

# KENDAL TOWN COUNCIL

## Allotments Committee

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 at 7.00 pm  
in The Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Kendal**

- PRESENT** Councillors Alvin Finch (Chair & Mayor), Dave Miles (Vice Chair), Giles Archibald, Michele Miles, Stephen Coleman and Carol Hardy
- APOLOGIES** None
- OFFICERS** Janine Holt (Assistant to the Town Clerk), Pierre Labat (Townscape Manager) and Nicky King (Council Secretary)
- 378/19/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- None.
- 379/19/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- None.
- 380/19/20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2019**
- The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019, which had been approved by full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.
- RESOLVED** That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019 be accepted as a correct record.
- MATTERS ARISING** (Not on Agenda)
- 381/19/20** Minute 245/19/20 – Disposal of Green Waste at Canal Head  
Janine Holt reported that the disposal of green waste is no longer a problem due to a change in working practice. There is therefore no need to look at alternative arrangements.
- 382/19/20** Minute 247/10/20 – Anti-social behaviour at Castle Haggs  
Janine Holt advised she had spoken to the Cemeteries Department at SLDC regarding the possibility of moving a bench which was being used to gain access into Castle Haggs extension. She has also written to all allotment holders on Castle Haggs and Canal Head with an update. It was noted that the vandalism problem appears to have subsided.
- 383/19/20** Minute 250/19/20 – Polytunnels  
An article will be placed in the KTC newsletter regarding KTC policy on poly-tunnels. Janine Holt will ensure tenants who already have poly-tunnels are aware they will need to apply for approval.
- 384/19/20** Minute 257/19/20 – Rabbits at Town View  
Chris Banks, site rep for Town View, reported that the problem with rabbits still remained. This was acknowledged by Janine Holt who commented that there was a split view about the problem amongst

tenants. It was agreed to discuss this matter further under 'Project Update'.

**385/19/20**

Minute 251/19/20 – Appeal Decision on Refund of Deposit

It was noted that no further correspondence had been received.

**386/19/20**

**PROJECT UPDATE**

Janine Holt presented the Project Update and reported an increase in demand for allotments.

Rabbits on Town View

This problem is still proving to be challenging. Janine Holt explained that the source of the problem is Nobles Rest Park. Whilst some rabbits were locked into the site when fencing was removed to carry out work to the hedge, others are entering the site from Nobles Rest. Janine commented that there is only so much KTC can do and until the source of the problem is eradicated the problem on Town View allotments cannot be resolved. In order to tackle the issue Committee will need to work in partnership with SLDC. Janine has contacted the Parks and Open Spaces team at SLDC and is awaiting a response. A number of allotment holders on Town View are not happy and 2 tenants have left. Invoices are due to be issued shortly, however these plots cannot be let when the produce grown is being eaten by rabbits. The Townscape Manager advised that it was an acute problem which requires professional advice. He was aware of two companies which could be approached, but this is a specialist service and the closest company is in North Yorkshire which would have a cost implication due to travel being required.

Following a general discussion Councillor Archibald proposed that Officers be authorised to seek professional advice. This was seconded by Councillor Finch and carried unanimously.

Unsatisfactory Plots

Councillor Archibald asked for clarification on the procedure for dealing with unsatisfactory plots. Janine advised that two letters are issued to tenants whose plots are not up to standard, with a request that they carry out the necessary improvement work. If they fail to do so a notice to quit is then issued. Janine commented that it is a cumbersome process and it can take some time to remove tenants from sites. Members discussed ways in which the issue could be addressed. It was suggested that developing clear photographic evidence of what is/is not acceptable would be a good idea. This could be published in the newsletter. The involvement of site reps was also raised, however it was noted that some tenants engage with site reps whilst others do not. It was thought people might not always be aware who the site reps are and Councillor Coleman suggested these be published on the KTC website and in the newsletter.

**RESOLVED**

1. That Officers be authorised to seek professional advice regarding the problem of rabbits at Town View.
2. Photographic evidence of unsatisfactory/satisfactory plots to be gathered and published in the newsletter.

3. Site rep details to be published on the KTC website and in the newsletter.

**387/19/20****RINKFIELD FENCING**

Advice from Graham Nicholson of SLDC was that the trees will be felled no later than the last week of September.

The Townscape Manager advised that plot 8 became vacant 3/4 months ago and requires substantial clearing work. A large rotten pigeon shed requires removing which he cannot do alone and he requested approval to pay someone to help him with this item of work. He advised that quotes for the new fencing cannot be obtained until the shed is removed as it is restricting access for contractors.

Councillor Archibald pointed out that approval of this nature can be sought from the Chair/Vice Chair and does not need to await Committee approval.

It was agreed quotes for the fencing will be obtained for the next Committee meeting in December.

**RESOLVED**

Pierre Labat to obtain quotes for the fencing at Rinkfield for the next meeting in December.

**388/19/20****VAN FUEL PURCHASE**

It had been noted by Full Council that van fuel is currently purchased from Lound Road garage. Suggestion was made that this could be obtained cheaper from Morrisons and the Allotments Committee and Kendal in Bloom Committee had been asked to give the suggestion further consideration (as the cost of van is split between these two committees). Following a general discussion Councillor Rowley commented that it was KTC policy to use local companies where possible and also pointed out that it would take longer, and therefore use more fuel, to drive to Morrisons than it would Lound Road. Members agreed van fuel should continue to be purchased from Lound Road.

The Townscape Manager indicated his wish for an electric van. The current van is two years old and therefore not due for replacement, however Committee agreed KTC should be looking to purchase an electric vehicle at the appropriate time. Councillor Rowley pointed out that whilst the purchase price of electric vehicles is higher, running costs are considerably less. Officers will obtain costings for consideration at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED**

1. That van fuel continue to be purchased from Lound Road garage.
2. Janine Holt to obtain costings for a replacement electric KTC van for consideration at the next meeting.

**389/19/20****REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO REPLACE PIGEON LOFT – PLOT 18 COOLEY BARN**

Members considered a request for permission to replace an existing pigeon loft with a new 8' x 16' loft. Janine Holt advised that there was sufficient space and no complaints had been received about the pigeons. She commented that it is good practice to advise the other tenants and will make them aware of the request. Councillor Finch proposed that permission be granted subject to no objections being received from other tenants. This was seconded by Councillor Coleman and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**

That approval for a replacement pigeon loft be granted, subject to no objections being received.

**390/19/20****DISCUSSION – HOW TO MANAGE ALLOTMENTS IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL WAY**

Councillor Archibald remarked that, like climate change, biodiversity loss was a major issue with 25% of species and 40% of insects at threat of existence. He asked Committee to think specifically about what could be done on allotments to increase biodiversity. He commented that Committee had the opportunity to act as advocates for biodiversity, not just on allotments but in and around Kendal.

Ros Taylor made the point that, whilst SLDC Planning were supportive of her work with Kendal Swifts and the inclusion of swift bricks in developments, she felt more could be done to encourage developers of large sites to look for biodiversity net gain. She suggested KTC Planning Committee could have a role to play in this respect. She also had some thoughts on how KTC could be more environmental in its general planting practice.

Councillor Coleman referred to the suggestion of further engagement with SLDC Planning and said this would require SLDC to amend/implement a planning policy document. The role KTC Planning Committee could undertake would be limited due to the frequency of meetings and volume of work. It was suggested that Ros Taylor liaise with the Chair of KTC Planning Committee to discuss the matter further.

Thinking specifically about increasing biodiversity on allotments, Ros Taylor expressed her view that emphasis is put on plots looking tidy and smart and commented that a culture change would be required. Janine Holt was in agreement and suggested that the Kendal in Bloom competition next year include a new category for the allotment with the best biodiversity.

The large scale of the biodiversity problem was highlighted by Councillor Rowley. He suggested focusing on key aspects and taking one thing at a time, adding that a good starting point would be the use of slug pellets. Janine Holt commented that the only guidelines given to tenants is the tenancy agreement and suggested further work on good practice was necessary.

It was agreed a letter should be issued to SLDC highlighting Committee's concern regarding biodiversity. Janine Holt to draft a letter for consideration by the Chair. It was also suggested that

Committee consider forming a subgroup to consider the subject further.

#### Master Composters

The Townscape Manager advised that he has completed training to become a Master Composter. He will be displaying a leaflet and setting up a demo site on Sedbergh Road allotments for anybody interested in learning more, schools etc. An article will also be placed in the newsletter.

The Townscape Manager advised that he wished to grow wild flowers on a couple of plots which had not been let for some considerable time. He will discuss the viability of this with Councillor Rowley in respect of the pollinator project.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. Janine Holt to draft a letter to SLDC highlighting Committee's concern regarding biodiversity.
2. Committee consider forming a subgroup to consider the subject of biodiversity further.

#### **391/19/20**

#### **PROPOSED SITE IMPROVEMENT PAPER**

Janine Holt presented an updated version of the Proposed Site Improvement Report which had been considered at the last meeting. The points raised had been addressed, including the implementation of a traffic light system for the overall condition of sites.

Councillor Coleman proposed that Committee concentrate on the three sites highlighted red in the report. As these were large sites a greater number of tenants would stand to benefit from the improvement works. This was seconded by Councillor Archibald and carried unanimously. It was agreed Janine Holt will obtain costings for the necessary works to bring these sites up to amber/green for consideration at the next meeting.

Ros Taylor noted reference to tree maintenance work. With the previous discussion regarding biodiversity in mind, she asked whether this would involve chopping trees down. Janine Holt replied that a strategy for tree management was required.

The presence of blue asbestos on Underley Hill was highlighted by Councillor Archibald. Janine Holt advised that she had requested a position statement from the Town Clerk in this respect. The Town Clerk had previously written to SLDC as landowners informing them of the presence of asbestos. The advice received was for no further disturbance of the land. It was not necessary to clean up the land but measures did need to be taken to cordon it off. She suggested Committee ensure the control measures previously installed are still in place and/or could be improved as part of any improvement plan. The asbestos found was brown, not blue. Councillor Archibald will investigate the position further with SLDC and report back to Committee.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. Pierre Labat to obtain costings for the works necessary to bring the 3 allotment sites highlighted as red in the Allotment

Improvement Paper up to standard for consideration at the next meeting.

2. Councillor Archibald to investigate the position regarding asbestos at Underley Hill with SLDC and report back to Committee.

**392/19/20****ANNUAL RENT REVIEW**

Last year Committee made a recommendation to Council for a three year rent review as follows:

- Year 1 - increase rent by 1p
- Year 2 - freeze rent
- Year 3 – increase rent by 1p

Members were asked to review the previous recommendation made and decide whether they wished to freeze the rent for this year. Councillor Coleman expressed concerns regarding the budget and the fact that projected costs for next year are not known at this point in time. Councillor Archibald proposed that the rent be frozen, subject to any large increases in budget arising. This was seconded by Councillor M Miles and carried with 1 abstention.

**RECOMMENDATION** That the rent be frozen for this year.

**393/19/20****ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER**

Spring 2020 edition - general article re allotments (demand, planned improvements etc).

**394/19/20****REVIEW OF SPEND AGAINST BUDGET 2019/20**

Janine Holt presented the Budgetary Control Statement for expenditure to the end of August and highlighted the following:

Vehicle Running Costs

The remaining figure reflects the split with the Kendal in Bloom Committee, which had previously been missed.

Improvements and Developments

Janine to clarify with the Treasurer whether this is required.

Site Maintenance

Remaining balance will be spent by the end of the financial year.

**RESOLVED**

Janine to clarify with the Treasurer whether Improvements and Developments is required .

**395/19/20****2020/21 BUDGET – REVIEW OF BUDGET REQUIREMENTS AND PROPOSALS FOR ONE-OFF DEVELOPMENT FUND BIDS**

Members considered the 2020/21 Budget Proposals report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Committee did not wish to make any Development Fund proposals or changes to the day to day budget.

**396/19/20****ANY OTHER BUSINESS**Noticeboards

At the last meeting Janine Holt had been tasked with obtaining costings for two further noticeboards to be installed at Castle Haggs and Sedbergh Road. The cost was confirmed to be £1,163.40 excluding VAT. These would be the same as the noticeboards installed at Underley Hill and Wattsfield, ie. enclosed boards with keys held by Janine Holt and the site rep.

Members discussed the pros and cons of having the noticeboards. Ros Taylor reported a split view amongst tenants at Wattsfield. There was a feeling that they would get more use if tenants had access in order to display posters etc. Advertisements could then be displayed for surplus produce, items for sale etc. The Townscape Manager advised that the type of board already purchased needed to be kept locked at all times as it is a sealed unit to ensure it is watertight and prevent condensation. Following a general discussion it was agreed to purchase the additional two noticeboards and trial leaving a key accessible for allotments holders. This was proposed by Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Finch and carried unanimously.

Gate at Sedbergh Road

The Townscape Manager reported that the gate at Sedbergh Road allotments was in need of replacing and this was approved by Committee.

Councillor Archibald advised that the Environment Agency, as part of their plans to fell trees, were looking for ways in which wood can be used in an environmentally friendly way. They would be offering wood for use as chippings, sculptures etc. Janine Holt will contact Craig Cowperthwaite.

**RESOLVED**

That two additional noticeboards be purchased for Castle Haggs and Sedbergh Road. Key to be left accessible for allotment holders' use on a trial period.

**397/19/20****DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

**Summary of Information, Resolutions and Recommendations to Council**

<b>Min</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Information/Resolution/Recommendation to Council</b>	
<b>386</b>	Project Update	<b>RES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Officers be authorised to seek professional advice regarding the problem of rabbits at Town View.</li> <li>2. Photographic evidence of unsatisfactory/satisfactory plots to be gathered and published in the newsletter.</li> <li>3. Site rep details to be published on the KTC website and in the newsletter.</li> </ol>
<b>387</b>	Rinkfield Fencing	<b>RES</b>	Pierre Labat to obtain quotes for the fencing at Rinkfield for the next meeting in December.
<b>388</b>	Van Fuel Purchase	<b>RES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That van fuel continue to be purchased from Lound Road garage.</li> <li>2. Janine Holt to obtain costings for a replacement electric KTC van for consideration at the next meeting.</li> </ol>
<b>389</b>	Request for Permission to Replace Pigeon Loft – Plot 18 Cooley Barn	<b>RES</b>	That approval for a replacement pigeon loft be granted, subject to no objections being received.
<b>390</b>	Discussion – How to Manage Allotments in an Environmental Way	<b>RES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Janine Holt to draft a letter to SLDC highlighting Committee's concern regarding biodiversity.</li> <li>2. Committee consider forming a subgroup to consider the subject of biodiversity further.</li> </ol>
<b>391</b>	Proposed Site Improvement Paper	<b>RES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pierre Labat to obtain costings for the works necessary to bring the 3 allotment sites highlighted as red in the Allotment Improvement Paper up to standard for consideration at the next meeting.</li> <li>2. Councillor Archibald to investigate the position regarding asbestos at Underley Hill with SLDC and report back to Committee.</li> </ol>
<b>392</b>	Annual Rent Review	<b>REC</b>	That the rent be frozen for this year.
<b>394</b>	Review of Spend Against Budget 2019/20	<b>RES</b>	Janine to clarify with the Treasurer whether Improvements and Developments is required.
<b>396</b>	AOB - Noticeboards	<b>RES</b>	That two additional noticeboards be purchased for Castle Higgs and Sedbergh Road. Key to be left accessible for allotment holders' use on a trial period.