

Report From the Church Field Sub Committee

Church Field

Introduction

Church Field is designated as part of the Natural Landscapes originally known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is the only place within the Village that opens up a magnificent view onto the Orwell Estuary, from Levington to Felixstowe, in all seasons and weathers because of its height above the River. From the Shotley side, the Church Meadow allows the view to be opened up across the River to show St Peter's Church in all its glory.

As various legal documents dating from 1978 make it very clear Church Field was bequeathed to the 'inhabitants of Levington and of the adjoining or adjacent areas' as an open space for recreational purposes, 'for all time'.

There are two previous reports in existence and available for reference:

The Report of the Church Field Management Working Party: 2005

And

The Management of Church Field and Tricker's Wood: 2018

The 2018 document, which adopted the 2005 Report, has a section entitled: Management Principles (No:3) and another entitled Maintenance and Development (no: 5) which are relevant to the current discussions.

Councillors: John Parrish, Ann Wignall And Chris Yeo when they met on 13 August at 18.30.

The following proposals were made by the current sub committee after due consideration that the Church Field should be accessible to the public at all times, but at the same time reflecting the need to protect and encourage the related wildlife.

1. The whole of Church Field should be cut three times a year in March, August and October. *(In neither Sections 3 or 5 of the 2018 document are the number of cuts specified.)*
2. From March to October, area 1, forms the main triangular area and is the largest, relatively flat area, including the previously agreed 1m strip parallel to Church Lane, should be mowed at fairly regular intervals allowing the grass to be kept short and of a type more conducive to recreational activities. It would also allow a clear view out over the field to the Orwell from the Church Yard and also from the pavement. *(This would be in keeping with Section 3(4) of the Management Principles, 2018)*

3. From March to October the identified paths should also be mown at the same time as area 1 to allow comfortable transit across the field.
4. From March to October Areas 2 and 3 should not be cut, but allowed to grow naturally as neither area is particularly conducive to recreational activities as they are both sloping, thus providing natural cover for wildlife and also as a means of controlling the nettle beds which are starting to invade the field. This would extend the '2m area to be left uncut for wildlife, adjacent to Pilot's Way and along the southern boundary . (*Section 5(a) of the Maintenance and Development Principle, 2018*), and takes into account current concerns with regard to climate change.

Finally, there are other options that should be explored for the Field that have not been considered by the subcommittee at this stage (such as improved seating / activity equipment for all ages). These will be considered once:

- a) the new cutting regime has been in operation and the impact can be evaluated
- b) the development of The Ship has occurred and any associated impact on the village has been evaluated.