

# WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

## Environment and Leisure Working Group

### MINUTES

#### ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 6pm Village Hall Committee Room

#### **E&L Chair: Cllr Robin Cooke**

1. Agree Minute taker: Offer from Anne Westover accepted.
2. **Those Present:** Cllr Cooke, Cllr Horsnell, Cllr Fowler, Cllr Huggins, Cllr Chenery, Simon Harrington, Sonya Exton, Anne Westover, John Eldridge.  
Also Cllr French (Chair WMPC).
3. **Apologies:** Andy Baker and Cllr Creasey. Public present Ian Webster.
4. **Minutes** of the last meeting: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 accepted as a true record.
5. **Matters** arising for items not on this Agenda: None raised
6. **Terms of Reference:** approved as a draft at May full meeting.

Queries raised by Anne Westover as follows:

Para 6.1 to action these aspects the E&L WG will need to receive relevant updates from WMPC.

Para 6.2 query over notice boards and hanging baskets.

Query over Simons Cross play area as this is privately owned and closed off by ESC. It was agreed that this role could become relevant when the allocated housing site is re-developed.

Para 6.3 queried sports development.

Para 6.4 queried crime prevention and police liaison.

Para 6.6 queried public transport promotion.

Para 6.8 queried village hall management committee; do they exist and have a role over the playing field?

It was generally agreed that some amendments would be needed in due course.

7. **Allotment matters:** Simons Cross and Glebe  
Glebe: John reported that all plots were currently rented out.  
Andy Baker: presented a report advising that some allotment holders would like a gate to be inserted at north end of the SX plots, accessed by an informal path from Thong Hall Road. It was suggested that the gate could be locked.  
Concerns were expressed about a new gate as it could encourage people to cross Thong Hall Road at a point close to the B1078 where cars are turning in/out. Hence public safety may be an issue.

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At the NP development and allotment relocation stage it was envisaged that people would walk across the SX sports field, and out through the car park to cross to the new plots. It appears that most people walk that way.

The consensus was that the additional gate access was not necessary and not appropriate given the road safety concern.

8. **Village Hall Playing Field:** Informal BMX track, the use is low key at present, the lime trees have been damaged by knives which is causing concern. The den and seats is being used by older children. The vandalised litter bin near skateboard park has been found within the den area.

AW suggested that the soil mound could be flattened and spread so that there is more space for informal play within this area.

JH is a sign needed to clarify that use of the BMX 'track' is at own risk as it cannot be insured. Antisocial behaviour sign might be needed.

It was suggested that our Clerk be requested to prepare an official sign and post.

Cllr French informed the group that the Skateboard Park is not insured whilst the play area and Zip wire are covered.

Sonya suggested that a jogging track could be created around the perimeter of the field with seat and new trees. Anne clarified that people do walk and jog around the margins already. The space for more trees is limited.

Cllr French advised that a proposal could be put together should Sonya wish to do so. Anne suggested a meet up on the field and agree what proposals might be appropriate. Recent strimming of the boundary strip appears to have been carried out by FC.

DC advised that Ufford PC created the BMX in the woodlands and insured the track. Accessed from the Nicholls Close.

Cllr Cooke asked for the view of the group. Majority do not support an official BMX track in this area, space is limited. Unofficial BMX track use is also not supported and will need to be monitored.

Other matters Anne advised that a budget be allocated to carry out management on some of the mature trees. Cllr Cooke advised a proposal be put together to take to WMPC.

Cllr Fowler asked how a family could report antisocial behaviour at the skateboard park. Cllr French advised they should speak to police.

Cllr Chenery advised that the village hall car park proposals are under consultation. Info is on the WMPC web site. Some have received the information from the VH CIO S Flavell. All to respond to clerk or S Flavell about the consultation.

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9. Simons Cross Playing Field: Tree and management matters. Currently nothing to report.

10. **Footpaths** (Footpath Warden): Update plus Litter and Management of growth Report was prepared and SH is working on managing various routes around the village. SCC have carried an annual cut along Little Lane. Simon tabled a proposal to create an informal grass walk, between the end of Broad Rd where it meets the B1078 and the north end of the SX bridleway. The area could be cut more regularly to allow people to walk more easily and safely. Cllr Horsnell suggested that there needs to be a scope for the work required to clarify what volunteer/or otherwise, tasks might be needed.

Anne raised concerns about overgrown paths and hedges elsewhere especially between the King Edward route to Footpath 9 and FP9 to The George. The open space is also smothered in bramble and not usable by children which is of concern. Cllr Fowler might speak with New Tide contact she has.

11. **Trees update** (Tree Wardens):

DC advised that Rendlesham have a Remembrance Tree scheme whereby people can plant a tree and manage it. Anne clarified that people often donated/paid for trees; two planted on the Pightle Green last winter along with others. More have been requested for end of 2024. WMPC spaces are limited and well planted already.

Cllr Horsnell suggested the field edge alongside byway 19 from High Street to Walnuts Lane could be a suitable location for trees.

Tree wardens to speak to landowner.

New TPO 173 has been served to protect a vulnerable mature copper beech tree alongside Little Lane within front garden to 12 Lime Close. Initial representations due 26 days after serving i.e. by 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Agreed that E&L would support the serving of the TPO in the interests of public amenity. Sonya and Anne to feed back to WMPC Clerk.

12. **Cemetery Management matters:** tasks undertaken over winter.

Box hedge

Grass now cut

Litter and spent wreath collections

Bonfire to clear dry prunings.

It was recognised that the need for a grounds maintenance operative was becoming increasingly important.

Cllr French advised that a proposal should be put together for WMPC to consider. This should set out roles for the position of handyman/grounds maintenance operative.

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Anne reminded the group that this role had been agreed last summer 2023.

Sonya asked why the original job description was not being followed and that if work was not being carried out then financial savings must have been made.

Cllr Chenery agreed that was the case.

PH suggested an article in the newsletter about community involvement and community spirit would be useful and will draft a piece.

Next deadline for newsletter will be 10<sup>th</sup> July.

Agreed a list of jobs needs to be identified (see below). Need for job would be discussed by Staffing and Personnel. Agreed the role was needed with a list of tasks.

13. **Biodiversity Strategy** Cllr Fowler presented her recent paper, previously circulated. References made to the E&L biodiversity report in February 2024.

Niki keen to get the document finalised and adopted.

Cllr Fowler confirmed that the WMNP made good policy references to biodiversity and that the report would develop these.

Anne and Niki to discuss out of meeting.

Sonya Exton asked whether biodiversity plan would be considered at all levels of work and decision making by whole WMPC. All agreed it should aim to achieve this. Cllr French suggested that policy needs working up in more detail for full council.

Cllr Huggins said she had been considered the pond on the SX field and whether this could be improved further as a wildlife pond. If the pond takes surface water from elsewhere this could present some difficulties with water quality.

Action: Pauline, Sonya and Anne offered to work further with Niki on the report/strategy.

14. **Walks Leaflet update (Discover Suffolk):** Update on funding. Anne apologised for lack of progress on the updated leaflet. She will follow up on funding separately to try and ensure that WMPC do not lose the funding from ESC via the Towns Initiative fund. There is a need to liaise further with two farmers over inclusion of the permissive route east of the A12.

15. **River Deben/Deben Climate Centre** and water quality testing update.

Arthur Stansfield is part of the testing team with the Deben Climate Centre and Ufford Parish Council.

Report provided along with the full report on the DCC web site.

### 16. Any Other Business

- SE number of cars parking alongside the pharmacy to pop over and buy a paper from Morrisons. Advised best to use the SCC Highways reporting tool to report as there are yellow lines here.
- D day and union flags JH proposed that they be replaced by Suffolk flags for Suffolk day. All agreed this would be appropriate, John would request help.

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ESC bulb scheme, no news received yet by the applicants; Niki and Anne applied.

Meeting ended by 8pm

***Handy Person maintenance Tasks needed: some added since meeting; some of these tasks will help support volunteers.***

Litter collection in WMPC open spaces, pathways and more?

Path clearance (in addition to Footpaths Warden)

Vegetation control where hedges are spreading over paths.

Pightle Green pruning and tidying of trees and shrubs especially sucker growth. Litter collection

WMVH Playing field regular litter collection, occasional hedge pruning, growth around hall, litter around hall & in gullies, tidy up recycling banks, watering and tidy up of planters (to support volunteers)

Cemetery: Litter, tidy ups, gravel weeding in memorial garden, hedge pruning especially box, tidy graves, levels to refine (soil add, soil flatten), help with tree protection (deer!)

Tidy around village pump on High Street.

Simple repairs to items such as benches, play equipment belonging to WMPC.

AW

Update 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024