



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 13th JULY 2016 IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM AT THE CIVIC CENTRE AT 6.00PM.

PRESENT: Councillors: P Barton (Chairman), P Smith (Town Mayor), T Luker, L Farmer, N Clement.
Co-opted members: A Burns, Mrs H Summers, C Mitchell, G Martin, I Jones.

IN ATTENDANCE Mrs D Hyam.

132. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Cllr N Pinnegar. Cllr P Smith confirmed that he would need to leave the meeting at 7.00pm due other Town Council commitments.

133. DECLARATION OF INTEREST. None expressed by members.

134. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 25th May 2016. Proposed by Chairman P Barton and seconded by Cllr T Luker of the Allotments Committee that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Agreed all in favour.

135. BEST KEPT ALLOTMENT COMPETITION. Mrs D Hyam informed the committee that Mr D Wilson and Mr J Morrow judged the plots and copies of the results were available. She asked if the Knapp Road Association plan to have their annual summer BBQ so the prizes could be presented to the winners at the event. Mr I Jones explain that the Knapp Road Association had not met yet due to falling membership and the Chairman Mr A Didcott has not being available. Mr I Jones to contact Mr A Didcott as no future meetings have been confirmed. Cllr P Smith suggested that they could be presented at the next Town Council meeting but on reflection it was decided that this would be too short notice. Mrs D Hyam to arrange prizes.

134. BUDGET PROPOSALS.

a) Skips. Chairman P Barton confirmed that the Town Council has agreed to allow a small 3yard skip for each site to get rid of rubbish at the cost of £123 for each skip with a grass verge permit of £108 at New Road. It was explained that the skips would only be available for a few hours on site and must be manned to prevent fly tipping. Mrs H Summers said that she would be willing to man the skip along with Mr A Burns and Mr G Martin early September was suggested. The New Road representatives to contact Mrs D Hyam to give available dates so a skip can be arranged. Mr I Jones questioned the need for a permit as usually these are needed for skips in situ overnight. Mrs D Hyam to check with skip hire company. The skip for Knapp Road would need to be sited inside the gate where there is already an accumulation of rubbish, Mr I Jones said this would probably fill the skip.

b) Strimming and covering vacant plots. The Town Council agreed that vacant plots could be strimmed at a cost of £250 for 5 plots and weed proof membrane at the cost of £266.

c) Noticeboard New Road. Chairman P Barton confirmed that the weather proof noticeboard has been agreed by the Town Council at the cost of £328. Mr A Burns said that he would need accurate measurements to dig the footings for the posts of noticeboard Mrs D Hyam will notify Mr A Burns when it is delivered.

135. PATHS AT NEW ROAD ALLOTMENTS. Mr I Jones had contacted the Town Council to offer salvaged wood ideal for shoring up the paths at New Road allotments. Mr D Howes a local contractor has kindly picked up the wood from site and arranged for it to be stored temporarily. This now needs to be moved onto the allotments and it will be put on plot 7A until the work is carried out. Mr D Howes has been requested to submit a quote.

Cllr P Smith explained that he will survey the path from the road to the main gate in detail and draw up plans for the next meeting. Following an initial inspection a series of shallow steps may be installed to help with the steep gradient. Mr A Burns felt it would be timely to consider a larger gate instead of a small gate and fence to enable deliveries of manure etc on site.

136. WAITING LIST AND VACANT PLOTS. Mrs D Hyam confirmed that there were still 5 plots available. She had received a number of enquiries as a result of displaying a poster in the town along with a new tenant following contact with the local doctor's surgeries.

137. SECURITY AND THEFTS FROM NEW ROAD ALLOTMENTS. Chairman P Barton told the committee that he and Mrs D Hyam went to inspect and measure the fence between the Allotments and the field with a view to apply for a grant of trees from the Stroud Woodland Trust. On inspection the nettles and brambles growing in the field and along the proposed hedge line are well established and form a natural barrier. There was no evidence of anyone gaining access onto the allotments and it was felt that clearing the site and watering of the trees would prove to be difficult and expensive. Mrs D Hyam added that the Neighbourhood Warden had included the New Road Allotments on her patrols and she had met some of the tenants. Her advice was to keep tools locked in tool boxes if possible and not to leave buckets or any containers on site that can be used to carry produce away. No further thefts have been reported. Chairman P Barton concluded that the situation would be reviewed in the winter when the vegetation has died down. It was noted that no plans have been submitted regarding the development in the field next to the allotments. If the development is submitted and passed by Stroud District Council then the contractors may plant a hedge as part of the scheme.

138. BANK AND PATH AT KNAPP ROAD ALLOTMENTS. Mr I Jones explained that the Knapp Road Association only had four active members and they had not met to discuss the widening of the path. Alterations would not be possible until the autumn /winter. Mrs D Hyam has requested an up to date quote from Mr D Howes for the landscaping of the bank. Mr I Jones said that the nettles and brambles in the verge at the top of the bank had become a problem as they had grown out into the highway. Cllr P Smith confirmed that Gloucestershire Highways would be responsible for trimming the overgrown verge.

139. REPORT FROM KNAPP ROAD. Mr I Jones said that with recent changes members of the Knapp Road Association had fallen. He and other tenants felt that the Allotment Agreement rules and regulations and Inspection documents were too detailed and put prospective tenants off. Chairman P Barton said that rules and regulations were needed and that the inspections are in place to improve standards. Mr I Jones said that not being able to have sheds was a big problem and felt that the covenant should be tested. Cllr P Smith explained that any breach of the covenant could result in the land being taken back by Severn Trent Water and it would only need one complaint from a resident for this to happen. Chairman P Barton confirmed that large storage boxes were

permitted for tools etc and said that perhaps a communal shed for tools could be considered on Town Council land along with a toilet only if it complied with the covenant. Cllr P Smith added that in addition planning permission may have to be applied for. Cllr Luker was concerned as there would be high costs involved in any such scheme.

140. REPORT FROM NEWROAD ALLOTMENTS.

a) Mr A Burns expressed an interest in knowing the asset value of the allotments Mrs D Hyam to check details on list of assets. Mr A Burns said that would build a picture of the value of assets for the allotments which may help with grants. Chairman P Barton said that if an association was formed at New Road there would be a better opportunity for the association to apply for grants. The Town Clerk Sue Bailey frequently emails information to clubs, groups and organisations to encourage them to apply. There has been grants available for many different activities such as health and recreation where the Wotton Community Sports Foundation have been very successful. It was pointed out by Cllr P Smith that the Recreational Trust had a large sum of money to distribute to local organisations following the changes at the cinema. Only five organisations had applied and there was only a two page application form to fill out. Cllr P Smith said that a list of available grants can be found on the Stroud District Council website after registering on "Grant Finder". Mrs H Summers added that the Barnwood Trust gave grants towards projects to improve the wellbeing of the disabled. Perhaps an allotment could be considered for raised beds and easy parking at the Knapp Road site as it has an area next to the main gate which is level. The representatives of New Road allotments all agreed that they would consider forming an association to take advantage of grants and other benefits such as the purchase of seeds etc.

b) Mr A Burns and H Summers said that there was a need for a toilet on site and would like to investigate the possibility of having a compost toilet. Mrs Summers understands that no chemicals are used and all that would be needed is a supply of saw dust. Cllr P Smith said that the land again is covered by a covenant and half of the allotment site belongs to the Stephens Trust and he believed that the land owned by the Town Council is included in the covenant similar to Knapp Road.

c) Mr G Martin asked if the Chipping Surgery had been contacted regarding the overhanging tree branches affecting the main path to New Road allotments. Mrs D Hyam had contacted the surgery and was told that Highways had trimmed them in the past. Cllr P Smith said that it is the surgery's responsibility to trim the tree. Mrs Hyam to contact the surgery again to request for the tree to be trimmed.

d) Mr A Burns asked if the tenant of plot 12 New Road could be asked to remove the ragwort growing on the plot. Mrs D Hyam to contact the tenant.

141. The Chairman P Barton thanked councillors and the co-opted members for their continued support and said that with this support steady progress can be made with the improvements to the allotments. There are several projects that will need help from the tenants and members going forward.

142. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS. Paths at New Road Allotments.

143. The next Allotments Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 14th September in the Committee Room at the Civic Centre.

144: This completed the business of the Allotments Committee.

Signed.....Chair of the Allotments Committee

Date.....