

ICKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

A local council for the peoples of Icklesham, Winchelsea, Winchelsea Beach and Rye Harbour

Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting Held at Winchelsea Court Hall on Monday 24th June 7.15 pm

Present: Cllrs: C Chappell, I Mann and A Rixon

In Attendance: Jenner Sands (Clerk and RFO), Rob Brown (Cricket Field Site Rep), members of the public were also present.

1. **To Appoint Allotment Committee Chairman for Council Year. RESOLVED:** Cllr Mann was appointed.
2. **Chairman to Open the Meeting at 7.15 pm**
3. **Questions or comments from members of the public relating to matters on the agenda.**

A resident asked when the water supply at Pear Tree Marsh would be back on the agenda. The Clerk confirmed that we are currently looking at communal water butts as the costs of a well were spiralling. It would also not be possible to use water from the river as the Clerk had received advice from the RMDB stating that the water quality varies day by day and recently there has been an issue with algae bloom which would mean the water would not be safe to use.

A resident raised the vegetation near the gate at Pear Tree Marsh and also the hedges on both sides. The Clerk confirmed that she would ask a contractor to cut this back and would write to the neighbouring land owner about cutting the hedges.

A resident raised the walkway at Pear Tree Marsh. The Clerk confirmed that we have received funding for this and this would have to start after nesting season as the hedges would need to be cut right back to ensure the micro digger could get through.
4. **Apologies for absence.**

Apologies received from Cllr Ms Eldridge.
5. **Disclosure of interests.**

Cllrs Chappell and Mann declared an interest as allotment holders.
6. **To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2024.**

Cllr Rixon raised two amendments in item 5. **RESOLVED:** the Minutes were amended and signed.
7. **Feedback from Allotment Sites.**

Rob Brown explained that it has been a difficult year for everyone. He said that nature appears to be winning the battle this year. Cricket Field have had issues with snails and slugs and with rabbits. He said that he isn't sure if the increase in rabbits this year is due to the National Trust rewilding project.

The Clerk explained that she met with National Highways regarding Hog Trough lane and they are going to look at installing a road drain at the top of the lane to stop rain water running down.

The Clerk also explained that she had received an email from East Sussex Highways to say that they had inspected the lane and that in their opinion, the improvement of the lane for vehicular use is not justifiable or necessary and that there is no obligation on the Council to improve it for that purpose. The Clerk is going to get back in touch with Southern Water as it is understood that the main ridge was caused by Southern Water when doing some works in the lane.

The Clerk explained that there appears to be an issue with rats in Icklesham. Pest Control went to have a look and they said that there is evidence of rats but no evidence of an infestation. The Clerk met a resident who lives in the house behind the allotments and he has a gate that accesses straight into the allotments. He is adamant that the rats are coming from the allotments. The Clerk has organised some hedge cutting and vegetation clearance. **RESOLVED:** Clerk is to arrange for the gates to be secured as only tenants are allowed access to the allotments. Clerk is also to purchase a plastic compost bin.
8. **Update to waiting list and to approve plot allocation.**

The Clerk confirmed the current waiting list as follows:

- 1 on list for High Fords
- 2 on list for Rye Harbour (1 outside of Parish)
- 0 on list for Cricket Field
- 1 on list for Pear Tree Marsh

The application for Pear Tree Marsh is from a resident who lives on a boat in Rye Harbour
RESOLVED: the application was approved.

The Clerk confirmed the following plot allocations since the last meeting:

- HF1
- PTM6
- CF27a

RESOLVED: approved.

9. Feedback from Allotment Inspections.

The Clerk explained that 5 plots were identified as not meeting the cultivation requirements and that the tenants have all been written to.

1 tenant has telephoned to explain that her personal situation has made it very difficult this year but she has now started work and would very much like to keep the plot. She did also mention the walkway flooding and explained that this made access to her plot very difficult in February/ March.

1 tenant has surrendered their tenancy.

1 has some health issues and Clerk has written to them offering to trim the plot to keep the grass down.

The Clerk explained that the plots would be inspected again 8 weeks' from the date of the previous inspections.

The Clerk reported that there was a real improvement noted from the inspections in September and the plots that had received letters had made a real improvement.

RESOLVED: noted.

10. Update regarding Compost Heap in Rye Harbour.

The Clerk explained that the compost heap has now been cleared however there is now a large mound. The fence at the back of plot 12a needs replacing however further work will need to be done to ensure the mud doesn't slide into plot 12a. The Clerk explained that a new walkway also needs creating so plots 11a and 11b (which are both vacant) can be accessed. Clerk is currently waiting on advice and costings from a second contractor. Some tenants have raised concerns about composting and what to do going forward. **RESOLVED:** the update was noted. Clerk is to write to tenants to let them know that the area is not to be used as a compost heap going forward and composting will need to happen on individual plots going forward.

11. To consider creating a 'dead hedge' out of vegetation cleared from 'compost heap'.

The vegetation has been cleared from the compost heap and was going to be burnt by the contractors. A resident has requested to build a 'dead hedge' out of the vegetation. **RESOLVED:** this was agreed and could be added to further down the line. Clerk is to help organise a working party and try and source some posts. Clerk is to meet the tenant to discuss the best location for this.

12. Update regarding Rye Harbour Allotment Pond.

The Clerk explained that she has submitted an expression of interest for funding from the High Weald Nature and Community Fund. The rough costings for the project are around £2,700 for labour costs and digger hire. The pond would of course be fenced off to ensure it is not a danger. The Clerk explained that the High Weald Nature and Community Fund have also indicated that they would be able to provide advice on projects. **RESOLVED:** The update was noted. Clerk will keep the Committee and site rep updated.

13. Suggested items for future agendas.

Communal water butts for Pear Tree Marsh.

14. The date of the next meeting: Monday 12th August 7.15 pm at Winchelsea Court Hall.

Agreed as a true record of the meeting

Signed
Cllr Í Mann (Chair)

Dated: 12th August 2024