

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 15TH APRIL 2015 AT THE CIVIC CENTRE AT 6.00PM.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C.V Galbraith (Chairman), C. J Galbraith, T.G Luker, P Barton Co-opted members: I Jones, C Mitchell.

IN ATTENDANCE Mrs D Hyam.

71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None received.

72. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 19th November 2014.

Proposed by C.V Galbraith and seconded by T Luker of the Allotments Committee that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Agreed all in favour.

73. MATTERS ARISING

a) BEST KEPT ALLOTMENTS COMPETITION. Members were asked at the last meeting to make suggestions for new judges for the Best Kept Allotments Competition. It was concluded that Mrs Hyam would contact Mr D Wilson Chairman of the Gardening Club to ask if he would be available. It was also noted that more detailed criteria could be needed. Mrs Hyam will contact Mr Wilson and look for sample judging forms.

b) THE BANK AT KNAPP ROAD ALLOTMENTS. An up to date quote has been received from D Howes for the proposed improvements to the bank. I Jones explained that the quote was for substantially less than the quote submitted some time ago due to D Howes having some surplus materials that he could donate to the Council. Mrs Galbraith added that the hedge had been cut back and the nettles had been strimmed making it easier for the contractor to lay the weed proof membrane. I Jones confirmed that the area to be completed would cover the bank running from plot 3 to plot 15 and then from plot 16 to 18. It was felt that Mr Mitchell tenant of plot 15 had planted a number of shrubs and ground covering plants and it was well kept so this area would not need any treatment. In total I Jones estimated that at least 90% of the bank would be covered. Following this the hedge could be improved with the offer of new plant stock from the Stroud Tree Workshop as they will be contacting the Council again in November. Mrs Galbraith added that the organisation had planted a large number of trees and hedging at the WCSF site last winter.

c) RUBBLE LEFT OVER FROM FILLING HOLE ON PLOT 18. C Mitchell reported that the rubble left by the main gate had been removed. However there was a small quantity left by the gate at the other end of the site nearest to plot 18. Mrs Hyam to liaise with Buildings Manager to arrange its removal.

d) DISABLED ACCESS ON ALLOTMENTS. At the last meeting Mr Elloway enquired if the paths could be improved to make access to his plot easier for his disabled wife as on occasions she visits the plot with him. Mrs Hyam discussed the issue with the Town Clerk Ms Bailey and it was concluded that due to the site being on a slope it would prove to be very difficult to install a suitable path and such an installation would incur a large cost. It was

suggested that when a plot becomes available near to the gate it could be offered to Mr Elloway so that it would be more accessible for his wife.

74. KNAPP ROAD

a) RUBBISH INSIDE MAIN GATE. I Jones explained that there was some rubbish still left inside the main gate to the site. Mrs Hyam explained that she had bagged up several bags of rubbish and disposed of it. She had not had time to remove the rest items being old carpet and plastic. I Jones said that there were several pieces of metal in the area that will need to be removed. Mrs Galbraith explained that in the past the neighbourhood warden had removed items of rubbish perhaps we ask for assistance again. Mrs Hyam to assess the items and contact Mr P Gleed Neighbourhood Warden. I Jones asked if the Committee would be happy for the Knapp Road Association to install a padlock on the main gate to deter fly tipping at an approximate cost of £30 for padlock and chain. All agreed of a combination lock being used and the access number to be given to the Town Council.

b) WATER. I Jones explained that he had turned the water off in the autumn and he would supply a meter reading for the start of this year.

c) TOP PATH. I Jones explained that the Knapp Road Allotment Association were due to have a meeting that evening at 8.00pm to discuss the volunteers available for the work and to co-ordinate with D Howes who is helping the association by driving the hired digger. The digger will be used to scrape a level path of approximately 300mm at the bottom of the bank ready to lay the weed proof membrane and retaining wooden boards. Following the Association's Meeting a better idea of a time frame will be decided. Mrs Galbraith added that perhaps this work needed to be co-ordinated with the improvements to the bank. C J Galbraith explained that this would be too late to be presented at the next Town Council Meeting but it may be viewed as it had been agreed to previously. Mrs Hyam to ask if this could be included. I Jones would let tenants know of when the alterations would take place via the association noticeboard.

d) EQUIPMENT PURCHASED BY THE KNAPP ROAD ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION. The Committee were informed that the association had bought two petrol lawn mowers to help tenants cut the grass paths to encourage tenants to keep the paths tidy. I Jones stated that it would be a lot easier if these could be kept in a locked shed, Mrs Galbraith explained this would not be possible due to the covenant on part of the land.

75. NEW ROAD

No report received as representative not in attendance. Mrs Hyam suggested that she could put up a notice on the gate to ask any interested tenants in becoming a representative to contact her.

76. COMPLAINT RECEIVED FROM TENANT AT KNAPP ROAD. Mrs Hyam received a complaint from a tenant of Knapp Road allotments as another tenant had brought his dog onto the allotments without permission. She was upset as it ran at her on her way to her plot and a rather unpleasant exchange of words took place. I Jones was able to give the committee more information regarding the incident from the other tenant's point of view.

The need arose for him to take his dog to the allotments as he had been locked out of his house and he was going to collect a key from his girlfriend who was working on the plot. Unfortunately he felt that the tenant with the complaint was very rude to him and he had no alternative but to retaliate. In conclusion the committee felt that the tenant with the dog should be reminded that clause 7.1 in the Allotment Agreement clearly states no dogs allowed onsite (except guide or assistance dogs). But felt this behaviour was out of character as he has helped many tenants on the site through being the Chairman of the Knapp Road Allotments Association. As for the exchange of words there seemed to be blame on both sides. Mrs Hyam will write to both parties and request that they do not engage in conversation and if there are any further issues to contact her.

77) COOMBE ALLOTMENTS. Mrs Galbraith informed the committee that she had been contacted by tenants of the Coombe Allotments as they are facing eviction. This is a private site and the land owner wants to have the land for her horses. She went on to explain that there had been allotments on the site dating back to 1847. The longest serving tenant has had a plot for 43 years and is still tending her plot with help from her family. At present the group are investigating ways of retaining the land for allotments. If they are unsuccessful the group may need plots at Knapp Road or New Road but this may not be for 12 months. I Jones asked if the council would consider using the land at Knapp Field if needed. Mrs Galbraith said this would probably be reviewed nearer the time to assess how many new plots would be need to accommodate them.

78) WAITING LIST. Mrs Hyam explained that she had reallocated 4 plots recently and has another 4 to reallocate to new tenants at New Road. When this has been completed there will be no names on the waiting list for New Road but there will be 3 on the list for Knapp Road. Rents must be received by the end of April so there is a possibility that some plots may become vacant after this deadline.

79) The next meeting of the Allotments Committee will be held on Wednesday 17th June at 6.00pm at New Road Allotments.

80) This completed the business of the Allotments Committee.

Signed.....Chairman of the Allotments Committee

Date.....