



Minutes of the Meeting of the Allotments Sub-Committee held on Thursday 9th December 2021 at 7pm in the Parish Office

AGENDA

Present:

Committee:

Kirsty Robinson-Ward, Josh Robinson-Ward (Co-Chairs), Gerald Short, James Tappin, Stedje Fanning.

Allotment Holders:

Kat Slade, Johanna Hoffbeck, Martin Ford.

WPC Representatives: Roger Beattie.

Members of the Public: None.

1. Apologies for Absence

Kristina Tynan, George Bruce, Gill Bindoff, Ian Hill, Fergus Lapage.

2. Election of Vice-chair

Gerald Short nominated himself, everyone in support. There were no other nominations.

3. Declarations of Interest

JT declared an interest in Agenda Item 5:2.

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved, no copy to sign.

5. Management Issues

1 **Discuss bees on plot 33** – Martin Ford answered concerns re. bee-keeping on the allotments, all have read the National Allotment Society's guidance and some points have not been adhered to. MF to put up signs and contact details, JT and MF will arrange a mutual time when JT can do maintenance work on his fence (between the plots), MF will cover the hive whilst JT does this. GS suggested MF's contact details should be on the noticeboard. MF assured the committee that space, swarming and close proximity to Rainbows should not be an issue. Bees become aggravated by low frequency noises such as rotavators which (as the neighbouring plot holder) JT explains he uses a few times a year- MF will secure the hive as and when JT wants to do this. GS suggested warning others about using rotavators within 50 yards of the bees, MF didn't think this was necessary. MF, RB, JH and SF expressed the many benefits to having bees on allotments. It was agreed we would monitor the situation come spring and should any issues arise we will reopen the discussion.

2. **Upgrade of water pipes** – JT will do the work at the beginning of March, in total it will take 7 days to complete, the work will be done in stages. RB expressed that he would like the work completed by the end of March which was agreed by all. JT to update the map which Kristina Tynan can circulate to show the committee where all the taps will be. JT suggested we source second-hand troughs for the additional taps, all to keep an eye out for.

3. **Communal area** – JH very supportive of this idea as a new plot holder, suggested a mower should be one of the available machines/tools. RB, JRW and KRW expressed the importance of a communal area on the allotments, RB would like a sense of community to be strengthened on the allotments which will be helped by this. He also suggested we have more events such as a fruit and veg show, JT suggested having a scarecrow competition and JH suggested a seed and herb swap event in January / February. JRW and KRW to look into shed options, would also like a table/bench for the area so will keep an eye out for any old freebies

which can be revamped. JT suggested we could also have a fire extinguisher in the shed and GS suggested a first aid kit too. JT said we could remove the cherry tree for more space as not that fruitful but to leave the greengage tree. GB emailed to say he was not in support of a communal area.

4 **Quarterly newsletter** – GS to look into a newsletter format so it feels different to an email, JH to discuss with GS other possible topics and articles to cover such as other options for looking after plots over winter rather than just covering, GS agreed explaining that weeds are sometimes more beneficial than just covering. It was agreed the newsletter could be used as a place of education whilst emphasising and encouraging the community spirit on the allotments. JRW and KRW to write water butt article and send to GS.

5 **Plot availability update** – plot 93b available. Two plots have recently been taken on by new plot holders.

6 **The middle pathway to the allotments from Love Lane** – GS, JRW and KRW agreed that woodchip will be used on the pathway in the first instance. Pathway to be cleared. Ask Kristina Tynan to pass on local tree surgeon contact to JRW and KRW. It was suggested we could also woodchip any trees that need cutting down on the allotments- JT can cut these down free of charge.

7 **Inspection follow-up** – plots 21 and 22 still need work, JRW spoke to plot holder on 9th December and was again assured of plans going forward. If nothing has happened by the next inspection we will act on the steps explained in the warning letter. Plot holder would like more space for chickens, currently no space available. RB believed that if allotments have over 48 chickens they will have to notify DEFRA, GS and JT don't think it's an issue as the allotment isn't considered as one space but rather as individual plots. JT said we should add another point into the Tenancy Agreement next year that when it comes to poultry, plot holders should leave their plots in a good condition. JRW and KRW to speak to plot holder 39 and 40 again as plots still not in a good state (and will follow up with any others too who have had a warning but still have not worked their plots). A tree needs to be cut down on plot 39 which JT can do once JRW and KRW have spoken to plot holder. Next inspection to take place at the end of March.

8. **Waiting List** – there is currently no-one on the waiting list, JRW and KRW keen to advertise the allotment locally to see if anyone would like to be added to the waiting list.

9. **Applications for structures** – there are no applications awaiting decisions.

10. **Corner dump** – a large skip to be organised in January, RB said the Parish Council have a skip contact- Kristina Tynan to provide please. SF explained he's done a lot of work in the back corner trying to sort out the area but people keep using it as a dumping ground, once we clear the area we need to be clear and tell people not to keep dumping stuff there.

6. Allotment Finances

1 **Budget Update 2020/2021 and Budget 2021/2022** – this was emailed out, JRW and KRW to sit down with Kristina and go through plot rental amounts. GS has donated his pumpkin competition winnings to the account- many thanks Gerald!

2. **Any items that need to be purchased** – large skip and shed.

7. General Issues

1. **Maintenance** – hazel coppice- JRW to arrange date in January with Tom Bindoff. KRW cut back road hedge leading into the allotments. GB continuing work on the hedge by the school, pathway and will show KRW and JRW what needs doing to the field hedge before the end of March.

2. **Report on chutney sale** – a success, we raised £235!

3. **Horse chestnut tree at school shading allotments** – RB said it's the school's responsibility, can Kristina Tynan contact the relevant person and ask if the tree can get cut back a little (it currently hangs over the road and blocks light from plot holders on the edge of the allotments who have complained about this).

4. **Cutting of hedge at Recreation ground end of allotments** – raised by RB as on Watlington Hedgerow Survey it was suggested it needs laying. RB concerned at the loss of height if done, also made the point that the hedge acts as a windbreak. JT suggested laying the hedge might also encourage more people to come onto the allotments from the Rec and suggested a local farmer next winter could cut back the side and back hedge. JRW aware about laying idea, has had a conversation with Nigel Adams about this. It was decided it's a matter for the Parish to decide upon as this is a shared hedge- Kristina Tynan to be made aware.

5. **Social Member Shed** – raised by Roger Beattie- discussed above in 5:3.

8. Items for Information

1. **Rear gates from Love Lane properties to access the allotments** – raised by RB. The Parish Council need

to draw up an agreement- Kristina Tynan to action please.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Scheduled Meeting Date: end of March time, date TBC. To take place once water work has been done and next inspection.

10. Any Other Business

1. **Asbestos pipes** – have now been removed by KRW and JRW. If any more are found KRW and JRW to be told.
2. **CCTV** – hopefully the vandalism during Halloween were a one-off. CCTV signs have been put up to act as a deterrent, cameras were discussed and at this stage decided they're not necessary.
3. Johanna Hoffbeck invited and agreed to join committee.
4. Committee agree inactive committee members should be contacted as it seems they don't want to be on the committee anymore, they'd be welcome to re-join at the next meeting if they do.

Signed: Kristina Tynan - Parish Clerk



Dated: 09/12/2021

Distribution

Allotment Holders: Kirsty Robinson-Ward, Josh Robinson-Ward, Gerald Short, George Bruce, Marie-Claire Allen, Shane McIntyre, Keith Gambriel, Fergus Lapage, James Tappin, Stedje Fanning, Gill Bindoff.

WPC Representatives : Ian Hill, Roger Beattie.

1 Old School Place, Gorwell, Watlington, Oxon. OX49 5QH. Tel: 01491 613867.
Email: wpc@watlington-oxon-pc.gov.uk Website: www.watlington.org