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Meeting	Parks & Open Spaces Committee
Date	1st December 2026
Report Title	Tadpole Field Metal Detecting
Agenda Reference	13a
Author	Laura Cutter, Deputy Clerk, HR & Services Manager

Officers Recommendation:

1. **Permission is sought from the Council, as landowner, for the proposed metal-detecting activity to take place at Tadpole Field, subject to all relevant legislation, permissions and responsible metal-detecting requirements being followed.**

Background

An idea has been proposed to explore a community metal-detecting activity at Tadpole Field. The activity could provide an opportunity for local residents to explore the history of the area, with any appropriate finds potentially displayed at the Council Offices, similar to the approach taken at Moredon Sports Hub.

The proposal could also be developed into a public event, inviting local metal-detectorists to participate and share their findings and the history behind them. Any activity would be subject to the relevant legislation, permissions and responsible metal-detecting practices.

The initial proposal is to explore the feasibility of the activity with relevant Council officers and subject to approval, bring a more developed proposal to the POS agenda in December.

Historical Context and Opportunity

The wider Tadpole Farm and Tadpole Garden Village area has a rich archaeological and agricultural history, with evidence of prehistoric activity, Iron Age enclosures, Roman-period pottery and medieval farming.

Previous archaeological investigations have identified worked flints, historic field systems and ridge-and-furrow earthworks.

A carefully managed metal-detecting project could provide an opportunity to explore the area's history further, engage local residents and raise awareness of its heritage. Any significant finds could be recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, with suitable items potentially displayed at the Council Offices to share the area's history with the wider community.



Landowner – Do's

- **Give written permission** specifying the exact area where detecting is permitted and the dates/times.
- **Check the land status first** — particularly whether Tadpole Field is a Scheduled Monument, SSSI, archaeological site, or subject to an environmental/agri-environment agreement. Some designations can restrict or prevent detecting. GOV.UK
- **Agree ownership of finds in writing.** Ordinary finds will generally belong to the landowner unless otherwise agreed; Treasure is subject to the Treasure Act. Suffolk Heritage
- **Require archaeological finds to be reported/recorded** through the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the relevant Finds Liaison Officer.
- **Require all finds to be shown to the Council** before they are removed from the agreed process, particularly anything potentially of historical significance.
- **Require responsible digging** — small holes, careful removal of soil and full reinstatement afterwards.
- **Require compliance with the Treasure Act** and immediate reporting of potential Treasure.
- **Ask the detectorist to report any dangerous objects**, such as unexploded ammunition, without disturbing them.
- **Reserve the Council's right to withdraw permission** if conditions are breached or concerns arise.

Landowner – Don'ts

- Don't give informal/verbal permission only. Put the arrangement in writing.
- Don't allow detecting without checking restrictions/designations first.
- Don't assume that public access to the field gives someone permission to metal detect. Public access does not automatically include metal detecting. GOV.UK
- Don't allow digging on archaeological/protected areas without the necessary consent. Using a metal detector on a protected place without the required written consent can be an offence. Legislation.gov.uk
- Don't agree to "finders' keepers" arrangements without considering the Council's position on ownership and Treasure.
- Don't allow damage to trees, vegetation, habitats, paths, drainage, utilities or other site infrastructure.
- Don't allow detecting to become an uncontrolled public event without separately considering insurance, safeguarding, health and safety and event-management requirements.