Watlington Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Kristina Tynan

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Parish Clerk: Kristina Tynan

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Allotments Sub-Committee**

**Held on Monday 6th September 2023 at 7.30pm in the West Room**

**Present:**

**Committee:**

Kirsty Robinson-Ward, Josh Robinson-Ward, Gerald Short, Gill Bindoff, Steve Fanning.

**Plot holders**: 3

**WPC Representatives**: Ian Hill, Roger Beattie

**Officer:** Kristina Tynan absent

01. Apologies for Absence

Fergus Lapage, Johanna Hoffbeck, James Tappin.

02. Declarations of Interest

There were none notified.

03. Approval of Minutes

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the 10th July 2023 be agreed as a correct record, minutes to be signed by JRW/KRW.

04. Appointment of Sandra Griffiths and Mark Ramsbottom to the Committee

**Resolved:** That the two plot holders named above be elected onto the Committee.

05. Management Issues

**1. VOTE Tenancy Agreement changes-** vote of 9 - 0 in favour of approving Tenancy Agreement changes, GB has since sent through the agreed reformatted version for final submission where the order of points have also been adjusted for clarity. Agreements should be re-signed each year.

**2. VOTE Plot Pricing Structure-** Option A- 0 votes, Option B- 11 votes, Option C- 1 vote. JRW and KRW will inform plot holders of this change and explain that plots will now have a base rate of £20 (for up to 100 square metre plots), above this size 10p per square metre will be charged. The majority of plot holders will only be affected by a few pounds if that, larger plot holders will be paying more but it was concluded that this was the fairest system. KRW and JRW will also adjust the plot map and numbering system for clarity.

**RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL:** That Council agree that the new allotment pricing structure sets the basic rent at £20 for plots up to 100m2 and then 10p per m2 above that, rounded to the nearest £1.

**3. Bi-annual inspection-** this took place by JRW, RB and GS on Sunday 3rd September. 8 plotholders have been contacted and warning letters will shortly be sent out to those who need them. MR will talk to one of the plotholders. The warning system was discussed, currently warnings are dealt with on a case by case basis but going forward it was agreed a warning policy across the whole allotments should be implemented. First year plots will be in a probation period and go straight to a final warning. Plots that fail inspection get a first warning and then a final warning if no change. Timescales to be discussed but 8 weeks was suggested for the first warning and two weeks for the final warning. It was mentioned that plots 59, 66, 67 and 68 after having had warnings are now in a very good state. It was also noted that mowing communal areas and paths around allotments needs to be encouraged once again. Special mention by GB of Sandra Griffiths for her mowing of communal areas including the road down to Love Lane, KRW and JRW are very appreciative of this extra work. Thank you Sandra.

**4. Dogs 6 month trial concluded-** all agreed this has gone well and there hasn’t been an influx of dogs. GS noted that having previously been against dogs up the allotment, now he has seen it in practice he concluded his initial fears were unfounded.

**5. Road repair-** The first drop will be booked during a dry period over the next few weeks- a date will be sent out nearer the time. It will be dropped in the first car park and worked back up to the gate (Rainbow end) which seems to be the worst section.

**6. Back Fence quotes-** JRW received two quotes, one for £3,000 and the other for £3,250. IH will present this at the next Operations Committee meeting to seek approval. The quotes are for approximately 180 metres, 4 ft high stock net fence on round timber posts with rabbit netting pinned to the ground. It will sit in front of the existing fence, some clearing will need to be done before this happens.

**7. Plot availability update-** We now have 17 on the waiting list, JRW and KRW have been in communication with them and let the latest to join know that there will be a significant wait. GS mentioned if people need help with plots due to illness or otherwise, they could volunteer giving up half a plot which could be mentioned in the newsletter. JRW and KRW are reluctant to split any more plots but they will mention this in the next newsletter to see if anyone would like to do this. We expect there will be 3-4 plots to allocate in October.

06. Applications for structures/tree

JRW has amended this form and will send it in an email for approval.

07. Allotment Finances

**1.** **Budget Update 2022/2023 and Financial Information-** JRW met with Steve Bolingbroke to discuss how the allotment finances work as previous budget updates have been unclear and our grants don’t seem to be included. In previous years there have been some discrepancies with the budget set and actual income, and also a hangover from the water installation which came into this financial year. A separate bank account for allotments only is not feasible as it would incur business charges. Monthly budget updates will now be given for clarity. The Doris Field Grant of £500 needs to be investigated and clearly stated in the budget.

**2. Any items that need to be purchased:**

1st 9 tonne Drop 70/40 Crushed Stone for track repairs **£432**

Batemans Water Trough 1250 x 435 x 410mm **£87.90** (MR and GS asked for a trough to replace the bath at their end of the allotments)

10kg Field Beans + 10kg Winter Tares Green Manures (Premier Seeds) **£80**

10 Tonne Drop of AD Compost/Manure **£350**

Hedge Cut (Devey Tree Care) **£100**

***(NB: Prices added post meeting)***

**3. Rents-** base rate to go up to £20 as agreed, please see point 05/2 for more information. The rents will be adjusted to the new Option B price system.

**4. Water Bill-** £143.11 from 4th April - 30th September. This will be adjusted upon metre readings. We need to investigate if this bill is correct.

08. Date of Next Meeting

January 2024, date TBC.

09. Any Other Business

**1.** **Unused fruit and vegetables-** During the inspection RB noted seeing a lot of unused fruit and vegetables. With the preservative sale coming up KRW and JRW will contact plot holders and

mention in the newsletter that if anyone can’t use all their fruit and veg, if they’re happy for others to pick it to let them know so our allotments avoid any unnecessary waste. Extra chutneys and jams

etc can then be made from surplus fruit and veg for the sale. Judy Sercombe also asked if any

flowers could be donated to the church for flower arranging- KRW and JRW will ask fellow plot

holders.

**2.** **Woodchip-** MR mentioned contacting Chip Drop which KRW and JRW will look into.

***(NB: Since the meeting Devey Tree Care have been contacted and local tree surgeon Jeff who will both will drop off woodchip once they have some.)***

**3.** **Love Lane Path-** MR keen to help clear, level and add wild flowers to the edge with KRW,

JRW and others who can help, to be discussed further. Woodchip will be used here too.

**4. Allotment Task Force-** Judy suggested more help to support frail people up the allotments, KRW

mentioned the previous task force of volunteers who offered their help if needed. Can mention

this again in newsletter to see if there are any other volunteers, as well as checking if anyone needs

any extra help.

**5. Field Beans-** JH emailed prior to the meeting about encouraging plot holders to sow field beans

over the winter rather than just covering plots. This would benefit the soil and the beans could be

harvested. It was concluded that we will purchase field beans and green manure for the communal

shed so whoever would like to do this can do so (please see items to be purchased point 5/7).

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.43PM**