

GREAT WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Recreation Strategy 2023-2027

Version 1

This policy document should be reviewed and updated as necessary

Version	Review Date	Reviewed By	Summary of Changes
1	March 2023	S. Gilbert	New document.

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Great Waltham Parish Council – Recreation Strategy (2023-2027)

1. Overview

- 1.1. At 25.04 km² Great Waltham is the eighth largest civil parish in Essex. In the 2021 census it had a population of 2,331¹; that is, 93.09 persons per km². However, residences are concentrated in three villages: Great Waltham, Ford End and Howe Street; and six hamlets: Breeds, Broads Green, Fanners Green, Littlely Green, North End and Minnow Mead.
- 1.2. Great Waltham Parish Council (“GWPC”) aims to provide recreational facilities for all age ranges within its area. Because most of the population live in the three villages, it recognises that facilities will tend to be centred there, with the most focus on Great Waltham village where the majority reside.
- 1.3. The range of recreational facilities will be determined by a combination of demand, GWPC’s desire for inclusivity and available budget (as determined by the parish precept and any other available grants or revenue streams).
- 1.4. The non-nucleated arrangement of its settlements places pressure on GWPC to spread its limited financial resources, presenting significant challenges in matching the expectations at each area of population. Often it has to make difficult decisions and compromises as it looks to make facilities as widely available as possible. When seeking to maximise the provision and use potential of recreational facilities for the widest number of parishioners GWPC also pays close regard to the impact of any developments and improvements on the environment (in particular, in adheres to the requirements of its Statement on Biodiversity policy²).
- 1.5. In these contexts, this strategy document outlines, for the five year period 2023 to 2027 inclusive, where and how GWPC will look to focus its activities and the principles which guide its work. Developments and opportunities during the period to 2027 may require a periodic review and update of the strategy. However, an initial five year period provides certainty and focus when GWPC considers its future budgets.

2. Current Recreational Facilities Administered by GWPC

2.1. Great Waltham Recreation Ground

This is sited off South Street, Great Waltham. The area is part owned and part leased by GWPC and contains the Pavilion (a facility used by GWPC for its meetings and also available for hire, details being available on the parish website³), a full-size football pitch, a football kickabout area, seating and the play equipment items detailed in the Appendix.

2.2. Howe Street Recreation Ground

This is sited off Parsonage Lane, Howe Street. The area is leased by GWPC and contains seating and the play equipment items detailed in the Appendix.

¹ See https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/admin/chelmsford/E04003960__great_waltham/.

² See <https://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/a/42828227-46323418>.

³ See <https://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/the-pavilion/>.

2.3. Ford End Recreation Ground

This is sited off Pleshey Road, Ford End. The area is owned by GWPC and contains a junior goal size football pitch and a single full-size goal, seating and the play equipment items detailed in the Appendix.

2.4. Allotment sites

GWPC leases two plots of land at:

- Brook Mead, Great Waltham (0.375 hectares).
- Bury Lane, Great Waltham (0.263 hectares).

which are available for parishioners to hire as allotment gardens for the cultivation of vegetable or fruit crops. GWPC's Allotment Allocation Policy and specimen Allotment Agreement are available on the parish website⁴.

2.5. Other areas owned or leased by GWPC

These areas are not used for recreational purposes but are maintained by GWPC:

- The green area in Banbury Square, Great Waltham, the site of the war memorial (owned).
- The open space in the centre of Broads Green (owned).
- An area of common land alongside Littley Green Road, Littley Green⁵.
- An area known as Pump Green, North End (unknown ownership).

2.6. Other recreational and cultural activities

GWPC recognises that there are other recreational pursuits provided by clubs in the parish using resources by Great Waltham and Ford End Village Halls, the churches in the parish or provided by such organisations themselves. GWPC has no responsibilities in relation to these other facilities.

3. Principles Governing GWPC's Recreation Grounds Strategy

The following principles underpin how GWPC makes available, develops and improves the recreation grounds detailed in sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3:

- 3.1. All decisions made by GWPC in conjunction with, and all improvements made and equipment installed at, its recreation grounds must be consistent with its agreed policies⁶. GWPC will always make its decisions and take actions consistent with the protected characteristics of individuals, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2. GWPC will prioritise the encouragement of exercise and learning activities for all at its recreation grounds, with a focus on children (under 18).
- 3.3. GWPC will prioritise the provision of facilities which make the supervision and safeguarding of children as convenient as possible.

⁴ See <https://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/a/42828227-46323499> and <https://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/a/42828227-45868377>.

⁵ At what3words location: motoring.vesting.flying.

⁶ See <https://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/copy-of-parish-directory/policy-files/>.

- 3.4. GWPC will prioritise improvements at its recreation grounds which encourage users to socialise.
- 3.5. GWPC will aspire to make its recreation grounds as inclusive for as many people as possible.
- 3.6. GWPC will aspire to prioritising access to its recreation grounds by individuals with disabilities.
- 3.7. GWPC will aspire to ensure all parts of its recreation grounds are accessible all year round.
- 3.8. All activities undertaken by GWPC in conjunction with its recreation grounds will be subject to any and all relevant legal, regulatory and financial requirements and constraints.

4. Principles Governing GWPC's Allotment Sites Strategy

The following principles underpin how GWPC administers the allotment sites detailed in section 2.4:

- 4.1. All decisions made by GWPC in conjunction with the management of the allotment sites must be consistent with its agreed policies⁷. GWPC will always make its decisions and take actions consistent with the protected characteristics of individuals, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.2. GWPC will manage the 'communal areas' of its allotment sites so that they are safe and well-maintained and will keep any unused plots safe, clean and free from weeds (in anticipation of new hirers taking them over).
- 4.3. GWPC will aspire to make its allotment sites as inclusive for as many sub-tenants as possible.
- 4.4. GWPC will aspire to making its allotment sites as accessible as possible for sub-tenants with disabilities.
- 4.5. GWPC will aspire to ensure all parts of its recreation grounds are accessible all year round.
- 4.6. All activities undertaken by GWPC in conjunction with its allotment sites will be subject to any and all relevant legal, regulatory and financial requirements and constraints.

5. Risk Assessments and Inspections

- 5.1. GWPC undertakes weekly inspections of the play equipment and other facilities installed at its recreation grounds.
- 5.2. The Pavilion at Great Waltham Recreation Ground has dedicated caretaking resources which identifying and health and safety issues at the premises.
- 5.3. GWPC commission an annual inspection of its recreation grounds by an independent inspection service provider. The agreed recommended actions made in the inspection service provider's report are implemented as soon as possible.

⁷ Ibid.

- 5.4. GWPC undertakes at least monthly inspections of its allotment sites to ensure that sub-tenants are adhering to the terms and conditions of hiring detailed in the Allotment Agreement, and that GWPC's obligations in relation to the safety of sub-tenants and other authorised persons on the sites are being met.
- 5.5. Issues arising from risk assessments and inspections at the recreation grounds and allotment sites are managed by GWPC's Recreation Committee.
- 5.6. GWPC has an Allotments Supervisor position. This person's role is to understand and manage sub-tenants' queries and concerns, and working in close liaison with the Parish Clerk and the Recreation Committee, to apply GWPC policies to engineer mutually acceptable outcomes.
- 5.7. GWPC employs a handyperson to undertake remedial work at its recreational facilities. When external resource is required to effect such work GWPC will commission external contractors and/or secure volunteer services.

6. GWPC 5-year Strategic Plan (2023-2027)

Recreation Grounds

- 6.1. In relation to its recreation grounds, GWPC's strategy for 2023-2027 is to:
 - 6.1.1. Effect any remedial, improvement or maintenance works in accordance with the principles detailed in section 3, above.
 - 6.1.2. Design and implement a rolling programme to replace play equipment as items come to the end of their working lives.
 - 6.1.3. Replace existing wooden play equipment with metal equivalents or better (and where possible, recycled materials), to improve longevity and overall value for money.
 - 6.1.4. To organise or facilitate events at the sites which promote their greater use by all members of the public.

Allotments

- 6.2. In relation to its allotment sites, GWPC's strategy for 2023-2027 is to:
 - 6.2.1. Maximise usage at the sites. The aspiration is to have the sites fully sub-tenanted at all times.
 - 6.2.2. Maintain and improve the designated 'communal areas' at the sites.
 - 6.2.3. Maintain the Allotments Supervisor role.

Other areas

6.3. In relation to all other areas for which it has responsibility (see section 2.5), GWPC's strategy for 2023-2027 is to:

- 6.3.1. Effect any remedial, improvement or maintenance works as they arise. In particular, it will ensure the war memorial and fencing at Banbury Square is well maintained, especially in anticipation of Remembrance Day and other commemorative events, and that all sites are kept secure to deter unauthorised access.
- 6.3.2. Other than for the purposes indicated in 6.3.1, is not to make substantive alterations to the existing appearance (or facilities available) at these locations.
- 6.3.3. In relation to the management of these sites, always make its decisions and take actions consistent with the protected characteristics of individuals, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

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Appendix – List of Play Equipment at the Recreation Grounds⁸

Great Waltham Recreation Ground

- Watch Tower (including safety surfacing).
- Locomotive and Carriage (including safety surfacing).
- Basketball Goal.
- Junior Swings.
- Infant Swings.
- Embankment with Stainless Steel Slide.
- See-Saw.
- Goalposts
- Youth Shelter.
- Cone Climber (including safety surfacing),
- Springers.
- Three Towers adventure unit including safety surfacing.
- Adventure Trail.
- Pick Up Sticks.
- Heavy Duty Picnic Bench.
- Inclusive swing.
- Concrete Table Tennis Table

Howe Street Recreation Ground

- Slide.
- Junior Swings.
- Infant Swings.
- See Saw.

Ford End Recreation Ground

- Junior swings.
- Infant swings.
- See-saw.
- Catwalk.
- Log Run.
- Walk the Plank.
- Switchback Run.
- Step Link.
- Cone Climber with safety surfacing.
- Junior Goalposts.
- Senior Goal Posts.
- Multi Sports.

⁸ Uses information from GWPC asset register as at March 2023.