

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY (DECEMBER 2020)****WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL  
PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY**

Members are asked to consider the text below and propose amendments/changes.

**INTRODUCTION**

One of the major elements contributing to the 'liveability' of an area is the quality and quantity of its parks and open spaces.

The parks and open spaces owned/managed by Winsford Town Council are precious assets to the town and its surrounding areas and are used and enjoyed by many people.

This protocol seeks to set out the strategic direction for our parks and open spaces and their management, including guidelines on the use of these assets by groups/organisations and also the public generally.

As it develops, this document will inform investment and management decisions by Winsford Town Council.

**VISION AND OBJECTIVES**

The vision of this document is "creating and maintaining the parks and open spaces of Winsford for the benefit of the town, its residents and its visitors". Success will look like all residents of Winsford having easy access to open spaces for relaxation; leisure pursuits and quiet reflection in areas safe and pleasant for people to use.

The Town Council seeks to provide a greener Winsford through enhancing its visual quality and improving the lives of the people of the town by the provision of parks and open spaces.

The vision is supported by a number of objectives, including: -

- Defining and understanding parks resources and services and their contribution to Winsford now and in the future
- Assessing the quantity, quality and accessibility of park resources to the public and addressing shortfalls when they occur
- Understanding the views of the public
- Defining policies on resources and services
- Reviewing how other councils do things

- Protecting and enhancing parks into the future

This document looks to provide a clear direction for developing and managing the parks and open spaces managed/owned by Winsford Town Council.

### **WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

Winsford Town Council owns or manages the following parks and open spaces: -

- Over Recreation Ground (also called 'The Grange' or 'Police Park') – Alexandra Street, Winsford
- Wharton Recreation Ground – East Dudley Street/Ledward Street, Winsford
- Winsford Town Park (on lease from Cheshire West and Chester Council) – The Drummer, Winsford
- Rilshaw Meadows, Rilshaw Lane, Winsford
- King George VI Play Area – Station Road, Winsford
- Stanthorne Play Area – Beckett Drive, Winsford
- Meadowbank Play Area
- Leaf Lane Play Area
- Verdin Playing Fields (on licence from Cheshire West and Chester Council)

On these play areas/open spaces, there are a number of facilities available including play areas for children; tennis courts; bowling greens; outdoor gyms; multi-use games areas; and football pitches – as well as floral areas; natural areas and green spaces

The Winsford Neighbourhood Plan, approved in November 2014, reiterated the desire of the town as a whole to protect its parks and open spaces and numerous surveys and consultations have shown that local people wish to see these areas both protected and, if possible, developed.

On a number of the parks/open space areas, the council has achieved awards and also has in place 'fields in trust' status – e.g. Over and Wharton Recreation Grounds and Rilshaw Meadows, which protect the land from any threat of development.

## **WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL SERVICES**

Winsford Town Council allocates significant resources to the development, management and maintenance of its parks and open spaces.

In 2019/20, the Town Council allocated a total of £171,179 (out of a total budget of £502,374) to open spaces (including the parks).

Using this funding, the Council employs a total of three permanent members of staff to look after the parks, as well as a number of casual staff.

These members of staff carry out a range of tasks, including (but not limited to the following): -

- Litter picking
- Inspection of equipment
- Removal of graffiti
- General maintenance
- Repair to equipment/grounds – including play areas
- Maintenance and repair of bowling greens
- Care of buildings/pavilions

In addition, the groundsmen liaise with clubs and organisations using the parks (especially the bowling clubs at Over and Wharton Recreation Grounds) and lock/unlock the parks, acting like wardens in terms of ensuring the areas are safe and looked after.

As said, the Town Council allocates funding and other resources to the parks/open spaces and also receives comments/complaints from the public which it acts upon in whatever way is required.

The Town Council periodically organises consultation/engagement processes to ask the public for their views on the development of the parks/open spaces included in this document. This approach has led in the past to improvements to the facilities in parks/open spaces such as the £85,000 installation of a new outdoor gym at Wharton Recreation Ground in 2015, funding for which came from the Town Council and also from Wren Environmental Ltd. The Council will seek to undertake consultation and engagement as often as possible in relation to the development of its own parks/open spaces.

The Town Council has also got a contract in place with a local supplier to maintain and landscape the parks/open spaces (including the provision of grass cutting and grounds maintenance) – this complements and supplements the work of the groundsmen and also extends to areas such as tree management.

Given that the Town Council owns these facilities, the responsibility for repairs and other work tends to fall on the Council in terms of financing any work and also in terms of arranging things like suppliers and contracts.

It is proposed that the Town Council organises regular inspections of the various parks/open spaces covered by this document in order to ascertain what is required in terms of repairs and other areas of work.

Finally, the Town Council will – on an ongoing basis – look at other councils and the work they are doing in terms of their parks/open spaces to see if there is anything to learn for Winsford in relation to its own parks/open spaces and their management and development in the future.

## **USERS OF THE PARKS/OPEN SPACES**

As well as the role played by Winsford Town Council in terms of the management, maintenance and development of these facilities, the role played by the various users of these areas is also covered by this document.

As we have seen, the majority of repairs and associated work on the parks will fall to Winsford Town Council, including opening/closing the parks and maintaining these areas.

In addition, users of the parks – in the main – will consist of members of the general public who wish to walk; run; play or sit in the parks/open spaces on a casual basis at some point during their lives.

Anyone wishing to organise an event needs to first contact the Town Council for permission, and then inform Cheshire West and Chester Council (<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/leisure-parks-and-events/arts-and-festivals/running-an-event/running-an-event.aspx>)

In a small number of cases, however, these facilities are used by organised groups/clubs – most notably, these are the bowling clubs based at Over and Wharton Recreation Grounds and the Friends of Winsford Town Park.

## G

In these cases, the Town Council will do everything it can to support their activities and ensure that the relevant parks/open spaces are open and available to them at all times.

In the case of the bowling clubs, this means that the Council will look to do the following (again, not an exhaustive list): -

- Ensure that the bowling greens are maintained to the highest standards and meet the requirements of the clubs and the leagues in which they play;
- Ensure that the pavilions used by the clubs are clean and welcoming for club members and their guests
- Ensure that the surrounding areas of the parks are also kept to the highest possible standards

In order to ensure that all this happens, the clubs will be asked to report any issues in a timely and positive way directly to the Town Clerk at the earliest possible moment to ensure that work can be carried out.

The Town Council will liaise with suppliers and will establish contracts in line with its Financial Regulations if work needs to be funded at any time. The clubs will only be allowed to carry out work themselves with the express permission of the Town Council.

In terms of funding, the Town Council will seek to fund work from its budgets or – if that is not possible – the clubs will be assisted and guided in terms of where to access available funding. A number of sources of funding are available, including: -

- WTC grants – grants are available up to £1,000 and application forms can be obtained from the Town Council ([mail@winsford.gov.uk](mailto:mail@winsford.gov.uk))
- CWAC Member Budgets – these can be applied for via <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/councillors-allowances/member-budgets.aspx>
- Other grants are available from bodies such as Awards for All (<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england>)

Further advice can be obtained from the Town Clerk at Winsford Town Council ([mail@winsford.gov.uk](mailto:mail@winsford.gov.uk)). Any application for funding should be approved by the Town Council in the first instance.

In terms of the Friends of Winsford Town Park group, the situation is different but similar principles apply.

The Friends Group provides a range of different services to the Park, such as planting, litter picking and information. The Town Council seeks to support the Group in these ventures.

If the Group wishes to hold an event, however, wishes to change anything in terms of the Park (including obtaining funding), or wishes to do anything beyond the routine work its does on a day to day basis, then permission should be sought and obtained from Winsford Town Council in the first instance.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

This document sets out the strategic position of Winsford Town Council in relation to the parks and open spaces owned/managed by the Council in Winsford.

These facilities are vitally important to both the Council and to the town as a whole and the Council will continue to treat the parks and open spaces as a priority in terms of its forward planning.

At present, the Council manages/owns a number of parks and open spaces and offers a range of different services and devotes resources to ensuring that the parks/open spaces are kept to the highest possible standards for the public as a whole to enjoy.

The Council will look to consult/engage with the public on a regular basis to better understand their needs and wants in relation to these assets.

This document has also set out the Council's expectations of those who use the parks on a structured and regular basis.

This document will form a key part of the Council's strategic planning approaches and will continued to be reviewed on a regular basis.

**WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL****APPENDIX A - PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21****GENERAL DUTIES – GROUNDSTAFF**

- Maintain the Recreation Grounds, including the pavilions, in a clean and tidy condition – **DAILY/ONGOING**
- Undertake minor pruning/weeding/groundworks as required, not otherwise included in grounds maintenance contract – **DAILY/ONGOING**
- Maintain the bowling greens and tennis courts, including mowing and soil treatment as required – **ONGOING**
- Ensure proper maintenance of all hand tools and mechanical equipment – **AS REQUIRED**
- To issue tickets for bowls and tennis, collect income and deliver income to WTC office on a weekly basis – **WEEKLY**
- Responsible for the Council’s vehicle – maintaining the vehicle – **AS REQUIRED**
- Submit vehicle log sheets to the Town Clerk on a monthly basis – **MONTHLY**
- Conduct regular inspections of the play equipment at all Town Council owned/managed parks/open spaces and carry out routine maintenance and painting as required – **WEEKLY**
- Inspection of condition of paths/fencing at all Town Council owned/managed play areas or open spaces and inform the Town Clerk of any matters requiring attention – **WEEKLY**
- Conduct litter picks at all areas of open space – **DAILY**

## APPENDIX B - PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21

### PROJECTS, TASKS AND DUTIES

AREA	PROJECT/TASK/DUTIES
<b>WHARTON RECREATION GROUND</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock and unlock gates (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Goal posts need painting (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Inspect play areas (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement signs (WTC Office)</li> <li>• New trees (WTC Office)</li> <li>• Develop raised beds (WTC Office)</li> <li>• Update MUGA (WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>OVER RECREATION GROUND</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock and unlock gates (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Goal posts need painting (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Inspect play areas (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape new front entrance (WTC Office)</li> <li>• Repair and replace fencing at front entrance (WTC Office)</li> <li>• Introduction of a teen shelter</li> </ul>

<b>LEAF LANE PLAY AREA</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock and unlock gates (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Goal posts need painting (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Inspect play areas (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement of play area (WTC Office)</li> <li>• Planting trees (WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>RILSHAW MEADOWS</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting new plants/trees (WTC Office)</li> <li>• New litter bins (WTC Office)</li> <li>• New signage (WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>STANTHORNE PLAY AREA</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock and unlock gates (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Goal posts need painting (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Inspect play areas (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review standard of play area (Groundsmen/WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>HILL STREET</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual tidy of the area (Groundsmen)</li> </ul>

<b>STATION ROAD (GEORGE VI PLAY AREA)</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock and unlock gates (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Goal posts need painting (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Inspect play areas (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review standard of play area (Groundsmen/WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>MEADOWBANK PLAY AREA</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock and unlock gates (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Goal posts need painting (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Inspect play areas (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review standard of play area (Groundsmen/WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>OVER/WHARTON ALLOTMENTS</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support allotment holders where required (Groundsmen/WTC Office)</li> <li>• Provide skips and other materials where requested (WTC Office)</li> <li>• Clean gravestones every three months - Over (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement project – Wharton Allotments (WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>WINSFORD TOWN PARK</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of any graffiti (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Inspect play areas (Groundsmen)</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review standard of play area (Groundsmen/WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>WAR MEMORIALS</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine maintenance checks (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Ensure litter and other waste is removed (Groundsmen)</li> <li>• Re-paint and clean on a regular basis (Groundsmen/WTC Office)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project to restore the memorials on hold, pending outcome of CWAC Masterplanning exercise at Shopping Centre (WTC Office)</li> </ul>
<b>TOWN SIGNS</b>	<p><i>Ongoing Tasks/Duties</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean on a regular basis (Groundsmen)</li> </ul> <p><i>Projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review provision annually (Groundsmen/WTC Office)</li> </ul>