

## ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

### Minutes of a virtual meeting on THURSDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> JULY at 7.00pm

This meeting is allowable under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) which came into force on 4th April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021. The published agenda for this meeting stated that members of the public wishing to attend should contact the Clerk prior to its start to receive an invitation containing a link that could be used to join it.

**Members Present** Cllr Palmer (Chair), Cllrs Holt and Williams

**Also present**

Mr John Brooks (ASR Ryeworth) and Helen Johnston (Administrative Officer).

1 member of the public was present.

The meeting was opened at 7.00pm.

**01/20/21 Recording and filming of meetings** There were no requests to record or film the meeting.

**02/20/21 Apologies** Apologies were received and accepted from Miss Michelle Kirby (ASR Ryeworth).

**03/20/21 Declarations of interest** No declarations of interest were received.

**04/20/21 Minutes of the previous meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2020 were received, accepted and signed as a correct record.

**05/20/21 Terms of reference** The Terms of Reference are considered at the first meeting in each year to inform members of their roles and responsibilities and to allow them to suggest amendments for consideration by Full Council. The Committee’s Terms of Reference were noted and there were no suggested amendments. Although not on the agenda Cllr Palmer suggested that as stated in the terms of reference as this was the first meeting of the year it would be appropriate to elect a Vice Chair under this item. Cllr Holt, being proposed by Cllr Palmer and seconded by Cllr Williams, was duly elected unanimously as Vice-Chair of the Committee for 2020-21.

**06/20/21 Action Plan and Recurrent Maintenance Work** The Committee reviewed the current Action Plan and Recurrent Maintenance Work Schedule. The Administrative Officer reported ongoing issues with the clarity of Water Plus’ billing despite numerous phone calls and emails. Cllr Williams proposed that we now need to escalate our concerns to those in charge of the relevant organisations and also to Ofwat the Water Services Regulation Authority.  
**The Administrative Officer will draft letters to the CEOs of Water Plus, Severn**

**Trent Water and Ofwat.**

Cllr Palmer reported that the grass cutting contract had come significantly under budget, and it is expected the Easy Access plot project will also come in just under budget. She also reported on the successful completion of the Croft Fencing project which came in slightly over budget by £147. The sustainability seminar has been moved under the remit of the CK Futures Group so will no longer come out of the Allotments budget.

Cllr Palmer expressed her concern that the income from the rental and water charges is barely sufficient to fund the work detailed in the recurrent maintenance schedule, much less any unplanned emergency repairs or additional works.

On review of the recurrent maintenance schedule it was proposed that the inspection and repair work on the Croft boundary wall be increased to every 2 years rather than 3. A further item to remove weeds from the wall and adjoining road gutter is to be added to the schedule on an annual basis.

**Administrative Officer to update recurrent maintenance schedule to increase frequency of Croft wall inspections and to add item on annual weed removal.**

**Administrative Officer to issue new work order for Sappercombe Blackthorn hedge work as per recurrent maintenance schedule.**

07/20/21

**Report from Site Representative** Ryeworth - Dr John Brooks reported that the problem with reduced water pressure reported earlier in the year had been resolved.

The major concern for tenants currently is the abundance of wildlife, particularly moles and deer which have been damaging plots and eating produce. The committee agreed that high fencing should be installed across key entry points on Ryeworth and Haver allotments as a matter of urgency. Cllr Palmer also suggested that tenants position 'obstacles' such as composters, wood, etc along the edge of their plots wherever possible to act as a barrier. The deer do not like to jump over a hedge or gate if they cannot see a clear place to land.

Cllr Williams asked that tenants advise the office if they can identify where the deer are gaining access to the site so that we can target it.

**Administrative Officer to source quote from contractor to supply and install 8ft fencing at key entry points to Ryeworth and Haver sites.**

**Copies of these minutes to be displayed on Ryeworth and Haver noticeboards to update tenants on this issue.**

Dr John Brooks also raised a suggestion that was brought to him by a fellow tenant that the committee might consider installing first aid kits on site. The committee discussed the suggestion but agreed it would be too difficult to ensure that a first aid kit be kept replenished, sterile and secure in an outdoor public location. The committee recommended encouraging tenants to keep their own first aid kits in their sheds.

**Administrative Officer to include recommendation for personal first aid kits in the next mailshot to all tenants.**

08/20/21

**Allotment Competition** Cllr Palmer reported on the committee's difficult decision to cancel this year's competition due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

09/20/21

**Plot inspections** The committee plan to undertake the next plot inspections in early October, following the cancelled June inspections. The inspections will be conducted in advance of the next committee meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

**Administrative Officer to arrange for notices to be displayed on site with inspection dates.**

10/20/21

**Coronavirus Emergency Measures** Cllr Palmer reported on the latest measures

employed in response to the Coronavirus crisis. The Administrative Officer confirmed that the office were receiving details of authorised visitors to plots to allow for track and trace if required.

**11/20/21** **Vacant Plots** The Administrative Officer reported that there is only 1 vacant plot on Croft currently, however with a waiting list of 28 it is likely to be tenanted very soon. Sappercombe 81B & C have been recently vacated after a period of neglect but Cllr Palmer advised that the Friends of Charlton Kings (FoCK) had proposed to 'rent' these plots as a community plot. The committee unanimously agreed to this proposal.

**Administrative Officer will forward tenancy paperwork to FoCK**

With the exception of those plots only recently let, the Administrative Officer reported that all rent monies had been received for this period.

**12/20/21** **Update on Current Projects**

Sappercombe Easy Access Plot – Cllr Palmer reported that the committee has received and considered 3 quotes for the Easy Access Plot Project, from which the preferred contractor will be recommended to the Full Council for approval.

Croft Fencing – The fencing project was successfully completed earlier this year.

Ryeworth Drainage Ditch and Path Stabilisation - Despite several attempts to contact the Estates manager of St Edwards school, we have received no response regarding the ditch clearing on Greenway Lane. In the meantime, however a contract has been agreed with a groundwork company to stabilise the Ryeworth path and clear the Greenway lane ditching at the same time. Although only the Parish Council side of the ditching can be cleared it is hoped that Gloucestershire highways will be able to jet under the road as planned.

**Cllr Williams will make an additional attempt to contact the St Edwards Estate manger in advance of the planned works.**

**Administrative Officer to arrange for notices to be displayed to advise tenants and passers by of the planned works.**

Ryeworth Plot 40 Bank Stabilisation – this remedial work was postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak, however it is hoped it can be rescheduled in the very near future.

**Administrative Officer to contact contractor to reschedule planned stabilisation work on Plot 40.**

**13/20/21** **Recent Ryeworth Issues** The recent issues of water pressure, wildlife and proposal to supply first aid kits were discussed under item 07/20/21.

**14/20/21** **Any Other Business** The Administrative Officer advised that a neighbour overlooking the Ryeworth allotments reported potential intruders on the evening of Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 10.30pm. Two individuals with torches were observed walking around the site for about 30 minutes. The police have been informed but there were no reports of damage or theft.

**Date of next meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7.00pm**