

Cottingham Parish Council



ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE
9 THE COTTAGES, MARKET GREEN, COTTINGHAM
ON FRIDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2020 AT 2:00PM

MINUTES

PRESENT: Cllrs: Abel, Duke & Jump
Allotments Association Representatives: R Bromley and P Fulleylove
Deputy Clerk – N Pape

590 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY, PREJUDICIAL AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

Cllr Duke declared an interest in items 597 and 600. Cllr Duke left the room prior to these items being discussed

591 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Cllr Green

Resolved: Apologies accepted

592 TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

592.1 The following report was received from the Allotment Association

“The CNAA is struggling to maintain a viable Committee. We have not had a chair for three years and this year are faced with retirements from other key positions. This has resulted in cutting back on various events for 2020. The Committee has decided it will do everything possible to maintain the site and act in the members best interests.

The condition of plots has generally improved throughout the year with a quick response from the PC when a problem has arisen. This has not been a complete success with a few plots still causing problems. A number of plots changing hands should

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however hopefully help this situation and the early ‘advice letter’ to members got a mainly positive response.

The monthly working party goes from strength to strength and continues to make improvement to the site and not least providing a regular social event for members.

Security is still a concern but as the protective hedging grows the boundaries become a little more secure. Ongoing vandalism to the playing field and the wildlife area show that trouble is not far away. We make every effort to keep the outer gate locked at all times.

Flooding is now a major concern and is on the agenda.

Hosepipes, locks and approach road also have a separate agenda item.”

592.2 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the Allotment Association are currently struggling to maintain a sufficient number of volunteers – Cllr Abel enquired how many volunteers would be ideal and Roger confirmed 5 or 6

592.3 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that currently the Allotment Association hold their meetings bi-monthly. Pete suggested that the number of monthly meetings be shortened to just 4 meetings per year – a meeting prior to the AGM, the AGM, a meeting following the AGM and a further meeting later in the year. The Committee agreed this would be sensible and Cllr Jump suggested an additional special meeting could be arranged if required

592.4 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that currently the Allotment Association Meetings are held in the home of the acting Secretary. Roger enquired if going forward the meetings could take place within the Parish Office. Cllr Abel confirmed this would be feasible on the condition that the meetings were held during Parish Office opening hours and prior notice was given

Resolved: Future Allotment Association meetings to take place within the Parish Office

593 TO DISCUSS HOSEPIPE USAGE

593.1 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that only one plot holder has confirmed that they wish to use the hosepipe facility in 2020 and has paid the additional £36 fee. A discreet marker has been placed on the plot to acknowledge this. Roger Bromley suggested this would help monitor hosepipe usage, the only foreseen issue could be that when the hosepipe is in use other plot holders wishing to use the tank could be inconvenienced for a short period of time

593.2 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that the Allotment Association is planning to turn the water back on in the first week of April – he will, however, consult with the plot holder who has paid to use the hosepipe facility to check that they do not require the water to be turned on in the weeks prior to this

593.3 The Committee discussed that it will be interesting to monitor water usage this year, with only one plot holder having paid to use their hosepipe

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594 TO DISCUSS FLOODING ISSUES

594.1 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that a number of plots on the west side of the allotments had been flooded for the past few months. This has resulted in numerous plots not being ready for Springtime planting – Roger Bromley queried if it was fair for these plot holders to pay their rent for the months that they had not been able to access their plot. The Committee discussed that many areas around the country were flooded, it was an act of nature and therefore rent would not be refunded

594.2 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the majority of the flooding was caused by an influx of water coming from the field of a local resident's property – the Committee discussed ways in which this could be alleviated, including cutting a drainage ditch into the west side of the central road – this could be filled with large stones. The ditch at the south side of the Allotments, close to KGV, had already been cleared by ERYC

594.3 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that a heavy-duty temporary pump could be used for a few hours to drain excess water, but could possibly pump the water away too quickly. Alternatively, a boat/bilge pump working 24 hours a day via a 12volt supply could be used – this would help re level the water, but a further ditch would need to be cut to accommodate the water

594.4 Cllr Duke suggested that a survey be undertaken to monitor the water levels. The Committee agreed that a pump should be purchased and discussed where this would be best placed – Pete Fulleylove will obtain prices (he estimates £300 - £350) and forward these to the Parish Office. The Parish Council will cover the cost of the pump

Resolved: Parish Council will cover the cost of the pump

595 TO DISCUSS PADLOCKS

595.1 Cllr Jump informed the Committee that she had requested a new padlock be fitted for the grey gate – Pete Fulleylove confirmed a new padlock had been installed

595.2 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that when a plot is reallocated, the keys are tested in the locks prior to being distributed to the new tenant

596 TO DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARISH COUNCIL/ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

The Committee discussed the distribution of responsibilities between the Parish Council and Allotment Association – the following were agreed:

Initial monthly plot inspections to be undertaken by the Allotment Association – this takes 2 members an hour to complete. Cllr Abel will then conduct a follow up inspection – this takes half a day for her to complete

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The Allotment Association will turn the water on/off each year – they will also conduct regular checks throughout the winter months to check for leakage

The Allotment Association will take the water readings and ensure these are passed on to the Parish Office – the Parish Council will pay the water bills

The Allotment Association will check the plot markers are in the correct place on the plots

The Allotment Association will be responsible for the central roadway – the Parish Council will provide planings for the road. Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape to request further planings from ERYC

The Allotment Association will provide the Parish Office with an annual list of those tenants that also have poly tunnels. The Parish Office will take the fees for the poly tunnels on behalf of the Allotment Association – the fees will then be transferred to the Allotment Association

The Allotment Association will distribute padlock keys to new tenants and will directly take the fees for these

597 TO DISCUSS ALLOTMENT BUDGET/INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION MEETING IN MARCH

597.1 Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape informed the Committee that the allotment budget for 2019/2020 was £1500. Cllr Abel informed the Committee that the budget would be reduced to £1000 for 2020/2021 as the Parish Council currently has a deficit. However, the Parish Council suggested payment for the hire of a skip annually instead of biennially. Cllr Abel informed the Committee of expenditure so far for 2019/2020

597.2 Roger Bromley enquired if unused budget funds could be carried from one financial year to another – Cllr Abel confirmed this could not be done

597.3 Roger Bromley enquired as to the cost of planings – Cllr Abel confirmed ERYC do not impose a charge for these

597.4 Roger Bromley queried why the allotment association fee payments taken by the Parish Council could only be passed to the Allotment Association once in the financial year – Cllr Abel to check with the Parish Council auditor to see if they could be made more regularly

597.5 Roger Bromley suggested that if a tenant is evicted from their plot due to lack of plot maintenance, therefore not refunded their deposit, that this should be set aside to assist with any costs involved in clearing up the plot

597.6 Roger Bromley enquired what happens to additional £3 Allotment Association fees taken during the year when a plot is taken over by a new tenant. Deputy Clerk Nicola Pape explained that the current Parish Office accounting system does not automatically take into account additional fees accumulated when a plot changes hands. The Committee agreed that the Parish Office will set up an additional spreadsheet to provide a more robust system for collating these fees from the plots

Resolved: Parish Office to set up spreadsheet

598 TO DISCUSS TARMACKING OF APPROACH ROAD

598.1 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that the trees/hedge/ditch by the approach road had been trimmed/cleared by ERYC. ERYC had also cleared the road. Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the jet wash clearing of the road had however resulted in some planings being washed away, leaving prominent potholes

598.2 The Committee discussed that the Parish Council could purchase cold tarmac for the Allotment Association to fill in the potholes

599 TO DISCUSS ANNUAL RENT DUE DATE

599.1 The Committee agreed that the annual rent due date would be the first of January each year – the Tenancy Agreement Forms to be updated by the Parish Office to reflect this date

Resolved: Parish Office to amend rent due date on Tenancy Agreement Forms

599.2 The Committee confirmed that the annual rent will increase from £36 to £39 in 2022

Resolved: Annual rent to increase to £39 in 2022

600 TO DISCUSS PLOT CONDITIONS ACTION LETTER

600.1 Cllr Abel informed the Committee that the current system used by the Allotment Association in sending “Advisory” letters was working well. Pete Fulleylove confirmed that when “Advisory” letters had been sent to 4 tenants, 3 of the tenants had taken immediate action to improve the condition of their plots

600.2 The Committee discussed the current scoring system for plot inspections. Cllr Abel suggested that perhaps the scoring used to place a plot in the “satisfactory” column be reviewed. Roger Bromley informed the Committee that the scoring system was purely a guidance to the Parish Council as to how the Allotment Association view the plots when undertaking their inspections

600.3 Roger Bromley informed the Committee that it would be difficult to conduct an inspection in March as certain plots were still flooded

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

601.1 Pete Fulleylove informed the Committee that the Allotment Association had agreed not to take part in the Cottingham Open Gardens or Cottingham Day in 2020. Once the structure of a new Allotment Association Committee has been decided, participation will be reviewed for future years

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601.2 Items for next meeting:

- To receive update on 2020/2021 budget/income and expenditure report**
- To receive update on how many plots have changed tenants**
- To receive update on frequency of payments due to Allotment Association**

Next meeting: **date to be confirmed**

There was no other business and the Chairman closed the meeting at 4:20pm.

Signed
Chairman of the Parish Council