

# Great Waltham Parish Council

Clerk, W J Adshead-Grant,

E Mail: [clerk@greatwalthamparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@greatwalthamparishcouncil.co.uk) Website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish>

The minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on Monday 29th January 2024 at the Pavilion, South Street , Great Waltham at 7.30pm.

1. Chair's Welcome  
Chair: Martin.  
Cllrs. Gilbert, Jenkins, Palmer, Bradley, and Jackson.
2. Apologies for Absence  
Cllr Page.
3. Declarations of interests (existence and nature) regarding items on the agenda and to consider any dispensations required to transact the business on the agenda.  
Cllr Jackson , Cllr Bradley, and Cllr Palmer – Allotment holders – Items - 5, 7, 13.  
Dispensations requested and approved.
4. Public Participation session with respect to items on the agenda or any items that they wish to bring to the Councils attention.  
Two members of the public:
  - A member queried why his request for allotment issues to be raised at the monthly meeting had been ignored.
    - The committee confirmed that allotments are a recreation activity, and it is appropriate that issues should be raised at the committee initially.
  - Concerns were raised on the existence of the service charge and why allotment holders are being picked on by the Parish Council to pay for items that other areas of the parish get for free.
    - The service charge is for water and variety of other costs associated with running the allotments. The plot rent is set by the landlord.
  - The value and full potential of allotment gardening (to allotment holders) – why was the words allotment holders added, as it is for the whole community.
    - There are several vacancies on both allotments.
  - Request to scrap the service charge – not included on the agenda
    - – It will be discussed as part of one of the agenda items.
5. Update on available plots on Brook Mead and Bury Lane.  
Brook Mead (42 allotments)
  - Vacant 1,2a, 2b, 2c, 2f, 3, 17, 26A - 8 plotsBury Lane (22 allotments)
  - Vacant 2, 2A , 2B , 2C, 3 , 3A, 5, 6, 7. – 9 plots.

The number of vacant plots at both sites has decreased by one since the last meeting.

6. Report on Playground Inspections.
  - Additional tablet to be discussed.

The benefits of the new recording system and the improved reporting/recording process were acknowledged and it was felt a second tablet for use between the three inspectors would further aid weekly inspections.

**Resolution: The Committee recommends the purchase on a second unit.**

**Resolution: The Clerk to get a quote for the additional tablet.**

- Consider action on the green plastic bench at Great Waltham recreation ground.

**Resolution: Cllr Palmer will investigate potential suppliers for the parts required to fix the recycled bench.**

**Resolution: Cllr Palmer to discuss the offer of a bench with the applicant to understand the preferred location and to share information on design, colour, and base requirements**

7. Report from Allotments Supervisor.

On both allotment sites where we have vacant plots some covers have been moved by the winds this month. Several allotment covers to be re-instated with the rebar pegs made by Cllrs Martin and Jenkins.

**Resolution: Additional pegs can be made when required.**

**Resolution: Cllr Gilbert and Jackson will recover the plots.**

A discussion was held on the recent incident at Bury Lane allotments when a park bench was moved. A discussion was held on the request for a padlock for Bury lane allotments.

**Resolution: The decision was made to not have a padlock on the gate.**

8. Updates on the Action Tracker - (All).

The action tracker was discussed, and each item updated. The action tracker will be available in the minutes section of the website.

9. Review progress and outstanding actions on the recreation grounds inspection tracker.

The tracker from the annual inspection was reviewed. Some items need to be updated as work has progressed in January. The remaining items are low or extremely low on risk assessment.

The system tracker from the new software was reviewed. The report is similar to the annual report but is undertaken by the weekly inspections team.

**Resolution: The Clerk and Cllr Gilbert to review the annual inspection tracker .**

10. Update on pavilion bookings including expenditure and income. And new items of expenditure.

- Consider Wi-Fi.

The benefits of providing wi-fi for full council and committee meetings and hirers use was acknowledged.

**Resolution: Recommend in principle to support the provision of Wi-Fi.**

- Consider a hand drier.

It was reported that the use of paper towels and the amount used is not consistent with the Councils commitment to reduce waste and an alternative solution should be considered.

**Resolution: Recommend the investigation of an electric hand drier to replace paper towels.**

11. Review the options regarding football goal refurbishment.

The poor condition of the football goals at all three recreation grounds is routinely reported on weekly and annual playground inspections and the committee has previously committed to resolving the issue.

A report was reviewed with a variety of options including the purchase of new goalposts, shot blasting the current goal posts and the option of new mobile junior goal posts.

Part of any replacement/refurbishment work would also include the need for new goal post sockets – three per goal enabling them to be occasionally repositioned, saving money on future goal area repairs.

A discussion on the best option for each location determined that the adult goals at Great Waltham could be refurbished by volunteers using a high grade paint preparation with appropriate undercoat to delay further rust coming through.

It was also noted that the adult goals at Howe Street and Ford End are a non standard size and are in a poor condition and therefore it would not be cost effective to have new sockets installed unless new goals are purchased.

It was decided that the junior goals at Great Waltham would not be recommended for replacement or refurbishment at this time but the matter would be re-considered if it is demonstrated that there is demand, at which point movable goals which offer more play options would be considered.

**Resolution: Purchase and install new full-size set of football goals (one unit each site) at Ford End and Howe Street – approximately £2000 (incl VAT).**

**Resolution: Cllr Jenkins to investigate costs to refurbish the full-size set of football goals at Great Waltham and re site them closer together approximate cost £700 (+Vat). The refurbishment to be undertaken by a working group of volunteers using cold galvanized paint.**

12. Review the recent tree survey report and agree an action plan.

The update report from Writtle tree consultancy was reviewed. Several aspects can be undertaken by volunteers, however some items such as tree felling will need to be undertaken by a tree surgeon.

**Resolution: Clerk to share the full report with JCM for some guidance on prices. Consideration to be given to any TPO's or trees within the conservation area.**

**Resolution: A working group to review the balance – date to be arranged.**

13. Following a recent representation to the full council discuss the following in relation to allotment provision.

- Current cost of providing allotments.  
The Clerk circulated the current annual allotment expenses and income to enable to current level of subsidy to be calculated.
  - Cost to the Council (this year to date) £2062.99 and income of £924.04. A c.50% subsidy.
  - Computer software, bank charges and administration have been removed from the above costs despite being allotment specific costs.
- The requirement to provide two allotment sites.  
The Council is required to provide allotments when there is a demand and the reason for having two sites in Great Waltham village was explained.
  - Previously there were three allotment sites in Great Waltham and one site in Howe Street but this has declined to two sites in Great Waltham over the years.
  - Plot vacancies at both sites were noted as a concern with Bury Lane currently having approximately 50% vacancies. It was agreed that the condition to only hire plots to people resident in the parish could be a contributing factor and maybe an alternative could be considered – limiting a distance outside the parish for example. It was also noted that having a service charge and plot rent causes concern for some people and combining all costs into a single charge maybe preferential.

**Resolution: Recommend discussion with the Landlord to consider lifting the restriction on allotment holders' residence for eligibility for a plot.**

**Resolution: Recommend discussion with the landowner on the land rent cap.**

- The value and full potential of allotment gardening to allotment holders.
  - It was noted that there are many health and wellbeing reasons associated with allotments including regular access to fresh air, fresh vegetables and exercise. The Parish Council promotes the allotments as part of the community engagement and has implemented many initiatives including holding an open day

with further ones planned, adverts in the Parish News, regular social media posts, small starter plots and free plot for the Great Waltham pre-school group to encourage uptake..

- Consider if allotment provision should be subsidised and by how much.
  - It was previously noted that currently around 50% of costs are by subsidy and while the costs of many Parish Council operated allotments are not readily available those that are published online were considered.
  - Great Waltham charges £4 per rod which equates to a combined average of £6.70(rod & service charge) which compares well with other areas. Great Waltham is mid table of the charges, (caveat on land ownership -which drives a significant percentage of our costs). Chelmsford £5.50 per rod plus water charges.
- Consider allotment charges in relation to concessions and water supply.
  - Water supply is levied across all the plot holders as part of the service charge.
  - Age-related concessions were considered but noted that the rates charged are not a barrier to allotment hire.
- Consider the provision of mowers and cultivators at allotment sites.
  - This subject has previously been considered and ruled out due to the cost of providing, maintaining and replacing equipment. Allotment holders are responsible for mowing around their own plot and cutting the hedge if their plot is bordered by it.

14. Update on the Great Waltham Play Equipment Project and next steps.

The working group has met with three different manufacturers to discuss a project to replace ageing equipment at Great Waltham. The project will also create a theme and ensure we have a spread of age-appropriate equipment.

Each manufacturer has created an initial vision board with hard copies to give some idea of the project.

**Resolution: The working party to meet to discuss the initial quotes.**

**Members – Gilbert, Martin, Jenkins, Palmer, Jackson, Bradley and Page.**

Meeting closed 21.46.

Will Adshead-Grant

Clerk to the Council.