

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 22<sup>nd</sup> JUNE 2015 AT NEW ROAD ALLOTMENTS AT 6.00PM.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors; P Barton, T Luker, N Clement, N Pinnegar, Co-opted members: A Burns, B Elloway, Mrs H Summers.

Food Bank Representative; W Lomas

**IN ATTENDANCE** Mrs D Hyam

**81. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN** It was proposed by T Luker and seconded by N Pinnegar that P Barton be Chairman of the Allotments Committee. All in favour.

**82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Mr Mitchell, L Farmer, G Martin, S Todd. Mr Elloway wanted to apologise to the Committee for not attending the last meeting this was due to illness.

**83. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:** Councillor; N Pinnegar, Co-opted Representatives of New Road Allotments A Burns, Mrs H Summers.

**84. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015.**

Proposed by P Barton and seconded by T Luker of the Allotments Committee that the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Agreed all in favour.

**85. FOOD BANK.** S Todd arranged for Wendy Lomas to attend the meeting to discuss the idea of any surplus produce to go to the Food Bank held at the Baptist Church. She proposed that a box could be left inside the gate on a Tuesday and the surplus produce could be put in it by tenants ready for collect on Wednesday morning. P Barton suggested that any surplus plants, seeds, or seedlings that tenants were happy to donate could be left and collected in the same way. W Lomas explained that 4500 people had been helped by the food bank in the Stroud District area over the past year. The Committee felt that the produce collected should be kept in Wotton for residents in need of the Food Bank. W Lomas will be happy to co-ordinate the project with any tenants who are interested in donating their surplus produce. It was suggested that a poster be put up on both Allotment sites to for tenants interested in the scheme to contact her directly. Mrs Hyam to arrange for posters to be displayed.

**85. MATTERS ARISING.**

**a) COOMBE ALLOTMENTS.** N Clement asked if there would be any plots available if the tenants of Coombe Allotment site were evicted successfully. Mrs Hyam explained that Knapp Field might be available if the need arose and at present all plots have been allocated and there are only two names on the waiting list. Due to the time scale this would not be known for at least 10 months as the tenants were served with a 12 months' notice and not all would necessarily take on a plot due to the distance needed to travel. The Council would have to assess the need if the eviction goes ahead. It was noted that the Coombe Allotments Association have received a lot of publicity recently with the announcement that there are

records of the site in the Berkeley Castle archives and it could be the oldest allotment site in the country.

**b) ALLOTMENT FOR DISABLED TENANTS.** B Elloway thanked the Council and Committee for the suggestion of offering him a plot near the gate should one become available to be more accessible for his wife to visit the Allotments. He confirmed that he would like to be considered if a plot became vacant.

**86. POORLY MAINTAINED PLOTS.** P Barton said that he would like to see plots inspected more regularly at least once a month to improve both sites. Mrs Hyam explained she is working on an inspection form for this purpose.

**85. BEST KEPT ALLOTMENT COMPETITION.** Mrs Hyam circulated copies of the prize winners of the competition to members. She said that Mr David Wilson Chairman of the Gardening Club along with Mr Jim Morrow judged the competition which they found to be very difficult as only one point separated first and second prizes at Knapp Road Allotments. Mrs Hyam to arrange a poster to be displayed at both sites showing the prize winners. Mrs Hyam said that she will contact the Knapp Road Association to enquire if the prizes can be given out at the Knapp Road Association Summer meeting so that the Judges can be invited to present them.

**87. KNAPP ROAD.** No report received as representatives not in attendance. Mrs Hyam raised areas of concern following a recent visit to the Knapp Road Allotments. The tenant of plot 32 has erected a tall pole 16'-18' high to grow hops. Following discussion with the Town Clerk Ms Sue Bailey it was decided the tenant would be asked to remove it following the harvest of the hops to be in line with the regulations regarding bean poles. Mrs Hyam to contact the tenant.

Mrs Hyam noticed a small pond on plot 23A which was uncovered. She has written to the tenant instructing them to securely cover it and a risk assessment will be carried out by the Buildings Manager to ensure it meets safety requirements.

It was also noticed that there was a large hole on plot 22A clearly not dug by an animal so she has written to the tenant instructing them to fill it in as it presents a hazard.

**88. NEW ROAD.** A Burns took the Committee on a tour of the site to highlight issues that have arisen on the allotments.

**a) PATHS.** A Burns explained tenants had great difficulty in reaching plots on the far side of the site as they are uneven and falling away due to the slope. It was also noted that some of the paths across the site were very narrow and difficult to negotiate with a wheel barrow. All agreed that the paths are in need of attention and would benefit from shuttering being installed to prevent the paths subsiding. A further visit would be needed to identify plots that need to move plants etc for the paths to be levelled and widened. It was suggested by B Elloway that a triangular block of wood could be used on the shallow steps to help tenants move wheel barrows around the site to their plots.

**b) WATER PRESSURE.** A Burns was concerned that many tenants were experiencing problem with the lack of water pressure on the allotments. T Luker explained that it had

always been a problem on the allotments and that residents of Symn Lane had reported the same problem to Severn Trent Water. Mrs Hyam said that future works on the water system to meet recommended guide lines, would result in the taps being replaced with dip tanks and this should help the problem. It was pointed out that funds would have to be found for this project and that it could take some time to implement.

**c) RECENT BUILDING DEVELOPMENT.** A Burns expressed that the tenants are concerned about the possible development of the land belonging to the Stephens Trust behind the Fire Station and the half of New Road Allotments that is leased to the Town Council by the Trust. It was confirmed that 12 months' notice would need to be given by the Town Council to the tenants and no plans have been submitted for consideration to Stroud District Council. P Barton explained that the Town Council would submit their comments but ultimately the final decision on any planning application lies with Stroud District Council.

**d) ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION FOR NEW ROAD ALLOTMENTS.** Mrs Hyam suggested that with the positive response to a request for new representatives for New Road Allotments she felt that they would benefit from becoming an association. P Barton said that if an association was formed they could arrange for a quantity of manure to be delivered to the allotments and each interested tenant could take a wheel barrow full for example and pay towards the cost. H Summers added that this could be considered for seeds and plants as the tenants would benefit from savings if items were bought in bulk.

**e) INSPECTION OF A SYCAMORE TREE ON PLOT 1.** Mrs Hyam explained that she had been contact by the tenant of plot 1 regarding the large sycamore tree on the plot. The tenant has found that it is taking a lot of moisture and nutrients from the soil and she is finding it difficult to manage. It was suggested that the tree be removed but this would incur a cost and this would have to be agreed by the Town Council . All were in agreement.

**d) THE SITE BOUNDARY WALL NEAR PLOTS 2-8.** H Summers pointed out that the ivy growing on the boundary wall near her plot had become difficult to manage. She has been able to cut the lower branches off but she is unable to trim the higher ones. These branches have now encroached onto an apple tree and this she felt needed addressing. P Barton agreed that the ivy on the wall would need to be inspected with a view to its removal.

**e) POPLAR TREES TO BOUNDARY OF THE CHIPPING SURGERY.** The committee expressed concern following the recent pollarding of the poplar trees adjacent to the housing development at the Chipping Surgery. It was felt that they may not survive the treatment. P Barton said their condition would need to be monitored.

P Smith joined the meeting. He apologised for his late arrival.

**f) MAIN GATE.** Mrs Hyam informed the Committee that the gate had been damaged by the tree surgeon contracted by Colburn Developments to pollard the poplars. She has contacted Colburn Homes to ask for the gate to be repaired along with compensation for the tenant of

plot 19 to reimburse him for the damage caused to gardening equipment and plants. In addition she has requested that ivy and branches that had fallen off the trees when the work took place be removed. Colburn Developments agreed to attend to the damaged caused this week. Mrs Hyam will ask for this to be monitored as further correspondence may be needed.

**89) SHEDS ON ALLOTMENTS.** N Clement asked if sheds were allowed on the allotments. P Smith explained that the site is covered by a covenant prohibiting the use of any buildings such as sheds.

**90) PATHS.** It was noted that all paths on the site would need to be assessed P Smith said that there was only so much the Town Council could do as the whole site was leased from a Berkeley Trust set up in 1922. H Summers could remember a suggestion made by Mrs L Selby over 13 years ago to turn the part of the site that belongs to the Town Council into a car park as a lot of the plots were unused. Mrs Hyam said that she would clarify the situation regarding ownership.

**91)** The next meeting of the Allotments Committee will be held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 in the Committee Room at the Civic Centre.

**92)** This completed the business of the Allotments Committee.

Signed .....Chair of the Allotments Committee

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