



**Minutes of the Allotments Committee Meeting
held on Monday 4th March 2024 at 7.30pm**

Members Present: Cllr D Smith (Chairman); Cllr E Ellicott (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Gripper; Ms S French (Non-voting member) and Mr A Farmer (Non-voting member)

Officer Present: Kevin Watson

Members of the public present: 21

No decisions were taken by the Parish Council on any item not on the Agenda

1. **Enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting:** None.
2. **To receive and approve apologies for absence:** Apologies received from Cllr A Funnell, Cllr D Funnell and Mr D Clover.
3. **Declaration of Personal and Prejudicial Interests:** Cllrs Smith, Ellicott and Non-voting members Ms French and Mr Farmer are all allotment holders. Cllr Gripper has a close family connection with an allotment tenant.
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** None
5. **Minutes of the last meeting:**
 - i. **To approve the draft minutes of the meetings held on 4th December 2023.**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.
 - ii. **Any matters arising from these Minutes which are not already on the agenda:**

Cllr Smith advised despite comments to the contrary under 7a, following challenge from Capel Groundcare, the Council had paid for the All Ability Garden concrete path and hardstanding driveway following legal advice from the Clerk. Thanks were expressed for the hard work completed by Keith Terry of Crossways Community in clearing the residual earth mound and levelling the surrounding area to allow installation of the raised beds.
6. **Open session for questions from the public**

A request was made to arrange for oiling of the locks at Southwood Road Allotments as a couple of tenants had experienced difficulty during the last couple of days. Ms French has agreed to attend to this as soon as possible. A request was made for wood chippings at Wickham Gardens Allotments. Ms French has agreed to ask Watson and Price, Tree Surgeons who are currently providing wood chippings to Southwood Road Allotments to assist once the ground at Wickham Gardens Allotments is dry enough to accommodate delivery (see also Item 16 later). Cllr Smith pointed out there will be tree surgery at Wickham Gardens Allotments soon which should also provide wood chippings for tenants.

- 7. Update on All Ability Garden Project at Southwood Road Allotments – Ms S French**
Ms French confirmed the new concrete path and driveway have been laid and the raised beds have been installed and filled ready for planting. Cllr Ellicott thanked Ms French and Keith Terry of Crossways Community for their hard work in delivering the project on time.
- 8. Update on Grant for All Ability Garden Project – Cllr Ellicott**
Cllr Ellicott confirmed the final application paperwork has been submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for £3266.00 with the funds due before the end of the financial year.
- 9. Agree how the All Ability Garden will be publicised and administered**
Cllr Ellicott has spoken with Reverend Ronnie Williams, Vicar of St. Paul’s Church and he is keen to support the initiative by publicising in his Weekly Pew Leaflets and the Parish Magazine. Cllr Ellicott proposed further awareness communications through the Lunch Club and the next edition of Rusthall Life. Officer Watson is to approach Keith Terry of Crossways Community to see if he is prepared to provide the necessary support and guidance to administer the Garden and oversee its initial development.
- 10. Consider request by Crossways Community to install a non-hose attachable tap on the water tank near to their hut on Plot 43 at Southwood Road Allotments**
RESOLVED Crossways Community may install a non-hose attachable tap on the water tank near to their hut on Plot 43.
- 11. Consider quotations to award 3-year Ground Maintenance and Grass Cuttings Contracts starting 1st April 2024**
Cllr Smith explained three tenders had been invited from Capel Groundcare (existing contractors), Landscape Services (recommended by Speldhurst Parish Council) and Little Loads (used by the Council for waste clearance and general allotments maintenance). Unfortunately, whilst Capel Groundcare tender has been received, the tender from Landscape Services requires clarification on VAT and despite several messages left by Officer Watson, this remains outstanding. Little Loads did not provide a tender which is disappointing. In these circumstances, no recommendation could be made as to which contractor should be awarded the Contracts. Officer Watson will continue to chase Landscape Services in order the final decision can be made at Full Council Meeting on Monday 11th March 2024.
- 12. Consider quotations to award tree surgery work itemised within the 2023 Tree Survey**
RESOLVED Treeworks to complete the tree surgery itemised within the 2023 Tree Survey at a cost of £1,840.00 + VAT.
- 13. To approve decisions made by the Committee Chairman in consultation with the Vice-Chair and Allotments Manager with regards Little Loads costs:**
- i. Southwood Road Extension Allotments. Clearance of brambles, etc. and establishment of clear paths between Plots 5, 5A and 5B - £350.00.
 - ii. Wickham Gardens Allotments. Clearance of Plot 21 and WGCR2 (old chicken run) and removal of additional non-combustible rubbish with surplus wood placed on communal area bonfire - £375.00.
 - iii. Wickham Gardens Allotments. Removal of additional non-combustible rubbish for any/all plot holders between 10th February and 1st March 2024 - £500.00.

- iv. **Southwood Road Allotments. Removal of rubbish discovered and collected by Crossway Community - £250.00.**

RESOLVED All costs were approved.

14. Update on Wickham Gardens Allotments Plot 28 Wild Flower Meadow

Cllr Smith confirmed great progress has been made in clearing the plot and the scuff rotovating by Keith Terry from Crossways Community is due later this week. The wild flower seeds have been received and Officer Watson and Mr Clover have visited and ordered four blossom trees from English Woodlands.

15. Update on Waiting List and Vacant Plots

There are three vacancies at Southwood Road Allotments, this includes re-creation of two plots 12 and 12A following departure of the previous resident, no vacancies at Southwood Road Extension Allotments and six vacancies at Wickham Gardens Allotments. The remaining residents on the Waiting List have been offered plots at Southwood Road Allotments and Officer Watson advised the latest Rusthall Life article has been a success with five new prospective tenants expressing interest in Wickham Gardens Allotments. Ms French expressed her thanks to Paul Goldsmith and Peter Banks, tenants at Southwood Road Allotments, for assisting with the clearance of non-combustible rubbish left on Plot 12.

16. To approve Watson and Price, Tree Surgeons proposal to deliver regular wood chippings to Southwood Road Allotments and create a new compost heap from occasional green material towards the rear of Plot 46 – Ms S French

RESOLVED Following first delivery of wood chippings to Southwood Road Allotments as a trial, it was approved that Messrs Watson and Price may continue and create a new compost heap from occasional green material towards the rear of Plot 46.

17. To approve spending priorities for the 2024/2025 financial year:

- i. **Further investment in the development of the All Ability Garden at Southwood Road Allotments.**
- ii. **Proposed purchase and installation of 10-foot x 16-foot community shed/club house from Topwood at Wickham Gardens Allotments - £1,666.00 + VAT.**
- iii. **Removal of large overhanging branch over new extended communal area at Wickham Gardens Allotments - £280.00.**
- iv. **Installation of infill for double gates at Wickham Gardens Allotments to badger proof and protect existing dropped kerb at Wickham Gardens Allotments.**

RESOLVED

Item i. Cllr Ellicott advised Gatwick Airport Community Trust has set aside £250,000.00 for any villages within the flight path to apply for grants upto £5,000.00. The funds to be used to support local initiatives where the elderly or disabled would benefit. Approved on the basis a new grant application will be made for £5,000.00 to Gatwick Airport Community Trust to purchase a shelter for the elderly and disabled who may require respite when attending the All Ability Garden at Southwood Road Allotments. The type and design of the shelter to be decided once the grant decision is known.

Item ii. Approved.

Item iii. Officer Watson is to request Treeworks provide a quotation for removing the large overhanging limb situated at Wickham Gardens Allotments Communal Area.

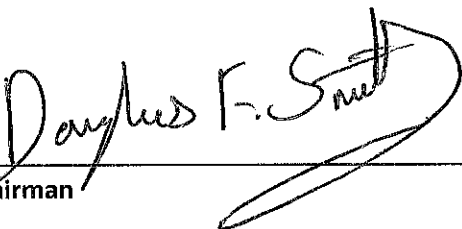
Item iv. Officer Watson is to obtain tenders for infilling the small parcel of land between Wickham Gardens road and the Wickham Gardens Allotments double gates due to the land being subject to badger destruction.

18. To confirm this year's judge, date of judging together with date and venue of summer BBQ and prize giving (Saturday 6th July 2024)

RESOLVED The summer BBQ and prize giving will be held at Southwood Road Allotments community rea on Saturday 6th July 2024 starting at 1.00pm. Officer Watson is to approach Dan Colborne, Commons Ranger to be the judge again this year with the judging to take place after the June plot inspections. Prizes will be The Venture garden vouchers and the level will remain the same as last year. The Parish Council will cover the costs of meat, sauces, plates and crockery with tenants asked to provide salad, side dishes, puddings and their own drinks.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be on Monday 17th June 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm



Chairman

17-6-2024

Date