



WORTH PARISH COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE & PLAY AREA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Worth Parish Council owns and manages a number of areas of open space, recreation grounds and play areas within the parish. These spaces are provided for the enjoyment, wellbeing and recreation of the community.

This policy sets out the standards of behaviour expected within these areas, the activities that are permitted or prohibited and the responsibilities of users to ensure that the environment is respected and protected.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect the safety and enjoyment of all users
- Safeguard the natural environment, wildlife and planted areas
- Prevent damage, nuisance or anti-social behaviour
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and local byelaws
- Provide clarity on permitted and prohibited activities
- Support the Council's duty to manage its land responsibly

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council-owned open spaces, recreation grounds, play areas, ponds streams and water features, woodland, grassland and planted areas. It applies to all users, including residents, visitors, contractors and event organisers.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Users of Council land must:

- Treat the environment, wildlife and other users with respect
- Follow all signage and instructions
- Supervise children appropriately
- Keep dogs under control and clean up after them
- Avoid causing nuisance, damage or disturbance

CONTROL OF ANIMALS

All animals brought onto Council-owned or managed open spaces must be kept under full control at all times. Persons responsible for an animal must take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not cause nuisance, alarm, distress, injury or danger to any person, wildlife or property.

Particular care must be taken in areas used by children, including playgrounds, recreation grounds, school frontages and routes to and from schools. Where requested by authorised Council representatives, animals must be placed on a lead or removed from the area.

Animals must not be allowed to approach, intimidate, chase or otherwise interfere with children or groups of children. In areas where children are present, animals must be kept sufficiently close to and under the effective control of the person responsible for them to prevent any risk to public safety.

Any person in charge of an animal remains responsible for its behaviour and for clearing up any fouling and disposing of waste appropriately.

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

To help protect the environment some activities are prohibited.

Prohibited Actions

No person shall

- Climb any fences, walls, gates, railings, trees or structures (except designated play equipment)
- Damage, remove or interfere with any barrier, post, bench, sign, bin or ornament
- Enter areas where signage indicates to "keep off the grass" or similar
- Damage or remove any flowers, shrubs, trees or plants
- Bathe, wash or wade in any pond, stream or other water
- Foul or pollute any watercourse
- Disturb, harm or kill any wildlife, or damage nests or habitats nor engage in hunting, shooting or fishing or the setting of traps, nets or snares
- Bring onto the open space any vehicle, barrow, truck or machine other than a wheeled bicycle without the express permission of the Council
- Allow their dog to foul the area without cleaning it up immediately

SPORTING ACTIVITIES

Permitted Activities

- Informal recreation (walking, running, casual ball games)
- Organised sports where the Council has granted permission

Prohibited Activities

No person shall

- Drive, chip or pitch a hard golf ball
- Interfere with other users of the open space whilst participating in a sporting activity, formal or otherwise
- Undertake organised events without prior permission
- Recreational Drone flying
- Use vehicles, motorcycles or electric scooters on Council-owned land

Activities Requiring Prior Permission

No person shall, without written permission from the Council

- Erect structures, tents, gazebos, marquees or stalls
- Sell goods or services
- Hold events, classes or organised gatherings
- Conduct commercial photography or filming
- Use amplified music or public address systems
- Commercial Drone flying
- Metal detecting

PLAY AREAS

Rules for play areas

- No ball games to be played within the fenced area of the play area
- No person over the age of 16 shall use the equipment within the play area
- Children must be supervised appropriately
- No dogs within the fenced play areas (except assistance dogs)
- No smoking, vaping, alcohol or consumption of illegal substances

ENFORCEMENT AND REPORTING

All users of any open space specified within the scope of this policy must comply with this policy and/or any instructions given by Council staff or authorised contractors. As a result of failure to comply, The Council may:

- Request users to leave the land
- Report offences to the Police or other authority
- Recover costs for damages
- Refuse permission for events or activities

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

Subject to any new legislation, changes in Statute or case law which require immediate amendment; or the requirements of the Parish Council, this Policy will be reviewed every two years.

Adopted March 2018

Reviewed November 2022

Reviewed July 2026