

MINUTE 38T

A meeting of the Allotment Management Committee and the Garden Allotment Tenants was held at The British Legion, Long Lane on Monday the 20th day of NOVEMBER 2023 – commencing 7.30 pm

COMMITTEE PRESENT - Mr Storey (Chairman), Mr Fenn, Mr Lambert and Mr Rayner. Also present 3 tenants.

APOLOGIES – Apologies were received from Mrs Arnold and Ms Pollard.

MINUTES of the last meeting were taken as read, agreed & duly signed.

MATTERS ARISING

1. Vermin Control – No current issues.
2. Knotweed – Mr Storey said he and Mr Fenn continued to monitor the knotweed which was not too bad at present and would be treated when necessary.
3. Entrance to Allotments – Mr Storey said the far corner would be reassessed in the summer – ongoing.
4. Boundary – Nothing further from neighbouring landowner – ongoing.
5. Future Plans for Hythe Road Garden Allotments – Due to a number of tenants relinquishing their allotments, therefore increasing the number of vacant plots, it had been decided, with the existing tenants' approval, that all plots on the left hand side of the allotments would be halved, effective from Rent Night October 2024. Existing tenants would keep the front half of their plots and be given the opportunity to take on the neighbouring half if it were vacant, and the back half would be amalgamated to form another farm allotment. Mr Storey reiterated that this would only ever happen if all tenants directly affected were agreeable and he was pleased to report that they were. The plots would be professionally measured by a GPS Technician and this would officially come into effect as of Rent Night October 2024.
6. Rent Increase Effective from October 2024 – Clerk had emailed all tenants on 10th October 2023 advising them of a rent increase as of Rent Night October 2024. Mr Storey said this was a reluctant decision made by the Committee as running costs continued to rise, i.e. skips, drainage, hedge cutting, rotavating, maintaining the entrance etc. He said rents had not been increased for over 10 years and gave a breakdown of income and expenditure details during that period. Expenditure 2012/13 was £673.67 compared to £1993.26 in 2022/23, an increase of 195.8%, whereas income had remained the same at £261.75. He said the farm allotments had been subsidising the garden allotments for a number of years which was unsustainable and although the rents were being increased by 100%, this only equated to an increase of 38p/week for those whose rents were increasing from £20 to £40 a year. He felt tenants were still going to get good value for money and asked for any comments. Mr George said although he didn't dispute the increase, he felt tenants should have been given more notice as the subject had never been mentioned at any prior meeting. Mr Cole agreed with Mr George

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MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

and said the Committee should have increased rents gradually rather than by a large amount all at once. Mr Storey said the rent increase would not come into effect until next October so tenants would have 12 months to absorb this increase but said it was an oversight on his part and going forward, the subject would appear on the agenda from time to time. Mr Lambert said that due to Covid and Brexit, costs had only risen sharply recently. Mr Storey added that even with the increased rent costs, rent would still be below other allotment rents in parishes around Norfolk, an exercise which had been conducted by the Clerk.

7. Thank You – Mr Storey thanked those tenants present for the hard work they put into their allotments which he appreciated wasn't always easy at certain times of the year.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Meeting declared closed 8.00 pm
