

KENDAL TOWN COUNCIL

Allotments Committee

**Monday 10th December 2018 at 7.00 pm
in The Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Kendal**

PRESENT Councillors Alvin Finch (Chair), Dave Miles (Vice Chair), Giles Archibald, Michele Miles, and Stephen Coleman.

Also in attendance was Brian Williams (Site Rep for Underley Hill Allotment)

APOLOGIES Councillor Hardy

OFFICERS Janine Holt (Assistant to the Town Clerk), Pierre Labat (Townscape Manager) and Amy Robinson (Interim Council Secretary)

675/18/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

676/18/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

677/18/19 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24th September 2018

The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2018, which had been approved by full Council on 5th November 2018.

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th September 2018 be accepted as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING (Not on Agenda)

678/18/19 Ref minute 352/1819 – Addition of clause to tenancy agreement re verbal abuse

Janine Holt confirmed that proposed changes to the tenancy agreement would not require Council approval.

RESOLVED That Committee make proposed changes to the tenancy agreement.

679/18/19 Ref minute 355/18/19 – Abnormal water consumption

Janine Holt confirmed that details had been passed to the police. The police had advised of the difficulties pursuing this sort of matter and that evidence of monetary loss to the council would need to be produced (Janine Holt confirmed that KTC has this evidence) as well as witness evidence. Janine confirmed that the original witness was now reluctant to share the photographic evidence and that further evidence would need to be sought. The police had suggested that the council approach the individual seen taking water to discuss the matter.

Pierre Labat noted that water consumption on Greenside remained high (97 cubic metres for July 2018, in comparison to an average 17-30 cubic metres for other sites).

Janine Holt confirmed that details of the matter would be included in the Allotment Newsletter and that she would be asking for vigilance from Greenside tenants who would be advised of the introduction of push taps should the problem not decrease.

Members discussed various approaches in addressing the situation. It was agreed that Councillors Archibald (Ward Councillor) and Finch (Committee Chair) would visit the individual in question to discuss the matter.

RESOLVED

That Councillors Archibald and Finch would approach the individual to discuss the personal consumption of site water.

That Janine Holt will include details in the Allotment Newsletter and advise Greenside tenants of push tap introduction should the matter not be resolved and ask for vigilance.

680/18/19**REPORT ON CHAINSAW COURSE**

The Townscape Manager asked members if they had any questions on the report. Members discussed the issue of lone working and restrictions on working with a chainsaw and recognised the benefit in increased knowledge for the Townscape Manager having undertaken the course.

Pierre Labat noted that on some sites, trees and overgrowth were putting pressure on boundary walls and fences and that this was causing walls to fall and the need for additional maintenance. He explained that a plan to manage overgrowth issues would be helpful and that some of the work would require a chainsaw.

Councillor Coleman proposed that an assessment of all tree work should be undertaken. He also asked whether there was money in the budget for tree maintenance. Janine Holt noted that tree felling was very expensive and that she would need to look at the figures.

Councillor Archibald suggested, Graham Nicholson from SLDC be approached for his view on tree management.

Councillor Miles declared an interest at this point, as a gardener with a chainsaw license.

Councillor Coleman suggested that trees be considered as part of the planned baseline assessment of each site and that consideration be given to whether some trees were appropriate for an allotment site.

Councillor Finch noted his interest in joining the next allotment visit (9th January 2019).

RESOLVED

That tree management is included in the baseline assessment of each allotment site.

That Councillor Finch will join the Townscape Manager and Assistant to the Town Clerk on their next allotment visit (9th January 2019).

681/18/19**SITE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING 4th DECEMBER FEEDBACK**

Pierre Labat reported that the main interest at the Site Representatives meeting had been composing with Reps interested in supporting allotment holders to compost onsite and in promoting the composting of food waste.

There was discussion amongst Committee Members around different approaches to encouraging composting and composting techniques. There was general agreement that sharing knowledge and empowering people to compost and minimising green waste going to Canal Head was the right approach.

Pierre Labat noted he had given a presentation on composting to children at Queen Katherine School and that this was one way of sharing knowledge and reaching and empowering households.

Pierre Labat reported that he had undertaken a Cumbria County Council composting course which had been very informative on different composters and the composting process. He noted that a number of composters go beyond the usual green matter and compost other food waste such as meat and bones. Some of these composters were available through a County Council Scheme at discounted rates.

Brian Williams suggested that Site Reps could begin by promoting compost on a small number of sites, and if successful, this could go on to include other sites, however he stressed that Reps would need help in managing how that is done.

There was some discussion about the risk of theft on site of expensive equipment and focussing on encouraging allotment holders to compost their allotment waste at the very least.

Councillor Archibald suggested efforts to disseminate information should go beyond allotment holders and be shared with all councillors in the hope it would be picked up by other organisations and the public.

Janine Holt agreed to share information from the course on the Town Council website including links to Gardening Organic information on organic growing. She would also share information relating to composting with full council. It was agreed that an article on composting could be included in the Town Council Newsletter.

RESOLVED

That Janine Holt will put information on composting and organic gardening on the Town Council website. That this information will also be shared with full council and included in an article for the KTC Spring Newsletter.

682/18/19

Noticeboards

As discussed last meeting, the installation of noticeboards is widely supported. Members discussed whether this should be rolled out everywhere or just one or two sites. Janine Holt indicated the cost of noticeboards to be £424-485 and recommended avoiding certain sites, with problems of vandalism, at this time.

Councillor Coleman asked how much of the Townscape Manager's time would be taken to install the boards. It was thought this would be about half a day, per board. It was noted that funds for such work would come from the site maintenance budget.

Underley Hill and Wattsfield sites were proposed as appropriate sites for trialling the boards, and would make for good comparisons given one site has restricted, gated access and the other is an open site.

It was noted that noticeboards would need to be well-managed and kept up-to-date and that an allotment site map would be a helpful addition.

-Councillor Coleman proposed that a recommendation be made to purchase two noticeboards. This was seconded by Councillor Finch and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

That two noticeboards are purchased and sited on Underley Hill and Wattsfield sites.

683/18/19

Allotment baseline standards

It was noted that Site Reps were interested in being involved in the baseline standard for allotments but did not wish to be in a position of managing tenant's plots. Janine Holt agreed that she and Pierre Labat would produce a proposal on minimum standards for next meeting.

684/18/19

Communication

Janine Holt reported that the new allotment database was up and running and that improving communication was a priority for 2019. The hope is that the database will help Site Reps and the Townscape Manager to be more aware of new allotment holders and also facilitate Site Reps sharing their contact details with tenants to aide communication.

Councillor Coleman asked officers to ensure any sharing of information is in line with GDPR guidance. Janine Holt agreed to check this before sending the newsletter.

RESOLVED

That Janine Holt ensure GDPR guidance is followed in the sharing of personal data.

685/18/19

Underley Hill and Underley Road Allotments

Brian Williams and Janine Holt reported to Members on a lack of suitable ground at Underley Hill and Underley Road allotments for SLDC to leave leaf mould and wood chip for use by allotment holders. It was agreed that Chris Rowley and Brian Williams (respective site reps) would develop a plan for managing this and report back to Committee.

RESOLVED

That Chris Rowley and Brian Williams would develop a plan for managing space for SLDC deliveries on Underley Hill and Underley Road allotments.

Pierre Labat noted a further meeting would take place with Site Reps next year but that this had yet to be arranged.

686/18/19

SITE MAINTENANCE QUARTERLY REPORT

Pierre Labat reported that site maintenance is underway with a recent focus on Canal Head site where a number of gates (10) had been vandalised on bonfire night. He noted that the matter had been reported to police but that Canal Head had a particular problem with vandalism. Janine Holt noted that they were looking at community initiatives to improve issues.

Shaws Brow fencing

Janine Holt reported that walling work and rabbit-proof fencing had been undertaken on Shaws Brow – noting that Chris Kelly, the contractor involved, had done an excellent job.

The Committee expressed a wish to pass on thanks to the individual responsible.

Rinkfield

Janine Holt reported that she was awaiting a quote from a tree surgeon for the felling of four trees obstructing the erecting of fencing on the site.

Councillor Archibald commented that he could not support the taking down of trees unless new trees would be planted. Janine Holt agreed that any tree removal proposal would factor in the replacement of trees.

Janine Holt agreed to update the Site Rep on what is being considered and to provide a further update at next meeting.

Baseline Assessment

Janine Holt reported that the baseline assessment would be undertaken in January and work would include an action plan with priorities and timescales in bringing all sites to a baseline standard.

Janine Holt reported that the water had now been turned off for the winter.

RESOLVE

A note of thanks to be passed to Chris Kelly regards his good work on Shaws Brow.

That Janine Holt update the Rinkfield Site Rep regards trees and fencing.

TENANCY AGREEMENT

Janine Holt provided a copy of the tenancy agreement highlighting areas that could be considered for updating. Members were asked to provide their comments.

687/18/19

Clause about verbal abuse to KTC staff

It was acknowledged that the following statement, discussed at the previous meeting, could be added to the tenancy agreement without full council approval - 'Verbal or physical abuse to Kendal Town Council staff will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This will result in immediate termination of your tenancy'.

RESOLVE

That the above clause be added to the allotment tenancy agreement.

688/18/19

4.9 The Tenant is only permitted to burn non-compostable garden waste from their allotment. Bonfires must be kept to a minimum and not cause a nuisance to other plot holders, neighbouring residents or neighbouring businesses

It was noted that traditionally bonfires have been promoted for managing green waste. Councillor Archibald commented that this was no longer seen as the best approach and suggested that this is no longer encouraged. Members agreed to amend the agreement stating 'Bonfires are no longer permitted'.

RESOLVE

To amend the tenancy agreement to state that bonfires are no longer permitted.

689/18/19

4.8 The Tenant must not practise unattended watering using sprinklers or any form of irrigation system connected to a site tap.

Hoses must not be connected to site taps at the inconvenience of other tenants.

It was agreed that existing wording was confusing and that the need for use of hoses was inevitable although this should not be at the inconvenience of other tenants. In light of the excess water consumption on Greenside, Councillor Coleman suggested the use of strong language was reasonable, such as, 'irrigation for use on allotments only, anyone using water for other purposes will be reported to the police'. He also suggested the highlighting of this part of the text.

RESOLVED

That Janine Holt will draw up preferred wording to be agreed at the next Committee meeting.

690/18/19

4.12 Prior written consent by the Council must be given to keep livestock or poultry upon the allotment. Cockerels are not permitted at any time.

Members discussed the use of terms such as 'livestock' and 'poultry' and the keeping of livestock on allotments. Only hens and in exceptional circumstances cockerels are currently permitted although it was noted that one goat is kept on the Coolley Barn site and some allotment holders keep ducks.

It was noted that cockerels and ducks were a particular nuisance and that cockerels should only be allowed on an exceptional basis and must be managed in an appropriate manner.

Janine Holt suggested a change of wording from 'poultry' to 'hens' and that the keeping of hens should only be with express permission of the Committee. Pierre Labat cautioned against being too authoritative with tenants.

Janine Holt commented that the Allotments Act 1950 states that rabbits and poultry are permitted to which Councillor Archibald queried whether KTC policy would be in contravention of the Act.

Committee suggested wording along the lines of 'most sites are free from hens, however with permission from Allotments Committee the keeping of hens on the following sites [to be agreed] is permitted'

It was agreed that Janine Holt will return to the next meeting with officers preferred changes and for agreement by Committee.

RESOLVED

That Janine Holt will draw up preferred wording to be agreed at the next Committee meeting.

691/18/19

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

It was agreed that the following would be included in the Spring 2019 Newsletter:

- Composting
- Details of the Baseline Project – to let people know about the project and to welcome ideas from the public, including neighbours of allotments and residential areas.

Bees (to be included in Summer edition)

RESOLVED

That contributions relating to composting and to the Baseline Allotment Project will be included in the Spring 2019 Newsletter.

REVIEW OF SPEND AGAINST BUDGET 2018/19

692/18/19

Janine Holt provided a summary of current spend against budget. Of note there had been a high spend on pest control on the Sandylands site and costs relating to green waste, although it was noted that some green waste costs were in relation to Kendal in Bloom.

Janine Holt commented that green waste costs had historically be absorbed by Canal Head recycling centre, at no cost to KTC however a number of challenges, described by Pierre Labat (relating to difficulties transporting waste and emptying this into green waste bins) meant that he has been utilising a green waste skip at Horticare. Horticare have sent an invoice for a contribution to the cost of the green waste skip. The annual cost of using this skip would be quite significant and is currently not included in the budget. Pierre Labat recognised that a long-term objective would be to enable green waste to be composted on each site.

There was some discussion about what could be done at Canal Head to make it easier to dispose of green waste. It was agreed that Janine Holt would approach Tony Jamieson at Canal Head to look at the challenges and whether any improvements could be made.

Councillor Archibald noted the advantages of producing compost for allotment sites and the reduction in fuel-use transporting green waste off-site by retaining compostable waste onsite.

Councillor Coleman suggested that costing be undertaken to set up composting on each of the 17 sites with approval for green skip use with Horticare in the short term.

Pierre Labat agreed to produce a report looking at what could be done to establish onsite composting, including the officer time and costs involved.

Some concern was noted that allotment holders may use a site composter for their own waste and that a trial approach would be sensible. Janine Holt noted there were a number of plots that are difficult to let which may be appropriate spaces to accommodate composting.

RESOLVED

Janine Holt would approach Tony Jamieson at Canal Head to discuss the challenges and whether any improvements could be made.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

693/18/19

Electronic Maps

Janine Holt reported that she had been working with SLDC's Tom Dugdale to produce electronic maps of all allotment sites. She noted that Tom Dugdale had done a great job and Councillors noted a wish to pass on their thanks. It was agreed a laminated copy of each site map would be helpful for Committee meetings.

RESOLVED

Janine Holt will bring a copy of the site map to each meeting in the future.

694/18/19

Underley Hill Site Flooding

Janine Holt reported that Councillor Rowley, in his capacity as Ward Councillor, had been in discussion with South Lakes Housing and SLDC regarding the flooding of plots and parking area on Underley Hill site. Following investigation of drains it had been established that the roots of

a number of large Willow trees had caused damage to, and were restricting, drains, causing the flooding. SLDC have accepted responsibility and will carry out works to address the problem.

Committee wished to pass on thanks to Councillor Rowley for pursuing the issue.

RESOLVED

Thanks to be extended to Councillor Rowley for pursuing the issue of flooding on Underley Hill.

The Townscape Manager gave a brief presentation showing images of some of the work carried out on allotments.

695/18/19

DATE OF NEXT MEETING MONDAY 11TH MARCH 2019 AT 7PM

Agenda item – Rinkfield Fencing to be added to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.

Summary of Information, Resolutions and Recommendations to Council

| Min | Subject | Information/Resolution/Recommendation to Council | |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 678 | Ref minute 352/1819 – Addition of clause to tenancy agreement re verbal abuse | RES | That Committee make proposed changes to the tenancy agreement. |
| 679 | Ref minute 355/18/19 – Abnormal water consumption | RES | That Councillors Archibald and Finch would approach the individual to discuss the personal consumption of site water. That Janine Holt will include details in the Allotment Newsletter and advise Greenside tenants of push tap introduction should the matter not be resolved and ask for vigilance. |
| 680 | Report on Chainsaw Course | RES | That tree management is included in the baseline assessment of each allotment site. That Councillor Finch will join the Townscape Manager and Assistant to the Town Clerk on their next allotment visit (9 th January 2019). |
| 681 | Site Representative Meeting 4 th December Feedback | RES | That Janine Holt will put information on composting and organic gardening on the Town Council website. That this information will also be shared with full council and included in an article for the KTC Spring Newsletter. |
| 682 | Noticeboards | RES | That two noticeboards are purchased and sited on Underley Hill and Wattsfield sites |
| 684 | Communication | RES | That Janine Holt ensure GDPR guidance is followed in the sharing of personal data. |
| 685 | Underley Hill and Underley Road allotments | RES | That Chris Rowley and Brian Williams would develop a plan for managing space for SLDC deliveries on Underley Hill and Underley Road allotments. |
| 686 | Site Maintenance Quarterly Report | RES | A note of thanks to be passed to Chris Kelly regards his good work on Shaws Brow. That Janine Holt update the Rinkfield Site Rep regards trees and fencing. |
| 687 | Clause about verbal abuse to KTC staff | RES | That the drafted clause be added to the allotment tenancy agreement. |
| 688 | Tenancy Agreement 4.9 The Tenant is only permitted to burn non-compostable garden waste from their allotment. Bonfires must be kept to a minimum and not cause a nuisance to other plot | RES | To amend the tenancy agreement to state that bonfires are no longer permitted. |

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| | holders, neighbouring residents or neighbouring businesses | | |
| 689 | 4.8 The Tenant must not practise unattended watering using sprinklers or any form of irrigation system connected to a site tap. Hoses must not be connected to site taps at the inconvenience of other tenants. | RES | That Janine Holt will draw up preferred wording to be agreed at the next Committee meeting. |
| 690 | 4.12 Prior written consent by the Council must be given to keep livestock or poultry upon the allotment. Cockerels are not permitted at any time. | RES | That Janine Holt will draw up preferred wording to be agreed at the next Committee meeting. |
| 691 | Items for the Newsletter | RES | That contributions relating to composting and to the Baseline Allotment Project will be included in the Spring 2019 Newsletter |
| 692 | Review of Spend Against Budget | RES | Janine Holt would approach Tony Jamieson at Canal Head to discuss the challenges and whether any improvements could be made. |
| 693 | Electronic Maps | RES | Janine Holt will bring a copy of the site map to each meeting in the future. |
| 694 | Underley Hill Site Flooding | RES | Thanks to be extended to Councillor Rowley for pursuing the issue of flooding on Underley Hill. |
| 695 | Agenda item | RES | Agenda item – Rinkfield Fencing to be added to the next meeting. |