

NORTH HINKSEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 21st APRIL 2016, AT 6.30pm, IN THE SEACOURT HALL, BOTLEY.

Present: Councillor Ms. A MacKeith (Chairman) and Councillors J. Bolder, A. Hardiman, L. Kunzemann, R. Mayne and M. Dowie Co-opted Allotment Holders).

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from the Chairman, C. Sugden (Co-opted Allotment Holder)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. ALLOTMENT ISSUES

a). WATER ISSUES

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith reported that Norline Martin (Well digging expert) had looked the well, spoken to Frank Harris, the person who had dug it out and suggested that water levels be monitored on a weekly basis. Frank Harris had quoted £2,325 to increase the depth of the well to 10 metres by a single bore. It was suggested that the cost could be funded by seeking grant aid. Councillor R. Mayne agreed to take the measurements herself provided she could agree cover when she was on holiday.

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith confirmed that the problem was not the pump, but differing water levels during the year and a different person had agreed to fill the water tanks from their private household water supply.

The tenant of the plot where the water tanks were on then asked why the tanks could not be repositioned to extract water from the small tributary leading into the Seacourt Stream as the tanks had been put on his plot without seeking his permission or giving him notice of what was to happen and had also been put over an area which his wife was cultivating at the time. He also made reference to another recent issue when brambles had been cut down on a plot without the permission of the tenant.

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith explained that she had already apologised to that tenant, but the intention was only to cut back the brambles that had grown outside her plot and were affecting a pathway to the local school. Councillor J. Bolder confirmed that she had received complaints from parents about the brambles in the pathway, which were considered to be dangerous. Councillor MacKeith apologised for any distress both tenants felt and agreed that both should have been informed of the proposals.

M. Dowie suggested that the committee should talk further about ways of improving communication with tenants and investigate an alternative site for the water tanks and if the brambles on the tenants plot did not grow back then the committee should replace them.

The Parish Clerk thanked the tenant for bring the issues to the attention of the committee.

b). WILLOW TREE ISSUES

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith explained the current position regarding a part fallen willow on allotment land near the Seacourt Stream which was considered to be an H &S issue. In her view the quote originally agreed by the committee was removing the large fallen branches was insufficient as the trees needed pollarding also. It was clear now that the Environment Agency was not going to accept responsibility for this work, so as the tree(s) were on council land it was the responsibility of the council to manage the problem. She had obtained estimates for the work as follows: -

Oxford Garden Rescue £1,300

Oxford Tree Surgeons £1,000

The Parish Clerk confirmed that there was insufficient money in the committee's 2016/2017 budget to finance this level of expenditure and as such the committee would have to seek a supplementary estimate from the council.

M. Dowie confirmed that he would like the branches over his plot removed and he had discussed

with Graham Sillman taking away the sawn branches for his own use. A number of councillors were uneasy about the costs quoted and again felt that the Graham Sillman's quote of £262 should be accepted. The pollarding of the trees should be delayed until later in the year when the birds had nested and there was strong growth in the new branches.

Action: The Chairman Councillor A. MacKeith to circulate to all members of the committee her proposals to get the work done.

c). ALLOTMENT INSPECTION

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith reported that the condition of the allotments had improved since the last inspection.

d). ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ANNUAL B-B-Q AND PLANT SWAP

This had been a fun event attended by about approximately 12 people.

e). ALLOTMENT BOUNDARY FENCING

The Chairman, Councillor A. MacKeith reported that one of the residents whose back garden bordered the allotment land had removed his fence. It was suggested that a group of councillors and the Parish Clerk visited the site to see the exact position and then a letter be sent to the resident asking him to replace his fence as no householder had a right to enter allotment land from their back garden.

Action: The Parish Clerk to arrange for councillors to meet to inspect the problem.

Councillor L. Kunzemann raised an issue about the Michael Soth who was the tenant at plot 29, this was next to her plot 28. He was not maintaining his grassed pathway and was also leaving his tarpaulin covering part of her plot.

Action: A letter should be sent to the tenant of plot 29 asking him to fulfil his tenancy requirements about keeping the pathway in good order and to remove his tarpaulin from plot 28.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm. The following items had not been discussed.

3). Allotment Issues

f). Hire of a Skip

4). North Hinksey Nature Reserve and Community Orchard Issues

a). Fencing and Gate Post Issues.

DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

1st September 2016

The meeting closed at 7.00pm