

## HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL

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### MINUTES of the Meeting of the ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

held on

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 7.00pm

at

The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich, Essex, CO12 3DS

<b>Present:</b>	Councillors Calver, Davidson, Fay, Powell, Smith and Wade
<b>In the Chair:</b>	Councillor Todd
<b>Clerk:</b>	Ms Maree Ratcliffe – Assistant Clerk to the Council
<b>Also present:</b>	Site Representatives: Susan Meadows, Peter Day, Robert Bayford No members of the public

#### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:

None

<b>A026/25</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b> Cllrs Morrison, Richardson Site Representatives, Paul Gale, Agnes Chudy.
<b>A027/25</b>	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST</u></b> None
<b>A028/25</b>	<b><u>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Allotments meeting held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2025 (previously circulated) were <b>APPROVED</b> by the committee and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
<b>A029/25</b>	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u></b> <b>MIN A018/25 Cost Recovery</b> The Assistant Clerk updated the committee regarding three previous allotment holders who had civil money claims issued against them. All three were still unpaid within the expected timeframe and therefore has proceeded to the issue of CCJs.  <b>MIN A018/25 Wildlife Friendly Fencing</b> The committee were updated on the picket fencing on The Redoubt. The audit of the site had not been carried out, however the Site Representative Ben Chamberlain (absent from meeting) suggested covering the picket fence with chicken wire which would help prevent further wildlife getting caught in the fence. Site Representative Peter Day advised members that even though chicken wire would prevent larger animals becoming trapped in fencing, he said that small mammals and birds could still be affected. Cattle fencing was suggested to be a more effective deterrent. Assistant Clerk to look into this.

	<p><b>MIN A023/25 – Boatswains Call Vacancy</b>  No interest has been shown regarding the vacancy for Site Representative at Boatswains Call. This has been advertised on site and put onto the Allotments Facebook page.</p>								
<b>A030/25</b>	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</u></b>  None</p>								
<b>A031/25</b>	<p><b><u>VACANT PLOTS/WAITING LIST/NOTICES TO QUIT</u></b>  The Clerk advised members of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 people on the waiting list (most are waiting for specific sites or plots)</li> <li>• 3 vacant plots currently – BC19A, BC44, BC48</li> <li>• Four NTQs issued since the last meeting, however 3 plot holders have worked their plots within the notice period and now have had their NTQ withdrawn. A close eye will be kept on their progress.</li> </ul>								
<b>A032/25</b>	<p><b><u>SITE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS</u></b></p> <p><b>Long meadows</b> – All sites are looking good.</p> <p><b>Dunns Meadow</b> – It has been a good summer overall and most plots are starting to look good.</p> <p><b>The Redoubt</b> – The site in general is looking good, but there are specific plots which are letting the site down. Site Representative, Peter Day is to submit to Assistant Clerk all plots which he feels will need a tidy up and communication.</p>								
<b>A033/25</b>	<p><b><u>BUDGET UPDATE AND BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2026/27</u></b></p> <p>Members received budget update and discussed the proposal of budget for 2026/27 prepared by the clerk. Cllr Calver suggested that the budget proposal for 2026/27 could be increased by £500 as it was felt that this would give a bit of additional headroom. Cllr Davidson informed members that water rates were set to increase by 10-20% next year. The Assistant Clerk confirmed to discuss this with The Clerk/RFO.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:</b> Budget for the Municipal Year 2026/27. With an addition of £500 to be suggested.</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">GROUNDS MAINTENANCE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MANAGEMENT OF VACANT PLOTS</td> <td style="text-align: right;">500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WATER RATES</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MAINTENANCE RESERVE FUND</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4000</td> </tr> </table>	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	2500	MANAGEMENT OF VACANT PLOTS	500	WATER RATES	1600	MAINTENANCE RESERVE FUND	4000
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<b>A034/25</b>	<p><b><u>MATTERS RECEIVED IN THE POST, TO BE REPORTED OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></b></p> <p><b>Lack of enforcement of rules on sites</b>  The Assistant Clerk informed members that communication had been made regarding concerns that plot holders were not adhering to rules on site. Cllr Davidson suggested that the committee made visits to sites to make plot holders aware that the council were regularly checking to make sure that rules as stated in their Tenancy Agreements were being followed. Cllr Todd advised that this used to take place, however, wasn't best practice. Cllr Todd said that he would liaise with the Estate Supervisor if there were any issues and would visit a site if deemed necessary.</p>								

	<p>All Site Representatives are to be kept up to date with any permissions granted for sheds and greenhouses that are erected and any other items that need council authorisation, e.g. ponds, chickens, etc.</p> <p><b>Concerns with badger activity on sites</b> Owing to the protected status of badgers, this item was moved into Confidential Business for discussion. In accordance with SO10 – members of the press and public excluded from meeting to facilitate discussion. Site representatives remained.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate dress code on allotment sites</b> Concerns have been raised regarding plot holders dressing inappropriately on sites, this is more prevalent during the summer months. Cllr Calver advised the Clerk to look at the Tenancy Agreement and check if anything was mentioned in it regarding conduct on site and how they are expected to behave in a way that doesn't offend other plot holders. Assistant Clerk to look at the Tenancy Agreement.</p> <p><b>Trespassing on allotment sites</b> The Assistant Clerk advised members that a one-off incident of children entering Boatswains Call site was reported by a resident in September. They had been told by a parent that they could go and help themselves to produce on plots. This was a one-off incident and was noted by the committee.</p> <p>Expenditure of £20, authorised by delegated authority, for the purchase of Asbestos Disposal Bags, expended from the Grounds Maintenance budget – <b>NOTED.</b></p> <p>Expenditure of £10.15, authorised by delegated authority, for the purchase of Ready-Mix Cement for Abdy Avenue allotment wall repairs, expended from the Grounds Maintenance budget - <b>NOTED.</b></p> <p>Expenditure of £35.00, authorised under delegated authority, for the commencement of a Civil Money Claim for unpaid allotment clearance charges on The Redoubt site - <b>NOTED.</b></p> <p>Expenditure of £80.00 authorised by delegated authority for site clearance at Boatswains Call site - <b>NOTED.</b></p> <p>Expenditure of £35.00 under delegated authority to commence a Civil Money Claim for unpaid allotment clearance charges on Dunns Meadow site – <b>NOTED.</b></p> <p>Cllr Calver passed on his thanks to the Assistant Clerk on dealing with the non-issue of annual invoices due to a technical error. This was resolved with all plot holders being emailed individually explaining the situation and requesting payment.</p>
A036/25	<p><b><u>TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></b> The next meeting of the Allotments Committee is scheduled to be held at <b>7pm on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich.</b></p>

Public meeting closed at 7.59pm.

**CHAIRMAN:**

**DATE:**