

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Environment and Leisure Working Group

MINUTES

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE WORKING GROUP (meeting 2)

Monday 12th August 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 Huggins, Cllr Chenery, Anne Westover, Andy Baker, Cllr Creasey.

Both Andy Baker and Cllr Creasey had to leave by 7pm.

3. **Apologies:** Cllr Niki Fowler, John Eldridge, Sonya Exton, Simon Harrington,

4. **Minutes** of the last meeting: Monday 10th June 2024 accepted as a true record.

5. **Matters** arising for items not on this Agenda: None raised at Item 5.

6. **Terms of Reference:**

There was further discussion regarding the queries raised at the June 10th meeting and listed in the minutes. No revisions have been made to E&L ToR. *(Post meeting note: no revisions have been proposed to WMPC to date.)*

Cllr Chenery has offered to look at making amendments to the document and to circulate a draft of the proposed amendments.

Queries raised by Anne Westover in June as follows:

Para 6.1 in order to action these aspects the E&L WG will need to receive relevant updates from WMPC. (Post meeting note: the 6 councillors on E&L working group will be aware of any information circulated to councillors that may be relevant and can share with the Working Group at the meeting.)

Para 6.2 query over inclusion of notice boards and hanging baskets. WMPC discarded hanging basket several years ago. (Post meeting note: hanging baskets may come back, so there should be a group to coordinate)

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 but as a private site WMPC do not have responsibility at present.

Para 6.3 queried inclusion of sports development but it was considered that play and open spaces should be included. (Post meeting note: the environment and

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leisure WG may be the most appropriate group to make recommendations to the full Council)

Para 64 queried crime prevention and police liaison. This role lies with the WMPC. Para 6.6 queried public transport promotion. Para 6.8 queried village hall management committee; this group no longer exists.

Cllr Horsnell raised concerns regarding the status of the E&L WG and the apparent diminished importance which arises from the change of status from a Committee to a WG. We agreed that there have been recent examples where the WG has not seen items which are within the ToR and should have been flagged up with the WG prior to Full Council. There is concern that this approach could continue and that as a consequence, the WGs role along with the members commitment could be undermined. Reverting back to a committee should ensure that this will not happen, a committee would also benefit from the Clerk or Deputy Clerk attending and providing support. *(Post meeting note: Working Groups are important contributors to Council business. Their organisation is summarised at <https://wickhammarketpc.com/assets/Parish-Council-Documents-/WMPC-Essentials/WMPC-Essentials-No.-7-Committees-and-Working-Groups.pdf> and Local Government Act 1972 s101 (4).)*

It was agreed to recommend that the full council in September consider a proposal to resurrect the E&L committee in place of the WG, Cllr Cooke agreed to be the chair.

7. Allotment matters: Simons Cross and Glebe discussed as first item.

Rent increase:

Andy Baker expressed concerned that the full council minutes from July 15th were not accurate in terms of recording both his and Ray Lewis's comments on the proposals to increase rent in 2025. The details were discussed and Cllr Chenery advised that there would be an opportunity at September's full council to review the wording of the minutes.

Cllr Chenery explained the incomes and expenditures for the allotments over the last 3 years and how the cost for water supply had increased significantly.

The clerk had recommended that Allotment holders will be advised about the rent increase from October 2024 in their 2024 rent reminder and that it would not be the intention of the parish council to increase rents in October 2025. Cllr Chenery will recommend to full council that the rent income be ring-fenced into an allotment account so any surplus could be reinvested into the allotments.

It was agreed that whilst a rent increase might be appropriate the matter should have been considered through the E&L WG with proper Allotment Association input so that full consideration could be made at full council.

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AW asked about rent amounts charged by the Diocese and Mr Holland for the two sites.

It appears to be £240 per annum for both sites but Cllr Chenery will seek clarity. It was confirmed that the Giving Community Glebe Community Allotment group have disbanded and cannot continue with the plot. Support has been low and various parties have moved out of the village. Whilst the idea of the project was laudable it has not attracted sufficient support from the community, unlike to regular, often shared plots.

The AA will decide how to re-purpose the community plot. This will include a reserved strip to resurrect the buffer zone alongside the Beehive historic wall for safety and management purposes.

Cllr Creasey expressed an interest in initiating a new project/group for a community plot at the Glebe. It was agreed that she will consider the matter further and feedback her ideas/proposals to the AA.

Andy Baker confirmed that all SX plots are let, one party is on the waiting list.

Glebe, small number of plots being currently let out and a short waiting list.

Plot 39 holder, the lack of management as previously agreed between plot holder and WMPC is of concern to the AA. The AA understand that WMPC Clerk is considering further action to ensure that the plot holder resolves this ongoing lack of management. If this does not happen then the tenancy is likely to be terminated.

It was agreed that the remaining hazel copse should be retained, and managed/coppiced for hazel produce. It was requested that Anne Westover follow up with the request to Simon Harrington regarding coppice work in the Autumn, in the event that there is no action in respect to the plot holder undertaking this work.

8. Village Hall Playing Field:

The Clerk has circulated a sign proposal for the skateboard park to WMPC.

The wording has been agreed.

A further sign is needed for the unauthorised BMX track.

It was proposed by John Horsnell that the Clerk progresses this matter.

Anne Westover requested that a budget be allocated to carry out further management on the perimeter mature trees (lime), two dead trees to be removed, and hedge pruning, similar to that carried out earlier this year. (*Post meeting note: Budget is created and approved in November – January for the following year.*)

Cllr Cooke advised a proposal be put together to take to WMPC in September to agree the principle and likely cost of three days work prior to specific quotes being sought.

9. **Simons Cross Playing Field:** Sonya Exton reported that school trees overhanging the field require pruning and will flag up with the school Head and team. Anne Westover raised the need to consider the safety of three larger hybrid black poplars and their management for safety reasons and will feed back.

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10. **Footpaths** (Footpath Warden): Report copied below:

Report by Footpaths warden to meeting to be held 12.08.24

1. Work since last meeting

1. General light clearance on all paths
 2. WMPC Clerk has requested work on –
 - Roadside approach to Deben Bridge – done but also cut by SCC
 - Weeds around village hall – Done but now regrowing quickly. Only root treatment will solve.
 - Footway between Old School and Cemetery access – SCC due to do ‘second cut’ in village. Will await results before doing.
 3. Larger projects
 - Widening FP8 Church Close to Spring Lane on section between stiles in order to achieve 1.5m footpath width. (This path is much used by visitors at Orchard Campsite and is an important access to the village centre)
 - Widening Restricted Byway High St to Walnuts Lane to achieve 3.5m width.
- ### 2. Issues
1. A resident on Little lane bridleway has expanded their garden boundary to effectively obstruct the bridleway with a new fence. The fence is in line with neighbouring property boundaries hence the justification. The effect is to make it difficult for horse riders to get through at that point. Logged on highways portal and reported to the Parish Clerk.
 2. Some hedges on properties along George Lane (mainly Meadowside) are encroaching on the footpath. More investigation is needed to establish properties involved and then contact owners.

Simon Harrington 07.08.24

There was some discussion regarding the report and thanks to Simon for hard works. It was noted with some dismay (by a resident) that an apple tree and fruit had been cut on the Byway near COOP. There were some other details which the Tree Warden can flag up with the Footpaths Warden.

11. **Trees update** (Tree Wardens) UKPN have not followed up on pruning of Holm Oak at Pightle, AW will prompt them for a response. Other tree work is required here along with chipping of previous prunings of sucker growth. Anne Westover flagged up the Regional Tree Wardens Network forum date of Saturday 7th September near Diss to which she aims to attend.

12. Cemetery Management matters:

Date for next working group will be Thursday 26th September 10am.

Anne has notified Cemetery working group; Ian Webster, Linda Merriam, Cllr Gloria Creasey and Mike Hawes.

Cllr French may wish to attend and Anne was asked to invite him. Cllr French is keen to see if there can be cost savings on grass cutting by removing kerbs from

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some graves and levelling out areas of grass. The parish council may be minded to invest in these works asap if they then save on maintenance costs.

Anne requested further funding for tree management particularly to focus on shaping the holly and large oak trees near the Bier House. *(Post meeting note: Budget is created and approved in November – January for the following year.)* As above at Item 8 this proposal will be taken to WMPC in September.

Topsoil storage area is needed. Gapping of box hedge where affected by blight is needed.

There was discussion of artificial tributes and it was agreed that ways of phasing out use was the best way forward. Further advice will be taken from ESS on 26th September. *(Post meeting note: Cemetery regulations have now been updated and published as requested by the full council)*

WMPC need to remove all debris as per the Cemetery Regulations, if not removed by family/friends. *(Post meeting note: “After six months the Parish Council reserves the right to remove tributes”)* The time period could be reduced from 6 months.

New signage to highlight snowdrop areas and artificial flowers will be needed.

Anne to follow up with Clerk/Deputy Clerk following, wording on bulb areas previously supplied.

Litter collection is becoming critical along with other tasks listed for the cemetery for a grounds maintenance/operative role, as below from June 2024 minutes: *(Post meeting note: WMPC full council is awaiting a proposal for consideration. It should be noted that 99% of litter consists of artificial tributes.)*

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!)

13. Grounds maintenance operative role: Cllr Horsnell and Chenery advised that the current post holder was unable to support the WMPC at the moment due to other commitments and that the Staffing and Personnel Committee should review this situation and appoint a new or second operative. It was agreed that the list of jobs identified in June would form the basis for a new JD and Cllr Chenery recommended the JD, hours and salary should be a matter for the Staffing and Personnel Committee to progress. Agreed the role needed to be reinstated along with a list of tasks similar to that previously carried out by Mr Clarke. *(Post meeting note: WMPC full council is awaiting a proposal for consideration.)*

There may be a need for additional building services / DIY support.

Handy Person maintenance Tasks needed: some of these tasks will help support volunteers.

Litter collection in WMPC open spaces, pathways and more?

Path clearance (in addition/or supplementing Footpath Warden's work)

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Vegetation control where hedges are spreading over paths.

Pightle Green pruning and tidying of trees and shrubs especially sucker (acacia) 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).

WM Village Hall, cleaning and weeding perimeters.

Cemetery: Litter, tidy ups, gravel weeding in memorial garden, hedge pruning / infill/ mulching 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. Allotment tasks, hedge pruning alongside boundaries/footpaths.

Market support?

Speed camera support.

Help with watering of planters and bee cafes to support volunteers such as Anne, Pauline and Jennie. Watering young trees where accessible is also increasingly important, bowser might be needed.

Delivery of composts to planters and War Memorial Garden to support Anne, Karen and Jennie.

14. Biodiversity Strategy No update as Cllr Niki Fowler was unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Huggins and Anne Westover are aware that a meeting to develop the strategy was required. As much of the strategy will need to feed into grounds maintenance specification work, Anne asked whether this was still in hand.

15. Walks Leaflet update (Discover Suffolk): ESC Jo McCallum has authorised funding and walks. Anne to work on this with others and SCC asap.

16. River Deben/Deben Climate Centre Arthur Stansfield sent water sampling documents through on 12th August, Anne to forward.

Additional volunteers are required and welcome to help with sampling.

Funding request from Ufford PC for continued funding of sampling equipment as set up by Cllr Dempsey Gray with payment issued for 2023. Approx £100 per annum would be beneficial. Cllr Chenery agreed to consider this request further.

17. AOB

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Anne Westover mentioned that she has had notification regarding an Environmental forum event in Ufford from Cllr Findley (Ufford PC hosting) on Wednesday 18th September. Information to be forwarded.

Meeting ended by 8.15pm

E&L Working Group draft minutes dated 27th August Anne Westover