

NORTH HINKSEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER 2016, AT 7.30pm, 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 Louise Wright 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). **WATER ISSUES**

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith reported that the well had varying amounts of water in it over the summer months. Councillor R. Mayne had monitored the well during this period and had found water levels as high as 50 inches, but during on 28th August the level was 7 inches, which had now fallen to 5 inches and councillors accepted that the reduced level was probably due to August being a very dry month. It was not known how much water had been taken out of the well to water the plots, and it was agreed that this needed to be established. There then followed a lengthy debate on what to do to remedy the flow of water into the well. One possibility would be to dig it deeper, but this might not be an effective use of £2,300. Another possibility might be to move one of the tanks next to it, and fill up the tank when the well was full, as back-up when water levels diminished. The other tank could be moved to the clay plot, where a neighbouring householder had signalled they were willing to fill it up from their household supply.

The Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith confirmed that the water tanks would be relocated by Christmas, an undertaking that had been made to the tenant of plot 87 at the last inspection and also thanked Councillor Mayne for monitoring the water levels in the well.

Councillors AGREED that the Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith would e-mail those allotments holders she had e-mail addresses for to determine their usage of the water resources provided.

Action: Chairman, Councillor Ms. A. MacKeith to e-mail allotment holders.

b). **WILLOW TREE ISSUES**

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith explained the current position regarding the need to cut down a willow tree on plot 35. In relation to the willow trees on the NH allotment side of the Seacourt Stream, she had been advised by the Oxford Tree Surgeons that little could be done at the moment due to the fact that the willows had been crudely coppiced earlier in the year. The committee felt that their existing budget for tree cutting was insufficient for their needs.

It was AGREED that the Chairman and the Parish Clerk would review the committee's budget needs when undertaking the estimates exercise in November 2016, and that the committee would meet on site before then to determine the scale of the problem, so that the work could be costed.

Action: The committee would meet on site before November, to estimate the work that would be needed. The Chairman and the Parish Clerk would review the committee's budget.

c). **ALLOTMENT INSPECTION**

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith summarised the findings of the recent inspection undertaken with Councillor J. Bolder. Following the inspection the Parish Clerk had sent out letters to 9 tenants in relation to the fact that the plot holders were not meeting the minimum requirement of cultivating 50% of their plot. Members discussed whether there was any advantage in ending the tenancies of ploholders who did not abide by the rules and cultivate at least 50% of

their plots, in the absence of a waiting list.

Members discussed the problem of renting disused plots which had become overgrown with weeds/brambles and what could be done to overcome this problem. **It was AGREED that the Chairman, Councillor Ms. A MacKeith would try and establish, possibly by a survey, whether condition of plots for hire was stopping people taking up the vacant plots and at the next Allotment Holders AGM raise the issue of condition of unused plots and the possibility of having them cultivated for future use.**

Action: The Chairman to try and establish plot holders views on the condition of unused plots.

d). ARRANGEMENTS FOR MOWING THE ALLOTMENTS' MAIN PATHS

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith explained that some plot holders kept their main paths mowed and others did not do so, which caused problems. Generally the main path at the stream end of the NH Lane and SB Pass allotments was cut, but the further half of the main path at the school end of the allotment was not.

Members AGREED that if necessary an additional condition should be added to tenancy agreements highlighting the fact that plot holders were responsible for keeping their element of the main path cut and tidy, although it is arguable that this is covered by Rule 7: Tenants are responsibly for mowing the adjoining pathways and keeping them free from obstacles.

Action: The Chairman to ensure that the proposal to change the tenancy agreement to include responsibility of plot holders to cut their element of the main path is discussed at the next Allotment Holders AGM, with a view of implementing it asap.

e). CUTTING OF THE ALLOTMENTS' BOUNDARY HEDGE IN NH LANE

This had now been completed, although Councillor L. Kunzemann reported that there were still some cuttings left on the allotments side of the hedge.

f). OFAS AS IT AFFECTS THE NH LANE ALLOTMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith reported that the most likely effect of the proposals would be to stop the flooding of the plots along North Hinksey Lane.

4. NORTH HINKSEY NATURE RESERVE AND COMMUNITY ORCHARD ISSUES

g). ROSPA ANNUAL REPORT – NHNR

The ROSPA inspection covering the ponds in the NHNR would take place in September 2016.

h). CUTTING THE MEADOW AND ORCHARD GRASS

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith informed the meeting that Ian Marriott would be scything the grass sometime next week. In the past there had been problems in raking and disposing of the resulting hay. Councillor J. Bolder to investigate the best way of dealing with this in the future. It was suggested that following the cut possibly 3 members of the committee could arrange to rake the hay and put it in the corner of the meadow.

Action: Councillor J. Bolder to investigate the best way to deal with this in future.

5. ANY OTHER ISSUES

i). THE BOTLEY FOOD FAYRE

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith informed the committee of the proposed Oxford Food Fayre in St. Peter and St. Paul Church on 17th September, and encouraged members to attend the event.

j). DATE OF NEXT INSPECTION

This was still to be agreed by members.

6. DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

19th January 2017

The meeting closed at 8.45pm