

# KENDAL TOWN COUNCIL

## Allotments Committee

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.00 pm  
(Via Zoom)**

- PRESENT** Councillors Alvin Finch (Chair & Mayor), Dave Miles (Vice Chair), Giles Archibald, Michele Miles and Stephen Coleman
- Also in attendance:  
Gwen Tordoff – Castle Haggs Site Rep  
Ros Taylor – Wattsfield Site Rep  
Kim Baker – Allotment holder, Greenside  
Councillor Chris Rowley – Allotment holder, Underley Road
- APOLOGIES** Councillor Carol Hardy  
Deborah Allison – Canal Head Site Rep
- OFFICERS** Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Janine Holt (Assistant to the Town Clerk), Pierre Labat (Townscape Manager) and Nicky King (Council Secretary)
- 474/20/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- Kim Baker (current tenant of Greenside Allotments) in relation to item 6 on the agenda. Tim Nichols (a prospective tenant of Greenside) was expected to attend but was unable to do so due to illness.
- 475/20/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- Councillors Finch and Coleman declared an interest being allotment holders themselves.
- 476/20/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**
- The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, which had been approved by full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.
- Councillor Finch proposed that the minutes be accepted as a correct record of the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Coleman and carried unanimously.
- RESOLVED** That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 be accepted as a correct record.
- 477/20/21 ORDER OF BUSINESS**
- The Chair suggested that agenda item 6 be moved to the next item of business. This was agreed.
- 478/20/21 APPROVAL REQUEST FOR GREENSIDE ALLOTMENTS**
- Janine explained she had previously been approached by Kim Baker with a request to keep hens on Greenside. She had informed Kim

further guidance would be sought and the matter would be brought to Committee in December. Under the current policy, Greenside is a cultivation only site, however the 1950 Allotments Act states hens can be kept on statutory allotments provided they are only for use by the tenant and not used for business or profit. However, if hens are deemed a nuisance or their welfare is in question, approval can be denied. Committee were asked whether they wished to review current policy and allow hens on Greenside.

Kim Baker informed Members that the idea to keep hens was formed with Tim Nicholls daughter (who will share the care and work of keeping hens with her), however it proved more difficult than anticipated and permission was refused. She believed the arrangements they plan to put in place will ensure the hens are not a nuisance. She has spoken to surrounding allotment holders and there are no objections. Should permission be granted, they will wait until Avian Flu is no longer an issue before introducing the hens.

Following a general discussion Committee agreed to defer the matter until the next meeting when Tim Nicholls and his daughter could attend. Janine commented that it is not appropriate to grant permission currently while Avian Flu is present.

Kim queried what guidance had been received that led to her request being refused. Janine explained that current policy states hens are not allowed on Greenside and it is a case of ensuring all guidance is considered at this stage before implementing a change. In the last couple of weeks the Kendal Fell Act 1904 has come to light which needs investigating. Simon Unsworth is currently undertaking research in this respect.

**RESOLVED**

That the matter be deferred until the next meeting.

**479/20/21****PROJECT UPDATE**

Members considered 3 alternative quotations for fencing at Crow Tree and Castle Hags Extension previously circulated by Pierre. The two most competitive quotes were £13,395 from AKS based in Grange and £11,270 from ABC Fencing based in Manchester. Pierre advised that AKS had previously carried out work at Rinkfield to a good standard. The quotes were for 3 areas of fencing, 2 at Crow Tree and 1 at Castle Hags Extension and included for 2 small gates and 1 larger gate.

Councillor Archibald asked whether there was a scoring criteria for quotes. Janine replied that this has only previously been carried out in a tender situation. Whilst Committee agreed it would be advantageous to work with a local firm, there is a need to ensure the best price is achieved.

It was noted that 2.4m high fencing was specified in the quotation. Chris Bagshaw advised that if this was to be erected to an area adjacent to a public right of way this would require planning approval.

Councillor Coleman suggested a decision be deferred until the next meeting. Further clarification is required in respect of the specification of work, height of fencing and need for planning permission etc. It was agreed Pierre, Chris and Janine will seek further information and present an update at the next meeting.

There was a general discussion regarding timescales and the implications of leaving a decision until the next Committee meeting in March. Janine commented that Castle Hags Extension would likely be first priority as there are problems with vandalism and anti-social behaviour on this site. The work at Crow Tree is for general improvement purposes. Pierre pointed out that work at Crow Tree is important too as there are very loose fence posts which could cause a hazard. He felt the preparatory work such as hedge removal would be better carried out in the winter when hedges etc are not growing and wildlife is not present. The Chair suggested this work could still proceed since the fencing will go ahead once a decision is reached on the preferred contractor. Committee agreed the Chair/Vice Chair will make a decision with advice from the Town Clerk and inform Committee at the next meeting.

#### **RESOLVED**

Pierre, Chris and Janine to seek further clarification in respect of the specification of work etc. Chair/Vice Chair to make a decision with advice from the Town Clerk and inform Committee at the next meeting.

#### **480/20/21**

##### **AVIAN FLU**

There have been several outbreaks of the highly infectious disease in farming areas and in the wild. As a result all poultry and pet birds will have to be kept indoors by law from 14<sup>th</sup> December.

The Chair advised that he would be visiting all sites where there are poultry and/or pigeons, along with Janine, to talk to allotment holders. Janine confirmed information has been put up on all noticeboards so all tenants should be aware.

Councillor Coleman queried who is enforcing the legislation. Chris advised that DEFRA are the enforcement agency.

#### **481/20/21**

##### **ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER**

It was agreed to include a general update covering current waiting lists, vacancies etc.

#### **482/20/21**

##### **REVIEW OF SPEND AGAINST BUDGET 2020/21**

Members considered the Budgetary Control Statement for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

Vehicle Running Costs – some budget remaining however the KTC van requires an oil service.

Pest Control – huge problem this year with £1,720 spend to date and possibly at least a further £500-600. Money from the Site

Maintenance heading is being used so Committee will have to be realistic about what jobs can be carried out. There will be no large projects undertaken as a result.

Water Charges – overspent. Janine commented that since moving to Water Plus it does not seem to be running as smoothly.

Allotment Fund – this is being used for site improvements. Could be utilised for the fencing at Crow Tree and Castle Hags Extension discussed earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Coleman suggested that a higher level of funding be sought for the next financial year in respect of Pest Control and Water Charges. He also asked why the Allotments year in respect of rents did not align with the Council's financial year. Chris advised that allotment years always tend to run October to November.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**483/20/21**

### Help for allotment holders during financial hardship

Councillor Archibald referred to previous discussions regarding what help could be offered to allotment holders experiencing hardship due to the pandemic. Janine advised that a letter had been issued to all tenants acknowledging that it has been a difficult year and asking people to make contact if they find themselves experiencing financial hardship. She will need to discuss a criteria for assessing hardship and assistance offered with Chris and the Treasurer.

Chris suggested that offering split payments would be a good way forward. This would be an informal arrangement to pay whatever the individual can afford. Councillor Archibald requested a policy to ensure clarity around the procedure. Chris and Janine will draft a policy and bring back to Committee.

**RESOLVED**

Chris and Janine to prepare a paper in respect of split payments option for tenants experiencing financial hardship.

**484/20/21**

### Additional allotment sites

Given the continued high demand for allotments (approx. 200 on the waiting list) Councillor Archibald asked whether there is any possibility to look again at sourcing new sites. The decision was taken 2 or 3 years ago to spend money on improving sites rather than seek new ones, but the situation has changed significantly since that decision was made.

It was suggested by Chris that a survey might be a way forward. Councillor Coleman commented that it would be useful to approach SLDC to ask if there are any opportunities, but pointed out that costs for establishing sites could be high. Councillor Archibald suggested it might be possible to consider using CIL money, along with exploring other potential options. Councillor Coleman referred to Town View Fields and asked whether this has been explored with SLDC for possible extension on the sloping area of land. Whilst such a slope might not be desirable, it would be an easy addition. Janine will contact SLDC in this respect. It was agreed to prepare a paper for

discussion. Despite extra plots being made this year following some sites being split, the demand is in no way waning. There is a 7 year waiting list for Greenside and only Underley Hill has a waiting list of within a year.

**RESOLVED** Janine to contact SLDC re possibility of Town View Fields extension. Paper to be prepared for discussion.

**485/20/21** Asbestos Training for Town Handyman  
Pierre informed Members that an asbestos awareness course can be undertaken online for £22.50. The course would cover awareness of the risk, how to handle asbestos, pitfalls etc and would take approximately 120 minutes to complete. Members agreed Pierre should undertake the course.

**RESOLVED** That Pierre undertakes an online asbestos awareness course at a cost of £22.50.

**486/20/21** Robert Wright – Hedgehog Houses  
Councillor Rowley advised that he had been in contact with Robert Wright, the young man working on the hedgehog homes project. He asked whether Janine could look into supporting Robert with the process.

The Chair acknowledged the hard work carried out by Robert and asked that he be presented with a thank you certificate from KTC. Janine will organise and tighten the link with his mentor on this project.

**RESOLVED** Janine to organise the presentation of a thank you certificate from KTC and tighten the link with his mentor on this project.

**487/20/21** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING – MARCH 2021 (TBC)**

The meeting closed at 8.13pm.

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

<b>Min</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Information/Resolution/Recommendation to Council</b>	
<b>478</b>	Approval Request for Greenside Allotments	<b>RES</b>	That the matter be deferred until the next meeting.
<b>479</b>	Project Update	<b>RES</b>	Pierre, Chris and Janine to seek further clarification in respect of the specification of work etc. Chair/Vice Chair to make a decision with advice from the Town Clerk and inform Committee at the next meeting.
<b>483</b>	Help for Allotment Holders During Financial Hardship	<b>RES</b>	Chris and Janine to prepare a paper in respect of split payments option for tenants experiencing financial hardship.
<b>484</b>	Additional Allotment Sites	<b>RES</b>	Janine to contact SLDC re possibility of Town View Fields extension. Paper to be prepared for discussion.
<b>485</b>	Asbestos Training for Town Handyman	<b>RES</b>	That Pierre undertakes an online asbestos awareness course at a cost of £22.50.
<b>486</b>	Robert Wright – Hedgehog Houses	<b>RES</b>	Janine to organise the presentation of a thank you certificate from KTC and tighten the link with his mentor on this project.