

07.11.2023

Recommendation from the Kings Farm Wood Working Party regarding a request from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to purchase a larger bin and to add it to WPC's existing waste contract using reserves earmarked for the management of Kings Farm Woods

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Neil Pullen from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) requested a larger bin to replace the existing dog waste bin at the bottom of Kings Farm Woods, and for the emptying of this new bin to be added to WPC's existing waste contract.

2.0 Report Details

2.1 Purchase of a new multi-purpose bin to replace the existing dog waste bin

WWT originally asked for a large, general rubbish bin at Kings Farm Woods to replace the existing dog waste bin. The members of the Kings Farm Woods Working Party were asked to agree a recommendation to the Parish Council's Community Assets Committee regarding this request. This would also include the costs to add the emptying of the bin to Wroughton Parish Council's existing waste contract, with the expenditure for both to be taken from the reserve earmarked for the management of Kings Farm Wood.

The KFW WP hasn't met for a long time, so the members have changed. Current members are:

- WPC Cllr John Hewer and Cllr Holly Woodward
- SBC Ward Cllr Rep Cllr Brian Ford
- SBC Officer Eden Speller
- WWT Neil Pullen

There is £13,158 in the reserve ringfenced for the management of Kings Farm Woods. WWT has checked with Earth Anchor. The Bentham 145litre costs approx £650 incl. VAT, plus installation costs of approx. £350 for a contractor to bolt to the existing plinth or a new hole and concrete plinth (WWT estates team could deliver this). Total to buy & install new bin = approx £1,000.00.

Under the terms of WPC's waste contract, the costs for emptying a bin currently stand at £2.00 per visit. With inflation at eg: 100% this could be £4.00 per visit. If emptied every two weeks this would amount to £104.00 per annum, and £1,040 over 10 years.

The existing bin is just inside Kings Farm Woods, 8.7m from the kerb on Badgers Brook, on the small access track across the brook. A new, bigger multi-purpose bin could be secured closer to the kerb as long as vehicle access across the bridge is maintained. This grass area outside the gate (on the Badgers Brook side) is owned by SBC and maintained by WPC. WPC would need to ask SBC for permission to install a bin on this area of land.

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If this expenditure and nominal agreement of future expenditure is agreed, £11,158 would remain in the reserve earmarked for the management of Kings Farm Wood. WWT advise they are currently negotiating Ash dieback work and other management works through the various consenting bodies and are not in a position to share anything more at this stage. These works are expensive. WWT will come back to the WP to discuss future use of the remaining funds for this purpose. They are hoping to move things forward and a Trustee with forestry experience has been tasked with pushing this, but it may be 12 months before any work/ draw down of funds.

Removing the existing dog waste bin and trial having no bin at all

Following WWT's request to install a larger general waste bin, Eden Speller (SBC) queried whether the Working Party should consider having no bin at all. WWT advised as follows:

WWT do not provide litter bins or dog waste bins on any of the other 44 nature reserves around the county (except on sites at which we have cafes or specific visitor facilities). We also have a policy on all other nature reserves that dogs should be kept on a short lead (regularly ignored). Therefore we have no capacity or facilities to empty waste bins across the 1,500 hectares or so of land that we manage. We do suffer from fly tipping (as all land owners). We have few general litter problems, but some sites are plagued by litter and others by dog walkers not picking up after their dogs.

Kings Farm Wood is a slightly different situation:

- It is the only nature reserve on which, dogs are allowed to roam free, following a request from the parish and the local community, who had been so active in securing funding for the site.*
- The Parish Council provided a dog waste bin waste bin and it has emptied that bin since the original purchase.*
- Despite the dog waste bin, we still suffer badly from dog walkers not picking up after their dogs.*
- At Kings Farm Wood we also suffer from spates of litter.*
- Responsible dog owners and others have become habituated and know that a bin is provided at the entrance and use the current bin at the entrance gate. However, this often overflows allowing an accumulation of dog waste and litter.*

We do not believe that there is an easy simple solution to this. A larger bin emptied regularly, may alleviate some of the problem. It will not change the attitudes of the irresponsible who will continue to litter and allow dogs faeces to accumulate. However, we would be happy to trial a period in which no bin is provided.



Finally. If we are installing a new bin should we work together (WWT and Parish) to publicise an article in the Parish Magazine and on wider social media, reminding people to take litter home, pick up after their dog etc. It is an issue that affects not just KFW but other areas within Wroughton. Recently I took a group to Common Farm who mentioned how much dog muck had simply been left through the site and recent work at Black Horse farm also encountered litter and dog muck (often hanging from trees). A gentle campaign across media outlets would seem to be a sensible and cost effective measure when we are considering £1000.00's for a single bin in one location. If we trial "NO BIN" we feel that a campaign such as the above would be beneficial and help to change people's mind-sets. Perhaps some of the money from S106 could be allocated to such a campaign.

Wroughton Parish Council will arrange an annual in-person meeting of the KFW WP – TBA.

WP Member responses:

Cllr John Hewer: In favour of replacing existing dog waste bin with a larger general purpose bin. The current bin overflows so there is a need for a bin. If there was no bins at all, it would discourage walkers/ dog owners from picking up waste/ rubbish and cause a huge litter issue.

Cllr Holly Woodward Is there any research to support the idea of no bins at all, as it seems counter-intuitive to me? People are unlikely to take rubbish and dog poo home with them. The suggestion that the current dog bin be replaced by a general black waste bin there, or alternatively on the near side of the stream was made by the head of the Grounds Team while I was there, and that seems very sensible to me. The land on the near side of the stream apparently belongs to SBC and is maintained by the Grounds Team and they already empty a bin at the children's play area nearby, so it would very little extra work. The current bin could even be relocated in between the play area and the entrance to the wood.

Eden Speller In response to the provision of a larger general purpose bin has any consideration been given to completely remove and not replace? I ask as I have previous experience where I have completely removed bins and seen a marked reduction in litter/social problems. This was coupled with a no poo-bag policy in woodland areas where dogwalkers were required to 'stick and flick' the dog-poo into the undergrowth. The above, whilst may seem unorthodox, did help reduce costs in terms of bin replacement, maintenance (often an overlooked cost) and emptying costs along with removal of social issues of having bins full of dog-waste and other waste items. National Trust in many areas have removed bins including dog bins. Kennet District Council when I worked there removed bins from various woodland areas. Stick and flick, understandably, is an unorthodox approach but is used by large woodland owners such Stansted Park.

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- Cllr Brian Ford I note Eden's response and I think this is worth a try for a trial period. (I am in favour of NO bin.)
- Neil Pullen (WWT) Originally requested replacement of existing dog waste bin with a larger general waste bin, with WPC to manage emptying. However, WWT does not believe that there is an easy simple solution to this. A larger bin emptied regularly, may alleviate some of the problem. It will not change the attitudes of the irresponsible who will continue to litter and allow dogs faeces to accumulate. However, we would be happy to trial a period in which no bin is provided but request that such a trial is accompanied by a strong, proactive joint comms campaign with SBC.

The Working Party Members are split as to whether they prefer to replace the existing dog waste bin with a larger general waste bin, or whether to trial no bin at all. Whichever option the Community Assets Committee decides, WWT will work with WPC on joint comms.

3.0 Recommendations: The Committee has 2 options to consider:

3.1 Option 1:

To nominally set aside £2,100 to purchase a new bin and have it emptied as part of WPC's existing waste contract for the next ten years, this expenditure to be taken from the reserve which is earmarked for the management of Kings Farm Wood, together with joint comms. Also to move the bin as close as possible to the gated access from Badgers Brook (seeking authority from SBC if appropriate) giving delegated authority to agree the site to the Deputy Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Community Assets Committee, the Grounds Team Manager and WWT. If they cannot unanimously agree on a site, this decision will be brought back to the Working Party to make a recommendation to the Community Assets Committee.

3.2 Option 2:

To trial having no bin for 6 months with strong, proactive joint comms.
To give delegated authority to the Deputy Clerk in consultation with both the Chair of the Community Assets Committee and WWT, that if after 6 months, WWT reports that the trial is not successful, to purchase a larger general waste bin and add this to WPC's existing waste contract, all details as per Option 1 above.

3.4 Whichever option the Committee decides, to delegate to the Deputy Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Community Assets Committee and WWT to spend up to a maximum of £500 on a joint comms campaign.

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