

Cottingham Parish Council



ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM
ON FRIDAY 9th OCTOBER 2020 AT 10:00am

MINUTES

PRESENT: Cllrs: Abel, Duke, Green & Jump
 Allotments Association Representative: R Bromley
 Deputy Clerk – N Pape
 Cllr Judith Moore attended as a member of the public

602 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY, PREJUDICIAL AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

Cllr Duke declared an interest in items 607 in regards to him being a member of the Cottingham Flood Action Group

603 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Allotment Association Representative C Fenteman-Coates

Resolved: Apologies accepted

604 TO RECEIVE 2020 UPDATE FROM THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

604.1 Report was received from the Allotment Association to the Parish Council

“It has been a very difficult year for the CNAA and for their members. Although we now have a committee of seven we still do not have a chairman and our secretary relies on others for most of the communication to members as he does not have a computer. Somehow, we seem to get by!”

The flooding early in the year lasted for several weeks and at times was exceptionally deep on some plots. The main plots affected were 1-38, all on the western side (Sewells)

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although because of the depth of the water some overtopping of the central roadway occurred which flooded several plots on the eastern side as well.

This was followed by an exceptionally dry June which caused a shortage of water for the plot holders. The decision taken to allow plot holders to pay for the right to water directly with a hosepipe has not turned out to be practical as the pressure is so low on site and will only produce water from 3 or 4 taps at a time. Also, when plot holders who have paid are using their hosepipes, taps are then not available for filling the storage butts for the rest of the tenants.

Despite the absence of working parties throughout the summer we have managed to keep the site tidy, grass regularly cut, communal bonfire used to clear burnable rubbish and general maintenance where needed. For this we thank our volunteers who mainly work alone due to current restrictions.

We have had a few plots which were not kept up to standard but with the CNAA carrying out monthly inspections and passing results to the PC this has resulted in speedier action in removing tenants where necessary and quickly re-allocating the plots.

Security of the site is still a worry although gate management is generally good with the outer gate locked most of the time. There is little more that can be done to the boundaries of the site without major expense.

The approach road from Mr Sewell to the grey/silver gate is showing signs of deterioration. There are several potholes and whilst the volunteers try to fill them it will eventually need some professional attention.”

604.2 Cllr Abel informed the Committee that she has been checking the condition of the allotment plots once/twice weekly and will continue to do so weather permitting

604.3 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the Allotment Working Party have continued undertaking tasks ie grass cutting and bonfires when required, following Covid guidelines

604.4 Cllr Abel informed the Committee that she has personally introduced herself to incoming new plot holders and has explained that regular plot inspections take place to ensure plots are maintained to an acceptable standard

604.5 The Committee discussed security with Cllr Abel informing that CCTV was not a viable option as the allotments do not have a power supply. Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the outer gate is kept locked at all times (Cllr Abel confirmed that she has noted this on her allotment visits) with the inner gate being locked when the last tenant leaves the allotments. Roger Bromley informed the Committee that earlier in the year some trespassers with motorbikes had gained access to the allotments, plot holders are aware they must be vigilant at all times

604.6 Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape informed the Committee that she had been in contact with ERYC who had confirmed that some planings could be available for the allotment approach road in the next couple of weeks. Roger Bromley informed the Committee that planings would not suffice, as the need is for a more robust, permanent solution. (It was agreed that

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Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape will cancel the request for planings from ERYC). Roger enquired if perhaps ERYC would contribute to any costs involved in providing a more permanent solution. Cllrs Green and Jump were doubtful that ERYC would contribute to costs

Cllr Duke advised the Committee that he knew of a local tradesman who might have some spare tarmac left over from jobs. The Committee enquired if there would be a charge for this, Cllr Duke did not think there would be but will make enquiries with the tradesman involved

Resolved: Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape to cancel planings request with ERYC

Resolved: Cllr Duke to confirm if local tradesman can provide tarmac

605 TO DISCUSS TENANTS LIVING OUTSIDE OF COTTINGHAM

605.1 Cllr Abel informed the Committee that some years ago plots had been allocated to non-Cottingham residents. As the waiting list has increasingly grown (there are currently 37 applicants on the list) applicants will only be added to the list if they reside in Cottingham

605.2 Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape informed the Committee that there are currently 4 plots allocated to non-Cottingham residents, 2 living in Hull, 1 in Skidby and 1 in North Ferriby. These plots had been allocated some years ago. The Committee agreed that these tenants will be allowed to keep their current plots, but the Tenancy Agreement be updated to include a clause stating that incoming tenant who later moves away from Cottingham will need to relinquish their plot

Resolved: Parish Office to update Tenancy Agreement

606 TO DISCUSS REMOVAL OF HOSEPIPE USAGE FOR 2021

606.1 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the decision to offer tenants the choice to pay an additional £36 fee to use a hosepipe for direct plot watering during 2020 had proved unsuccessful – the water supply is insufficient for multi-use and if a tenant is using a hosepipe this results in plots close by being unable to access water due to pressure at the same time. The Committee discussed an alternative to try to resolve the issue. Due to the dry summers of recent years the cost of supplying water to the plots was increasing and these costs have to be met.

Roger Bromley suggested that all tenants pay a surcharge of £3 per annum which the Committee agreed to. Roger Bromley will advise plot holders of this in the annual newsletter which will be sent out from the Parish Office with the annual rent reminders. Parish Office to amend Tenancy Agreement forms

The highlighted paragraph above has been replaced with the following:

Due to a further discussion regarding inaccuracy of within said paragraph re water charges, this issue will be discussed at a further meeting

Resolved: Parish Office to remove option of direct hosepipe watering from Tenancy Agreement forms

606.2 Cllr Abel informed the Committee it had been brought to her attention that plot holders who have not paid for direct hosepipe usage had been using hosepipes to fill their own water butts situated on their plots – Roger Bromley confirmed this does happen, taking approximately 30 minutes to fill a butt, but if another plot holder wishes to use the water at the butt the hosepipe is removed at the plot holders request

606.3 Cllr Abel informed the Committee that during her allotment visits she noted 3 taps running without any plot holder in attendance at the water trough – Roger Bromley said he was not aware of this

606.4 Cllr Abel reminded the Committee that the water bill costs are deducted from the Allotment expenditure budget of £1000 per annum

606.5 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the CNAA had paid for valves to be placed on 3 water troughs to keep them full – valves could also be purchased for the remaining troughs

606.6 Cllr Duke suggested that a water ferrell pipe, which is an inch diameter pipe from the water main from Scrutons building site, Park Lane, be inserted to improve the flow of water. Cllr Jump expressed her concerns that this could prove costly and Cllr Duke stated that costs need to be explored with dialogue with Scrutons builders

607 TO DISCUSS FLOODING ISSUES

607.1 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that heavy rain of the past week had resulted in some plots flooding again – flooding is caused by water running off Mr Sewell’s field – and suggested a trench be cut and filled with gravel to help alleviate this issue

607.2 Cllr Duke informed the Committee that within the last week he had met with Mr Sewell to discuss flooding issues in his capacity as a member of the Cottingham Flood Action Group. Cllr Duke advised the Committee that Mr Sewell is planning to commence landscaping work on his own land during November 2020 at his own expense. The planned work could potentially stop the current problem of the allotments flooding. If this is not the case a suggestion by Mr Sewell to Cllr Duke was to look at a swale

Cllrs Green, Jump and Abel expressed their concerns that Cllr Duke had made clear to Mr Sewell at this meeting he was there in the capacity as a member of the Cottingham Flood Action Group and not representing the Parish Council or as a plot holder – Cllr Duke confirmed this. Cllr Abel enquired if any other members of the Flood Action Group had also attended the meeting and Cllr Duke confirmed the Secretary of the Flood Action Group had been in attendance

608 TO DISCUSS CONDITION OF APPROACH ROAD

This item was discussed under item 604.6

609 TO DISCUSS PLOT MARKERS

609.1 Cllr Abel informed the Councillors that whilst undertaking her plot inspections, she has noticed that some plot markers are clearly visible whilst others are buried under debris/weeds and requested that all plot markers be made visible

609.2 Cllr Abel requested an update from Roger Bromley regarding the allotment meeting of 28th February 2020, minute number 604.6, the Allotment Association had confirmed that they would ensure that the plot markers would be situated in the correct place on the plots. It had also been mentioned that the Allotment Association would be looking to paint the markers to make them visible. Roger Bromley informed the Committee that, due to the Working Party not working to the same capacity re the Covid pandemic, he would mention this issue again within the Allotment Association annual newsletter a request for all plot holders to have clear, visible plot markers in the correct place on their plots. Roger also confirmed that paint was available for the plot holders to use on their markers

Resolved: Roger Bromley to include plot marker maintenance within annual newsletter

610 TO DISCUSS SECURITY

This item was discussed under item 604.5

Due to the confidential nature of the following business Cllr Duke, as a plot holder, and members of the public were asked to leave the meeting

Cllr Duke requested an item under agenda item 615 (Members points of information for next agenda) and then left the meeting

611 TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON FREQUENCY OF PAYMENTS TO THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape informed the Committee that when a plot is taken over by a new tenant, the incoming tenant pays their fee and deposit via bank transfer, Nicola then transfers the £3 Allotment Association fee to the NAA account the same day. An email is sent to Roger Bromley to confirm the transference of the funds into their account. Roger Bromley confirmed this system was working well and he checks the account in his role as Treasurer

612 TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON HOW MANY PLOTS HAVE CHANGED TENANTS/DEPOSITS NOT REIMBURSED

612.1 Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape informed the Committee that the current office accounting system was installed in 2015. This has resulted in any deposits paid prior to this date not being accessible on the system

612.2 Cllr Abel informed the Committee that deposits taken were kept by the Parish Council as insurance that for a tenant relinquishing their plot and not leaving it in an unsatisfactory

condition. When a relinquished plot has been left in a good condition, the deposit is refunded to the tenant

612.3 Roger Bromley enquired of the amount of deposits currently held by the Parish Council – Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape confirmed the amount accumulated since 201 is £1275. Two deposit refunds were made during January 2020

612.4 Roger Bromley enquired if deposits not refunded could be used in the future to help clear plots left in an unsatisfactory condition – a decision was not reached

613 TO REVIEW CNAА MONTHLY INSPECTION REPORT AND FOLLOW UP PROCEDURES

613.1 Cllr Abel informed the Committee that she is happy with the current system – the Allotment Association undertakes plot inspections at the beginning of the month and forwards a report to the Parish Office. Plots holders given a low score from the Allotment Association are contacted personally by Cllr Abel to check if any help is needed before the plot deteriorates further

613.2 Roger Bromley suggested that contacting a plot holder after one low score, and not waiting for the following months score, may be harsh (plot holder could be ill or on holiday). See 613.1

613.3 Cllr Green enquired if plot scores were reflected by the seasons – Roger Bromley confirmed himself and Pete Fulleylove from the Allotment Association conduct the monthly inspections and are aware of the season changes. Cllr Abel advised the Committee that during the winter months all plots look similar, but by April/May plots would be expected to start showing improvement. Roger Bromley confirmed that he will advise the plot holders of productivity expected on the plots in the annual newsletter

Resolved: Roger Bromley to include expected plot productivity in annual newsletter

613.4 Cllr Jump enquired when the water supply would be turned off and Roger Bromley confirmed this will be 1st November 2020 at the latest. Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape informed the Committee that the water must not be turned prior to this date, as plot holders who had paid for direct hosepipe watering for 2020 had paid up until then

Resolved: Allotment Association to turn water off 31st October/1st November 2020

614 TO RECEIVE UPDATE OF ALLOTMENT BUDGET/INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

614.1 Roger Bromley requested an update of income/expenditure during the past year. Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape provided figures for the 2019/2020 financial year and the 2020/2021 financial year so far. Nicola informed the Committee that the skip arranged to be delivered to the allotments on 19th October would cost of £185 excluding VAT. This would be deducted from the £1000 allotment budget. Roger Bromley also enquired how much the invoice would

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be for the annual hedge cutting – Cllr Abel is waiting for the invoice to be produced and will inform Roger once received

Resolved: Cllr Abel to email Roger Bromley with invoice details

615 MEMBERS POINTS OF INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING
(DISCUSSION ITEMS ONLY)

615.1 Cllr Green suggested that in 2021 a Cottingham village vegetable competition could be arranged for residents to sell their excess crops (the current Covid pandemic has seen a sharp rise in the number of people growing their own crops). Cllr Green would help organise such an event take place and Cllr Jump suggested if this was to go ahead that an article advertising the event be placed within the Cottingham Times magazine. Roger Bromley informed the Committee however that a similar event had been organised as part of Cottingham Day 2019 and was unsuccessful, with a struggle to find volunteers and only 4 applications to enter the competition

Items for next meeting:

Update on discussed items from meeting 9th October

There was no other business and the Chairman closed the meeting at 11:40am.

Signed
Chairman of the Parish Council