

Item 8: Pond Working Party

Meeting: Full Council on 28 August 2025

Motion: To discuss plan for delivery of the project and agree actions arising, including creating a working party to start clearing non-organic debris from the pond.

Author: Clerk to the Council

Summary:

Ilmington Parish Council has secured a grant to support improvements to the pond on the Playing Fields. The project was originally proposed by and will be carried out in collaboration with Ilmington Wildlife Group. Planned works include clearance of debris and general tidying to improve habitat and amenity value. The Wildlife Group has confirmed it does not hold its own public liability insurance. This means that, if the project is to proceed, the Parish Council will be the responsible body for insurance and risk management.

Project delivery:

The project proposal involves (a) clearing the pond (b) restoring the water flow, (c) providing nesting boxes for barn owls and other birds, (d) enhancing pond margins to encourage water voles, and (e) new planting of marginal water plants.

Members of the Wildlife Group are eager to start work while the pond water level is low following the dry summer, which will make removal of debris, including old tyres, easier. The group has put out a call for volunteers to help with clearance.

Risk implications:

The Wildlife Group will provide volunteer support but does not have its own insurance. This means the Parish Council must act as the organiser, with the Council's public liability insurance applying to volunteers working under its direction.

Without Council oversight, the Parish Council's public liability insurance might not cover the activity, because it would no longer be a Council-organised event. This means any injury to volunteers, members of the public, or damage to property could leave the Council exposed to claims for compensation, particularly as the work is happening on Council-owned land.

Recommendation:

Pond clearance be treated as a Council-organised activity, with all volunteers regarded as working under the Council's direction.

A written risk assessment be prepared prior to works commencing (see Appendix).

A Council-appointed co-ordinator shall act as the point of contact with the Council for clearance activities and take responsibility for overseeing volunteer management.

Volunteers be required to sign in on the day, provide emergency contact details, and acknowledge receipt of the risk assessment for the activity.

Appendix: Risk Assessment – Pond Debris Clearance

Location: Pond on Ilmington Playing Fields

Task: Manual clearance of debris from shallow pond (e.g. branches, litter, vegetation)

Assessed by: Parish Clerk

Date: 26 August 2025

Hazards, Risks, and Control Measures

Hazard	Risk	Persons at Risk	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Slips, trips, and falls on wet/uneven ground	Minor to serious injury (sprains, fractures, bruising)	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Wear appropriate waterproof boots with good grip; keep work area tidy; restrict access to working zone.	Low
Drowning or immersion in water	Serious injury or fatality	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Work in teams of at least two; no lone working; use bankside methods where possible; provide throw line or rescue pole; brief all workers on emergency procedures.	Low
Entrapment in soft mud or silt	Risk of becoming stuck, loss of balance, possible fall into water	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Test depth and firmness before entering; avoid working alone; use long-handled tools to reduce need to wade in; limit entry to shallow, stable areas only; provide rescue equipment (throw line, pole); brief team on safe assistance methods.	Low
Waterborne diseases (e.g. Weil's disease, gastrointestinal illness)	Illness, potentially severe	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Wear gloves; cover cuts with waterproof plasters; avoid touching mouth/eyes wash hands thoroughly after work.	Low
Sharp objects (glass, metal, wire)	Cuts, puncture wounds, infection	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Wear heavy-duty gloves; use tools (rakes, litter pickers) rather than bare hands; have first aid kit available on site.	Low

Manual handling of heavy or awkward debris	Strains, sprains, back injury	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Practice safe lifting; use team lifts for heavy items; use barrows/buckets for transport; limit load sizes.	Low
Exposure to cold/wet conditions	Hypothermia, discomfort, reduced performance	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Wear weather-appropriate clothing; provide breaks and shelter; monitor for signs of cold stress.	Low
Contact with wildlife (e.g. wasps, rats, nesting birds)	Bites, stings, allergic reactions	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Brief workers to be observant; avoid disturbing nests; have first aid kit available; ensure allergy sufferers carry medication.	Low
Use of hand tools	Cuts, bruises, minor injury	Volunteers, staff, contractors	Check tools before use; provide training/briefing; use correct tool for job; store safely when not in use.	Low
Public access to work area	Public injured by tools, slips, or contact with debris	Members of public	Use signage and barriers; keep public away from active work zone.	Low

Emergency Arrangements

First aid kit available on site.

Mobile phone available for emergency contact.

Emergency services access route identified.

Nearest hospital(s): [Stratford Hospital MIU](#) (not 24 hours), [Warwick Hospital A&E](#) (24 hours)

PPE Required

Waterproof boots with good grip

Heavy-duty waterproof gloves

Weather-appropriate clothing (waterproofs, warm layers if cold)

High-visibility vests if working near public areas

Volunteer Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understood this Risk Assessment for clearing debris from the pond, and that I will follow the control measures set out within it.

Name (print)	Signature	Date