

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Allotments Committee** held on 19th March 2018 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman

Councillors Mrs J M Cole, B L Correll, R J Dykstra, Ms L A Gifford, Mrs M H Harlock, G B Joseph and Mrs J A Tavener.

Mr A and Mrs B Taylor (Allotments Association).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs M P Bucknell, P S Potts and G C M Willis

09/17 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Dykstra and seconded by Councillor Correll, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30th October 2017 were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

10/17 MEMBERS INTERESTS

Mrs Taylor declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as a tenant of an allotment from the Parish Council. Councillor Dykstra and Mr Taylor declared similar interests as their spouses were tenants of an allotment. A dispensation to speak but not vote on matters affecting the allotments had already been granted to Councillor Dykstra.

RESOLVED

that a dispensation to speak but not vote be granted to Mr and Mrs Taylor on matters appearing on the agenda.

11/17 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the following matter arising from the Minutes of its meeting held on 30th October 2017:-

Plot Numbers

Further to Minute No. 06/17, the Clerk reported that the Handymen had made and installed replacement plot numbers at the allotments since the previous meeting.

12/17 ALLOTMENTS

A report was submitted by the Clerk (a copy of which had been circulated to all Members), summarising the actions taken since the previous meeting of the Committee and drawing attention to the issues that had been discussed by the Chairman and Clerk at a meeting with the Association's representatives on 5th March 2018.

The Committee was informed that Red Tile Wind Farm Trust Fund Ltd had approved another grant of 100% of the cost of a load of soil improver to be tipped at the allotments for use by tenants. Delivery would be made on 29th March following consultation with the Association's representatives.

The Clerk reported that there were currently 4 full and 2 half plots vacant and that few enquiries for an allotment were now being received. Following discussion as to how to keep plots in reasonable condition while they were vacant, a suggestion had been made that plots be covered with tarpaulin to restrict weed growth.

Members were informed that allotments varied slightly in size as tenants had deviated from plot boundaries over the years but averaged about 200 sq. metres. The Clerk reported that reasonable quality tarpaulin that could be re-used would cost about £21.50 for 50 square metres (net of VAT). The cost therefore to cover a full plot would be in the region of £85 and £425 to cover all of the plots currently vacant.

Members discussed various options as to how to restrict weed growth. Although spraying had been undertaken by the Handymen previously, it was noted that this was no longer permissible without appropriate qualifications and that there was a danger of the spray being blown on to neighbouring plots and killing plants and crops. As a result a vote was taken as to whether sufficient tarpaulin should be purchased to cover one plot on an experimental basis or to cover all of the plots currently vacant.

The Clerk reported that following complaints from tenants about rats and rabbits at the allotments, traps had been purchased which had to be checked each day. However the Handymen had found that someone had been springing the traps intentionally. As a result the traps had been removed until such time as further complaints were received.

As ruts were appearing again in the roadway, the Clerk indicated that the Handymen would attempt to obtain some more planings to fill the areas affected.

Members were informed that a compost bay had been built by the Handymen since the previous meeting but as the Association's representatives had pointed out that it was difficult to access, the Handymen had removed part of one side of the bay. Mr and Mrs Taylor reported that some of the hedge clippings in the bay had not been shredded and the Clerk indicated that he would speak to the Handymen to ensure the work was undertaken.

The Clerk confirmed that the Handymen had arranged to dispose of unused Parish Council equipment stored in the old railway carriage by placing this out for collection by the District Council's refuse team on Tuesday mornings.

The Chairman advised that Mr Taylor had supplied her with a digital version of the Association's notice advertising the availability of vacant plots which she would post on the Parish Council's Facebook page.

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be requested to purchase sufficient tarpaulin to cover one of the vacant allotment plots as a trial to ascertain how well this restricted weed growth before the plot was re-let

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

Chairman.