



Bishop's Waltham Parish Council
Parish Council Office
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Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy

Bishop's Waltham Parish Council owns and manages various open spaces to ensure they remain open to everyone for their recreation and enjoyment in perpetuity and to give local people, through their elected representatives, the power to control what happens on this land. The council thereby accepts that it has the responsibility for this land and the cost associated with maintaining it - where appropriate and affordable improving it, in order to enhance the public's enjoyment of the sites. The council also owns land and buildings which are not deemed open spaces. These parcels of land are also managed for the community irrespective of size.

It follows that the Parish Council holds this land in perpetuity for the community and therefore it is the Council's policy that it will not sell land unless a clear case has been presented to the Council that it is overwhelmingly in the interests of Parish residents to do so.

Any attempt to enclose land owned by the Parish Council by adjacent landowners or others will be resisted (unless permission has been previously sought and agreed by the council) in order that the Council may fulfil its obligation to maintain the land it has for the benefit of the general public in perpetuity.

It is important to the Parish Council to maintain its land in line with its green policy. We wish to maintain biodiversity and wildlife corridors within the parish and any land disposal may not have a net detrimental effect to the parish (after any mitigation measures). Areas of land and open space are often integral to the design and landscaping of developments as well as providing habitats for wildlife.

Any acquisitions or disposals must also support the aims of our Local Plan.

The Parish Council will need to consider and take into account the following:

1. That current Government legislation is understood and used as a basis for decision-making.
2. To consider best value for the community.
3. To consider what the land is currently used for.
4. To consider if professional advice is needed before proceeding with a purchase or sale. i.e legal, surveyor, drainage experts, Ecological surveys etc.

Acquisition of land

The Parish Council are happy to look at ways in which to increase their portfolio of parish council owned land/open space for the benefit of the community. Opportunities to obtain further land can be gifted or acquired by purchase. This land/open space is normally gifted to the Parish Council in most cases for the benefit of the community.

Any request to acquire land for the use of public open space will be considered by the Council.

Ensure when we accept gifted land or when we are purchasing land that due diligence is formed, legal advice is sought and the impact to the residents is considered before accepting the land.

To consider on a case-by-case basis the valuation of the land – the Council could instruct and pay for an appropriate person to value the land to ensure fair value is received.



Disposal of Land

The Parish Council will not actively seek to dispose of land unless there are sound justifications, as set out below, to do so. The Parish Council values its land/open spaces as part of the fabric of the village and in most cases the monetary value of the land cannot match the amenity value to local residents.

The Council will not dispose of land for less than it is worth so knowing the value of the land is important to establish in the first instance. Professional advice must be sought.

The Council will consider an open and transparent bidding process where required and certainly when there is more than one party interested in the disposal.

The Council will be inclined to dispose of land when one or more of the following apply:

1. The Council's current or future liability for maintenance and repair outweighs the current or future amenity the land provides for residents.
2. Disposal facilitates broader projects which the council deems to be for the benefit of residents.
3. The parish land provides no current discernible amenity to residents nor uncommon environmental advantage for flora or fauna.
4. Disposal will contribute to the vision of the Council.

Document History		
Status	Date	Version
Originally adopted	9.1.24 FP&R	1.0
Review Date	2027 or if circumstances change	
Next Review date		