



WROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Open Spaces Committee meeting on 1st August 2023

Agenda Item 9.3
01/08/2023

Allotment Invoicing Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 During late Spring and early Summer there have recently been a number of vacant plots but still people on the waiting list. The maintenance of the vacant plots during this time of year has been highlighted as an issue due to the workload of the grounds team.
- 1.2 The current invoicing year is from 1 April 2023 – March 2024 and this year tenants had until the 5th May to settle their invoices. During April – June 2023 there was a high turnover in plot terminations. Some plots were terminated by the council due to non-payment and other vacancies occurred due to tenants giving notice as they did not want to commit to paying for another financial year.

2.0 Report Details

- 2.1 Spring and early Summer is the height of the growing season and therefore the grounds team are extremely busy with maintaining the rest of the parish and are very pushed for time. Due to increased work during the summer months, capacity to trim and clear plots which are given up at renewal in April is very limited, and overtime has been paid to try to manage plot clearance and strimming. Last year WPC employed a seasonal worker to help manage this in addition to other areas within the village.
- 2.2 Due to the introduction of the deposit system plots need to be let out in a reasonable condition i.e strimmed and clear of any rubbish.
- 2.3 If the invoicing year is changed from April – March to October – September it is very likely that plot holders are then likely to vacate their plots in October when their invoice is due for payment. This would enable the grounds team to prepare the vacant plots in the autumn when the additional workload generated in the summer months has decreased and they are therefore less likely to need overtime to maintain the allotments.
- 2.4 If the billing period was amended with 6 months rent free, it would be reasonable to partially offset that loss by increasing the allotment prices by 10%, as they haven't been increased since April 2019.
- 2.5 Costs are currently £6.05 per perch. An average plot is 5 perch = total cost of £30.25.
Giving plot holders 6 months free would equate to £15.13 for a 5 perch plot.
This would result in a small loss to the council of approx. £2,150 over the whole allotment site.

A 10% increase would result in an increase of £3.03 for a 5 perch plot for 2024-25, which if the new invoicing period is adopted, would take effect from October 2024.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 **To change the April – March invoicing year to October – September from next year and allow allotment holders 6 month of free rent. At the same time increase the allotment prices by 10%, invoices would be prepared late September 2024 which will reduce the pressure on the Grounds Team.**



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- 3.2** The Grounds Manager to include more time for allotment maintenance in the Autumn schedule of work if the change were to be implemented.
- 3.3** Consider an annual incremental increase of up to 5% from October 2025 and each subsequent year when invoices are sent out, to cover inflationary costs etc.