

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Allotment Committee** held on 11th January 2024 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

IN ATTENDANCE

Allotment Association (AA) members; F Dykstra and P Bellamy

PRESENT WERE

Cllr R Dykstra
Cllr D Fabb
Cllr L Gifford

Cllr J Land
Cllr J Parker (Chair)
Cllr S Withams

Mrs E Coverdale:- Asst. Clerk

Meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m

AL 1/24 WELCOME

Chair Parker opened the meeting.

AL 2/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from;

Cllr J Cole – Personal reasons

Cllr M Collins – Work commitments

Cllr A Ntuk – none received

Cllr C Sproats – arrived during discussions on agenda item 5/24 (7.23p.m)

Cllr S Wilcox – Holiday

Clerk J Drummond - arrived during discussions on agenda item 5/24 (7.34p.m)

AL 3/24 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

P Bellamy and 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 P Bellamy and 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 4/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 20th MARCH 2023

It was proposed by Cllr Withams, seconded by Cllr Gifford and **RESOLVED** by all Members present, the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2023 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

AL 5/24 ALLOTMENT LIAISON

The Chair provided members with an update on the allotments following the Allotment Association liaison on 23rd October 2023.

a) Rent

There had been a number of late rents, with reminders going out. The asst. clerk had allowed plot holders additional time to pay due to the change in payment process following the retirement of the previous Clerk. One plot holder was evicted for non-payment and deposits kept (Dec 2023).

b) Vacant Plots

In October 23 there were 12 vacant plots, but as of 10th January, two new plot holders had joined. So currently it stands at 10 empty plots.

- a. It was decided for the asst. Clerk to place an advert in the Ramsey & Warboys Informer and Warboys Diary to gain potential interest from the Parish and surrounding villages.

c) Cultivation Notices

Following the walk around by the Chair and asst. Clerk, 3 plots had been noted as requiring improvement and notices sent out.

d) Railway Carriage

The Chair updated members that in October he had given the AA until March 2024 to source an alternative supplier for wood within the £700 budget previously agreed. Otherwise, the Council would have to consider the carriage's removal for health & safety reasons.

- a. P Bellamy and F Dykstra were keen to save the railway carriage and voiced that perhaps they may have to investigate funding the repairs through the AA.

e) Soil Improver & Planings

The AA members raised their requests for soil improver (the grant was refused in 2023) and for more road planings as they had been beneficial to the roadway previously, both to be received by March 2024.

- a. It was therefore **RESOLVED** for the Asst. Clerk to get quotes and apply for Red Tile Trust grants to cover the cost of planings and soil improver.

f) Signage for Allotments

Concerns had been raised over the signage at the Allotments, both for the numbering for the individual plots and for the entrance way.

- a. Entrance:- The Chair advised that he had since been out and taped over the contact information at the entrance way as the details were out of date. And it was **RESOLVED** for the asst. Clerk to look at creating a laminated sign with contact information on.

- b. Plot numbering:- Concerns over the difficulty in locating the plots due to there being no visible signs. The asst. Clerk updated attendees on the new map that is being given to all new plot holders, and that the handymen had been tasked with creating new numbers for the plots. Following a request from F Dykstra it was **RESOLVED** for the asst. Clerk to print and laminate an A3 version of the map to add to the site noticeboard.
- g) Rabbits/Pest Control
Allotment holders had raised concerns about the number of rabbits at the site and were advised that a pest control company had been instructed to come 7th or 8th January, however they hadn't turned up.
- h) New Process
To ensure that the council and tenants are in agreement regarding the condition of the site, the asst. clerk has implemented a system of photographing plots at the beginning and end of tenancy. Additionally, this system has been incorporated throughout the life of the tenancy to ensure that the plot is being cultivated and maintained as is required by the signed agreement.
- i) Hosepipes
It was decided for allotment holder M McGarry to investigate alternative materials to protect hosepipes running over the allotment roadway as previous measures had not been successful.
- j) Water Access
Previously a plot holder had raised concerns about how his plot is the furthest away from any water access points. He asked if the Council could look into costs of installing a standpipe to improve the water access for plots 34-38. The Chair advised that as the allotments were already in a deficit the funds couldn't be justified at this time.

Cllr Sproats arrived whilst members discussed the above item (7.23pm)

Clerk Drummond arrived whilst members discussed the above item (7.34p.m)

AL 6/24 ALLOTMENT UPDATE

- Currently 10 plots are available for rent, with 2 full plots recently taken on by new tenants. (take on 10/01/24)
- Thefts – Two thefts had been reported from plot holders in December 2023. The Chair made a statement to plot holders urging that they should mark all equipment and exercise caution. Plot holders are also reminded that anything kept at the allotments is at their own risk and not the responsibility of the Parish Council.
- Allotment Records - In order to improve the allotment management a new records system had been put in place, and the committee aim to collect all plot holders email addresses in future for ease of communication.
- Budget - (attached as an addendum) Currently at a deficit due to rising water rates and high number of unused plots. Any requested improvements would need to be carefully assessed for priority due to the lack of available funds.

AL 7/24 NOTICES AND MATTERS FOR THE NEXT ALLOTMENTS AGENDA

F Dykstra raised the issue of the ditch at the end of the allotment's being flooded, asst. Clerk to discuss with adjacent land users and add to next agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 7.38pm

The next meeting of the Allotments Committee will be held on 18th March 2024.

Chairman.

Date.

APPENDIX 1

FORECAST FOR 2024/25

Balance b/fwd	-866.46	Maintenance	1000
Rents	1215	Administration	250
Deposits	0	Water Rates	300
Wayleaves	18	Deposits returned	0
			1550
	<hr/>	Balance c/fwd	<hr/> -1183.46
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	366.54		-1183.46