

KENDAL TOWN COUNCIL

Allotments Committee

**Monday 11th June 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, Stephen Coleman and Carol Hardy
- Elizabeth Kelly – Site Rep, Castle Drive
Simon White – Allotment Holder at Town View
- APOLOGIES** None
- OFFICERS** Janine Holt (Assistant to the Town Clerk), Pierre Labat (Townscape Manager) and Nicky King (Council Secretary)
- 044/18/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- None.
- 045/18/19 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- The Chair welcomed those present. General introductions then took place, this being the first meeting of the newly formed Allotments Committee following recent KTC elections.
- 046/18/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- There were no declarations of interest made at this point.
- 047/18/19 ORDER OF BUSINESS**
- The Chair proposed that item 7 on the agenda (Approval to Keep Bees at Sedbergh Road Allotment) be brought forward. This was agreed.
- 048/18/19 APPROVAL TO KEEP BEES AT SEDBERGH ROAD ALLOTMENT**
- Janine Holt advised that there had been a request from an allotment holder at Sedbergh Allotment to keep bees. The lady making the request was present for this part of the meeting.
- It was noted that there are already some bees on the allotment which were functioning without problem. The lady was seeking approval to keep a hive. The Kendal Bee Keepers group were supportive. Allotment holders had been spoken to informally and there were no objections. Janine Holt said she could see no reason to not support the request.
- Councillor Archibald was very supportive. He queried the situation with tenancy agreements. Janine Holt said there was currently no reference to bee keeping in tenancy agreements, however as she was receiving more and more requests this may be something to consider adding.

The lady making the request added that she would ensure sufficient screening was installed. Councillor Archibald asked how far bees forage from the hive. It was advised that this can be up to 2 miles.

Councillor Coleman was also supportive and asked whether there were any particular types of flowers preferred by bees. He suggested that an article be placed in the newsletter regarding the bees and particular flowers that are good for attracting them.

Councillor Coleman proposed that approval be granted. This was seconded by Councillor Archibald and carried unanimously.

It was agreed to consider any necessary alterations to the tenancy agreement at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That approval be granted to keep bees at Sedbergh Road Allotment.
2. Committee to consider any necessary alterations to the tenancy agreement in respect of keeping bees at the next meeting.

049/18/19**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH MARCH 2018**

The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2018, which had been approved by full Council on 9th April 2018.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th March 2018 be accepted as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING (Not on Agenda)**050/18/19****Verbal Abuse**

Councillor Archibald referred to the previous incidents of verbal abuse towards staff. It had been agreed that a clause would be added to tenancy agreements regarding abusive behaviour towards staff and requested an updated. Janine Holt was still awaiting suitable wording to add to the agreement. Councillor Archibald proposed that the Chair work with Officers in order to progress the matter. This was seconded by Councillor Finch and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Chair work with Officers in order to progress the addition of a clause in the tenancy agreement regarding abusive behaviour.

051/18/19**Dog Fouling (ref Minute 1032/17/18)**

Janine Holt had previously been tasked with contacting John Barwise regarding the dog fouling problem. She reported that she had received a positive response. Enforcement patrols were to be requested, particularly around Sandylands, Rinkfields and Castle Hags where dog fouling was particularly bad. Signage would also be installed.

052/18/19**PROJECT UPDATE**

Janine Holt presented the following information since the last meeting:

- 19 new tenants
- 23 vacant plots
- 13 people on Greenside waiting list
- 46 people on the complete waiting list (with more every day)

She reported an increase in requests for plots and observed that allotments appeared to be becoming more popular again. She noted that there was no kind of electronic allotments map on the website which was needed as a matter of urgency. It was suggested that the Garmin might be suitable for this project.

Janine Holt advised that generally herself and the Townscape Manager visit all sites every 6 weeks. A full day is taken to go around each allotment. She informed those present that anybody was welcome to go along if they wanted to look around.

Councillor Archibald referred to the need for additional sites. He pointed out that £70k had previously been allocated for this purpose and asked how this could be moved forward. The possibility of creating additional plots at Greenside was discussed. Janine Holt advised that this was difficult due to boundaries. Councillor Archibald pointed out that the Committee had 2 options; (1) continue to look for new sites or (2) use the money allocated to improve existing sites. Janine Holt replied that the money could be spent on existing sites to improve them and create additional plots. Councillor Archibald requested Janine Holt and the Townscape Manager look into this further, particularly on the Greenside site.

Simon White commented that he had been shocked to learn there was a large sum of money ring fenced but not spent. He urged the Committee to improve the current infrastructure before looking for new sites. Janine Holt asked whether he felt site reps should be consulted further. It was agreed to take the matter forward at the next site reps meeting.

Councillor Coleman commented that the £70k had previously been allocated with the aim of allocating new sites. It had proved difficult to find suitable sites and he made the point that it was not just a case of the money not being spent. Councillor Archibald added that the money had previously been ring fenced for a specific purpose and clarity would need to be sought as to what it could be used for. He said that many sites have degraded plots and require improving.

There was a general discussion regarding plots which were of concern. Certain plots on Sandylands were desperately in need of work. Councillor Coleman referred to a plot on Castle Hags, a third of which was unusable. The Townscape Manager said he was being more proactive in building up relationships with plot holders in order to keep an eye on things.

RESOLVED

1. That Janine Holt and the Townscape Manager consider improvement works that could be made to existing sites in order to create additional plots.
2. That clarity be sought as to what the £70k previously ring fenced for new sites could be spent on.
3. That consideration be given to creating an electronic map of allotment sites for the website.

053/18/19**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk presented the meeting with the review of Terms of Reference.

Councillor Coleman suggested that greater clarity was needed regarding the right to vote on matters. Only Committee Members had the right to vote, not site reps. He said it can lead to an embarrassing situation if not made clear. Councillor Archibald queried whether co-opted members could vote. It was Councillor Coleman's understanding that they could not. Janine Holt said she would seek clarity from the Town Clerk and re-draft the Terms of Reference accordingly for consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That Janine Holt seek clarity from the Town Clerk in respect of the right to vote at Committee meetings. Terms of Reference to be re-drafted accordingly for consideration at the next meeting.

054/18/19**APPROVAL FOR HEDGE LAYING AT TOWN VIEW ALLOTMENTS**

The Townscape Manager presented photographs showing the extent of growth of hedging at Town View Allotments. He explained that the hedge had been trimmed annually for some time. When this happens the result is the hedge gets taller and taller with thick foliage at the top and a big gap at the bottom, but it doesn't thicken out. He said the hedge needed re-laying properly now and then managing correctly to ensure good growth for years to come. He requested funding of approximately £900 to carry out the necessary work. It was noted that funds were available in the Maintenance budget.

Councillor Coleman proposed approval to carry out the work. This was seconded by Councillor Archibald and carried unanimously.

Janine Holt stressed that allotment holders needed to be informed of the intended work. It was agreed that she would draft a letter once a date for the work was known. Laminated notices also to be put up on site.

The Townscape Manager added that a correctly maintained hedge would help to slow down rabbits. Timescale for the work was likely to be 7-10 days and would probably take place in November. Once done, the hedge would not need re-laying for approximately 10-15 years.

RESOLVED

That Committee approve work to re-lay the hedge at Town View Allotments at a cost of approximately £900. Janine Holt to write to allotments holders informing them of the intended work once a date was known and place laminated notices on site.

055/18/19**ABNORMAL WATER CONSUMPTION UPDATE**

Janine Holt provided Members with background information regarding the abnormal water consumption problem. Huge volumes of water had been taken from Castle Drive, Greenside and Shaw's Brow sites over the last 3 seasons. The water company, Water Plus, had been consulted who advised there were no leaks. The amount of water taken could not physically be used by allotment holders. The Townscape Manager was regularly visiting the sites to take meter readings.

Signs were to be placed on each allotment informing holders of the problem and requesting any suspicious activity be reported. The option of installing push taps was being considered, but allotment holders would not be in favour of this course of action. The problem had been reported to the police.

Councillor Archibald asked whether Water Plus had any means of alerting electronically when a significant amount of water was taken. It was agreed that enquiries be made. He suggested that the problem be highlighted in the newsletter.

The Townscape Manager said he had met with Water Plus who advised that the usage was not related to normal allotment activity. He had been informed that the meters were very sensitive and would pick up any leakage.

Simon White commented that it should not be a difficult task to fit an electronic device which would alert if, for example, water was running for more than one hour. He said he was happy to make enquiries.

Janine Holt said the infrastructure around the meters is quite old and upgrading them might be a way forward.

The Townscape Manager recommended that water consumption rates be published for each site. He suggested that a noticeboard be placed on every site. The water consumption rates could be posted on the noticeboard, along with a map of the allotments and other relevant information. Janine Holt commented that this idea had been put forward previously but funding had not been granted. It was agreed that Janine Holt would obtain costings for noticeboards for consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That enquiries be made with Water Plus as to the possibility of them alerting electronically when a significant amount of water was taken.
2. Simon White to research suitable electronic devices.
3. That the problem be highlighted in the newsletter.
4. That Janine Holt provide obtain costings for noticeboards for consideration at the next meeting.

056/18/19**ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER**

The following items were put forward:

- Bee keeping.
- Water consumption rates.
- List of available plots.

Councillor Archibald asked about annual meetings. Janine Holt advised that these had fallen by the wayside. It was agreed that there needed to be more engagement with allotment holders before considering an annual event. It was not considered appropriate at the current time.

Councillor Archibald asked whether plot holders should be informed about the new tenancy agreement. Janine Holt replied that the November issue would be the correct time to do this.

Councillor Archibald referred to climate change and the use of manure and fertilisers. It was agreed that this could be an article in a future newsletter.

Simon White informed Members of a promotion by CCC to support the use of compost bins. Bins were available at substantially lower cost. It was agreed that he would forward details to Janine Holt.

Councillor Coleman talked about social media and the role it could play amongst allotment holders. Janine Holt said this was being looked at and would be coming on board in the near future.

The issue of surplus food from allotments and ways to distribute it was suggested as a possible newsletter item. Janine Holt said that hopefully the drop in sessions would help. Holders could possibly bring in boxes of food for distribution to Manna House etc. The difficulty of dealing with fresh produce was discussed.

RESOLVED

That Simon White forward details of CCC's compost bin promotion to Janine Holt.

057/18/19**REVIEW OF SPEND AGAINST BUDGET 2018/19**

Janine Holt presented the Budgetary Control Statement for expenditure to 31st May 2018.

Councillor Coleman commented that the Statement shows monies committed but it was not clear what amount was available to spend. Janine Holt said she would seek clarity from the Treasurer on the way the statement is presented.

RESOLVED

Janine Holt to seek clarity from the Treasurer in respect of how the Budgetary Control Statement is presented.

058/18/19**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was a general discussion regarding site reps and the need to engage on a higher level.

Councillor Archibald asked what the situation was regarding the opportunity to co-opt members. Janine Holt replied that it had previously been agreed 3 site reps would attend Committee meetings on a rotational basis. Simon White commented that greater communication and engagement was essential and suggested that all site reps be invited to meetings. It was felt that this could interrupt the flow of the meeting and such business would be better conducted at the site reps meetings. Councillor Coleman suggested that there be a standing item on the agenda for updates from site reps.

059/18/19**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 24th September 2018 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.12pm.

Summary of Information, Resolutions and Recommendations to Council

Min	Subject	Information/Resolution/Recommendation to Council	
048	Approval to Keep Bees at Sedbergh Road Allotment	RES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That approval be granted to keep bees at Sedbergh Road Allotment. 2. Committee to consider any necessary alterations to the tenancy agreement in respect of keeping bees at the next meeting.
050	Verbal Abuse	RES	That the Chair work with Officers in order to progress the addition of a clause in the tenancy agreement regarding abusive behaviour.
052	Project Update	RES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Janine Holt and the Townscape Manager consider improvement works that could be made to existing sites in order to create additional plots. 2. That clarity be sought as to what the £70k previously ring fenced for new sites could be spent on. 3. That consideration be given to creating an electronic map of allotment sites for the website.
053	Terms of Reference	RES	That Janine Holt seek clarity from the Town Clerk in respect of the right to vote at Committee meetings. Terms of Reference to be re-drafted accordingly for consideration at the next meeting.
054	Approval for Hedge Laying at Town View Allotments	RES	That Committee approve work to re-lay the hedge at Town View Allotments at a cost of approximately £900. Janine Holt to write to allotments holders informing them of the intended work once a date was known and place laminated notices on site.
055	Abnormal Water Consumption Update	RES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That enquiries be made with Water Plus as to the possibility of them alerting electronically when a significant amount of water was taken. 2. Simon White to research suitable electronic devices. 3. That the problem be highlighted in the newsletter. 4. That Janine Holt provide obtain costings for noticeboards for consideration at the next meeting.
056	Items for the Newsletter	RES	That Simon White forward details of CCC's compost bin promotion to Janine Holt.

057	Review of Spend Against Budget	RES	Janine Holt to seek clarity from the Treasurer in respect of how the Budgetary Control Statement is presented.
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