



# WARMSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL ALLOTMENTS FIRST OPEN MEETING

**Notes from the Meeting held on Wednesday 11th. September  
2024 at 6.30pm at Warmsworth Stapleton Road Centre.**

**Members Present:** Cllrs. A. Bennett (Chair), C Pattison, S Beech & D Maxey (Parish Chair)

**In Attendance:** The Clerk, Mr A. Bosmans

There were also around 25 Plot Holders in Attendance – notes from the last meeting were given out and would appear on the website.

Cllr Bennett called for a minutes silence in memory of Mick Fenton who was a long-time allotment holder and had sadly, very recently passed away.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would send some flowers to his widow as an expression of sympathy.

Cllr Maxey explained that the Parish Council was exploring with Rob Brothwell the possibility of giving him some extra hours which would be applied to some work on the allotments to deal with side grass and tidying hedgerows etc. This would be a cost to all allotment holders over time with increased lease fees, but the fees would still be extremely competitive.

It was also explained that a new noticeboard had been purchased and installed, the defibrillator installation cost was agreed and paid for by the council – (the actual defibrillator was not).

**Comment** : There are still not enough keys

**Answer** : The Parish Council have spare keys as they have a new supply – anyone who requires one needs to pay a deposit and will be given one. Along with an application form and allotment rules, the Parish Council is looking at an induction pack for new allotment holders, in it will be a procedure for obtaining a key to the allotments.

**Comment** : Fly tipping at huts – stuff still left there – is this out of the old skip?

**Answer** : There should be no dumping of rubbish – skips or not – however the Parish Council was investigating the possibility of having a skip and was investigating a contract with a local skip company. The skip would be only occasional and announced in advance on the website and noticeboards.

Garden rubbish can be burnt twice a year – the latest date is at or around 5<sup>th</sup> November to coincide with Bonfire night.

**Question** : What has happened about the Blue Container?

**Answer :** It was explained that an inspection was made, and the floor was unsafe – this was questioned, but it was explained that Rob Brothwell had checked on this (possibly after ex Cllr S Auty had mentioned it) and an initial assessment by him was relayed to councillors that he was “reluctant” to go in as the floor looked rotten.

**Question** : There are an unacceptable number of unfit plots – are the “owners” of these leases tackled about the state?

**Answer** : We have undertaken to give people with plots in an unacceptable state a chance to rectify, however we are now at the stage of eviction and reletting some of them – the rest will be considered – and again the “occupants” will be given a chance to rectify before eviction and reletting.

Cllr Maxey informed everyone that they would undertake to inspect every 6 to 8 weeks and will tackle neglected gardens, however if there is some valid excuse such as illness / bereavement etc, the occupant will be given reasonable time to rectify.

**Comment** : If there is to be an inspection, plot holders need to be notified

**Answer** : This is not a necessity and is noted, and answer has been given previously.

**Comment** : People are not abiding by the rules, and it is unfair on those that do follow the rules.

**Answer:** The previous answers would be sufficient, and an assurance was given that an inspection WILL be done before the next meeting of this forum and action will be taken if necessary.

**Idea proposed** : Can we not have more noticeboards?

**Answer** : We have bought one new board and accept that the others are getting to be “unsuitable” we will look at replacing next year but the number of noticeboards is considered adequate at this time.

**Question** : Are we setting people up to fail and would it not be better if plot holders could advise and assist those that are struggling?

**Answer** : There is a case at present where this has been the case and has been dealt with sympathetically to everyone’s satisfaction. A previous suggestion that probationary periods for new plot holders would be implemented, and it could be that such new “starters” may be given a half plot to see how they get on and could be elevated to a larger plot if they prove satisfactory.

The assurance was again made that inspections WILL be made, and action take where appropriate.

**Idea proposed:** What about a bond being used as a condition of keeping the plot up to specification?

**Answer** : Chair explained that something along these lines was already in practice : They pay for the first year regardless of when they take on the plot in the year and if acceptable they get the plot the following year for a reduced rate or even free.

**Question:** Is there a waiting list and could this be publicised? (Plot holder commented that his wife had been on the “list” for some time and had not been informed when a plot became free)

**Answer:** The Chair indicated that if plots are available, an announcement would be placed in the notice boards and on the website – he requested further details on the specific case

**Question:** Going back to issue of Rob possibly doing more hours especially on the allotments, couldn't he do the inspections and also keep the vacant plots up to an acceptable standard?

**Answer :** This is not what we envisaged as Rob's role on the allotments, and it is not expected that he should do inspections or keep vacant plots up to specification. Inspections will be done by the Committee and Rob will be tasked to tidy outlying areas? He will not be tasked to do any work on an allotment, unless there are specific and unprecedented circumstances.

**Question :** Who pays for Rob's services on the allotments?

**Answer :** It will come from Allotments funds.

There were then some mutterings of disagreement about this indicating that if a plot holder was resident in Warmsworth and paid for a plot, they were paying twice?

**Answer:** The lease fee is to cover specific requirements of the plot holders, and the council tax Parish Council element is small and should be used for the benefit of all council taxpayers in Warmsworth – there was a difference.

**Question :** Who is responsible for the fences being maintained?

**Answer:** There is no requirement that a fence needs to be placed around any of the plots, however if a plot holder wishes to have a fence then they can, provided it is not too high or out of keeping with other plots and fences, so in answer to the question if a fence around a plot is broken it is the plot holder's responsibility to repair it and if they do not wish to have a fence it can be removed at their time and cost.

**Question :** Again, some people are using the water via a hosepipe in the summer for quite an amount of time – can you clarify the policy?

**Answer :** The policy has not changed, and hosepipes are not allowed – the water will be cut if this is abused – the policy is to allow the filling of buckets, watering cans etc. but the water is metered and will be monitored. The water is always turned off in November and restored in the Spring.

**Follow up:** But what about Blue Badge holders and disabled – they will have difficulty in getting water up to their water butts?

**Answer:** We will of course consider if the person has a disability and will look at the rules, but it is also a good sense of community for other plot holders to assist disabled plot holders if they are struggling?

**Question :**What happens about rat infestation?

**Answer:**

The Council has on advice from our pest controller, upgraded all the stations and receives a monthly report on visits – if there is a specific problem, it is usually dealt with within the framework of the "eradication" agreement.

Other means of eradication which may appear effective are either illegal or dubious and Doncaster Council does not support these measures as does Warmsworth Parish Council.

**Question :** What about the equipment which is still locked and inaccessible?

**Answer :** Chair itemised the list he had and its value but emphasised that the values would not be market values and the equipment probably not particularly good anymore.

**Question:** Could the tools be re let if serviced for individual plot holders to use?

**Answer** : Sufficient training would have to be undertaken to mitigate the Parish Council's liability, and if the tools were rented out, this would be via a request and a signature of agreement similar to a normal hire.

Before ending the de fibrillatory was commented upon and a code was shared – it was also suggested that a course could be arranged at the Hub – this was received well by the Chair and other Councillors present but it was pointed out that if the emergency services are notified – the instructions are given over the phone.

It was also mentioned about the fees for rent beginning collection in October and a letter or an email would be sent to all plot holders according to the records we have on file.

The final question was on trustees and why there were none for the allotments – it was explained carefully that the equivalent of the trustees were the Councillors and the Clerk and there was no need or provision in law for this.

The Meeting was closed at 7.55pm – the next one set already for mid-November and is already publicised on the Allotments noticeboard and the website.