

NORMANTON TOWN COUNCIL



MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 28th August 2024 at 1.00pm at Normanton Town Hall

Present: Councillor M Jennings
Councillor B Mayne
Councillor P Mayne – Chairman
Councillor C Parsons
Councillor M Rowley
Councillor R Seal

Donna Johnston – Town Clerk & RFO
Jonathan Wilkinson – Property Officer

Absent: Councillor C Appleyard
Councillor T Morgan
Councillor A Samuels
Councillor P Marchant

030. To receive apologies for absence.

RESOLVED that apologies for their inability to attend be received on behalf of Councillors C Appleyard, P Marchant and T Morgan.

031. To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED that the following declaration of interest be received:

Councillor M Jennings
Non-Pecuniary Interest

Relating to all matters at Wentworth Terrace Allotments due to his allotment tenancy.

032. To receive and sign the minutes of a meeting of the Allotments Committee.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Allotments Committee meeting held on Tuesday 16th July 2024 (Minute Numbers 017-029; Pages 9-13) be received as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

033. To receive an update on vacancies and waiting lists.

RESOLVED that the report on waiting lists and vacancies be received.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Waiting List</u>	<u>Vacancies</u>
Cypress Road	27	1
Edward Street	0	0
Ellins Terrace 1	13	10
Ellins Terrace 2	16	4
Gilcar Street	10	0
Gladstone Street	26	0
Heys Buildings	8	0
Newland Lane	23	1
Norwood Street	16	0
Station Road	0	0
The Grove	11	0
Wentworth Terrace	12	1
TOTAL	162*	17

*Some applicants have applied for more than one site.

034. To consider requests for skips, structures, livestock, and any other general matters.

Members considered a series of applications from tenants:

HB014

Skip request to dispose of waste from a greenhouse which is to be demolished.

APPROVED

NL016

Request for livestock

DECLINED – Livestock is not permitted at Newland Lane and the tenant does not have twelve months in good standing.

WT016

Request for a replacement shed and relocation of existing structures.
Replacement wooden shed - size 6' x 8'

APPROVED

WT011a

Request for a polytunnel

New polytunnel size 8' x 15'

APPROVED

ET1-a and ET1-b

Asbestos sheets to be removed following recent storms.

RESOLVED that the Clerk is delegated authority to have the asbestos removed by an approved contractor at their earliest convenience.

035. To receive the Allotments Committee Budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

RESOLVED that the Allotments Committee budget showing income of £1,749.20 and committed expenditure of £6,109.59 be received.

036. To review the Allotments Policy.

Members reviewed the existing Allotments Policy and made several recommendations for changes to wording for the purpose of clarity.

A series of major changes were implemented as follows:

- One allotment per household – this will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in the case of adult offspring living at the parental home.
- Community groups and schools will no longer be permitted to hold an allotment.
- Refusal of two plots will result in the applicant being removed from the list.
- A new policy would be introduced in relation to the readmittance of previously evicted tenants which would include a case-by-case review, a waiting period of at least two years, a conduct evaluation, and a probationary period.
- In extreme cases the Town Council reserves the right to move to immediate eviction where it is clear that the plot has been abandoned.
- Hedging, shrubs and non-fruiting trees will not be permitted.
- Bonfires will no longer be permitted.

- All poultry and captive birds must be registered with DEFRA / APHA with effect from 1st October 2024 and evidence provided to the Town Council.
- A new policy on the use of weedkiller would be implemented.
- Rent would be charged on a pro-rata basis depending on when the plot is accepted.

RESOLVED that the suggested changes be adopted, and the policy updated and circulated to all tenants.

037. To receive an update on the various allotment issues that have been dealt with in the last month.

It was reported that inspections had been carried out at most sites and that had taken up a large proportion of the Property Officer's time over recent weeks.

It was reported that there were significant issues in identifying plots due to the lack of numbering. It was agreed that tenants would be asked to clearly number their plots as it is a condition of tenancy.

A new dedicated allotments email address had been set up to deal with allotment queries more efficiently within the office.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

038. To consider any complaints from tenants or neighbours about the allotments.

The following complaints had been received:

Wentworth Terrace – Fallen tree branch which has been reported to WDH for removal.

Newland Lane – A letter was received from the Site Secretary at Newland Lane which indicated that they were seeking legal advice. The letter was noted.

Ellins Terrace 2 – Complaint about a bonfire with thick smoke affecting nearby residents. The new policy on bonfires would be circulated to the tenant.

RESOLVED that the complaints be received and actioned.

039. To consider any tenancy issues including breach of tenancy, warnings and evictions.

A number of responses to written warnings had been received as a result of the recent inspections.

Several tenants raised health issues as a reason for non-cultivation.

The committee accepted that in the case of ill health, cultivation expectations could be lowered on a short-term basis, however the weeds must still be kept under control so that they don't impact on neighbouring plots. If the tenant was unable to address the weeds themselves then the Town Council would offer to strim the plot for a fee of £50 on each occasion. Payment would be required in advance.

Consideration would be given to raking the plots after strimming and disposing of the weeds, but the cost implications would need to be taken into account.

A number of tenants had given up their plots after realising they didn't really have time, and some had asked if their plots could be halved.

The halving of plots would be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to access being available to both halves. This would be dealt with by the Property Officer and Town Clerk.

RESOLVED that the reports be received and actioned where appropriate.

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