

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Environment and Leisure Working Group

MINUTES

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Monday 11th August 2025 at 6pm Village Hall Committee Room

E&L Chair: Cllr Robin Cooke

1. Agree Minute taker: Offer from Cllr Chenery accepted.
2. **Those Present:** Cllr Cooke, Cllr Chenery (DC), Cllr French, Cllr Horsnell, Anne Westover (AW), Sonya Exton.

Apologies: None

3. **Minutes** of the last meeting of Monday 14th April 25 were accepted as a true record.
4. **Tree work update:**
AW is chasing UKPN to carry out pruning of the Holm Oak in the Pightle. Work has been identified to trees on the SX sports field. AW is keen to set up a work programme and link this to the CC Working Group.
5. **Tree Safety Inspections:**
AW/Sonya to agree the key trees that need inspecting. Of note, Ufford's inspector has died so we all need to find a successor. AB trees was mentioned. Cllr Chenery confirmed the parish council had allocated £2k for inspections and £2k for any subsequent work. He will ask the Clerk if he has any names for an inspector.
6. **Cemetery Management matters:**
The Cemetery WG is seeking good wood chip. AW advised that headstones are insured for 10 years after installation. It was agreed that the "wobble test" was preferred. Cllr Chenery to ask the Clerk and Deputy Clerk if they would do this. The WG agreed it would be good to have a 3- or 5-year cemetery management plan and would look at other parish councils plans to inform the parish council. Its possible SWT would carry out surveys and suggest a plan, for free. The WG also discussed whether grass cutting could be avoided around some margins to save costs and increase biodiversity. AW to offer suggestions.
7. **Box hedge:**
The WG noted the decline of the existing hedge and reviewed the draft report. It agreed that a replacement hedge was preferable rather than a fence. The initial indicative costs from Botanica were considered too high. Some work could be done by volunteers and there may be suitable grants from ESC. It was hoped a report could be taken to September's full council to seek support to replace the hedge and then seek quotes from ESSL or Josh Cox or Glen Rose or Swanns.

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8. Simons Cross Sports field issues:

Concern was raised about the condition of 3 poplar trees that would benefit from removal of lower branches. Several school trees overhang the sports field and there is a dead elm tree by the closed off play area. Regarding the pill box we noted ESC's desire that we expose this and encourage access as an item of history. It's a Type 24 which is relatively common. ESC can offer a grant for e.g. a metal grate door. This would probably need consent from SCC. The WG wondered if the Archive Centre would be interested and AW will ask them. Regarding the pond Cllr French will speak to the Youth football club about cleaning out the pond.

9. Bat Survey:

Sonya reported good monitoring results with over 500 bats reported – she will share the report. Also Hopkins Homes has bat data for a comparison. This item possibly falls under biodiversity and the CC WG.

10. Volunteer Management and first aid training:

The Council has now published a set of risk assessments and a Toolbox Talk Attendance Record. It was asked if the latter could be available as a Word document as well and all the different risks identified on a single application. Cllr Chenery to contact the Clerk. The extend of first aid training needs to be agreed and training providers sought. AW had contacted Basic First Aid Training who had provided an estimate for 10 people for 4 hours. AW to share this estimate and DC to discuss with the council.

11. Any Other Business:

Sonya reported that bags that had contained drugs were being found on the VH Playing Field. Cllr French to notify his police contact.

12. Date of next meeting

13 October 25