

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Environment and Leisure Working Group

MINUTES

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Monday 14th October 2024 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 Horsnell, Cllr Fowler, Cllr Chenery, Cllr French from 7pm. Simon Harrington, Sonya Exton, Anne Westover, Andy Baker.
3. **Apologies:** Cllr Creasey. Cllr Huggins has offered her resignation from this Group.
4. **Minutes** of the last meeting of Monday 12th August. Agreed that any comments be forward to the Chair and Cllr Chenery and if no comments received they be accepted as a true record.
5. **Matters Arising: Terms of Reference:**

Agreed to accept the version currently on the parish council website except to delete para 6.4 (crime prevention) and amend para 6.2 from “hanging baskets” to “floral displays” as this would then include planters.
6. **Allotment matters:**

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed to ask the Clerk to inform the tenant of Glebe Plot 39A that his plot tenancy would not be renewed in light of non-compliance with the tenancy Agreement. The Group supported the proposal that this plot be managed as a supply of willow for all allotment users. The Group agreed a set of words to forward to the Clerk.
7. **Footpaths** (Footpath Warden): No report provided for this meeting.
8. **Grounds Maintenance Operative:**

Cllr Chenery suggested the list of tasks identified in previous meetings split into higher and lower skilled tasks with the latter mainly involved with litter picking. The Group agree to ask full **Council** to review the functions of the current operative and subject to available budget to consider appointing a litter picker. Cllr Chenery to submit a proposal to the full council.
9. **Trees update** (Tree Wardens):

Anne Westover has drafted a proposal for tree work around the village with an indicative cost of around £4,800. This has not been allowed for in the 23/24 parish council budget. The Group agreed that Anne would ask ESSL as to what tree works they can absorb within their current cemetery contract. She would also split the proposed works into what may be essential this financial year and what could be

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deferred until 25/25. She will update the Chair and Cllr Chenery so that a proposal can then be made to full council.

Sonya Exton will contact the primary school regarding their trees overhanging the sports field which obstructs pedestrians.

10. Tree Management and Safety Inspections:

Cllr Chenery noted the good work already carried out by the Tree Wardens but raised concerns as to whether all parish council owned or managed trees should have formal, recorded safety inspections to protect the public and the parish council's liabilities. He described what several other councils do in employing qualified arboriculturists, each with differing frequencies of inspections from annual, 18 months, every 3 years etc. The Group agreed to recommend full council to set up a formal inspection regime using external consultants. Cllr Chenery and Anne Westover will create a map of all the trees that require inspections, agree 3 suitable consultants, agree a suitable frequency and seek indicative costs for inspections commencing in 25/26 and then submit a costed proposal to full council before it sets its 25/26 budget.

11. Cemetery Management matters:

The main discussion was about rabbit control and most of the Group supported the use of gassing, as shooting would not be allowed in a public place and there had been little interest in the past from pest control firms to use ferrets. It was agreed that Anne Westover would seek a fresh quotation and specification for gassing.

12. Bulb packs:

The Group noted that East Suffolk Council (ESC) has supplied 2 packs of bulbs, one to the Library/Resource Centre and one to the parish council. The Green Gym group will now agree the best locations for planting and advise the council.

13. Biodiversity Strategy

An initial biodiversity report was considered by the E&L Committee in February 2024 who agreed that no further work was needed over and above the current ongoing work. Cllr Fowler has updated this report which was well received by the Working Group with an aim to add this to the parish council's documentation on its web site. It was agreed that Cllr Fowler, Anne Westover and Sonia Exton would check the current wording, label it as a live Working Document, rather than a policy, and then submit to the full council for consideration and adoption.

14. Wild About Wickham:

This is an ESC driven initiative that expects local support in creating an activity. The Group noted the limited capacity of parish volunteers and Cllr Chenery will ask ESC to defer any further events until Spring 2025.

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15. Volunteer Status:

The Group sought clarification as to whether existing parish volunteers were insured by the parish council. Cllr Chenery referred to the parish council's published Volunteer Policy. It is up to each volunteer group to inform the parish council of its intended activities within the parish and submit its risk assessments and training plans, and then they will be insured. Cllr Chenery and Anne Westover to source suitable risk assessments for e.g. the Green Gym activities and then submit to the Clerk. Cllr French advised that the Staffing and Personnel Committee will be collating a list of parish volunteers. The Group queried whether a first aid course is needed for volunteers and will seek advice from the Clerk.

16. Walks Leaflet update (Discover Suffolk): Anne Westover is progressing this and reported on obstructions on some footpaths. Cllr Chenery offered to proof read the final version.

17. River Deben/Deben Climate Centre

Arthur Stansfield is part of the testing team with the Deben Climate Centre and Ufford Parish Council. Our parish council has contributed £100 to Ufford Parish Council from its Climate Change budget.

18. Climate Change Working Group:

This has not met for some while. Cllr Chenery to contact Cllr Gemma Dempsey-Gray to suggest Cllr Chenery sets up a meeting of the Group.

Regarding the thermal camera this resides with Arthur Stansfield with some other councillors trained in its use. There had been an article in the April 2023 parish Newsletter inviting residents to contact Cllr Dempsey-Gray if they would like their property surveyed. Cllr Fowler agreed to draft an updated article for the next Newsletter.

19. Any Other Business:

Cllr Chenery advised the Group that Suffolk County Council's (SCC) Flood Investigation Report for Wickham Market was now on the SCC web site. The Group agreed that Cllr Chenery and Anne Westover (who had originally met SCC and the Environment Agency) would precis the report and submit a summary to full council to consider the implications.

Meeting ended 8.30pm