

# WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Allotments Committee** held remotely on 2nd November 2020.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors Mrs J M Cole, R J Dykstra, Ms L A Gifford, S J Green, Mrs M H Harlock, J A Parker, P S Potts, Mrs S J Wilcox and Dr S C Withams.

P Bellamy and Mrs F Dykstra (Allotments Association).

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs C Evans and Mrs J Tavener,

## **01/20 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

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

## **RESOLVED**

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

**Councillor Parker in the Chair.**

## **02/20 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

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

## **RESOLVED**

that Councillor Ms L A Gifford be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

## **03/20 MINUTES**

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams and seconded by Councillor Green, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

## **04/20 MEMBERS INTERESTS**

Mr Bellamy and Mrs Dykstra declared disclosable pecuniary interests as tenants of allotments from the Parish Council. Councillor R J Dykstra declared a similar interest as his wife was a tenant 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 Bellamy and Mrs Dykstra on matters appearing on the agenda.

## **05/20 MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee noted that there were no matters arising from the Minutes of its meeting held on 16th March 2020 that would not be dealt with under Minute No. 06/20 below.

## **06/20 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 at a liaison meeting with the Association's representatives on 15th October 2020.

The Clerk reported that it had not been possible to arrange for a delivery of soil improver from Amey Cespa at Easter as the company no longer provided bulk deliveries. The material had been purchased instead from EnVar Composting of Woodhurst at a cost of £270 for a 15 ton load. As the grant from Red Tile Wind Farm Trust had been based on the cost in previous years, there had been a shortfall of £100 that had been met from the allotments budget.

The Association's representatives had requested a larger load in 2021 which it was estimated would cost £360 from EnVar.

The Committee was advised that the cultivation of allotments had not been affected by the Government restrictions on activities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. There had been a significant increase in interest in allotments since the beginning of the year with 13 new tenancies having been issued and no plots now remaining vacant for the first time in several years.

The Clerk reported that he had arranged for a load of planings from the resurfacing of Fenton Road in March to be delivered to the allotments to help fill ruts that had been forming in the main roadway. However the scheme had been delayed by the pandemic lockdown, during which time one of the County Council's Highway Managers had withdrawn the offer. Enquiries had been made with suppliers to buy a load of planings but calls asking for prices had not been returned. The Association's representatives suggested that two large bags of planings should be sufficient and the Clerk indicated that he would try to find a supplier.

A suggestion was made by one of the Association's representatives that in order to avoid the Handymen having to drive the van down the roadway to access the plot used for burning waste, the latter should be relocated to near the entrance to the allotments. Members were of the opinion that the proximity to Fenton Road could present a danger if smoke drifted across the road and also suggested that the waste heap would be too conspicuous at the entrance to the site.

The Clerk indicated that he would contact the person who had offered to build a new notice board again to ask if he intended to do the work.

Mr Bellamy advised that it had not been possible to arrange for members of the scouts to help with the cultivation of the plot rented on their behalf this year. Arrangements had been made to keep the plot tidy in the interim and plans were already in place for the youngsters to become involved in 2021.

No objections were raised to a request by Mrs Dykstra for a trailer full of manure to be delivered to the allotment.

## **RESOLVED**

that an application be submitted to Red Tile Wind Farm Trust Fund Ltd for a further delivery of soil improver to the allotments in 2021/22.

## **07/20 TENANCY CONDITIONS**

The Committee was advised that over the course of the summer, several issues had arisen over the wording of the tenancy conditions and complaints had been received about non-compliance by other tenants. Discussions had therefore taken place at the liaison meeting about a change in the wording of a number of conditions. Suggested amendments to the agreement had been circulated with the agenda and were considered by the Committee.

Arising from some uncertainty as to whether the revised agreement would apply to all existing tenants, Councillor Mrs Wilcox offered to obtain the advice of colleagues at the solicitors where she was employed.

Following discussion on the suggested amendments, it was

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the following amendments be made to the Hallgate Allotments tenancy agreement:-
  - (i) that the following words be added to clause 8 – ‘An exception is made for the erection of a rabbit-proof fence of wire mesh material not exceeding one metre in height around the boundary of a plot.’;
  - (ii) that the following words be deleted from sub-clause 11(m) – ‘and not the access roadways to the various plots’ and the following words added – ‘The parking of vehicles on access roadways to various plots is permitted but should not obstruct access and should be avoided when ground conditions are unsuitable resulting in roadways being damaged.’;
  - (iii) that the following words be added to sub-clause 11(n) – ‘Hosepipes may be used to fill water storage containers on individual plots.’;
  - (iv) that an additional sub-clause be added to clause 11 as follows -

- ‘(p) Ensure that water is not wasted and that access to the standpipes provided is shared equally.’;
- (v) that the following words be added to sub-clause 12(a)(ii) after the word ‘apex’ – ‘or sloping’; and
- (v) that the following words be deleted from sub-clause 13(c) – ‘sufficient for the purpose of infrequent passage for vehicles for the collection/delivery to allotment plots **but not for parking**’.
- (b) that the revised tenancy agreement be applied to all new tenancies and, subject to confirmation from Councillor Mrs Wilcox that this is permissible, to all existing tenants.

## **08/20 BUDGET 2021/22**

The Committee considered a report by the Clerk (a copy of which had been circulated) and a summary of income and expenditure for Hallgate Allotments for 2019/20, together with a forecast for both the current year and 2021/22.

Members were informed that a deficit had been carried forward at the beginning of 2019/20 of £429 which had reduced to £283 at the end of that year. The Committee was informed that a nominal administration charge of £250 for the Clerk’s time was included in the budget annually. Although the amount of time to be expended in administration was expected to far exceed this figure in the current year, the Committee agreed to retain the nominal sum of £250. The anticipated deficit to be carried forward at the end of the year was therefore £110.

Members were informed that rents had not increased since 2013 and had been held at that level due in part to the number of vacant plots in subsequent years. Arising from the length of time since an increase had been made and the level of interest in allotments in the year to date, it was

### **RESOLVED**

that rents be increased in 2021/22 of £20 for a full plot and £15 for a half plot.

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

**Chairman.**