

# **WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Allotments Committee** held on 2nd June 2014 at Hallgate Allotments, Fenton Road, Warboys.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors Mrs M P Bucknell, P Clarke, Mrs J M Cole, Ms L A Gifford, Mrs M H Harlock, T R Huggins, P S Potts, J A Parker, J C Price, G C M Willis and Mrs A R Wyatt.

Ms W Catlow and Mrs F Dykstra

## **01/14 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Upon being moved by Councillor Mrs Harlock and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wyatt, it was

## **RESOLVED**

that Councillor J A Parker be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

**Councillor Parker in the Chair.**

## **02/14 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Upon being moved by Councillor Mrs Bucknell and seconded by Councillor Mrs Cole, it was

## **RESOLVED**

that Councillor Mrs M H Harlock be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

## **03/14 MINUTES**

Upon being moved and seconded, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th October 2013 were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

## **04/14 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were made by Members in respect of items appearing on the agenda.

## **05/14 MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee considered the following matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2013:-

### **(a) Track on Eastern Boundary**

Further to Minute No. 9/13(a), the Clerk advised Members that the signs erected at either end of the track on the eastern boundary of the allotments had remained in situ since they had been erected following the previous meeting. Although the signs had indicated that the track was not a public right of way, Members commented that it was still being used by members of the public from time to time.

### **(b) Ditch at Southern Boundary**

Councillor Clarke informed the Committee that he and the Clerk had met the County Council's local Highways Supervisor on site to discuss responsibility for the ditch between the perimeter fence and Fenton Road. The Highways Supervisor had accepted that the land had been acquired by the County Council when land had been transferred from Parish Council ownership for the A141 roundabout construction. As a result he had arranged for the ditch subsequently to be cleaned. However the Highways Supervisor had indicated that because of a lack of funding, he was not prepared to construct a culvert under the access roadway to the allotments to allow water in the ditch to drain away.

Members were of the opinion that a culvert should have been provided when the access roadway had been constructed by the County Council at the time of the A141 realignment. It was felt that continued attempts should be made to persuade the County Council to install a culvert to prevent an excess of standing water in the ditch and the Clerk was requested to bring this to the attention of County Councillor Tew to ask for his help in the matter.

## **06/14 HALLGATE ALLOTMENTS**

The Committee undertook an inspection of the allotments at Hallgate, all of which were let with 7 people remaining on the waiting list.

Members were pleased to see that the vast majority of the plots were being well cultivated. However plots 5, 21 and 51 showed no sign of cultivation during the current season with the Clerk already having written to the tenant of the latter plot to ask him cut down the weed growth. As plots 35 and 37 had been let to one person at the beginning of the year when the waiting list had been exhausted and neither plot was now being cultivated fully, the Committee felt that one of the plots should be relinquished and the tenant asked to cultivate the remaining one. Members observed that a number of tyres had been placed on plot no. 48 which also showed little sign of cultivation. It was also noted that there was standing water at the bottom of plot 25 but on none of the other plots and the Clerk was asked to investigate the reason.

The Committee also inspected the former railway carriage used for storage purposes by the tenants. The Clerk reported that the Handymen would be repairing the roof where the felt had been torn and he would also ask them to creosote the carriage. With regard to the interior, the Clerk also indicated that the Handymen would remove any unwanted materials, including the white plastic chairs which Ms Catlow and Mrs Dykstra suggested that had been there for some time.

Mrs Dykstra mentioned that the railway carriage had been broken into on a number of occasions and tools had been stolen. She asked if a brick building with a toilet, wash basin and individual lockers for tenants could be provided from the reserve earmarked by the Council for allotments.

Members pointed out that a building of this nature would be expensive and would be likely to attract more break-ins as intruders would think that there was more of value inside. In the event of a building being provided, it was also suggested that the cost would have to be recovered through a substantial increase in rent, as the allotment reserve was intended primarily to purchase and provide more allotments if demand outstripped the capacity of Hallgate.

Councillor Willis also offered to investigate the cost of providing a steel lock up container for use by tenants as an alternative to a brick building with services.

Ms Catlow and Mrs Dykstra also asked if it would be possible to reinstate the supply of horse manure at the allotments which had been welcomed by the tenants. The Clerk explained that when stable owners had been permitted to dispose of manure at the allotments previously, it had resulted in poor quality material being dumped which largely consisted of straw and which was of little benefit to tenants. As a result the practice had been stopped. Mrs Dykstra suggested that she knew of a reliable source and would enquire whether the stable owner would be prepared to transport material to the allotments.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the Clerk be requested to serve notice to quit on the tenants of plot nos. 5, 21 and 51; and
- (b) that a letter be sent to the tenant of plot nos. 35 and 37 asking him to relinquish the tenancy of one of the plots and tidy the remaining plot;
- (c) that a letter be sent to the tenant of plot no. 48 asking him to remove the tyres that had been disposed of on the site and to tidy up the plot;
- (d) that arrangements be made to creosote and re-felt the railway carriage and to remove any surplus materials stored inside;
- (e) that investigations be undertaken into the cost of providing a brick built shelter or a steel container for use by tenants for storage purposes; and

- (f) that the disposal of horse manure be permitted again at the allotments, subject to details of the stable owners being notified to the Clerk and no repetition of the previous practice of dumping straw at the allotments.

#### **07/14 REQUEST FOR TENANCY**

The Clerk drew attention to an enquiry that had been received from the Macmillan Information Manager at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Woodlands Centre regarding the possibility of obtaining an allotment tenancy for use as a form of therapy by local people diagnosed with cancer.

Members welcomed the suggestion and had no objection to a plot being offered with immediate effect rather than waiting for a plot to become available under the waiting list.

#### **RESOLVED**

that the tenancy of plot 5 be offered to the Woodlands Centre for use by local patients diagnosed with cancer.

#### **08/14 ROADWAY**

Mrs Dykstra pointed out that the central roadway became waterlogged in wet weather in winter months as a result of which the Handymen tended to close it off for vehicular use to prevent cars from being stuck. She asked if the roadway could be made up to an improved standard to improve access for those tenants with plots furthest from the entrance.

The Clerk mentioned that any hard surfacing would be prohibitively expensive but that he would investigate the cost of obtaining road planings and report back to a future meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

**Chairman.**