**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE**

**Held on Wednesday 31st August 2016**

Present: Councillor A Wassell – Chairman

Councillor Mrs P Mayne – Vice-Chairman

 Councillor F D Jones – Allotments Liaison Officer

Site Representatives:

 Mark Cowcill – Ellins Terrace 1

 Fiona Farrar – Gladstone Street

 Kenny Ireland – Gladstone Street

 Andrew James – Gladstone Street

 Frank Crossland – Heys Buildings

 Kevin Mills – Heys Buildings

 Bernard Crossley – Newland Lane

 Joe Fisher – Norwood Street

 Mike Darwin – Wentworth Terrace

**13. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Member’s apologies for their inability to attend were recorded in the apology book.

**14. Member’s Declarations of Interests**

 Members were reminded of the requirement to make an appropriate declaration at the meeting on any item in which they had an interest.

 There were no declarations made.

**15. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

There were no items of a confidential nature from which the press and public were required to be excluded.

**16. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Allotments Committee held on Thursday 14th April 2016 (Minute Numbers 7-12; Pages 6-10) be received as a true record and the contents contained therein be approved.

(Proposed by Joe Fisher / Seconded by Councillor Mrs P Mayne)

**17. Reports from sites**

Ellins Terrace 1

Mark Cowcill reported that there were no problems on the site, no current vacancies, there had been some visitors on the site but the site secretary challenged them, took a photograph of them and they left the site immediately.

Gladstone Street

Fiona Farrar reported that there were 3 vacancies and that they required an update on the waiting list. There had been some nuisance fires and a letter was requested to be sent to all tenants. There were ongoing issues regarding the hedge boundary and a request was submitted to send a reminder to WDH. There had been issues with air rifles from a property on MacKinnon Avenue which would be referred to the police and WDH. There was a discussion regarding the former show judge, John Smiles, who had offered to do a demonstration on the showing of vegetables. The Town Clerk agreed to contact John to arrange this.

Fiona requested that a copy of the rules and regulations be circulated to each site, ideally laminated so that these could be kept up in notice boards.

Heys Buildings

Frank Crossland reported that there were no issues on site, one warning had been issued and the tenant had since left. There was a shed application which was currently being looked into.

Newland Lane

Bernard Crossley reported that there were 2 vacancies at the present time and there were 4 plots not being maintained. It was suggested that one of the tenants should receive a telephone call to see how she’s getting on because she had been unwell. There were concerns about another tenant who had possibly been sleeping in his shed. This would be discussed with the tenant. Another tenant who had been evicted appears to have given his key to a friend who is continuing to use the plot, this friend has been taking tools from other people’s plots. It was suggested that the tenant should be contacted. There were also some concerns about someone camping overnight in the park.

Norwood Street

There were 3 plots currently vacant, plot 13 needs a letter urging further action. It was reported that the fence had been completed following the fire earlier in the year. Joe suggested that a letter regarding the building of sheds be included in the invoice mailing in January. It was reported that there was a tree growing at the Mill Lane gate and Joe agreed to remove the newly growing branches.

Wentworth Terrace

There are 2 ½ plots currently vacant and more will be becoming vacant in the coming months. Plot 12, 13 and 14 wanted to give up 1 ½ or 2 plots, but the committee was concerned about the number of half plots on the site. Councillor A. Wassell said that half plots were not a major concern for the committee because it enabled us to move more people onto the sites to establish whether they were, in fact, good gardeners. However, if the committee wished to keep the number of half plots as it was then that would be acceptable. Mike reported that the gate was in a poor condition and it was agreed that quotes could be obtained. A medium sized skip was required to remove the glass on plots 12, 13 and 14 and a request was submitted to evict the tenant on plot 26 who does not appear to have done any work despite a 30-day warning letter being issued earlier in the year.

The Chairman thanked the Site Secretaries for their input.

**18. Town Council Update**

Councillor A. Wassell reported that there had been a significant improvement on all plots through the inspections and was extremely pleased with progress.

The Town Clerk reported that since the last meeting the annual allotment inspections have been carried over 6 days across 5 weeks. The longer time frame allowed us more time in the office to input the inspection results and write the required letters. We have inspected 422 plots across Normanton and Altofts.

We have issued a number of gentle warnings across many sites, plus 2 30-day warnings and 9 evictions. There is just 1 eviction currently pending which runs out next week. In terms of work of sites, we have provided skips on a number of sites to assist in plot clearance. There have been some very dilapidated plots vacated recently, which have warranted some additional support for the new tenants.

On Ellins Terrace 2, plot 56 has been cleared of rubble and a quote has been obtained for the clearance of asbestos and there is some scrap metal currently awaiting removal. On Gladstone Street plot 14 is being cleared of a shed and greenhouse with the associated asbestos and at Norwood Street a major fire in May that spread to the boundary fence, nearby garage and car has been dealt with by our insurance. A skip was provided for the tenant and a replacement fence was installed in the last few weeks.

There was some discussion regarding the Horticultural Show, it was suggested that the prize money needs to be re-evaluated; Fiona, Kenny and Andrew from Gladstone Street very kindly offered to assist us in reviewing the Show schedule.

It was reported that this year’s show would be the last at the Alice Bacon Centre and a new venue was being looked at due to the imminent closure of the community centre. It was hoped that many members would visit the Show and exhibit if possible. There was also a reminder that we still accept produce for the Meet ‘n’ Eats Diner, which is held on a Thursday and if anyone would like to drop off vegetables they could do so on a Tuesday at the Town Hall.

In the absence of any further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.