

Metal Detecting Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 From time to time, Melbourn Parish Council receives requests from individuals or organisations wishing to conduct metal detecting on land owned, leased or managed by the Council.

1.2 Metal detecting can contribute to historical knowledge but, if uncontrolled, may damage archaeological features, create hazards for other users, and expose the Council to liability risks.

1.3 This policy sets out how the Council will manage requests for metal detecting on its land.

2 Scope of this policy

2.1 This policy applies to all land owned, leased, or managed by Melbourn Parish Council, including but not limited to:

- Parks and recreation grounds
- Sports pitches
- Play areas
- Open spaces and verges
- Allotments
- Cemeteries

2.2 This policy applies to both casual and organised metal detecting activities.

3 General Policy Position

3.1 Metal detecting is not permitted on any Melbourn Parish Council land unless prior written permission has been granted.

3.2 The Council adopts a presumption against recreational metal detecting in order to:

- Protect archaeological heritage
- Prevent damage to land and facilities
- Ensure public safety

4 Exceptional Circumstances

4.1 Requests may be considered only in exceptional circumstances, including:

- (a) Archaeological research undertaken by suitably qualified individuals or organisations

(b) Recovery of a specific lost item, where location is known or reasonably identifiable

(c) Statutory or utility works, where metal detection is required to locate services

4.2 Requests for general hobby or speculative detecting will normally be refused.

5 Application Process

5.1 All requests must be submitted in writing to the Parish Clerk and include:

- Name and contact details
- Exact location(s) requested
- Purpose and justification
- Proposed dates and duration
- Methodology (including whether digging is proposed)
- Evidence of qualifications (if archaeological)

5.2 Applications will be considered by the Maintenance Committee with considered resolution recommended to Full Council.

5.3 Individual Councillors or officers do not have authority to grant permission.

5.4 The Council reserves the right to:

- Refuse any application without explanation
- Impose additional conditions
- Limit access to specific areas or time periods

6 Conditions of Permission

Where permission is granted, the following conditions will apply:

6.1 Insurance and Membership

- Applicants must hold public liability insurance of at least £10,000,000
- Membership of the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD) or equivalent is required for hobbyist applicants

6.2 Code of Conduct

All activity must comply with:

- NCMD Code of Conduct
- Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting

The Countryside Code must be observed at all times

6.3 Land Protection

- Minimal ground disturbance must be ensured
- Any excavation must:
- Be approved in advance

- Be shallow and controlled
- Be fully reinstated to the Council's satisfaction
- The Council may impose:
- No digging conditions (surface detecting only)
- Maximum excavation depths

6.4 Restricted Areas

Metal detecting will not normally be permitted on:

- Sports pitches
- Play areas
- Cemeteries and burial grounds
- Allotments
- Areas of high public use

6.5 Finds and Reporting

- All finds must be reported to the Council
- Finds of historical importance should be recorded with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)
- Treasure finds must be reported in accordance with the Treasure Act 1996

6.6 Safety and Conduct

- No hazards must be left on site
- All holes must be safely filled
- Any dangerous finds (e.g. unexploded ordnance) must be reported immediately to police

7 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

7.1 Permission will not be granted where:

- The land is a Scheduled Monument
- The land is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) unless external consent is obtained

7.2 The applicant is responsible for ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation.

8 Liability

8.1 The Council accepts no liability for:

- Injury, loss, or damage arising from metal detecting activities
- Loss or ownership disputes relating to finds

8.2 The applicant undertakes all activity at their own risk.

9 Withdrawal of Permission

9.1 Permission may be withdrawn at any time if:

- Conditions are breached
- Damage occurs
- The activity is deemed inappropriate

Document Approval:

(Chair to Melbourn Parish Council)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Clark', written over a faint red 'DRAFT' watermark.

Date of Parish Council meeting: 24 June 2026

Review Policy: Every 3 years

DRAFT