

# NORMANTON TOWN COUNCIL



## MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Normanton Town Hall

Present: Councillor B Mayne  
Councillor P Mayne – Chairman  
Councillor M Rowley  
Councillor R Seal  
Donna Johnston – Town Clerk & RFO

Absent: Councillor E Blezard  
Councillor M Jennings  
Councillor P Marchant  
Councillor T Morgan  
Councillor C Parsons  
Councillor A Samuels – Vice Chairman

### 022. Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies for their inability to attend be received on behalf of Councillor E Blezard, Councillor M Jennings, Councillor P Marchant, Councillor T Morgan, and Councillor C Parsons.

### 023. Declarations of Interest

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.

### 024. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Allotments Committee held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (Minute Numbers 011 - 021; Pages 7-13) be received and signed.

**025. Allotment Inspections**

A report was received on the inspections that had been carried out and those that were outstanding.

Members suggested that due to workload and inclement weather, all those currently on a written warning would be given an extension until spring to bring their plots up to the required standard. Plots failing to meet the required standard in Spring would be subject to eviction.

Plots which were subject to serious complaints from neighbours would be inspected when time allowed and may be called at short notice upon review of the weather conditions.

It was suggested that inspections would be scheduled for earlier in the season in 2024.

RESOLVED that the report be received, and the agreed actions implemented.

**026. Eviction Updates**

The Town Clerk provided an update on evictions that were pending with several requiring inspection in the spring.

One tenant had been asked to reduce his plots as they were not kept in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement. An opportunity was given for him to reduce to a more manageable number of plots, but no response had been received.

It was agreed that the tenant be contacted and asked to confirm which plots they would be keeping or to submit a written appeal by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

Should an appeal be received then an independent person would be appointed to inspect the plot and give a report on cultivation levels and weed control in accordance with the requirements of the tenancy agreement.

If the tenant fails to respond to indicate which plots they are retaining, then an eviction will be issued for all plots for breach of tenancy.

RESOLVED that the report be received, and the agreed actions implemented.

**027. Site Updates**

The Town Clerk provided a site-by-site update:

**Cypress Road**

- Trees along boundary near gate are causing issues opening the gate. Quotes are still to be obtained.

Vacancies 1 (Plot 9)

Waiting List 23

**Edward Street**

Vacancies 0

Waiting List 0

**Ellins Terrace 1**

- Quotes for treatment of Japanese Knotweed still to be obtained.

Vacancies 10 (Plots 11, 12, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 39, 40, E)

Waiting List 13

**Ellins Terrace 2**

- A viewing session was held on 24<sup>th</sup> October and three plots were allocated.

Vacancies 6 (Plots 54, 60, 67, 73, 74, 86)

Waiting List 13

**Gilcar Street**

Vacancies 0

Waiting List 7

**Gladstone Street**

- Quote still required for tree at entrance to be removed and tree at rear of plot 61 to be crown lifted.

Vacancies 1 (52a)

Waiting List 27

### **Heys Buildings**

- Complaint received about the overgrown plots backing on to Armstrong Close.

Vacancies 0

Waiting List 26

### **Newland Lane**

- Japanese Knotweed coming from Railway Land – No response to letter.

Vacancies 4 (Plots 10, 14, 16, 40)

Waiting List 22

### **Norwood Street**

- A viewing session was held on 23rd October and seven plots were allocated.
- Bindweed growing over the fence had been treated.
- Tenants piling materials against the fence – letter to be sent.
- Fencepost in need of repair – Quote still to be obtained.

Vacancies 0

Waiting List 14

### **Station Road**

- No update

### **The Grove**

Vacancies 1 (Plot 2 – NTC to allocate)

Waiting List 7

### **Wentworth Terrace**

- Bushes overgrown on entrance track from nearby house. On site committee asked to deal with cutting it back.
- Weeds overgrowing into residents' garden – plot to be re-inspected.

Vacancies 5 (Plots 14, 26, 37, 39, 69)

Waiting List 20

## **Overall**

There are a total of 102 applications awaiting allocation.

There are 29 plots currently vacant.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

### **028. Site Fees**

Members considered a report on the historic collection of Site Fees which were charged on top of the rent by various allotment sites.

The office workload did not allow for the sending of invoices and managing the incorrect payments that have been received in the past.

The work of collecting Site Fees would remain with individual sites and a generic letter would be enclosed with the rent advising tenants to contact their Site Secretary or Treasurer to make payment.

RESOLVED that the report be received, and the agreed actions implemented.

### **029. Japanese Knotweed**

The Town Clerk provided a written update on Japanese Knotweed. No further responses had been received and quotes were being obtained for treatment of our land at Ellins Terrace and Newland Lane.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

### **030. Requests from Tenants**

A series of requests were received from tenants.

Overgrown plot at ET2-54 – It had previously been agreed to obtain quotes for clearance. This was still on the list to be done.

Allotment swap – A tenant on ET1-B wishes to swap to ET1-A. This was agreed and it was noted that the tenant may require a skip to remove dangerous structures left by the previous tenant.

Allotment Church – the request to hold an allotment church be declined at this time. Members felt that the new tenant should demonstrate their ability to cultivate the plot themselves in the first instance. The tenant may apply again in twelve months. All tenants would need to be consulted along with our insurers before any agreement is reached.

#### Structure Applications

##### HB024 – Livestock Accommodation

Approved subject to maximum sizes as set out in the Allotments Policy.

##### WT060 – Shed

Approved subject to maximum sizes as set out in the Allotments Policy.

##### ET1-43 – Livestock Accommodation

Approved subject to maximum sizes as set out in the Allotments Policy.

##### NS005 – Shed

Approved subject to maximum sizes as set out in the Allotments Policy.

RESOLVED that the applications be received, and the agreed actions be implemented and reported back to the tenants.

### **031. Complaints**

A complaint was received about bindweed at the garages at Norwood Street. The tenant had declined our offer to treat and remove the bindweed and had therefore been advised to deal with it at their own cost in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

### **032. Allotments Budget**

The budget for the allotments was received showing income of £8,424.94 and expenditure of £7,289.64.

RESOLVED that the budget report be received.

**033. Allotment Rent**

Members reviewed the arrangements for the increase of allotment rents which were scheduled up to 2025.

Members agreed to monitor costs for water and maintenance over the next year and suggested that the allotments should cover their own costs and not be a burden to the taxpayers. Comparisons would be sought from other councils.

Budget information for the last complete year should be sent out with the allotment rent for transparency.

RESOLVED that the report be received, and further consideration be given to rent in November 2024.

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