



## North Hinksey Parish Council



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### Minutes of the Meeting of the Allotments Committee held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.00pm via video conference

**Those Present:** Cllr A MacKeith (Chairman), Cllrs Bolder, Fairclough and Dowie

**In attendance:** Sharon Henley, Clerk

**Members of Public:** 0

1. Apologies for Absence: None
2. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda: None.
3. Questions from Members of the Public: None.
4. Allotments
  - a. **Vacant Plots** – Chairman to report: Cllr MacKeith advised that plots 103a and 103b were vacant but confirmation was awaited on plots 27 and 29. There were various new applicants for plots but she was awaiting confirmation on 27 and 29. Plots 103a and 29 were in good order but the other two plots would require maintenance.
  - b. Maintenance, including safety issues:
    - i. **Safety Inspections:** The possibility of an external organisation conducting a risk assessment on the allotments was discussed. The Clerk to seek advice on recommended practice from the NASLG or similar.
    - ii. **Hardstanding:** – Cllr MacKeith updated that she would like to progress this proposal to provide hardstanding for skips and a place to put manure. Cllr Dowie pointed out that it had been agreed not to progress the project until it could be done properly and that no funds had been agreed in the budget for this action. There was discussion that the new double yellow lines on North Hinksey Lane may strengthen the case for all year round plot holder vehicular access but concerns were raised that the driveway from the road was very steep. Committee members agreed that plotholders should be canvassed to check whether the hardstanding was required. Following that, if the project was to be progressed then Graham Sillman should be asked for his recommendations. He had previously advised that tree root removal would be required, but as he did not have access to a chipper, it was suggested that Oxford Tree Surgeons be approached for a quote to cut down and chip the trees.
    - iii. **Hedges:** Cllr MacKeith reported the hedges on North Hinksey Lane were to be flailed in February by a farmer for the same cost as last year.
    - iv. **Weed control membranes:** Cllr MacKeith had sourced costs of 5m x 50m plus 100 pegs at £60 to provide weed suppression for empty plots. It was agreed to discuss further at the March meeting with specific costs provided on the agenda.
    - v. **Overhanging Trees:** A plotholder had reported several extremely tall conifer trees in gardens very close to and overhanging plots 54-60. They asked if the Committee could write to the homeowners to request trimming back. Committee members agreed to check and advise the Clerk if the trees in question were leylandii as these may be subject to specific rules. Following this it was agreed that a friendly letter explaining the situation and requesting that they were trimmed would ~~it~~ be sent by the Clerk. Cllr MacKeith to advise which addresses to write to. Cllr Dowie advised

that a current planning application was in place for No 42 North Hinksey Lane, which might affect the banks of the stream at Stream End.

- vi. **T10 eucalyptus** – Clerk wrote to the property owner to request overhanging dead limb removal.
  - c. **Meetings:** Number per year and Annual Tenants' Meeting: Provisional dates of 11<sup>th</sup> March, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept, 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were discussed with four each calendar year being viewed as suitable. Approval was Proposed by Cllr MacKeith, Seconded by Cllr Dowie and Unanimously approved. It was agreed not to set a date for the Annual Tenants Meeting at present due to Covid. Cllr MacKeith to send out a newsletter following this meeting and ask if there were any points that ploholders would like to raise.
  - d. **Therapeutic Allotment:** Alex Markham, the tenant of Plot 41B had met with the practice on the Committee's behalf but no Committee members had been able to attend and no update had subsequently been received. Cllr Dowie agreed to take this project forward and contact the practice to find out what had been agreed. If plots 27 or 29 became available, he would pass on this information.
  - e. **Climate Emergency:** Measures re Biodiversity. Cllr Church had held a meeting to discuss Green Spaces and asked what biodiversity measure the allotments could offer. Various options were discussed, including discontinuing the use of pesticides. However, it was thought that a better approach would be to educate and inform ploholders. The Clerk was asked to seek advice from NASLG on how allotments elsewhere were addressing the climate crisis.
5. Nature Reserve & Community Orchard
- a. **Maintenance:** Winter reduction of the hedge next to the WI was provisionally booked for 20<sup>th</sup> February by Oxford Conservation Volunteers. The group proposed to burn a mound of brash but the Committee agreed to review what was currently on site and decide via email whether it should be left as a habitat pile or otherwise disposed of before 20<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
Yellow rattle seeds costing £68 had been sown.
  - b. **Litter Bins:** Although there was £250 in the budget for new bins the Clerk advised that the Vale were no longer able to empty bins which were not on District Council land. Any new bins would require a budget for emptying. The Clerk was asked to source a company to empty bins.
  - c. **Benches:** Cllr MacKeith reported the existing seats had been removed for refurbishment and this had discouraged the visitors who had previously been causing a disturbance. The seats to be replaced and the new bench installed once the workers were back in the adjacent offices.
  - d. **Memorial Garden:** The contractor had started work and the work would cost £432. There was £750 available to complete the planting. Benches would be put back after work was complete.
  - e. **Grass Cutting for 2021** – review quote and specification: The quote was discussed and was thought to be expensive for the small amount of grass cutting required. The Clerk was asked to contact local contractors to request additional quotes.
6. **Any Other Information to Note:** Cllr Dowie advised of two current planning-related consultations by the Vale District Council on CIL and SPD which mentioned allotments. He recommended that committee members review the consultations for interest.
7. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm via Zoom.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.56 hours.