

# WICKERSLEY

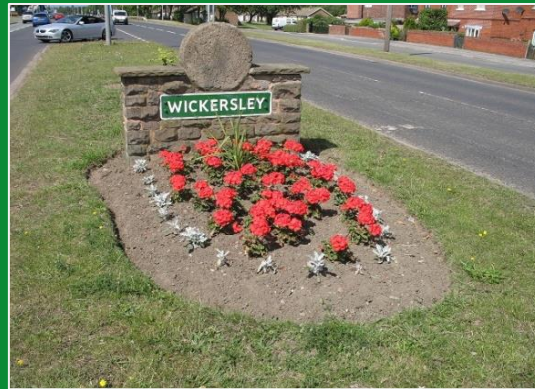
Parish Council



# Business Plan

## 2025 – 2028

Version 2



## Welcome to Wickersley Parish Council

*Developing our community & making a difference in Wickersley*

## A Snapshot of What We Do

The Parish Council take a lead role in developing our local community. We are self-aware and are committed to focussing on the issues that are important to the entire community.

We are the first tier of local government serving the parish of Wickersley, near Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Wickersley has a population of around 8,000 people living in approximately 3,400 residential properties.

We provide local services within Wickersley and aim to influence what is delivered within the village.

The Parish Council provide events (such as the popular Christmas lights switch on), look after Wickersley Park, Bob Mason Recreation Ground (at Sorby Way), Wickersley Woods, the Gorse, Winthrop Gardens and the Tanyard toilets, and we manage Wickersley Community Centre.

We are an ambitious and aspirational parish council and excited to implement this plan for the village and residents.



## Wickersley Parish Council

To do this, and more, we have up to sixteen elected Parish Councillors who are all volunteers, who believe in their community and work hard to improve the facilities, environment, and opportunities for all within Wickersley. They serve for a period of four years between elections.

The number of serving councillors can vary over the four-year period, due to vacant seats, changes in membership and new appointments through a process called co-option. Our aim is always to work at a full complement of sixteen parish councillors.



*Wickersley Parish Councillors September 2024*

The councillors each sit on a range of committees, of their choice, which manage the work and plans of the parish. Each committee is led by a Chair and serviced by a member of the clerking team.

The committees are as follows:



Recreation & Environment



Events



Planning



Finance & Governance



Winthrop Gardens



Human Resources & Staffing

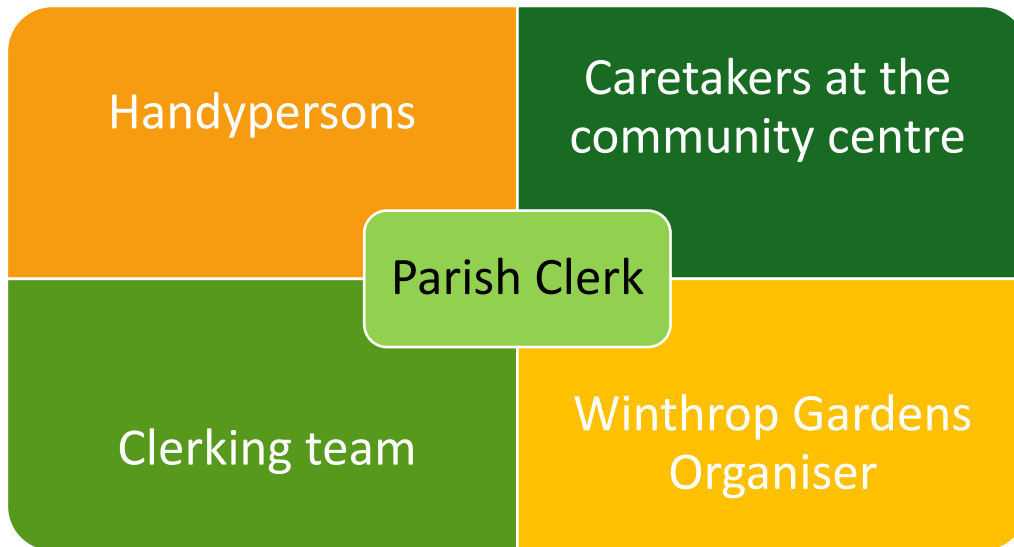


Woodlands



Wickersley  
Community Centre  
Association

The Parish Council are supported by a team of eight part time staff who work hard to turn the aspirations of parish councillors into reality locally.



The Parish Council meets once a month, on the third Monday. The Parish Council meetings set policy and take major decisions, whilst day to day matters are dealt with by the Parish Clerk and team.

The Parish Council is largely funded by a precept paid by local people through their council tax bills. It is collected on our behalf by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) as the rating authority. Some income comes from other Parish Council activities such as football pitch hire, café and plant sales at Winthrop Gardens.

Wickersley is situated 3 miles from Rotherham in South Yorkshire.



## **The Purpose of Our Business Plan**

To help direct our works over the coming years we have developed this business plan. It provides a framework for our plans for the next three years and beyond. By planning, we are able to ensure we spend public monies where they are needed within our locality.

The Business Plan enables all stakeholders (councillors, employees, parishioners and other interested parties) to understand the Parish Council's purpose, and both short and long-term ambitions by setting clear aims and objectives. It gives direction and enables us to work in a more consistent and coordinated way.

It is a rolling 3-year plan that allows the Council to adapt and change in a controlled and systematic way, growing to meet the changing needs of Wickersley, the changing pressures from other strategic plans and Government legislation. It will influence how we design and deliver services, allocate our resources, and achieve value for money. The plan sets out how we propose to achieve our long-term vision and outcomes and specifies the priorities and actions we would like to deliver during the next three years and beyond.

## **Community Engagement**

Parish Councillors do not work in isolation from the community they represent. For this reason, the role of community engagement is vitally important to us and how we have developed this plan. We have held community engagement events, surveyed residents to gain the opinions of local people and responded to comments on social media.

From this consultation our plans for the different phases at Wickersley Park have been developed, the Neighbourhood Plan produced, and the current Winthrop redevelopment project developed.

## **Strategic Vision**

***Our vision is to develop our community and make a difference in Wickersley.***

### **To achieve this, we will:**

Create a healthy, positive community by ensuring our residents have access to social activities, health and wellbeing activities, and recreational facilities.

Maintain and improve Parish Council owned assets so they are "fit for purpose" for continued use and enjoyment by Wickersley residents.

Engage and communicate with parishioners to better understand their needs.

# Our Strategic Objectives

## We aim to:

- 1) Ensure all Parish operated facilities are fit for purpose, now and in the future
- 2) Offer a range of community events to bring the community together
- 3) Develop a pride in our community and enhance the environment within Wickersley
- 4) Develop our means of communication with and for Wickersley residents
- 5) Provide health and wellbeing opportunities for residents to contribute to a healthy and positive community
- 6) Invest in the development of Wickersley and the Parish Council in the best interest of the community

## The Detail:

Each of these objectives, for the period of 2025-2028, will start with the below planned works.

### **1) To ensure our buildings, premises and infrastructure are fit for purpose**

- a) Commencing the redevelopment of Winthrop Gardens in 2024 due to securing a £264,000 Government grant
- b) Continuing the development of Wickersley Park
- c) Continuing the development works commenced at Bob Mason Recreation Ground (Sorby Way) by updating the children's play area and football pitches
- d) Ensuring the major maintenance needs of the Community Centre are planned and managed
- e) Ensuring that we have a financial reserve to support the Community Centre and its continued operation post Covid and if any large structural expenditure item is required

### **2) To offer a range of community events to bring the community together**

- a) The popular Christmas lights switch on event
- b) Woodland and Gorse based events e.g. Teddy Bears Picnic
- c) To develop new activities/events e.g. the first Wickersley Walking Festival held in 2024

- d) To work with local providers to encourage the use of Wickersley Park for non-parish run events e.g. the Fair, Farmers market etc
- e) To host a Gala or similar, at least one in a 4-year period

**3) To further develop a pride in our community**

- a) To advocate for residents for contentious planning applications
- b) Increasing Community Litter Picking events and similar
- c) To provide sustainable planting displays throughout the village combining floral and perennial; displays in order to reduce our carbon and water footprint.
- d) Working with RMBC to maintain their infrastructure across the parish, reporting areas of concern, monitoring their progress and working together to maximising resources
- e) Maintenance of our assets at a street level, e.g. bins and benches
- f) Increased cleaning frequency of the Tanyard, a central point of our community

**4) To continue to develop our means of communication with Wickersley residents**

- a) Keeping parishioners informed and updated on a regular basis about initiatives being undertaken by the Parish Council and its partners, e.g. WCCA
- b) Explore appropriate and frequent methods of communicating with all sections of the community
- c) Research the needs of the community and encourage feed-back and participation
- d) Improve accessibility to Parish Councillors through engagement with the community

**5) To provide health and wellbeing opportunities for residents to help create a healthy & positive community**

- a) Ensuring good maintenance of our green spaces to provide recreation opportunities for all
- b) Provide volunteering opportunities at Winthrop Gardens and café to aid social inclusion
- c) To add to the outdoor gym equipment in Wickersley Park
- d) Continue to offer a wide range of classes at the community centre and Winthrop Gardens, suitable for all ages and abilities
- e) Further develop the well-being and support provision at Winthrop Gardens for parishioners including the Memory Café and men's groups

**6) To continue to invest in the development of our staff and councillors in the best interests of the community**

- a) Ensuring all keep abreast of opportunities and policy requirements
- b) Dealing with enquiries speedily and efficiently
- c) Taking on board all feedback either negative or positive
- d) Endeavouring to ensure decisions made by the Council consider the workload of staff
- e) Investing in continuous professional development for the Clerks and councillors
- f) Encouraging development for councillors and committees in line with the "Good Councillor's Guide"
- g) To achieve the silver level of the Local Councils Quality Award Scheme

## **Action Plan - January 2025 to January 2028**

The delivery method of the plan will utilise the Parish Council's committee structure. The actions identified are as a result of work and consultation undertaken at committee level from September 2023 to September 2024, as well as previous parish wide consultation for certain projects.

Each of the actions determined by the committees, fits to deliver one or more of the Strategic Objectives listed above.

### **Funding the Actions**

Several of the aims are aspirational as they have a financial cost beyond the current budgets of the committees. These will be subject to an annual bidding process to access part of the current reserves budget which is presently just under £100,000. Over the 3-year period it is hoped to deliver as many of the aims as practicable.

### **Woodland Committee**



1. To improve the viewpoint at the Gorse by clearing the area and providing a new information board.
2. To continue with an annual programme of community woodland events (minimum of 4 per year) including the Teddy Bear Picnic, Lantern Walk, Bluebell Walk and Balsam Pulling.
3. To hold regular (minimum of 2 per year) litter picking events.

*Note:* Due to overuse and subsequent damage to paths within Wickersley Woods, the committee have decided it is not appropriate to plan further sculptures or encourage additional use of the woods at present, until the area has rejuvenated. Actions will be therefore added when considered appropriate.

### **Events Committee**

1. To host the popular Christmas Lights, Switch On event each year at the Community Centre or alternative venue in the future.
2. To host a Gala or similar, a minimum of one event in a four year period.
3. To arrange Parish Council presence at the village Remembrance service and display RBL poppies and similar in Wickersley annually.



### **Planning Committee**

1. To review all planning & licensing applications within the parish and submit representations to Rotherham Council where appropriate, on behalf of all parishioners.
2. To keep the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan under review and update the policies at the appropriate time.



## **Recreation and Environment Committee**



1. To commence a replacement programme of the large bottomless and broken planters.
2. To purchase additional barrier planters in time for contract renewal.
3. To undertake a survey of trees covered by Tree Protection Orders within Wickersley.
4. To work with RMBC regarding the replacement of road-side dead trees.
5. To continue with improvements to the surroundings of the War Memorial.

6. To commence an annual litter and dog bin condition survey.
7. To develop and install the first of four planned heritage boards for the Heritage Garden.
8. To develop improved relations with RMBC by the formation of a joint WPC/RMBC liaison team.
9. To decorate annually the Tanyard Toilets.
10. To conduct an annual path/passage condition survey.
11. To introduce maintenance to the Wickersley boundary marker stonework.
12. To make improvements to the Tanyard rear car park cleaning regime in partnership with the Tanyard management company.



### **Wickersley Park:**

1. To complete the final stages of the adopted Wickersley Park Development Plan.
2. To upgrade safety surfacing to play and gym equipment zones.
3. To adopt a maintenance contract/ programme for gym and play equipment.
4. To establish a Community Orchard at the Millenium Meadow.
5. To add an additional item of gym equipment, a pull-up bar, to complete the facility.
6. To look into the option of powered lighting to the central path.
7. To introduce a new path and gateway from Bawtry Road - as per the adopted Wickersley Park Development Plan.

### **Bob Mason Recreation Ground (Sorby Way):**

1. To develop the children's play area, introducing new items and replacement equipment, including replacing the slide.
2. To commence a football pitch condition improvement programme.

3. To undertake bike track maintenance (in year 3).
4. To adopt a maintenance contract/programme for the play equipment.
5. To upgrade the safety surfacing around the play equipment.
6. To introduce a tri-annual redecoration programme at the Bob Mason pavilion.
7. To install additional benches.



### **Winthrop Gardens Committee**

1. To complete the redevelopment of Winthrop gardens including the repairs to the Atrium building, ensuring we maximise the benefits of the new café building.
2. Complete the garden redesign to provide additional visitor attractions and continue the growth of health and wellbeing activities.

### **Human Resources/Finance & Governance Committees**

1. Improve the working conditions and office facility for the parish clerks.
2. To support the Deputy Clerk to commence formal clerking qualifications.
3. To continue to invest in IT development appropriate to the work and needs of the office and Community Centre.
4. To encourage training and development opportunities for staff and councillors.
5. To achieve the foundation level of the Local Councils Quality Award Scheme.

### **Wickersley Community Centre Association**

Wickersley Community Centre Association operates as an “arm’s length” organisation to the Parish Council and has its own Memorandum of Association which directs their work.

They work to an annual financial break-even objective.

1. To maintain and develop the Community Centre as a welcoming, attractive, accessible asset.
2. To ensure the Community Centre is financially sustainable.
3. To increase the usage of the Community Centre by under-represented groups.
4. To ensure the Community Centre plays a role in supporting the overall ambitions of the Parish Council and the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan.



## Financial Information

### Funding and Affordability Context

Over the last few years, we have agreed to some major spending proposals. In particular the five main investment areas have been:

- The Wickersley Park strategy, primarily the new playground and paths.
- The use of Winthrop Gardens surpluses to support the redevelopment of Winthrop Gardens.
- A programme of small projects.
- Financial support to assist the Council to deal with the impact of Covid e.g. the community centre recovery process.
- The costs of the new clerk structure accompanied by the costs of managing staff absences.

In July/August 2024 we have also approved business plan pre commitments associated with the security of our parks following the traveller's visit and the replacement of the slide at Bob Mason for health and safety reasons.

This means the current level of reserves available for business plan investment are relatively limited and we need to develop our proposals within that affordability context.

Funds available for investment in our business plan can be summarised as:

Reserves	We have a development reserve of just under £100k for investment in our business plan over the 3 years. This is after funding the security options following the travellers visit and a replacement slide at Bob Mason play area (both 2024).
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	It is unlikely that we will receive significant CIL over the next three years as we are not aware of any major building proposals. Our assumption is circa £15k per annum.
Self-financing	Given the tight financial position it is proposed that Winthrop Gardens and WCCA fund their own business plan proposals from surpluses generated. This will mean that the development reserve would primarily be available for Recreation & Environment and Woodland proposals. As highlighted above in the short term the requirements of Woodland are small.
Grants	A number of the business plan proposals could be suitable for grant applications and as part of our value for money arrangements we should try to maximise grants as a funding source.
RMBC	We have benefitted in previous years from grants from our local Borough Councillors via their community fund (e.g. Bob Mason paths, Wickersley Park and Winthrop Gardens), and we should aim to continue that working arrangement.
Loans	Further loans for the future major maintenance of the community centre or a major business plan project could possibly be funded via loans.

This business plan will be funded by the future developments/business plan element of the reserves, as detailed below.

## Allocation 2024/25

General (Financial Management) Reserves	£71,000.00
Winthrop Gardens Accumulated Surplus	£118,164.00
Future Developments / Business Plan	£108,402.00
Total as at 31/03/2024	£297,566.00

## Process

The different committees will bid for funds to full council, to determine which of their desired actions can go ahead.

Both WCCA and Winthrop Gardens will fund their own action plans, as they are income generating ventures.

The expectation is that all committees will look for available grants to enable the allocated monies to go further.

## Review

The progress of the business plan will be formally reviewed annually by the Parish Council, in line with the budget setting process.

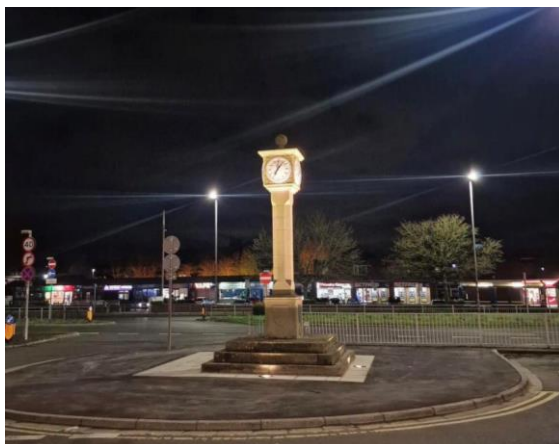


Image: Wickersley Clock Tower



Image: The Gorse in Winter