

# WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Allotment Committee** held on 18th

March 2024 at the Parish

Centre, Warboys.

## IN ATTENDANCE

Allotment Association (AA) member, F Dykstra and 1 member of public.

## PRESENT WERE

Cllr J Cole

Cllr R Dykstra

Cllr L Gifford (Vice Chair)

Cllr J Land

Cllr J Parker (Chair)

Cllr S Withams

Mrs E Coverdale:- Asst. Clerk

Meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m

*The agenda was updated at the meeting to remove the co-option of chair and committee members in accordance with Warboys adopted Standing Orders para 25 (a) and (h) plus para 44 (c).*

## AL 8/24 WELCOME

Chair Parker opened the meeting.

## AL 9/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from;

Cllr D Fabb - Personal

Cllr A Ntuk – Work commitments

Cllr C Sproats – Personal

Apologies were not received, and not accepted from;

Cllr M Collins – none received

Cllr S Wilcox – none received

## AL 10/24 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

F Dykstra declared disclosable pecuniary interests as tenants of allotments from the Parish Council.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that a dispensation to speak but not vote had previously been granted by the Council to F Dykstra on matters appearing on the agenda.

Cllr Dykstra declared a similar interest as his wife was an allotment tenant, but he had previously received a dispensation to speak but not vote on matters affecting the allotments.

## AL 11/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024

It was proposed by Cllr Withams, seconded by Cllr Land and **RESOLVED** by all Members present, the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2024 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

## AL 12/24 ALLOTMENT LIAISON

The Chair and Asst. Clerk provided members with an update on the allotments following the Allotment Association liaison on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024;

a) Plot 36

The Asst. Clerk advised Members that they had tried numerous ways to get in touch with the previous tenant of plot 36. According to council records it has been vacant since April 2023 and no rent was paid in October 2023. On previous site visits by the Chair and Asst. Clerk the plot has some signs of cultivation and there is a padlocked shed with personal items inside. Following the liaison on 28<sup>th</sup>, it was decided for the Asst. Clerk to place a notice on the shed door requesting the plot holder get in touch by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 or all items would be removed and plot rented out to a new holder.

b) Signage for Allotments

The Chair had sourced some replacement signs for the Allotments following previous concerns from plot holders that signage isn't clear at the site. The price was quoted at £1.60 per sign, totalling approximately £96.00.

It was therefore unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve for the Asst. Clerk to order 60 replacement signs at £1.60 each.

c) Railway Carriage

The Chair had previously given the AA members until March 2024 to source an alternative supplier for wood within the £700 budget previously agreed. This time limit had now come to an end with no repairs or supplies organised. The Asst. Clerk had been in discussions with Cllr Collins regarding potential grants from the Spar but they would not be substantial enough to cover the required works.

It was decided for the Chair and Asst. Clerk to go and assess the current safety of the railway carriage before the AA can investigate corrugating the roof at their own expense.

d) Soil Improver & Planings

Following the recent applications to the Red Tile Trust for soil improver and planings, it was noted that they were refused on the grounds that these applications were considered general maintenance and not new initiatives. Cllr Withams stated that applying again would not be worth doing as they are likely to be rejected.

e) Rabbits/Pest Control

It was noted that whilst pest control had been organised, the contractor never arrived.

f) Hosepipes and Water Access

Following no further update from M McGarry and the implementation of a standpipe being costly with limited benefits it was decided that this issue was now closed.

g) Rubbish

At the liaison meeting F Dykstra had reported that there was a large collection of rubbish and green waste collecting at the bottom of the allotment plots next to the railway carriage. The Asst. Clerk had since spoken to the handymen who had cleared the site.

**AL 13/24 ALLOTMENT UPDATE**

*Not much to report due to previous Committee meeting being held 11th January 2024.*

The Chair provided members with a summary of a complaint made by a resident who was evicted from their plot in September 2023 and now wished to reapply. Members were advised that the plot holder has accused the Chair of being discriminatory due to their health conditions when he initially turned down their reapplication. In response to the accusations the Chair had asked the complainant to provide any evidence or documentation they held in support of their allegations and that the decision whether to approve their application to rent a plot would be made at the forth coming Allotment Committee meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March, which they could attend. No further communication has been received from the complainant to the Clerks or Council Members.

Arising from the discussions it was proposed by Cllr Land, seconded by Cllr Withams and unanimously **RESOLVED** by all voting Members of the Allotment Committee to refuse the application by this resident to rent a plot from Hallgate Allotments for the period of 24 months.

*Aside from providing the background the Chair did not participate in the discussion or voting of the above item, with the Vice Chair taking the lead.*

**AL 14/24 TENANCY AGREEMENT UPDATE**

(Appendix 1) The Chair and Asst. Clerk had made the recommended amendments in order to provide both renters and the Council better protections moving forward. Allotment holders in attendance were informed that they would need to sign the new user agreement when their rent is due later in the year.

Subsequent to discussions it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the amendments to the Tenancy Agreement.

**AL 15/24 APPEALS PROCESS**

The Asst. Clerk advised that she hadn't had time to properly prepare the new process and would provide at the next Allotment Committee meeting on 4th November.

**AL 16/24 NATIONAL ALLOTMENT SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP**

Following the Asst. Clerk advising Members of the benefits to the Council for being involved in the National Allotment Society, such as for legal advice and documentation;

It was proposed by Cllr Withams, seconded by Cllr Land and unanimously **RESOLVED** for the Council to join the National Allotment Society for the annual membership fee of £55+VAT.

**AL 17/24 NOTICES AND MATTERS FOR THE NEXT ALLOTMENTS AGENDA**

None

**There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 8.11pm**

**The next meeting of the Allotments Committee will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024.**

**Chairman.**

**Date.**

## APPENDIX 1

11. The Council reserve the right to refuse any applications for allotment plots should they think it is necessary to do so;
  - a) Any tenants that have been evicted from Hallgate Allotments will not be eligible to rent another allotment at Hallgate Allotments within 24 month of date of eviction.
  
16. Tenants have 1 month to appeal against served eviction notices from the date of issue. Appeals will be considered by the Allotments Committee at their earliest convenience as per the appeals process.