

NORTH HINKSEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 19th JANUARY 2017, AT 7.15pm, IN THE SEACOURT HALL, BOTLEY.

Present: Councillor Ms. A MacKeith (Chairman) and Councillors J. Bolder, L. Kunzemann, R. Mayne and C. Sugden (Co-opted Allotment Holder).

Others Present: 1 member of the public (M. Dowie) and A. J. Stone (Parish Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **ALLOTMENT ISSUES**

a). **ALLOTMENT RENTS 2017**

The Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith proposed and Councillor J. Bolder seconded the motion that as the invoices for the 2017 allotment rents would not be sent out prior to 1st February 2017, the deadline for payment would be extended until 3rd March 2017.

Members UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED the motion.

b). **WAITING LIST FOR ALLTMENTS PLOTS**

The Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith informed the meeting that at certain times of the year the waiting list would fluctuate as a result of some allotment holders giving up their allotments. There continued to be an ongoing waiting list and the committee hoped to actively address this issue and would encourage comments from allotment holders at the proposed Allotment Holders AGM 2017.

c). **REVIEW OF THE POLICY OF THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PLOTS AN INDIVIDUAL IS ALLOWED TO HIRE**

The Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith explained that there was 100 over the two allotment sites and that the waiting list for plots constantly fluctuated depending on the time of year. Waiting lists tended to reduce during the winter months as allotments holders decided to give up plots and increase during the spring as more people were keen to have allotments. There was a current waiting list which would be reduced as a result of vacated allotments and two overgrown plots being bought back into use.

Councillor Ms. MacKeith believed it was now the time to review the policy in relation to multiple plot holders as this would be one way of increasing the number of different people who would have access to allotment land and help to reduce waiting lists. She explained that the a number of people had either two or three plots and wondered whether the committee would be willing to agree a proposal to Council that those people with 3 plots should in the future have them reduced to a maximum of 2 plots and that no person would be allowed to hire more than 2 plots.

Councillors R. Mayne and J. Bolder agreed that allotment plots should be made available to as many different people as possible and restricting multiple hiring of plots would be one way of increasing the number of allotment holders. C. Sugden (co-opted member) also supported the intention to have as a many people as possible able to cultivate plots and suggested that the 2nd plot could be reviewed on an annual basis. The ideas of annual reviews did not have the support of other committee members.

Councillor L. Kunzemann felt that 3 plots might be excessive, but did not believe 2 plots would be.

M. Dowie a plot holder who had 3 plots was opposed to any reduction in the number of plots an individual could hold and also stated that under the Allotments Acts he had secured tenancy of his plots. The Parish Clerk queried this fact as he believed the secured tenancy related to the allotment land, not the allocation of plots and informed the meeting that he would establish the actual position, as this was key to any proposals to reduce the number of plots an individual could hire.

Action: The Parish Clerk to seek advice on secured tenancy within the Allotment Acts.

In relation to a policy regarding the maximum plots an individual could hold, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith believed it was important to obtain the views of other allotment holders at their AGM, in February 2017. The Allotment's Committee would then consider at its April 2017 meeting any views expressed before finally deciding on any proposed policy rule changes that the committee could take to Council for consideration. Councillors AGREED that the current policy of allowing an individual to have more than 1 plot would remain until a new policy had been agreed by the Council.

Councillor R. Mayne proposed and Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith seconded the motion that 'the allocations policy for 2017, should remain the same and (subject to the clarification of 'Secured Tenancy' rules and whether the committee could reduce the number of plots held by an single individual), the Allotment Holders AGM should consider whether it would support the Allotments Committee in attempting to reduce waiting lists by restricting in the future, the maximum number of plots any tenant could hire to a maximum of 2 per person, and (subject to the outcome of advice in relation to 'Secured Tenancy' for plots holders), allow existing plot holders with 3 plots to continue to hire them on an annual basis'.

The committee UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to support the motion.

M. Dowie did not agree that any policy change should be debated at the Allotment Holders AGM, as the decision should be made by the Allotments Committee. He also stated that he felt rather than reduce the number of plots an individual could hold, the committee should consider bringing allotments back into use which were now the North Hinksey Nature Reserve (NHNR). This view was not supported by the committee as the NHNR was well used and considered a valuable community asset by many parishioners. Mr. Dowie also suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group should attempt to find further land within the parish that could be used for allotments.

d). WORKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN ON THE ALLOTMENTS BEFORE 31st MARCH 2017.

The Chairman, Councillor Ms, A. MacKeith informed the meeting that G. Sillman would undertake the following works before 31st March 2017.

- i). The relocation of the two water tanks,
- ii). Destroy and burn on-site 'Mare Tails'.
- iii). Improvements to the lock access at the 5 bar gate to the to the North Hinksey Lane allotments.
- iv). Plots 21 and 26 to be cut and cleared.

4. NORTH HINKSEY NATURE RESERVE AND COMMUNITY ORCHARD ISSUES

a). MEMORIAL GARDEN

The Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith informed the meeting that the Memorial Garden had become overgrown and the committee were looking at ways and means of maintaining it. As staff employed at the Minns Business park used the gardens and nature reserve it had been proposed that a request for funding was sent to the various businesses situated there. C. Sugden would draw up a draft letter for members to consider.

Action: C. Sugden would draw up a draft letter.

5. ANY OTHER INFORMATION

a). A DATE FOR THE ANNUAL ALLOTMENT HOLDERS' ANNUAL MEETING

It was AGREED that the Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith would see if the Botley WI building was available on Saturday 25th February at 11.00am.

Action: Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith to determine availability of the hall.

6. DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

6th April 2017

The meeting finished at 7.58pm