



Draft Minutes of the Allotments Committee Meeting Monday 19th October, Hebden Bridge Town Hall

Present: Cllr Davies, Cllr Sutcliffe, Cllr Butterworth, Cllr King, Melanie Taylor, Bob Greenwood, Ana Jara Gonzalez, Alan Keep, June Evans, Margaret Conway.

1. Apologies for absence. Donna Goodman, Cllr Anne Geldard

2. Declarations of interest in matters on the agenda. Explanation by Chair regarding nature of 'interests'. Pecuniary interest is more straightforward, e.g. when someone may work for a potential contractor, they would declare an interest and step back from that item on the agenda. Other types of interests are more complex. Clearly councillors should be able to have an interest in matters in the parish. Melanie added that she raised a conflict of interest regarding the allotments at the parish council meeting in July, hence this explanation.

3. Noted minutes of the meeting of the Allotments committee on 29.9.14.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of meeting on 29.9.14. Fencepost has been fixed in June. Annual inspection was listed in minutes as being proposed for June 2015, but now there have been two inspections – April and October.

5. Allotment Committee inspection reports

5.1. From April 2015 by Councillors Hoyle and Sutcliffe and matters arising from this. Key issue was two plots at Woodman end. Plot number 8 is now empty, and Ana Jara Gonzalez has contacted the person on the waiting list, and is waiting to hear. There is another person on the waiting list who is hoping to move to Underbank. We could wait for this 2nd person to move into the parish. Ana will contact us regarding this. The Naze fence – Cllr Davies has spoken to Dan Sergeant regarding this, and he is happy to have wire fence, or for us to extend existing fence all the way along, whatever we choose. He is very happy with the allotments, and very supportive. This should be discussed at next meeting of allotment plottolders. There's £50 available from Chairman's charity towards this.

5.2. From October 2015 by Councillors Davies and Geldard, new members of the parish council allotment committee and matters arising from this. Written copies circulated. Cllr King also suggested paving slabs instead of grass in some areas. Some discussion about this in relation to current contract, and in relation to aesthetic of slabs / gravel / woodchip. Access path up, in particular bottom third, gets very muddy. Could do with attention. Concrete slabs would be quite a job, getting it level. Inside allotment fence could be different. Half a path mowing – might make more sense to do either left or right path alongside one's allotment. Mypex with wood chip has worked in some places. Bottom path is more used, could potentially be paved / woodchipped, etc. Dog fouling has been a problem in the past, but plottolders felt this issue has mostly been resolved. Earlier on, none of bushes had wire frames, and now majority do so it'll be much easier for them to be established. Produce has been mixed. Cold and wet early in growing season. The fruit bushes along the path - would be good if these were responsibility of plottolders. Agreed.

6. Report of progress from the Charlestown Allotments Group and future action plan:

6.1. Report from Allotments Group on budget and balances. Bob Greenwood read out written report, all issues mostly already discussed in agenda. Need to address the fencing. Overall looking forward to putting learning to good use for another year. £24 in for a membership of allotment society. Insurance paid, so now have £154.27 in bank. MD pointed out that may be worth group applying for small grant from Ward Forum, in particular for fencing. Still some money in pot – BG will contact Jae Campbell.

7. To report on the contract for maintenance of communal areas – miscommunication with the contractor meant that not all the undergrowth was cleared. Cllr Davies was due to meet contractor, and although first attempt failed, this is in hand. General support for a working party. MD to take this back to PC, and get support for organising a work day.

8. Changes proposed to the allotment tenancy agreement by Donna Goodman

8.1. Multiple Unannounced inspections during the growing season rather than at the end/beginning. MD suggested that there are two ways of running inspection regime – a) punitive, trying to catch people out, or b) more supportive, saying that we'll look at site in spring and late summer, and expect them to be in good condition. MT – objected to DG's proposals and the statement, as this could be seen as harassment. Not heard of any other allotment that has multiple inspections. This is partly down to terminology – informal visit versus formal inspection. Unhappy with what was in DG's statement, as it hadn't been discussed at ploholders meeting. There followed some discussion about the inspection regime, whether to do it twice or once, announced or unannounced. MD said it is quite nice to have ploholders there on site during the visit. DS prefers to pop in informally and have a chat. But, PC does have responsibility to ensure it is going okay, for other ploholders as much as anyone else. MD pointed out that if someone is struggling it would be good to talk to them. AK said he's not keen on tone of the clause proposed by DG. However, PC do have right to hold people to their agreement. Found both reports very helpful. Would be useful to have the report on the internet sooner - agreed. RB wondered if only one formal inspection, with proper report better in mid growing season. Perhaps towards end of June. Finally agreed to propose to parish council there be one official inspection in June, with informal visit and workdays in addition to this.

8.2. Section 4.3 - "3/4 Cultivation" to also include Green house contents and Number/Variety of crops. AJG felt this was unreasonable – wanted to be able to grow lots of one thing if desired. Also greenhouses are only used occasionally for things. Sometimes just for seeding, but then it gets planted in the plot. The greenhouses might be empty on inspection, but may well have been used. JE felt that her greenhouse wasn't used very much, but that this shouldn't be a problem. Cllr Sutcliffe felt that all this should be up to the ploholder, and that we shouldn't be forcing ploholders to use the greenhouse. They should be able to grow whatever and whenever they want. BG said that it should be able to have greenhouse at disposal to be used as required. AK - wanted bit of balance - greenhouse shouldn't go into overall 3/4 cultivation. Greenhouses can also go really wrong, so you may need to clear it out totally due to disease or pests. And if someone was away for most of summer, greenhouse might be empty. Too volatile to bring into the overall cultivation percentages. But can see a point of view that the greenhouses are expensive and a resource, and that we should be encouraging ploholders to use them as PC provided them. Tone should be encouragement to maximise use of assets. Agreed not to include this

8.3. Section 4.1 - "free of hazards...reasonably free from weeds and noxious plants and in good state of cultivation and fertility and in good condition" to also include a) 1m Plot Perimeter path (Front, Back, Side [if applicable]) - As per planning application, b) 1m Shared Plot Separator path (managed by BOTH joining plots) and c) Condition of the community fruit bushes also be included. Agreed to propose to PC that fruit bushes included in contract. Discussed the paths surrounding the plots..... Possibly more clear to change it from half a path, to clear the path to the left or right. Proposed everyone looks after the path to the east of their plot. Propose to PC that this will change in next contract.

8.4. Section 8 "Termination of Tenancy" - 8.1.8 "By re-entry if the Tenant is not duly observing the conditions of this tenancy" It wasn't clear to people in the meeting why this was included, as felt that it was already in the tenancy agreement.

9. Any other tenancy issues / waiting lists etc - Already discussed earlier in agenda.

10. Financial matters:

10.1. Rent payments – all up to date

10.2. Water bills – all up to date, and noted that significantly reduced due to rainwater collection.

11. Dates and venue of future meetings - 14th March 2016, 7.30pm