

KENDAL TOWN COUNCIL

Allotments Committee

**Monday 22nd March 2021 at 7.00 pm
(Via Zoom)**

- PRESENT** Councillors Alvin Finch (Chair & Mayor), Giles Archibald, Michele Miles and Stephen Coleman
- Also in attendance:
Councillor Chris Rowley – Allotment holder, Underley Road
Gwen Tordoff – Castle Haggs Site Rep
Elizabeth Kelly – Castle Drive Site Rep
Deborah Allison – Canal Head Site Rep
Tilly and Tim Nicholls – item 7 on Agenda
Kim Baker – Allotment Holder, Greenside (item 7 on Agenda)
- APOLOGIES** Councillors Dave Miles and Carol Hardy
- OFFICERS** Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Janine Holt (Assistant to the Town Clerk), Pierre Labat (Townscape Manager) and Nicky King (Council Secretary)
- 708/20/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- None.
- 709/20/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- None.
- 710/20/21 ORDER OF BUSINESS**
- The Chair proposed that item 7 on the Agenda (Approval of Hens on Greenside) be taken as the next matter. This was agreed.
- 711/20/21 APPROVAL OF HENS ON GREENSIDE**
- At the last meeting it was resolved to defer making a decision on the request by Kim Baker to keep hens on Greenside. The reason for the deferral was so that Tim Nicholls and his daughter, Tilly, could be present since Tilly had been instrumental in forming the idea of keeping hens and carrying out research.
- Members considered a paper which outlined the background and current policy. It presented options for consideration as (1) to not permit hens on Greenside (withholding currently KTC policy), (2) to allow hens on Greenside, (3) to allow hens with suitable conditions attached and (4) to defer a decision pending findings on the research of the Kendal Fell Acts of 1861 and 1907.
- It was noted that the Assistant to the Town Clerk has written to tenants on Greenside. She reported 5 positive responses, 4 negative and 7 expressing concern about vermin. She also advised that the Kendal Fell Act Project Officer is currently unable to access the

archives, therefore the existence of a byelaw for the regulation of activities on Kendal Fell is still unknown. Avian Flu restrictions are to be lifted on 31st March so is no longer a consideration.

Tilly spoke about her research into keeping hens. She outlined the benefits such as increasing biodiversity and reducing carbon footprint and talked about the plan to use chicken feeders designed to prevent other animals accessing the feed and avoid attracting vermin.

The Town Clerk raised the outstanding issue with Kendal Fell Act. He read out an extract from The 1950 Allotments Act which states that on Council land there is an expectation that hens and rabbits may be kept. It further states that Councils can impose restrictions to manage the site properly and ensure the keeping of such animals is not prejudicial to health.

Following a general discussion Councillor Archibald proposed adopting option 3 “to allow hens with suitable conditions attached”. The conditions would include regular monitoring of the vermin situation and consideration of other tenants. A probation period would be set to allow this to take place and Committee would review the situation in 6 months’ time. A maximum of 2 hens was agreed initially and it was stressed that no cockerels will be allowed at any time. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Coleman and carried.

RESOLVED

That Committee agree to allow hens to be kept on Greenside with suitable conditions attached.

712/20/21**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2020.

Councillor Coleman proposed that the minutes be accepted as a correct record of the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Archibald and carried.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14th December 2020 be accepted as a correct record.

713/20/21**PROJECT UPDATE**

The Project Update was noted. The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported that sites are generally looking good and the number of problem plots have diminished. The demand for sites has levelled off this quarter, although still remains high. The waiting list currently stands at 234, a decrease of 33 since the last meeting.

The Project Officer is currently undertaking site mapping and tree survey work and a report will be circulated at the next meeting.

Tenants Experiencing Financial Hardship

The Assistant to the Town Clerk presented a draft policy for consideration. The policy set out the procedure for supporting allotment tenants who are experiencing financial hardship. It allows tenants in such circumstances to apply to split their annual invoice into 3 smaller payments. Members were advised of an amendment recommended by the Town Clerk to incorporate clauses relating to GDPR and appeals process.

There was a general discussion during which Members discussed what further support might be offered and the legality of requesting the reason for tenants wishing to give up their plots. The Town Clerk commented that support should be offered "at the discretion of the Council" and suggested having a discretionary fund.

Councillor Coleman proposed that the draft policy be approved with the addition of clauses relating to GDPR and appeals process. This was seconded by Councillor Archibald and carried.

RESOLVED

That the draft policy for Tenants Experiencing Financial Hardship be approved, with the addition of clauses relating to GDPR and appeals process.

714/20/21

ASBESTOS SURVEY

Committee considered results from a recent survey of asbestos on allotments in Kendal. The survey highlighted the presence of asbestos at Rinkfield and Shaws Brow. It recommended the collection and disposal of the profile cement roof sheets forming boundary fences and from shed roofs on these sites.

There is a further issue at Underley Hill where asbestos is known to be present in the ground which makes it hard to easily assess the extent of the problem. The contaminated area has been cordoned off and a specialist contractor is required to carry out further investigative work. The Town Clerk commented that this site requires treating as a special case and advised he will be visiting the site tomorrow.

During a general discussion Members discussed timescale and the implications of the survey results. It was noted that removal of roofs of the pigeon lofts concerned is a major project. As the roofs are currently solid Members debated whether to remove and replace immediately, or upon the tenants of the plots concerned vacating.

Councillor Finch proposed that all asbestos found present on Rinkfield and Shaws Brow be removed as soon as possible. A timetable for removal to be set. This was seconded by Councillor Coleman and carried. It was agreed that budget from the Allotment Fund would be used.

RESOLVED

That all asbestos found present on Rinkfield and Shaws Brow be removed as soon as possible. A timetable for removal to be set. Budget from the Allotment Fund to be used.

715/20/21 APPROVAL OF POLYTUNNEL ON CASTLE HAGGS EXTENSION

Committee considered a request to erect a polytunnel on Castle Haggs Extension. The size proposed was 4m wide x 7m long.

It was noted that the proposed size is below the current policy of no more than 20% of the size of the plot.

There was a general discussion regarding current policy and whether this presented a fair approach to all sizes of plots. There was a suggestion to set a standard size which would also avoid the necessity of Committee considering individual requests. It was felt this would be unfair of holders of large plots which can accommodate a larger size polytunnel.

Councillor Coleman proposed that the request be approved, subject to the normal provision of contacting other tenants. Tenant to be advised that the polytunnel must not be placed on hardstanding. This was seconded by Councillor Miles and carried with 1 Member against.

The Town Clerk advised that the site is inside the Conservation Area, the implications of which will need checking.

RESOLVED That Committee approve the request for a polytunnel at Castle Haggs Extension, subject to other tenants being contacted. Conservation Area implications to be checked.

716/20/21 FENCING AT CROW TREE

Committee were asked to consider three quotes received for fencing at Crow Tree allotments. Councillor Coleman proposed that AK Fencing be chosen as the preferred contractor to carry out the works. This was seconded by Councillor Archibald and carried.

RESOLVED That AK Fencing be appointed to carry out installation of fencing at Crow Tree allotments.

717/20/21 ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENT LAND

The Town Clerk reported that work is underway at Canal Head to form new plots. This became a viable project much sooner than anticipated due to SLDC tree management work in the area. The land is currently being cleared and marked out and will provide at least 20 new plots. It was noted that there is currently 21 on the waiting list.

There was a discussion regarding associated costs of the work. The Townscape Manager reported projected costs of £8,980. Extras would bring the total to approximately £10k for all ground work required, including water points. Fencing costs are expected to be in the region of £20k (same specification as at Rinkfield and Wattsfield), bringing the total to around £30k. The Townscape Manager talked

about the removal of tree roots on the land and a method which would avoid costly waste removal.

The Town Clerk commented that post and wire fencing would be a more cost effective alternative to security fence. He also said that the footpath running through the land would need consideration. It was agreed that the Town Clerk will prepare a management plan to include costings, planting regime etc. Vehicle access is to be borne in mind.

Deborah Allison reported some tenants of Canal Head being upset by the lack of notice of planned tree felling. She asked that Committee communicate any such plans with advanced notice in future. The Town Clerk replied that under normal circumstances notices would have been displayed on site, however due to the short notice given by SLDC this had not been possible on this occasion. A discussion ensued regarding the need for a noticeboard at Canal Head. Councillor Finch proposed that this be installed. Councillor Archibald seconded the proposal and it was carried.

RESOLVED

1. Town Clerk to prepare a management plan to include costings, planting regime etc.
2. That a noticeboard be installed at Canal Head Allotments.

718/20/21

REPORTS FROM SITES

Councillor Finch thanked those site reps present for attending and commented that he would encourage reps to attend Committee meetings.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reported an increase in the number of rats on sites in the last couple of weeks. Reports of rats are responded to immediately and Pest Control routinely visit certain sites. This is likely to be an ongoing problem. Global warming is thought to be the cause of wildlife changing their habits which is seeing an increase in moles, rats and rabbits.

The Townscape Manager commented that allotments have brought much needed wellbeing for tenants during lockdown.

719/20/21

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Items suggested for the summer edition included:

- Canal Head update
- Waste into Wellbeing Scheme
- Facebook page

720/20/21

REVIEW OF SPEND AGAINST BUDGET 2020/21

Members considered the Budgetary Control Statement for the period ended 28th February 2021.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk will request a breakdown of figures in respect of water charges.

Budget remaining under boundary walls and fences heading to be utilised for fencing at Crow Tree.

RESOLVED

The Assistant to the Town Clerk will request a breakdown of figures in respect of water charges.

721/20/21

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 14th June 2021 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm.

Summary of Information, Resolutions and Recommendations to Council

Min	Subject	Information/Resolution/Recommendation to Council	
711	Approval of hens on Greenside	RES	That Committee agree to allow hens to be kept on Greenside with suitable conditions attached.
713	Tenants experiencing financial hardship	RES	That the draft policy for Tenants Experiencing Financial Hardship be approved, with the addition of clauses relating to GDPR and appeals process.
714	Asbestos Survey	RES	That all asbestos found present on Rinkfield and Shaws Brow be removed as soon as possible. A timetable for removal to be set. Budget from the Allotment Fund to be used.
715	Polytunnel on Castle Haggs Extension	RES	That Committee approve the request for a polytunnel at Castle Haggs Extension, subject to other tenants being contacted. Conservation Area implications to be checked.
716	Fencing at Crow Tree	RES	That AK Fencing be appointed to carry out installation of fencing at Crow Tree allotments.
717	Additional allotment land	RES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Clerk to prepare a management plan to include costings, planting regime etc. 2. That a noticeboard be installed at Canal Head Allotments.
720	Review of spend against budget 2020/21	RES	The Assistant to the Town Clerk will request a breakdown of figures in respect of water charges.