



BRIERCLIFFE WITH EXTWISTLE PARISH COUNCIL
ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, 10th October 2014

7:30pm at the Community Centre, Jubilee Street

Present: Councillor Lishman (in the Chair), Councillors Bailey and Royle.

Others: J. Greenwood (Allotment Manager), M. Greenwood (Lengthsman), Alan and Ann Firminger (Allotment Society Representatives), S. Watson (Clerk), Councillor J. Sweetman plus 9 tenants.

Councillor Lishman opened the meeting and welcomed everybody.

39. Apologies for absence and reasons given

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Seed and Alan Turner.

40. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

41. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on the 15th September 2014 were circulated. The minutes were approved at the September meeting of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Allotment Committee meeting of the 15th September are noted.

42. Actions taken under the minutes as listed

There were no actions to be noted.

43. Allotment Society Report

The Allotment Society had no further report.

44. Public Questions

The National Allotment Society had conducted a site inspection on Thursday and a verbal report was provided by the Chair, a written report is to follow. Literature from the Society was available at the meeting.

45. Correspondence and Clerk's Report

The correspondence and Clerk's report was noted. There were 2 allotment complaints received which would be dealt with through the Complaints procedure. A formal request had been received to share a grazing plot and a proposed 'Buddy System' was explained. An issue was raised about kennels and it was agreed that this would be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Recommended: That a decision on the formal request to share a plot will be put to the Parish Council.

46. National Allotment Society

An Association representative had met with the Parish Council Chair and the Chair of Allotments. He advised that the Parish Tenancy Agreement is an extremely good example especially as it covers the issue of nuisance with other tenants. He also noted that the Strategic Development Plan is in progress. He advised that trees, gates and pathways on the Allotments remain the responsibility of the Parish Council. He also advised that the Allotment Water bill is excessive and should be around £900 less each year, individual water metres were suggested and switching the water off during the water to prevent leaks.

It was suggested that the Allotment Society could consider joining the National Society, they were previously members but had agreed to come out. The National Society offers Insurance for tenants who are liable for the public on their plots. It was suggested that insurance only costs £2 per year per tenant and tenants would not be covered by the Parish Council Public Liability insurance. Members can also access cheap poly-tunnels and free legal advice.

It was suggested that the Parish Council is too lenient with improvement notices. It was suggested that 21 days is given for improvements and if not done then 14 days is given to clear the plot.

The Inspector also suggested that the Allotments could be self-managed by the Allotment Society or an allotment group and report to the Parish Council. This would include management of the maintenance budget but not responsibility for the water bill. More details could be made available to tenants.

An allotment software package was suggested and details provided. Information is also available on grants for security, composting and toilets. It was commented that over 80% of the allotments are well used and looked after. The site is challenging as

it is on a slope. It was asked how much it would cost to provide individual water meters and noted that most plots share a tap. Water butts had been suggested previously to save water and it was suggested that sprinklers could be banned. An inspection will be carried out to see which taps need to be lagged for the winter. The perimeter fences weren't mentioned but clarification would be sought. A written report will be available in a few weeks.

The Allotments are currently a voluntary site and it was suggested that they should be made a statutory site as this would prevent future developments on the land as Secretary of State Permission would be needed.

Recommended: That a decision on the allotments becoming a statutory site will be put to the Parish Council.

47. Pathways around Allotments

A list of pathways has been agreed and work is continuing.

48. Garages

48.1 Turning Circle

There are 2 garages vacant but there is a waiting list and these will be let soon. The Allotment Inspector noted that the Turning Circle fence is excellent.

49.2 Garage Plots

There is asbestos down the side of some garages and a couple of pens and it was agreed that the Council would pay for its removal.

49. Allotment site inspection

The next inspection will check if pipes need to be lagged for winter.

50. Finances

The Allotment and Lengthsman Invoice is to be circulated and approved for payment. The budget monitoring report will be considered at the Parish Council meeting. The Allotment budget will be published on the website.

51. Waiting List

A resident asked why he wasn't on the waiting list and agreed to resend in the application form. The Council is currently not letting plots.

52. Maintenance – Allotment Jobs

The maintenance list is up to date and a verbal report was provided, the top path gate needs to be installed, the end house on Douglas Road will be consulted about the gate before installation. A tenant asked why his hedge had not been cut with the tractor and it was explained the tractor couldn't access the area. The tenant agreed that he didn't want his hedge cutting. A tenant also requested that the tap is removed from their pen.

It was noted that the barrier is difficult to open and close and will be investigated.

53. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 3rd November 2014 at 7:30pm in the Community Centre.