

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Environment and Leisure Working Group

MINUTES

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Monday 30th June 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 (SE). (Cllrs Cooke and Horsnell left at 7pm for George AGM).

Apologies: None.

3. **Minutes** of the last meeting of Monday 14th April 25 were accepted as a true record subject to amending Item 7 in that the £400 for the walks leaflet was for artwork. Also to note at Item 11 that the Gardening Group look after the flower border verging the High Street near the war memorial garden. AW asked why the GC were included in the TofR.
4. **Cemetery Matters**
 - Box hedge was being weakened by box blight and the box moth caterpillar. After a full discussion it was agreed to monitor the hedge over summer. If needed it could be cut down, grubbed out and replanted with a new hedge if box growth does not recover. AW and Dep Clerk have discussed this. AW will prepare a report to full council with options and a proposal after liaising with the Cemetery Group on site. AW will aim for July.
 - Holly leaf blight is a growing problem on young and older hollies. Need to prune out infected areas and burn.
 - Barn owl boxes. The boxes have both been inspected by BOSS with SE and were inhabited by stock doves (not barn owls). Barn owls were last recorded in 2021. Anne circulated the eligibility criteria for new barn owl boxes and suggested some tree locations. SE agreed to look at an alternative location/s and explore the offer of free boxes from BOSS (Barn Owl Support Suffolk).
 - Bat survey – SE has this in hand with Ipswich contacts and will know more detail when she meets with them. AW will contact SWT people regarding their Moth Traps at Fen Meadow. The grassland and flower areas will be important for moths (and bat feeding).
 - Rabbit holes and deer damage needs to be addressed.
 - Deer have killed one lime tree in the avenue on TLC land – AW to arrange re-plant in discussion with Town Land Trust.
 - Litter – AW had carried out a recent litter collection at a Cemetery work party morning. These being stray and dead flowers, artificial tributes and containers.

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Environment and Leisure Working Group

- AW to arrange a Cemetery Working Group (Mike H, Linda M, Ian W, Cem Clerk) meeting to discuss works for 2025. Robin and/or David/and/or Sonya to attend too.

5. **Volunteering activities to support biodiversity**

SE and DC to chase Gemma to set up a further Climate Change Working Group meeting who have been asked to take on biodiversity. SE and AW stressed that climate, nature, environment, biodiversity cannot be separated topics. Also, that clarity was needed regarding volunteering work and all the many important roles it fulfils.

Sonya mentioned that she had attended the recent STWN (Suffolk Tree Wardens Network) at which protected roadside wildflower verges were a topic.

6. **Tree management and tree safety**

Concern was noted about a young child being killed recently by a fallen tree in Southend. AW and SE (Tree Wardens) advised they were aware of the more-at-risk trees in the village and have previously recommended management work (report was prepared for full council September 16th 2024) to higher risk trees (such as the three SX Poplars) and surveying take place. They advised that the parish council should seek to employ experts to assess our trees notably those higher risk trees that we are aware of.

DC advised that AW's quote at £500 to formally risk assess the Pightle trees was at our limit of requiring alternative quotes so DC advised he would seek such quotes. DC to ask AW for suitable alternative experts.

7. **Biodiversity plan**

The draft strategy needs finalising by SE, Niki Fowler and others but SE doesn't have time at the moment. Draft strategy to be passed to Climate Change Working Group to approve before passing to full council to adopt.

8. **ESC Nature First Grant**

AW advised that the Wickham Market Partnership has agreed to receive, process and allocate this grant. AW is also planning to apply for an additional grant which could extend to new hedging for the cemetery.

9. **Walks Leaflet update**

The Working Group were pleased with the work by AW and others to finalise the updated parish walks leaflet. AW advised they were distributed to 31 different WM and neighbouring venues, various web sites and that there were approx. 500 left which should be sufficient for 2025.

10. **Volunteer Management and first aid training:**

AW asked for an update of the parish council providing first aid training for volunteers. DC advised that the council needed to agree which volunteer groups were affiliated to the council. DC also said the council will issue advice about

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Environment and Leisure Working Group

volunteers working on council land to seek and obtain council consent before carrying out any work, to ensure we satisfy the councils insurance requirements.

11. Suffolk Blooms

AW advised she has made an application for bulbs.

12. Simons Cross pond

SE suggested that some of the larger items of litter may have been removed and the pond was dry at the moment. It was suggested that the trees and bushes around it be cut back in the Autumn so that the pond could be cleared of all rubbish. AW asked for contact details for Shane of the Youth Football Club.

DC will contact the Probation Service to see if the Community Payback Team could do this work.

13. Terms of Reference of this Working Group:

DC to ensure there was consistency between all the council's TOR's that exclude voting rights from non-councillors.

14. Any Other Business

SE suggested the parish council reviews who it banks with to ensure the bank is eco-friendly.

15. Date of next meeting

11 August 2025 at 6pm in the Village Hall Committee Room