

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2014 AT KNAPP ROAD ALLOTMENTS AT 6.00PM.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C.V Galbraith (Chairman), C. J Galbraith, T.G Luker, Co-opted members: I Jones, C Mitchell, Ms S Bailey (Town Clerk).

IN ATTENDANCE Mrs D Hyam.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: R.P Claydon, P Barton.

56. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 23rd APRIL 2014.

Proposed by C.V Galbraith and seconded by C. J Galbraith of the committee that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Agreed all in favour.

57. MATTERS ARISING

a) THE TOP PATH. Mrs Galbraith apologised to the committee, as the request to release funds for the proposed improvements to the top path was not added to the Town Council Meeting agenda in time. However, she assured the Knapp Road Association representatives that it would be discussed at the next Town Council Meeting to be held in July. I Jones said that the working party was not quite ready to start the work so it would not delay them. I Jones briefly outlined the work to be carried out, to widen and level the path so that a mower could be used to cut the grass for easy maintenance. This would mean that some of the bank that had encroached onto the path would need to be removed.

b) THE BANK. I Jones was still concerned about the condition of the bank. The growth of the trees, nettles and other weeds have gone unchecked for some time. He had made enquires about possible grants but these are limited and are not available from the Gloucestershire Community Association at present. He explained that he had produced a quote for the landscaping work regarding the bank last year but when it was presented to the Town Council it was rejected due to the cost of over £1,700. Mrs Galbraith explained that M Kingscote had removed a lot of rubbish from the bank about two years ago to help with maintenance, but due to the Buildings Managers work load it was not maintained on a regular basis. However, the Knapp Road Association had improved the site over the years, organising working parties to put up the fence and steps on the boundary adjacent to Knapp Road. It was noted that some tenants had been able to maintain an area of bank opposite their plots but C Mitchell said that this was proving difficult due to the gradient. I Jones suggested at a previous meeting that the bank needs to be treated with weed killer at least twice a year to keep it under control. Ms Bailey explained that a proposal document detailing the phased work to be carried out on the site needs to be drawn up and presented to the council so that it can be included in next year's budget. The proposal would include the bank, the hedge, fencing and a future maintenance plan. She would look into grants to see if there would be anything available for such a project and work with Mrs Hyam and the committee to produce the document.

58) KNAPP ROAD

a) THE KNAPP ROAD ASSOCIATION. I Jones informed the committee that the members at the last Knapp Road Association meeting had increased to 12 following the re-allocation of plots. He felt that if the Council agreed to improve the bank, hedge and fence, the committee would feel more supported. C.J Galbraith explained that in the past the Association had been very pro-active in improving the site for example digging the trench for water pipes and laying the bottom path. He felt that the committee and Town Council should support the association and work together on the projects and future maintenance as it would enhance this valuable amenity.

b) CONDITION OF PLOT 5. Mrs Hyam explained that she had concerns regarding this plot and had sent the tenants a letter of concern as it was very overgrown. As the plot is still in a bad state, a letter to remedy will be sent giving the tenants two weeks to improve the plot to a state that is ready for planting.

c) COMPETITION FOR KNAPP ROAD TENANTS. The Association have decided to hold an annual competition for the best selection of produce grown on the allotments by a tenant. The trophy will be named in memory of Mr C Smith, who recently passed away after a long illness. He was a long standing tenant of plot 11 and had won the Best Kept Allotment Competition for many years.

59) WAITING LIST. Mrs Hyam confirmed that she has two names on the waiting list one for each site and two plots at New Road have been offered recently.

60) HEDGE BOUNDARY WITH KNAPP FIELD. The Committee inspected the hedge as concerns had been raised by the tenant of plot 35.

I Jones left the meeting.

The brambles are overgrown and the remaining cherry tree needs attention. Mrs Hyam explained that Mr A Didcott (Chair of the Knapp Road Allotment Association) had removed a tree last year with a local tree surgeon and due to the bird nesting season he was unable to remove the remaining one. Mrs Hyam to contact A Didcott to enquire about its removal. Ms Bailey suggested that one tree could remain as it seems to bear fruit and the other saplings surrounding the tree should be removed. The tenant of plot 35 also had a willow tree growing on his plot which will need to be removed. She suggested that the root and stump be treated with strong weed killer if it proved too difficult to remove by digging it out. Regarding the hedge C J Galbraith believed that the tenant of the field had to ensure that it was stock proof as part of the agreement. Ms Bailey will review records to confirm the conditions of the tenancy and to market test the rental charged. It was noted that most of the tenants do not have access to the equipment needed to maintain the hedge. It is now in a very poor state and more specialist equipment will be needed. Ms Bailey suggested that the hedge cutting should be included in the proposal of works for next year's budget. C

J Galbraith said that, in the past the maintenance was carried out by the buildings and grounds team but due to the lack of resources it had been left. He doubted that the Town Council were aware of the problem and he felt that this asset should be better maintained. C Galbraith added that if the hedge and bank were brought up to standard then the association might be in a better position to help maintain it.

61) TAP ON PLOT 32. It was noted that the supporting post of the tap on plot 32 was broken. Mrs Hyam to inform the Buildings Manager.

Ms Bailey left the meeting.

62) HOLE ON PLOT 18. Members of the committee inspected the hole that had appeared on plot 18. T Luker explained that some years ago the site belonged to the Water Board and it is believed that there had been a reservoir on the site. C Galbraith added that following previous inspections the day before the meeting it was concluded that this structure housed pipes leading from a spring to the holding tank. The hole had appeared following the collapse of the concrete slab that had sealed it off. T Luker said that on maps dated around 1900 there was a record of a structure or building roughly in the same area on the site. The area has been cordoned off until the hole has been made safe.

This concluded the business of the Allotments Committee.

The next meeting to be confirmed.

Signed.....Chairman of the Allotments Committee

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