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METAL DETECTING POLICY

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Formally adopted by Council:

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Reviewed:

November 2024

Next Review:

November 2027

1. Introduction

Metal Detecting is a popular hobby which has the potential to add to archaeological knowledge as well as to provide an enjoyable pastime. However, it is essential that such activity is governed so as to prevent damage to items of archaeological or heritage value and to ensure that significant finds resulting from activity on Parish Council property are properly logged, monitored and regulated and that detecting is carried out under agreed permissions.

There are specific laws in place regarding finds on protected sites, which include Scheduled Monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, military crash sites and those involving human remains. The Acres is a SSSI, and detecting may not be carried out upon it without the permission of the appropriate authority (in this case, Gnosall Parish Council)

2. The National Council for Metal Detecting

This is a body composed of elected volunteers, which has gained government recognition as an organisation representing metal detectorists throughout the UK. It has contributed to legislation affecting the hobby and one of its aims is to provide a code of conduct for responsible metal detecting. Membership provides civil liability insurance for members up to £10,000,000 and members must sign up to its Code of Conduct.

GPC requires any person wishing to metal detect on its property to be a member of the NCMD.

3. Code of Conduct

Members must adhere to the Code, which specifically instructs the following (abridged version):

- a Do not trespass
- b Respect the Country Code, leave gates and property as found and do not damage crops, frighten animals or disturb nesting birds.
- c Do not leave a mess or an unsafe site for others to follow.

- d If you discover any live ammunition or lethal object, do not disturb it but mark the site and report the find to the landowner and police.
- e Safely dispose of any refuse whether your own or any that you come across.
- f Report all unusual finds to the landowner and follow the advice for the Voluntary Reporting of Portable Antiquities in England and Wales (finds.org.uk)
- g Complete your own Risk Assessment before you go detecting.

In addition, Gnosall Parish Council requires that Minors be accompanied by adults when metal detecting.

4. Treasure trove

Technically, all hidden treasure found within the UK is the property of the Crown. In the UK, it is considered to be "treasure trove" if it is:

- At least 300 years old
- Made of at least 10% precious metal if not prehistoric
- If prehistoric, made of precious metal in any amount or part
- Coins that are at least 10% gold or silver. If a coin hoard as a whole does not contain that proportion of precious metal, then at least 10 coins must do so.

If you find objects that you believe are treasure, you must report the find to the appropriate authority. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, this is to the Coroner within 14 days. Failure to do so can result in a £5000 fine and three months in jail.

An Inquest will be held to determine whether the object(s) are treasure or not. If not, it will be returned to the finder, who may keep it after settling any claims made by the landowner. If it is treasure, a valuation committee will determine its value and it will be offered to appropriate museums. If sold, the amount paid is generally shared between the finder and landowner. Should no museum bid on it, the Crown relinquishes its claim and it is returned to the finder subject to the agreement with the landowner as above.

5. Finds

Gnosall Parish Council will abide by the laws of Treasure Trove, should they apply to any item found on Council property.

In the case of findings of local archaeological or historical interest, they will be offered to the Heritage Group for safe-keeping and display.

Should any finds be sold to realise a market value, the proceeds will be split 50/50 between the Parish Council and the finder.

6. Search Agreement.

Detectorists will be required to sign the Agreement at Appendix A.

Appendix A Search Agreement

Gnosall Parish Council, being the owner of land premises known as _____ situated at _____ grants the undersigned permission to metal detect upon the agreed land between _____ and _____.

It is a condition of permission that:

- the permit holder shall hold a current NCMD membership card, showing details of their £10,000,000 Public Liability Insurance Cover;
- that s/he shall uphold the NCMD Code of Conduct;
- that minors shall be accompanied by adults when metal detecting;
- The licensee(s) shall record finds made on the said land with third parties including The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), Historic Environment Records (HER) or any museum service only after gaining the appropriate permission of the landowner to do so and then only to an accuracy of find spots that all parties are comfortable with.
- The licensee(s) shall strictly observe and adhere to any guidelines or special conditions and area boundaries, which may be set out by the owner / occupier from time to time and to any terms and conditions with respect to metal detecting access specified in agri-environment agreements which may cover all or part of the said land
- That the profits from any finds shall be shared 50/50 with the Parish Council, whether classed as Treasure Trove or not.

Signed on behalf of Gnosall Parish Council:

Signed (permit holder):

Date:
