

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 23RD APRIL 2014 AT THE CIVIC CENTRE AT 6.00PM.

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

IN ATTENDANCE Mrs D Hyam.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: R.P Claydon, M Kingscote.

48. MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 11TH SEPTEMBER 2013

Proposed by C.J Galbraith and seconded by T.G Luker, that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Agreed, all in favour.

49. MATTERS ARISING

a) CONDITION OF PLOT 9 KNAPP ROAD. Mrs D Hyam confirmed that the eviction of the tenant of plot 9 Knapp Road has now been completed and a new tenant has started gardening the plot. The removal of rubbish left on site will be monitored by the Buildings Manager.

50. CORRESPONDENCE

a) REQUEST TO TAKE A DOG ONTO PLOT 24 KNAPP ROAD. An email was received and circulated regarding the tenant of the above plot. She detailed that a request was accepted 18 months ago for her dog to be allowed on the plot to guard her while she was working and to accompany her special needs daughter. Mrs Hyam confirmed that after searching through minutes of previous meetings and correspondence no trace could be found relating to this issue. The tenant went on to explain that there was a genuine need for the dog to be with the child, who has Downs Syndrome. Mr Mitchell said that the dog was always well behaved when he had seen it on site. However, Mrs Galbraith pointed out that requests from tenants who were dog owners had been refused in the past, and if more dogs were brought onto site there may be problems with fouling, barking and roaming, causing a nuisance to other plot holders. She went on to say she felt that this was an exceptional circumstance, and she was in favour of allowing the dog on site only when the child was visiting the allotments. All were in agreement. Mrs Hyam to write to the tenant to inform her of the committee's decision.

b) CLARIFICATION REGARDING GREEN WASTE ON PLOT 8 NEW ROAD. Mrs Hyam had received an enquiry from the tenant of the above plot regarding green waste. The tenant is a self-employed gardener and from time to time brings onto site grass clippings. These clippings he uses as green manure to enrich the soil by digging a trench and burying them. I Jones pointed out that there could be a problem with the material if it had been treated with weed killer or other chemicals. It was decided that the tenant would be allowed to continue to use the green waste as manure as long as he could guarantee that the clippings were not contaminated. Mrs Hyam to write to the tenant to inform him of the committee's decision.

51. NEW ROAD ALLOTMENTS. No representative available.

52. KNAPP ROAD.

a) TOP PATH. I Jones informed the committee that the Knapp Road Association will be meeting on 29th April 2014 and one of the items on the agenda is to discuss the top path. A new estimate for the digger and driver for the weekends work will has been received at a cost of £200. C Galbraith asked if it would be needed for both days and I Jones explained that it was a flat rate and a Saturday only price was not available. The Association had sourced a large quantity of chippings for £40. The aim of the work is to standardise the path to a width of approximately 900mm and to level it off. The association still have a quantity of edge boarding left over from the work carried out on the lower path some time ago. The intention is to utilise this and additional boarding may be needed to support the bank where sections are removed to enlarge the path. I Jones will be able to confirm a provisional date following the meeting. Mrs Galbraith will raise the project with the Town Council so that monies earmarked can be made available.

b) THE BANK. I Jones explained that the bank was still an ongoing problem and he felt money was needed for major landscaping to get the area under control. Mr Mitchell said that some tenants including himself garden the bank as their plots lie the other side of the path. But it was difficult to maintain due to the slope. The main problem is the nettle cover and the gradient of the bank. At a previous meeting I Jones presented a quotation for the work, but it was rejected by the Town Council as it was in excess of £1,700. Mrs Galbraith felt that this would not be easy to resolve. I Jones explained only a few members of the association attend meetings so it was only a core group who are pro-active. He went on to say that he was looking into a number of grants that might be available to the association. However, most would entail match funding of 50%. In the short term the area needs regular treatment with a strong weed killer applied between August and September, and some of the roots may need digging out before it is covered with a weed proof membrane.

c) BOUNDARY HEDGE AND FENCING. I Jones raised concerns regarding the condition of the boundary fence and hedge, in particular where it runs along the edge of Knapp Road. He said there are several sections of the fence that need attention and vegetation including tree branches was beginning to encroach into the road. C Galbraith believed that it was the landowner's responsibility to maintain, not Highways, as it forms part of the bank. Mrs Galbraith will go back to the Town Council about the issue of maintenance of the fence and the bank. Mrs Hyam will ask M Schofield to inspect the fence.

d) ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENTS. I Jones asked if the Town Council had access to any additional land that could be used for allotment plots as he felt that there might be an increase in demand as more interest has been shown in allotments recently. C Galbraith said that the council rent out Knapp Field on an annual basis and this could be changed if the land was needed for extra plots when the Town Council felt it necessary. Mrs Galbraith confirmed that the rent paid for the field was in the region of £200 to £300 pounds and that the tenant would need to be given the appropriate notice to quit if the need arose.

C Galbraith confirmed that the land in question has a covenant in force until 2020 regarding the use of the land and after this period it would not revert back to Severn Trent Water. However, this would not affect the covenant regarding buildings on site as that is enduring.

e) Area near Plot 36. The tenants would like to continue to use this plot as a compost area. It was agreed this could remain at present but it may have to be reviewed if there are prospective tenants on the waiting list for a considerable amount of time.

53. WATER SUPPLY.

Mrs Galbraith informed the committee that a site meeting had taken place with councillors and the Town Clerk Ms S Bailey to review the water system at New Road Allotments. It was confirmed that the stand pipes would be replaced with dip tanks fitted with stop cocks. In total there is a proposal for six tanks to be evenly spaced over the site so that each tank will supply around six to seven plots. The next stage will be to find the root of the underground main onto the site and determine whether it is plastic or metal. I Jones felt that the system in place at present was more than adequate. He was concerned that such tanks would be susceptible to bacteria and listeria contamination. C Galbraith said that these regulations came into force in 1999 and water companies are beginning to check allotment sites. It was felt that a plan for the necessary improvements should be in place, especially as some of the pipe work at New Road is not buried to the required depth. Mrs Galbraith explained that one aim of the regulations is to conserve water as many tenants leave hose pipes running unnecessarily. This is a national directive for all councils to follow and implement. The council would have to plan a gradual budget to implement the work to be completed in stages over several years. C Galbraith confirmed that at present Knapp Road is not being considered as he understands that the underground pipe work complies with the regulations, so priority must be given to the New Road site.

54. BONFIRES.

Mrs Hyam confirmed that bonfires were allowed onsite but must follow SDC guidelines.

This concluded the business of the Allotments Committee.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 18th June at Knapp Road Allotments.

Signed.....Chairman of the Allotments Committee

Date.....