

Great Waltham Parish Council

The Pavilion, South Street, Great Waltham. CM3 1DF

Clerk, W J Adshead-Grant,

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Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on Monday 3rd February 2025 at The Pavilion, South Street, Great Waltham at 7.00pm.

1. Chair's Welcome.
Chair: Martin.
Cllrs: Gilbert, Stephenson, Jenkins, Bradley, Taylor and Jackson.
2. Apologies for Absence.
None required.
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 and Bradley – Allotments (items 5, 7, 11, 14).
Dispensations were granted due to the pecuniary interest being low value and the two members having considerable allotment experience.
4. Public Participation session with respect to items on the agenda or any items that they wish to bring to the Councils attention.
No members of the public in attendance.
5. Update on available plots on Brook Mead and Bury Lane.
Noted that the Clerk is still chasing some rents.
Vacant Plots – Bury Lane – 2, 3A, 12A. (Plots 2 and 12 to be confirmed)
- Brook Mead – 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10B, 11, 16B, 17, 18B.
6. Report on Playground Inspections.
The Handyman continues to inspect all three playgrounds until Councillor Stephenson has been trained on the tablet software. Cllr Stephenson once trained will inspect Ford End and Howe Street playgrounds. Recent inspection reports were reviewed and discussed.
7. Report from Allotments Supervisor.
An allotment review took place on Saturday 1st February involving Cllrs Gilbert, Martin, Taylor and the Clerk to look at the general condition at both sites.
A number of recommendations were considered:
New plot markers required to make the plots clear against the map.
The 9 Starter plots are underutilised and it was suggested that this is reduced to 3 starter plots for the next season and recover one full plot.
Plot 3 at Brook Mead has not been used in a long time. This will become the new starter plot area. Plot 2 will be released back to being a full-sized plot.
Communal areas to be marked on a map at both sites showing those areas that will be maintained by the Parish Council. The presence of brown wheelie bins were noted, these will no longer be supported by the Chelmsford City Council from 1st March 2025.
Brook Mead needs a clearance day from a volunteer team.

Resolution: Brook Mead plot 3 to become the starter plot.

Resolution: Brook Mead starter plots to be reduced to 3 starter plots of approximately 1 metre square.

Resolution: All plots to be renumbered by October 2025.

Resolution: New white plot markers will be produced.

Resolution: Supply the allotment inspector with a tablet for doing the inspections.

8. Updates on the Action Tracker - (All).
The tracker was reviewed and updated. Several items were closed after updates.
9. Update on works completed by the handyman in relation on the Recreation Grounds Inspection Tracker.
The remaining low and very low risk items identified in the annual inspection were reviewed. Some longstanding items will be cleared when the Great Waltham Playground project is completed.
- Resolution:** **Clerk to review the list of remaining defects during March 2025 and organise a working party to clear the remaining issues where possible before the annual inspections.**
10. To receive an update from the Great Waltham Recreation Ground Play Area Working Group on progress and agree with the next steps.
- The Great Waltham Cubs group undertook an aspirational event on play items they would like to see in the playground.
 - The Great Waltham School hosted an event and viewed the catalogues and options available and produced drawings.
 - The Invitation To Tender on the Gov.UK Contract Finder website ended on 31st Jan 2025 – there were over 700 views on the portal.
 - The SurveyMonkey survey run over December generated several responses with some excellent ideas and feedback.
 - An open public meeting is to be planned.
 - A local sponsors list to be drafted.
 - The target date to start the works is June 1st 2025
11. Review the allotments expenditure for the previous 12 months and recommend any changes to service charge and plot rent charges to take effect from October 2025.
Cllr Bradley and Jackson confirmed their pecuniary interest but were granted a dispensation to discuss the allotments as allotment holders with considerable experience.
Currently is the Council charges £4.28 per rod land rent and £8.50 per plot service charge which is calculated on 65 plots across the two allotment sites.
The latest allotment agreement allows the Council to fully recover the cost of the allotment hiring charge paid to the landlord. It is proposed that the rent charged to individual plot holders should be set at £5.35 per rod for the 2025/26 hiring period enabling the Council to break even on rent paid. This is assuming every plot at both sites is rented out, a small financial risk held by the Parish Council.
Allotment operating costs for the previous two years were reviewed to allow an estimate for the 2025/26 hiring period to be calculated. Costs used for the estimate included the maintenance of communal areas (grass and hedges), the supply of water and a small administration charge. It was proposed that the 2025/26 service charge should be set at £4.65 per rod with no discount for multiple plot hires.
- Resolution:** **Change from a fixed service charge per plot to a service charge per rod.**
- Resolution:** **Remove the service charge discount for multiple plot hires**
- Resolution:** **Rent charge to increase to £5.35 per rod from 1st October 2025.**
- Resolution:** **Service Charge to be £4.65 per rod from 1st October 2025.**
12. Discuss and arrange working group date and volunteers for repairing eroded soil areas at the Ford End and Howe Street Recreation Grounds.
Clerk to arrange soil delivery to both sites and organise a working party to complete the work. Some of the back fill from the new seat base at Howe Street will be used to repair some areas.
- Resolution:** **Defer making any arrangements until the new seat has been installed at Howe Street.**
13. Review the 2024 Asset Condition Survey results and make recommendations to the Council.

The report was reviewed, and hard copies were available of the findings. It was agreed that producing the results in an excel format would make it easier to prioritise repairs and replacements.

Resolution: Clerk to produce in Excel for filtering purposes.

Resolution: Clerk to confirm all assets are on the system.

14. Discuss any implications arising from Chelmsford City Councils decision to charge for green waste collection and if necessary, propose solutions for waste produced by the Council.

February 28th is the last free brown bin collection. In the allotment agreement is the requirement for plot holders to remove waste or compost on site. The Parish Council does not own any bins or provide commercial waste services. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to remind plot holders of this responsibility and any changes agreed for the 2025/26 hiring period.

Resolution: Clerk to communicate the changes to the allotment holders – Brown bins on the Allotments will not be emptied by Chelmsford City Council from 1st April ,changes in fees and the planned change to plot numbers.

Meeting closed 21:28

Members – Gilbert, Martin, Jenkins, Taylor, Jackson, Bradley and Stephenson.