

**ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE****Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 18.00**

Members present: Cllrs Meadows (Chair), Jarrett, Palmer and Williams.

Also present: Dr John Brooks (ASR Ryeworth)

Two allotment tenants.

Cllr Meadows opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present.

**30/18/19 Recording and filming of the meeting**

There were no requests to record or film the meeting.

**31/18/19 Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**32/18/19 Declarations of interest**

Cllrs Jarrett, Palmer and Williams declared an interest as allotment tenants.

**33/18 /19 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record by Cllr Meadows.

**34/18/19 Reports from Site Representatives**

John Brooks reported there had been no issues at Ryeworth. The new No Fly Tipping sign had 'worked', although he had removed another donation of old plastic pots to discourage a further accumulation of material. Two large new sheds had appeared, apparently without the prior approval of Council, and these would be investigated.

**35/18/19 Plot inspections**

Inspections of all 'winter-red' plots were carried out by Cllrs Meadows and Williams on 31<sup>st</sup> January. 11 eviction letters had been issued because of failure to take action to improve the cultivation of plots since receiving a 'winter cultivation letter' in October, and a further 6 personalised letters were sent and two telephone calls made to deal with specific issues.

**36/18/19 Vacant plots**

There are currently no vacant plots although more would become available in a month's time following the eviction letters. Only 6 people are on waiting lists (2 at Ryeworth and 4 at Sappercombe) so it was agreed that 'Allotments available here now' notices would be posted at all sites and on the website.

**37/18/19 Invoices for 2019-2020**

Invoices would be prepared in March and sent out, as usual, on 1<sup>st</sup> April. The package will include:

- Covering letter setting out new charges Plot rent increased in line with RPI from 31p/m<sup>2</sup> to 32p/m<sup>2</sup>; Water Charge increased from 5p/m<sup>2</sup> to 8p/m<sup>2</sup> because of the

change in supplier from Severn Trent Water to their new commercial supplier Water Plus, who had not read meters and hence allowed an accumulation of bills at each site over two years. If proper information had been available, the water charge would have been increased in steps over the last two years instead of in one step this year. This would be accompanied by another request to conserve water, and an emphasis on enforcement of the rule that prohibits sprinklers or fixed hosepipes (also to be posted on site notice boards although it was agreed that the only effective way to change behaviour was by peer-pressure from other tenants).

- Invoice generated by the Rialtas Allotment software.
- Advance information about the Allotments Competition 2019, including revised judging criteria to reflect changes in allotment rules (Agenda 40).
- A copy of the revised Rules and Conditions booklet.

#### **38/18/19 Grass cutting contract 2019**

The 2018 specification for the mowing contract was agreed, with one minor change to reflect the wish to improve relations with a neighbour by strimming a 3metre length at end of the top main path. The specification would also be modified in the light of agreement on agenda item 42. The Clerk would check with the current contractors whether they would hold their 2018 price.

#### **39/18/19 Easy Access plot and toilet**

It was agreed that Veal and son would be approached to quote for the installation of the toilet/shelter and septic tank. A quote had been obtained for site works/landscaping to follow. Eco-Wood planters would be ordered once the works were near completion.

#### **40/18/19 Allotment Rules and Conditions booklet**

The committee agreed the revised text, which Cllr Williams would review for a final time before asking the Clerk to obtain quotes to print 500 copies (actual number to depend on relative prices for different print-runs). Cllr Williams would ask Smith and Mann Nisa, whether they would prefer to have an advert, or a repeat photograph on the back cover to acknowledge their sponsorship.

#### **41/18/19 Allotment Lettings Agreement and associated paperwork**

The committee agreed the revised texts of the following documents

- 'So, you think you want to take on an allotment' (given to prospective tenants who request an application form)
- Allotment Tenancy Application form (A1a)
- Allotment Tenancy Agreement (A1c)

The committee accepted Cllr Meadows' offer to re-write the Allotment Tenancy Terms and Conditions (A1b) to reflect the agreed text of the Rules and Conditions Booklet.

#### **42/18/19 Ryeworth path and recurrent maintenance jobs**

The committee addressed the prolonged issue of the dangerous section of the Ryeworth public footpath. Materials brought together to address this issue had disappeared from behind the Council's office and another solution was now proposed. It was agreed that a specification would be drawn up for work to lay a 1.3m – 1.8m wide path, using a compacted Type 1 base with a porous asphalt top from the gate to the first standpipe; including a n effective soakaway under the first standpipe to prevent water flowing down the path.

Cllr Grimshaw would be asked whether he could supply the interlocking honeycomb plastic substrate for the top section of the path at Greenway Lane. It was agreed that no other work would be considered for the remainder of the footpath at this time.

The committee considered the list of recurrent maintenance jobs and Cllr Williams will progress those identified for 2019 with the Council's handyman.

It was agreed that, in the light of the very high water bills that had been received in 2018, and the concern at Croft that there may have been corrosion of below-ground pipes, a leakage test would be applied to all standpipes at the 4 allotment sites, at the end of March before the water was turned on for the season. Notices would be posted on notice boards and the website, and information passed by word of mouth.

**43/18/19 Haver Plot 36**

It was agreed that when the current tenant vacated this plot in March, it would be 'mothballed' as a result of its poor record in allowing productive gardening and the lack of demand for plots at Haver. Instead, it was agreed that the committee would purchase a number of fruit trees that could be planted there and mulched to prevent competition by natural vegetation. The plot would be strimmed once a year, in late summer, to remove the cost of mowing, increase the 'naturalness' of part of the site, yet allow a productive use of the land for the benefit of all Haver tenants.

**44/18/19 Allotments competition**

It was agreed that the annual allotments competition would be run again this year. Shortlisting would be carried out in the third week of June and, subject to availability of judges, the independent judging panel would meet in the first week of July. Subject to availability of the Stanton Hall, the awards evening would be held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September. Cllr Jarrett would approach potential judges and an awards presenter.

**45/18/19 Any Other Business**

There was no AOB.

The meeting closed at 19.58

Date of next meeting: To be confirmed.