

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk



Notes from the non-statutory Working Group meeting of the Allotments Committee meeting held on Monday, 27 September 2021 at 7.00 pm via Zoom.

Cllr G Archibald (Vice Chair)	Present	Cllr C Hardy	Apologies
Cllr S Coleman	Present	Cllr D Miles	Apologies
Cllr A Finch (Chair)	Present		

In attendance: Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Ian Gordon (Democratic Services Assistant), Janine Holt (Council Services Officer), Pierre Labat, (Townscape officer).

Site Representatives also in Attendance:

Gwen Tordoff Castle Haggs
Councillor Chris Rowley Underlay Road
Ros Taylor Wattsfield

Apologies received from Ali Paddle, Greenside Site Representative and Deborah Allison, Canal Head Site Representative.

A01/21/22 Apologies

Were received and accepted from Councillors C Hardy and D Miles.

A02/21/22 Declarations of Interest

None

A03/21/22 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

A04/21/22 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 March 2021

Resolved: To accept them as a true record.

A05/21/22 Review of Spend against Budget

The Committee considered a report on budget spending and noted some underspends. It was suggested that a line be added to the report indicating the extent and expenditure of the Allotment Development Reserve fund, and a note on where this money had been allocated to date.

Resolved: To accept the report and add additional information identifying committed development spending plans.

A06/21/22 Canal Head Development

The Council Services Officer provided an update on progress. A landscape architect has identified the potential for an additional 17 plots and 21 raised bed starter plots. A quote has been received today for £56,548. This would not include the cost of purchasing and installing the 21 raised bed planters. The income from the larger plots would be around £800pa, with the income from the smaller ones yet to be determined, but possibly between £200 and £600, depending on our pricing policy for very small plots.

The committee felt that less ambitious schemes could be considered. The Clerk noted that further quotes were required and that other possible solutions that would provide additional plots but at less cost could be identified.

Resolved: To seek two further quotes with options to explore alternative designs

A07/21/22 Rabbit Strategy

The Committee considered a draft policy on management of rabbits produced by the Wattsfield Site Representative. The Council Services Officer reported that five sites were affected, with Wattsfield the worst. Historically the Town Council has provided fencing but this year infestation of rabbits has been considerably worse and there is a need for more robust action. The Wattsfield Rep reiterated the summary of her strategy, especially the need for better communication with the public to make them aware of the problem. It was pointed out that in the wild rabbits, would naturally be controlled by predators. The Site Representative suggested opening better communications with SLDC, or their replacement, and perhaps Natural England. The Chair felt it was important to find out from SLDC what it was that the Town Council can do. Councillors wanted to know what the most effective deterrent is without killing the rabbits. Council officers maintain that rabbit fencing was the most effective. It was suggested that allotments were an important aspect part of Kendal life and should be well maintained. The Clerk felt there was a legal matter to explore with the owners of certain fields where rabbits appear to be breeding excessively and are seen in high numbers. It was proposed to erect rabbit proof fencing to be used at two sites initially. The choice of sites to be identified by the Chair and officers of the Town Council e.g., Wattsfield and Canal Head. It was also proposed to allocate a budget of £6,000 and then on a rolling programme with the other sites. Additionally, it was proposed to arrange a meeting with SLDC to discuss the problem with rabbits on their land and report back to next meeting. Finally, it was proposed for the Council Services Officer to enter into discussions with other agencies on feasibility of natural predators.

Resolved: To identify the cost of installation of rabbit proof fencing at two sites to be agreed with the Chair and Officers of the Town Council and report feasibility, costs and timing to next committee.

1. To identify a budget of £6,000 to cover costs of installation.
2. That the Council Services Officer arrange a meeting with SLDC to discuss the problem of rabbits on their land and ascertain what action the Town Council can take and what action SLDC might take to ameliorate the problem.
3. That the Council Services Officer investigate and report the potential for natural predators to assist in the control of rabbits.

A08/21/22 Waiting List Update

The committee considered a report on waiting list status for all allotments. The waiting list is now significantly down, with 164 individuals on the list. The Council Services Officer believes the longest wait is now around three years

Resolved: To accept the report.

A09/21/22 Tree Works

The Committee considered what actions to take in regard to some tree management issues at Shaws Brow and Town View. A dead tree on Shaws Brow requires specialist services to remove with an estimated cost of £800. Within this cost is also the removal of two overgrown fruit trees at Town View. Council Officers reported that this work could be done early next year, but the Town View trees required a Conservation Area notice. It was suggested that the District Council's Tree Officer be consulted about the correct and effective management of the trees in Town View

Resolved: To retain the services of tree surgeon and to remove the trees subject to correct notifications and approval.

A10/21/22 Coley Barn Subsidence

Councillors discussed some technical issues relating to the support a wall and bank at Coley Barn. Officers were proposing the installation of stone gabions. The Chair wanted to know if a less expensive option might be feasible. It was suggested that other options should be explored

Resolved: To further investigate possibly cheaper solutions to the subsidence of the bank.

A11/21/22 Town View Field Extension

The Clerk reported that a former play area at Town View Field had been identified as potential allotment land.

Resolved: To investigate the site fully, with costed proposals and an assessment of likely safeguarding issues relating to the proximity of the adjacent accommodation unit.

A12/21/22 Future Allotment Rents

The Committee considered a proposal that the Council alters the timing of the consideration of its allotment rents to reflect the actual timing of the budgeting process. It was suggested that the allotment year might be co-terminus with the financial year, however the Clerk suggested that allotments tend to be occupied from the beginning of March, rather than April, and this might create problems for renewals at the start of the growing season. It was suggested that any increase should be frozen for 2022, with a counter suggestion that the increase be kept to inflation for the coming year.

Resolved: To restrict a rise in allotment rents to reflect inflation at 2%. Further issues of timing for next years rental increase would be held over to the next meeting.

A13/21/22 Water Management. The Townscape Officer reported excessive use of hoses to water allotments and with potential water shortages, wanted to investigate

alternatives to the use of hoses. He would like to see more use of water troughs and watering cans.

Resolved: Officers will report to a future meeting on the feasibility of using water troughs in some areas as an alternative to hoses.

A14/21/22 Parking at Greenside

A councillor reported that residents on Undercliff Road had complained about inappropriate parking by some Greenside allotment users which is causing difficulties.

Resolved: That the Council Services Officer would write to allotment holders reminding them of the Council's 'good neighbour' policy.

The meeting closed at 20.58