

Wisborough Green Parish Council

Village Green Policy

1. Policy Aim

- 1.1 The Green is for the benefit of parishioners, Wisborough Green Sports CIO (WGS) and visiting members of public. The aim of this policy is to offer guidance for the use and maintenance for all those who use or have an interest in the Green.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 A village green is a common open area within a village or other settlement. Traditionally a common grassland at the centre of a rural settlement used for grazing, village greens have become a quintessential feature of the character of rural villages in England. Greens are not just a picturesque reminder of a bygone age but a very present amenity to the communities they serve. Whilst the Village Green was born out of a functional need for open public space, the emphasis today is on the Village Green as an area for play and public recreation.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this Policy, the Village Green (the Green) is defined as the area with Land Registry Title Number WSX276212 (the main green, the Little Green and peripheral verges in Kirdford Road and School Road – refer to Figure 1, Page 7))
- 2.3 Casual Activities are defined as when no specific permission from Wisborough Green Parish Council (WGPC) is required, only adherence to the Byelaws.
- 2.4 Events are only permitted if written permission is received from WGPC and an Agreement has been signed by the organisers, with risk assessment and evidence of public liability insurance.

3. Background

- 3.2 WGPC owns and is responsible for the Green that sits at the heart of the village, in the Conservation Area.
- 3.3 On 29th June 1871 an award of 11 acres, 3 rods and 31 perches (being waste lands of the Manor of Amberley) was made to the Churchwardens and Overseers of the poor by Mr James Taylor. The award transferred to WGPC when the Council was established in 1894. It should be noted that the award included other strips of land around the Parish that have been lost through time.
- 3.4 In accordance with the Commons Registration Act 1965, the Green was registered with West Sussex County Council as a Village Green and the entry became final on 12th February 1973, registered under VG40. The registered land includes the main Green (including the playground), the Little Green, peripheral verges, and the verge on School Road and around the pond. The car parks at The Cricketers Arms and The Three Crowns are also part of the Green.
- 3.5 The Parish Council's ownership was registered with Land Registry in 2003 under Title Number WSX276212.
- 3.6 The Green forms part of the village Conservation Area. Chichester District Council (CDC) commissioned a character area appraisal and management proposals for this area in 2010, the conclusions of which were endorsed by public consultation. The purpose of the appraisal was to define the 'special architectural and historic interest' that warrants the area's designation, and to identify what character and appearance qualities of should be preserved and enhanced.
- 3.7 The character appraisal, used in conjunction with planning policies and other guidance, will assist the management of the Conservation Area including developmental control

decisions that affect this central area that includes the Green. A full copy is available on the CDC website¹.

- 3.8 The Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan (WGNP) sets out the vision, objectives and policies for the sustainable development of the Village from 2014 to 2029. A review was subsequently undertaken from 2019, extending the Plan period to 2037. During public consultation the local community identified these two special qualities which defined the village:

- * the traditional village setting.
- * the large village Green accommodating a wide range of recreational and communal activities.

4. Byelaws

- 2.1 Bye-laws for the Village Green were made by WGPC on 23rd May 1969 and they came into operation as 1st July 1969.
- 4.2 A poster giving detailed explanation to the Byelaws is displayed on the single Parish noticeboard on the corner of the A272 and Durbans Road.
- 4.3 Under Section 8 (1) (d) of the Local Government Act 1894 and confirmed by the Home Office, the following are the main provisions contained in the Byelaws in Section 12 of the Inclosure Act 1857 and in Section 29 of the Commons Act 1876: No Vehicle (except a bicycle, pram or wheeled chair) may be brought on to the ground, No cattle or horses may be brought on to the ground, no bill, placard or notice may be affixed to any tree or building on the ground.
- 4.4 The maximum penalty for contravention - £20.

5. Access

- 3.1 Many properties that surround the Green have a Deed of Easement which grants access rights as a domestic dwelling for the occupants and their successors in title. It is the responsibility of the property owners to maintain their access, with the exception of the western road, leading to the Pavilion, which is maintained by the Parish Council.
- 4.2 The areas in front of the Cricketers Arms and Three Crowns Public House are part of the Green and public parking areas and are not specifically for public house patrons. Parking at these sites is encouraged for school parents' use.
- 4.3 There is an acceptance that tables have been placed outside the Cricketers Arms on the Green to enhance the patrons' enjoyment. WGPC permission is required for the erection of any temporary structures.
- 4.4 The Three Crowns has an Easement for use as a Public House to the front of the property but no right of vehicular access exists to the garden gate.
- 5.5 The Pavilion has a right of access along the west road solely limited to Club staff and officials. Players and those using the Pavilion socially should not use this road and should park elsewhere around the Green.

6. Parking

- 4.1 Parking or driving across the Green is not permitted without WGPC's express permission.
- 6.2 Damage to the Green, caused by illegal parking or driving, is repaired by WGPC. The Parish Council will seek to recover any and all costs from those responsible.
- 6.3 Some temporary parking for community events may be allowed at the discretion of the WGPC for limited duration and only when ground conditions permit.
- 6.4 WGPC reserves the right to allow or disallow parking as appropriate.

¹ <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/24659/Conservation-Area-Character-Appraisals>

7. Use of the Green

- 7.1 Casual use of the Green is permitted by all members of the general public. Restrictions that apply relate to the Byelaws (refer to 4).
- 7.2 Village organisations and other societies can hold organised events on the Green with prior approval from WGPC. Events must be booked in advance and managed safely and responsibly by the organisers. Organisers must enter into a signed 'Use of the Green' Agreement to use the Green with WGPC, complete a Risk Assessment and have Public Liability Insurance providing cover £5 million or above.
- 7.3 Prior to applying to WGPC to hold an event on the Green, organisers should liaise with WGS over dates and times to, wherever possible, avoid clashes with sports fixtures. Should a clash be unavoidable the decision as to scheduling will remain the sole preserve of WGPC. (See Section 10)
- 7.4 Despite WGS having a Lease for the Pavilion, this does not confer either implied or explicit priority over the Green; however, the importance of sport on the Green is acknowledged and welcomed.

8. Green Coordination Group

- 8.1 The Group was established by WGPC in 2012 and has a role to keep those involved with activities on the Green informed. This is solely an advisory group and decisions relating to the use, maintenance of the Green and any expenditure will be made by WGPC.
- 8.2 Membership of the Group is by WGPC invitation and currently comprises two Parish Councillors, the Chairman of Wisborough Green Sports CIO, the Chairmen of the Football and Cricket Clubs, and two village residents representing the community interest.
- 8.3 Meetings are held in October and March of each year to review the programme of use for the year and events, discuss any plans affecting the Green, including but not limited to: maintenance, parking, cleaning and any other concerns, and to make recommendations to the WGPC.
- 8.4 The Parish Clerk calls the meetings and attends, to record discussion.

9. Parish Council Maintenance Responsibilities

- 13.1 As the landowner, it is WGPC's responsibility to ensure that the Green, and Parish owned fixed assets around the Conservation Area (refer to Appendix 1), are well maintained for the recreational enjoyment and safety of members of public. WGPC shall take all reasonable measures to ensure that the Green is fit for purpose.
- 13.2 Maintenance work will be undertaken by appointed volunteers or hired contractors, at WGPC's discretion. Contractors must carry a minimum of £5 million public liability insurance.
- 9.3 Additional work required in support of sporting activities is the responsibility of WGS with prior WGPC approval (refer to 11).
- 9.4 WGPC undertakes to maintain the Green for general recreation, and will make arrangements for the following:
 - a. **Grass cutting:** WGPC agrees a specification for the work to include regular cutting of the main green (weekly in summer months) with less frequent cutting of the peripheral areas and strimming around fixed obstacles.
 - b. **Grass Surface Repairs:** This work generally takes place on an annual basis in the spring, weather and ground conditions permitting, and may include fertilising, verti-draining, weed kill and/or repairs to specific areas identified by annual inspection.
 - c. **Leaf and Conker Clearance:** Included as part of the grass cutting contract and undertaken after their fall. Ditches and accumulations around the village are cleared and additional conker clearance is organised if deemed necessary.
 - d. **Drainage:** WGPC has supported the installation of further land drainage to allow all year use of the Green; annual maintenance is required. Annual drainage

maintenance is led by the Parish Council, the cost of which is split; 75% for WGS and 25% WGPC, the WGPC contribution being capped at £500.

- 9.5 To comply with Health and Safety regulation, insurance, and to identify maintenance requirements, WGPC undertakes annual risk assessments for areas and assets around the Green. In addition, Health and Safety is a standing agenda item at WGPC monthly meetings.

10. Wisborough Green Sports Charitable Incorporated Organisation

- 10.1 WGS provide the over-arching structure for the sports clubs that use the Green for training, matches and fixtures throughout the year. WGS currently supports four sports clubs: Football, Cricket, Stoolball and Touch Rugby, by providing the Pavilion facilities, insurance, care of the Green (in cooperation with WGPC) and a forum to coordinate use and improvement of facilities.
- 10.2 The Charity's objectives are: "The promotion of community participation in healthy recreation for the benefit of the inhabitants of Wisborough Green (and surrounding areas), West Sussex by the provision of facilities for playing cricket, football, touch rugby, stoolball and any other sporting activities capable of promoting healthy recreation."
- 10.3 The Pavilion is owned and managed by WGS. WGPC owns the land on which the building stands and granted a Lease for a period of 25 years to the Wisborough Green Sports Association Trustees dated 10th December 1999. This Lease was transferred to the WGS CIO on 3rd July 2019.
- 10.4 Although WGS's use of the Green is not included in the Lease, it is acknowledged by WGPC and will be included in any future Lease
- 10.5 The Pavilion building and use of the Green confers maintenance responsibilities on WGS as detailed in 15 below.

11. Wisborough Green Sports CIO Responsibilities

- 11.1 WGS will comply with the Terms of the Lease.
- 11.2 Being at the heart of the Conservation Area, the external appearance of the Pavilion and associated equipment is to be maintained to a high standard, acceptable to WGPC; including but not limited to the management of refuse (commercial and horticultural) and all materials. No alteration to the building exterior or surrounding land (seating area) can take place without WGPC's prior, written approval.
- 11.3 Health and Safety and maintenance requirements, in support of the Pavilion building, and all associated sporting activities and equipment on the Green, is the responsibility of WGS.
- 11.4 With prior approval from WGPC, WGS, at its own cost, will undertake maintenance of the Green for sports' requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, end of season football pitch repairs, the cricket square preparation, irrigation (when necessary) and maintenance and regular maintenance of the drainage system WGPC will organise any annual drainage system maintenance. WGS will make a 75% contribution to this cost. The justification for additional work, such as worm suppressant, will be considered by WGPC for approval The Green Coordination Group will discuss works to the Green with recommendations presented to WGPC.
- 11.5 Maintenance undertaken by WGS on sports pitches, by contractors and volunteers, must meet Health and Safety requirements and be WGS's risk.
- 11.6 WGS will undertake risk assessments for all its activities on the Green and undertaken an annual inspection for all equipment erected on the Green.
- 11.7 Moveable equipment is to be securely stored away after use or secured to the Pavilion building, to reduce the risk of it being moved by unauthorised users.
- 11.8 The cricket practice nets will be the only permanent or semi-permanent structure permitted on the Green. The nets are to be retracted and lifted after every use. At the end of the cricket season, the cricket nets are to be removed and the ground sockets

should be covered in a safe manner. WGS management are required to inspect the area and to ensure that it poses no risk to members to the public. This is a change to the current operation in which the PC move the basketball net – we are concerned about its weight and the H&S implications of moving it over wet muddy ground. WGPC will organise the reinstatement of the basketball net.

- 11.9 At the end of the Cricket season, the sightcreens are to be moved to the back of the Pavilion before ground conditions prevent relocation.
- 11.10 The football goals on the football pitch are to be checked after erection by WGS officials to satisfy themselves that they pose no safety concerns.
- 11.11 WGS is responsible for ensuring that sufficient waste collection receptacles are provided sufficient for Pavilion use and the area immediately around the Pavilion. WGS is responsible for regular refuse collections by CDC. The waste area is to be kept tidy, regularly inspected
- 11.12 It is expected that the area around the Pavilion, including the rear changing room doorway, will be kept clean and free of litter. Additional litter picks must be organised after larger events and gatherings, such as matches and practice sessions. Club users/players to be encouraged to take litter home for recycling and not use the village green litter bins for picnic waste.
- 11.13 Sponsorship, or other, signage on the building is not permitted without the express written permission of WGPC
- 11.14 Gas canisters must be stored securely.
- 11.15 Pitch lines are to be marked using an approved sports pitch marking liquid. Grass retardant may be added at the manufacturer's prescribed rate but under no circumstances may any weedkiller or other substance which will harm the grass be used.
- 11.16 The sports clubs are to develop their own Code of Conduct relating to activities on and off the sports pitches; relationships with other Green users and the wider public, including neighbouring properties and the highway, for example, loud and abusive language. Copies of the current Code of Conduct documents must be lodged with WGPC.
- 11.17 During any of their activities on the Green, WGS is to have due regard to parking and traffic flow through the village. 'No Parking' cones should be placed along Kirdford Road in advance of the activity, to create a passing place, and removed immediately after the activity has concluded.

12. Organised Events

- 12.1 Village organisations and other societies (not associated with WGS) can hold events on the Green but must make a formal application to the WGPC for consent.
- 12.2 An initial enquiry for use should be made to WGPC, via the Parish Clerk (clerk@wisboroughgreenpc.org), providing a detailed explanation of the event to be considered by the Parish Council at its next meeting.
- 12.3 On approval, the organisers must sign the 'Use of the Green' Agreement and provide a Risk Assessment and Public Liability Insurance Certificate to a minimum value of £5 million.
- 12.4 Events must be managed safely and responsibly by the event organisers.
- 12.5 Parking for large events must be managed by the organisers and follow a plan submitted, for approval, in advance. Additional temporary field parking should be provided, with the use of 'no parking' cones and car park signs (available from WGPC) through the centre of the village to ensure the flow of traffic. Parking by the children's playground and in Butts Meadow/Wyatt Close must be prevented due to the impact upon residents. The organisers will provide sufficient adult parking marshals wearing appropriate high visibility vests. Missing or damaged cones and parking signs will be charged for.
- 12.6 As the litterbins placed around the Green are insufficient for large events, additional bins should be provided, and their emptying and removal must be arranged by the organisers. The organisers shall arrange for post-event litter picking and all litter or

debris must be removed from the Green and surrounding area; the Pavilion refuse bins should not be used.

- 12.7 Any damage to the Green must be reported and either repaired by the organisers or by a contractor appointed by WGPC at the organiser's cost. The decision on how repairs will be made rests with the Parish Council.

13. Licensing

- 13.1 It is the responsibility of WGS to ensure that the Pavilion has the necessary licences for its activities.
- 13.2 WGPC has registered the Green as a Premises to allow for licensable activities to take place at events, such as the playing of music and dance. The license does not include the sale of alcohol and organisers proposing to sell alcohol on the Green must ensure that they meet necessary licensing obligations.

14. Advertising Signs

- 11.1 WGPC acknowledges the importance of advertising signs for village businesses and event organisers but must also consider the impact upon the appearance of a rural village environment. For this reason, WGPC has adopted a Sign Policy that provides guidance for temporary signs in the village centre.²
- 11.2 Organisations that erect unauthorised signs will be asked to remove them or they will be removed by WGPC.
- 11.3 For signs on the Pavilion, refer to 11.13.

15. Filming on the Green

- 15.1 Wisborough Green is a quintessential English village and, as such, film/TV companies seek permission from WGPC to film in the village centre.
- 15.2 WGPC acknowledges that the village centre is appealing to those in the film industry and in order to promote the village and support the local economy, WGPC will support the use of Parish Council land for filming purposes in line with its adopted policy³.

² <https://www.wisboroughgreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WGPC-Village-Sign-Policy-af.pdf>

³ <https://www.wisboroughgreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WGPC-Filming-Policy-af.pdf>

Appendix 1

Parish Council Fixed Assets and Maintenance Responsibilities

- a. **Ditches/Gullies:** These are regularly maintained to assist water flow.
- b. **Trees:** Wisborough Green is associated with the mix of red and white Horse Chestnut trees that border all sides of the Green, many planted to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. An annual tree inspection is undertaken, which includes the willows around the pond, and required maintenance undertaken, as necessary, to ensure their health and public safety. Horse chestnut trees can suffer from canker disease and are replaced when justified by health or safety concerns. Being in the Conservation Area, a tree planning application is required for tree surgery.
- c. **Pond:** Originally used by wheelwrights, blacksmiths, and later, steam engines filled up here, the pond is now a notable village feature with its duck house, fish and pollarded willow trees. Periodic lily clearance is undertaken when considered necessary.
- d. **War Memorial:** This Memorial Cross was erected in 1921 and is engraved with the names of village men who died during the First and Second World Wars. Canadian troops, who were billeted at Hawkhurst Court and who died during the Dieppe Raid on 19th August 1942, are also remembered.
- e. **Flagpole:** The flagpole is fibreglass and flags are flown at least 20 times *per annum* on local and national occasions. Flags are raised by a local resident on behalf of the village.
- f. **Village Sign:** The original design was created by local artist, Pat Gierth, who lived in School Road. The sign was refurbished in 2010.
- g. **Telephone Kiosk:** Adopted from BT in 2019 at the cost of £1, this has now been restored and converted into a village Information Point.
- h. **Noticeboards:** WGPC maintains 2 noticeboards on the Village Green for Parish Council and district notices. Byelaws are displayed on a separate noticeboard on the south-east-corner of the Green. Community events can be advertised on the noticeboard outside the village shop, on the bus shelter notice board or the event sign below the church. Business advertising is only allowed on the bus shelter notice board.
- i. **Litter Bins:** There are 16 bins around the Green to encourage responsible litter disposal. CDC empties the bins on a weekly basis; recycling of this waste is not currently possible.
- j. **Dogs Waste Bins & Waste Bag Dispenser:** Responsible owners are welcome to take their dogs on the Green provided the dogs are under control. Dog waste must be picked up and removed or put in one of the dog waste bins located by the Durbans Road layby and along Kirdford Road, where a dog waste bag-dispenser is also located. Dog waste is a serious hazard and can cause illness and infection.
- k. **Benches:** There are 36 benches situated around the Green and pond for residents and visitors to enjoy the views and the events held on the Green. Many are memorial benches donated by local families. The Parish Council has a Bench Donation policy that provides guidance to potential donors⁴.
- l. **Playground:** Situated on the north-west corner of the Green, the children's area was extensively refurbished and enclosed with fencing in 2012 to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics. It is designed for use by children up to 12 years of age. The equipment encourages use by differently abled children and to promote inclusive play. Two pedestrian gates have been provided so that children can exit freely if under duress. The wide locked gate is for services entry only. The playground is inspected on a weekly basis, with an annual ROSPA inspection.
- m. **Basketball Net:** The basketball net is located to make use of the cricket net area during winter months. WGS volunteers move it to the back of the Pavilion when the cricket nets are erected at the start of each cricket season and returned to this area prior to the start of the football season. I believe WGPC move it in winter back to the net area
- n. **Cycle Humps:** Installed along the pavement edge close to the playground.
- o. **Junior Goal Post:** This is permanently erected on the Green behind the Pavilion.

⁴ <https://www.wisboroughgreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WGPC-Donated-Bench-Policy-af.pdf>

