

# Briefing for Wickham Market Parish Council

## Briefing on Cemetery maintenance costs. Agenda Item: FC23:74.4

### 1. Background

- 1.1. This is a high-level briefing designed to draw attention to the discrepancies with maintenance between different amenities managed by Wickham Market Parish Council.
- 1.2. Operating Wickham Market Cemetery consistently creates a deficit in the Parish Council accounts. It was agreed by the Parish Council that the Cemetery should be cost neutral.
- 1.3. This deficit is increasing with recent figures being:  
20-21 £2k, 21-22 £0.1k, 22-23 £3.9k, 23-24 expected £5.5k
- 1.4. The expected deficit for 23-24 is over 7% of the total precept which is the amount Wickham Market residents pay for Parish Council Operations. This equates to £3 on the council tax for every elector in Wickham Market

### 2. Costs for maintenance of other community assets

- 2.1. As a comparison, here are the funds that the Parish Council allocate to support the maintenance of other community assets each year.
  - Cemetery: £9k – £11k
  - Simons Cross Playing field £610
  - Village Hall Playing Field £556
  - Pightle Green £257
  - General maintenance of footpaths, litter picking and minor repairs £3.7k
  - Allotments: currently make about £300 profit each year.
  - Market: currently makes a small profit but with additional management this is expected to increase in the current year

### 3. Level of Service and Public Usage: High level Summary

- 3.1. **Cemetery:** Rarely see more than a couple of people there at any one time.
  - Grass Cutting: 17 cuts per year, strim round all headstones and remove all arisings.
  - Hedge Trimming all perimeter hedges annually.
  - Manage the trees and shrubs on the driveway.
  - Manage Margins to allow spring flowers to flourish then cut every 2 weeks.
- 3.2. **Village Hall Playing Field:** Used daily by dog walkers, general walkers and runners, children playing and many others. Used weekly during the football season for matches and training.
  - Grass Cutting: 12 cuts per year with no grass collection. Strimming round obstacles is periodic.
  - Margin Management: Nothing.
  - Hedge cutting: Nothing.
- 3.3. **Simons Cross Playing Field:** Used daily by dog walkers. Used weekly during the football season for matches and training.
  - Grass Cutting: 12 cuts per year with no grass collection.
  - Margin Management: Nothing.
  - Hedge cutting: Nothing.
- 3.4. **Pightle Green:** Used daily by walkers and access to the village centre.
  - Grass Cutting: 9 cuts per year with no grass collection.
  - Margin Management: Nothing.
  - Hedge cutting: Nothing.
- 3.5. **Allotments:** Used daily by the holders of over 120 plots
  - Maintenance is limited to some annual hedge cutting and the provision of water

### 4. Recommendation

- 4.1. Wickham Market Parish Council should carefully consider the maintenance cost for its amenities in relation to their usage by residents who ultimately pay for this maintenance with a view to providing maintenance service more proportionally to usage.
- 4.2. The specification schedule for the new parish maintenance contract should reflect any changes.