

WROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Council



OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING 2ND APRIL 2024

Request to grant permission for metal detecting on the paddock area of the allotments

Introduction

WPC has received a request from an allotment holder to carry out metal detecting in the paddock area of the allotments as follows:

I am seeking formal permission to detect in the paddock area (which is about 2 acres in size) next to the allotments, see attached picture. I understand this would need to be escalated to Swindon Borough Council. Your help in this matter would be much appreciated to get it put on "AOB" at the next council meeting. I believe my deadline to you is the 18th March so that it can be added to the committee agenda. I am a fully paid-up member of the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD) and a member of The Federation of Independent Detectorists (FID). Being a member of NCMD I have Public Liability Insurance up to £10m, and I fully endorse the code of conduct of any finds. If granted, it would take me about 4 days to complete scanning the area.

NCMD - Membership No. NCMD-4Q5J-5S2X

FID - Membership No. 21552

We have contacted Swindon Borough Council as landlord, to ask whether they would be prepared to grant permission. SBC has advised that they do not give permission for metal detecting on any of their land and are unable to facilitate this or enter into any arrangement to permit this. They have further advised that they do not consider that their lease with WPC of the allotments makes any reference to such a matter and the decision on what WPC permits or otherwise in relation to this is for WPC to determine.

WPC was asked back in 2020 by a resident could carry out metal detecting on any WPC-owned land. That 2020 request was declined on the basis that there was no suitable land. This request differs in that it relates specifically to the paddock area which is not used although it is kept mowed by the Grounds Team. However, the Grounds Team Manager has raised concerns about allowing anyone to detect and dig in the paddock area for 2 reasons:

- The paddock used to be used for raising young game birds. The Grounds Team continue to find pieces of metal in the ground from the cages where the birds were kept. This will mean any detectorists are likely to get false positive readings and could mean many holes being dug with little or nothing of any historical value being found.
- It is difficult for anyone to refill a hole to the same level as the surrounding ground, as earth tends to settle and sink after a period of time, which would cause dips and hollows, which in turn would present trip hazards to the Grounds Team and make it impossible to get a good cut with the mower.

Recommendation:

The Committee refuse permission for the following reasons:

- 1. The paddock used to be used for raising young game birds. The Grounds Team continue to find pieces of metal in the ground from the cages where the birds were kept. This will mean any detectorists would be likely to get false positive readings and could mean many holes being dug with little or nothing of any historical value being found.**
- 2. It is difficult for anyone to refill a hole to the same level as the surrounding ground, as earth tends to settle and sink after a period of time, which would cause dips and hollows. These would present trip hazards to the Grounds Team presenting a potential health & safety risk, and also make it impossible to get a good cut with the mower.**