already exists.

VH playing field Informal BMX track has developed; it was not sure who was leading on this. Sonya expressed concern over tree damage and undergrowth clearance in the field corner.

AB Trees; Anne confirmed that their work on the field had been completed in second week of March. This covered hedge management on south boundary, a small amount on north boundary, trimming the blackthorn 'tunnel' to ensure that the footpath was clear, cutting the dead Prunus canopy with the stump lowered and left on the ground to slowly rot, safely forming part of the informal track.

Question was raised, are the PC liable if there are any incidents from kids using the informal track? Can signage assist with covering risk?

David advised a risk assessment was needed around the safety of people/children using the informal BMX.

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Agreed the impact on the green space and tree health needs to be assessed and monitored.

12. Bird boxes

Sonya gave us an update on bird boxes she has been busy inspecting. Plans to 'pass on' the Pettistree boxes to PPC.

13. How much gravitas and responsibility does the group have? Members were concerned and agreed we need to be sure of our remit and status and ensure advice does not get overlooked. Agreed to review the E&L terms of reference available on line, WMPC web site.

14. Climate change group to operate separately under Cllr Gemma Dempsey Gray although it was recognised there were overlaps in many roles and projects.

15. Biodiversity actions. Cllr Niki Fowler was expressed the need for Biodiversity actions to be taken forward with ideas set out in Anne's recent report (to E&L committee 12th February re statutory duties) developed further and actioned. Niki has offered to act as a lead on this topic.

16. Next WAW 27th April at village hall. Cllr Chenery stated there was no funding available after the question was raised.

17. King Edward Avenue local green space. Cllr Chenery raised the question over the Flagship scheme at King Edward Avenue.

Anne advised that members should look at the site. She was rather concerned about the quality and content of the work. It is likely to be linked to Biodiversity net Gain and a requirement for Flagship to implement as compensation elsewhere. Note there is little management of the site underway, and the former green space is no longer available for play.

18. Next meeting Monday 10th June 2024 or sooner if a meeting is needed at 6pm. 2 hours time limit.

A Westover

Draft Minutes Environment and Leisure Working Group

Final version with inputs

28th April 2024