

# **WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Allotments Committee** held at the Parish Centre, Warboys on 7th November 2022.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors R J Dykstra, D R A Fabb, Ms L A Gifford, J A Parker, Mrs C L Sproats, Mrs S J Wilcox and Dr S C Withams.

Mrs F Dykstra (Allotments Association).

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs J M Cole, A Ntuk and P S Potts and Mr P Bellamy (Allotments Association).

## **01/22 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

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

### **RESOLVED**

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

**Councillor Parker in the Chair.**

## **02/22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Upon being moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilcox, it was

### **RESOLVED**

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

## **03/22 MINUTES**

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams and seconded by Councillor Dykstra, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st March 2022 were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment on the preamble to replace the year of the meeting to '2022'.

## **04/22 MEMBERS INTERESTS**

Mrs Dykstra declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as an allotment tenant of 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 Mrs Dykstra on matters appearing on the agenda.

## **05/22 MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee noted that there were no matters arising from the Minutes of its meeting held on 21st March 2022 that would not be dealt with under Minute No. 06/22 below.

## **06/22 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 25th October 2022.

Members were informed that the delivery of soil improver to the allotments in the spring had been appreciated by tenants but this had taken longer to be collected by tenants for use on individual plots than in previous years. The delivery had been an annual occurrence for several years with funding provided by Red Tile Wind Farm Trust and the Association's representatives had asked if a further application for grant could be made for 2023.

The Clerk reported that 3 full plots were vacant currently with 1 person on the waiting list and 4 existing tenants requesting a second plot.

The Committee was informed that, following a site visit by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk in the summer, letters had been sent to 14 tenants concerning the poor state of cultivation of the plots that they rented. Several tenants had expressed a desire to retain their tenancies and tidy the plots and others had either relinquished their tenancies or notices to quit had been served by the Clerk.

The Chairman advised that a further site visit would be made shortly to assess the condition of the plots and the Clerk reported that a number of tenants tended to relinquish their tenancies at this time of year when rents were due.

With regard to pest control, the Association's representatives had accepted that the only practical measure to prevent rabbits was for tenants to install some form of fencing around individual plots but that there was little that could be done to deter other pests such as pigeons.

Members were informed that it was no longer possible to purchase rat poison unless the person doing so had the appropriate qualification to use the poison. As the supplies held by the Council was now exhausted, the Clerk reported that he had been trying to find a suitable course that the Handymen could attend locally but most appeared to be on line.

The Association's representatives had asked previously if the former railway carriage could be retained and improved and had offered to undertake the work if the Council paid for the materials. One of their representatives had provided an estimate of the cost of the timber, etc. which had amounted to £1,400.

Mrs Dykstra was of the opinion that the shipping container wasn't large enough to accommodate everything that the tenants wished to store and that it was used by the Council also to store some equipment. She also mentioned that the container was difficult to open which meant that some tenants were reluctant to use it.

The Chairman advised that the container and carriage would be viewed during the course of the forthcoming site inspection and Councillor Fabb offered to meet on site to see if it was possible to make the door to the shipping container easier to open.

It was reported that no further problems had been experienced with the roadway over the dry summer, although this had tended to be more problematic in winter. The Association's representatives had asked if a further supply of planings could be obtained to ensure that any holes were filled and did not deteriorate further and the Clerk reported that he had managed to obtain a small load of planings in November 2020 at a cost of £54

Arising from a complaint about brambles in the adjoining field, the Chairman undertook to view the situation when the forthcoming site visit was undertaken.

It was reported that the Association had asked if a tap could be provided for the use of tenants occupying the plots to the east of the roadway. All of the existing taps were located to the west of the roadway which had resulted in damage to hosepipes when being used by tenants to water the newer plots to the east which was being caused by vehicles using the roadway.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) that an application be submitted to Red Tile Wind Farm Trust Fund Ltd for a further delivery of soil improver to the allotments in 2023;
- (b) that a site visit be undertaken by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk to inspect the issues raised at the meeting;
- (c) that the request by the Allotments Association for the Council to fund the cost of materials to repair the railway carriage be deferred, pending the outcome of the site inspection;
- (d) that the Clerk be requested to arrange for the delivery of a further load of planings for the roadway; and
- (e) that the Clerk be requested to investigate the cost of installing additional taps at the allotments for the use of tenants.

## **07/28 BUDGET 2023/24**

The Committee considered a summary of actual income and expenditure in respect of Hallgate Allotments for 2021/22, together with a forecast for both the current year and 2023/24 (copies of which had been circulated).

The Clerk reported that although an increase in rents had been approved by the Committee for 2021/22, the account had incurred a deficit in that year, which together with the deficit brought forward had amounted to £467 at the end of the year. This had been due primarily to the increased work required on the part of the Handymen to clean plots that had been left in an overgrown condition by tenants before they could be re-let.

The deficit was expected to reduce to £332 by the end of the current year but the Clerk pointed out that the invoice for the use of water for the past six months had been based on an estimate and was only £25.58 despite the fact that there had been exceptionally low rainfall throughout the summer. It was anticipated that the next invoice would be high after the meter had been read.

Under the circumstances, it was

### **RESOLVED**

that rents be retained at their present levels in 2023/24 of £20 for a full plot and £15 for a half plot.

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

**Chairman.**