

Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting

Held on **Thursday 28 September 2023** at **10:30** in the Parish Office

Jane Tetley – Proper Officer to the Council

Attendees: Councillors: Sandra Attwood (SA), Kate Bishop (KB), John Gardner (JG), Penny Kennard (PK) chairman. Allotment Representatives (AR): Brian Cousins (BC), David Jackson (DJ),

In attendance: member of the public

Minutes: PK

Item No. Allot23/	Minutes	Action
023	Apologies - none	
024	Declarations of interests - none	
025	Minutes of previous meetings - Minutes 3 August 2023 were accepted.	
026	Matters arising from minutes not covered in the agenda – lock on noticeboard on by pedestrian entrance/Water Tank 8 fixed by Brian Cousins – thank you Brian.	
027	<p>Public session</p> <p>One member of the public present – the order of the agenda adjusted to accommodate this unusual but welcome occurrence. Items 028 and 029 deferred until after Item 033 as confidential details of tenants and future tenants may be disclosed during those Items.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Question from member of the public about the role of Allotment Representatives (AR), how AR chosen and whether Terms of Reference (TOR) exist. During a discussion it was determined that AR used to be put forward and elected by members of the Blacksmith Lane Allotment Group (BLAG) which was a group formed by allotment plot holders but that this group no longer exists. The existing AR were approached by a previous Chairman. Unknown if there were ever TOR, to be checked before next meeting.</p> <p>Question about Annual Rent Meeting.</p> <p>Chairman stated the annual rent meeting no longer takes place as a majority of tenants pay their rent by BACS and that PPC does not run a group for allotment holders but that if such a group is started by tenants, then members of the Committee could be invited to meetings by that group.</p> <p>Bonfires on the allotment site were discussed and the difficulty in keeping both allotment plot holders and allotment neighbours happy was highlighted by the Chairman. The Allotment Committee has received comments with a wide range of views, from no bonfires to bonfires all year round. The Terms and Conditions were amended last October, delaying the start of bonfires from 1 October to 1 November, and the Committee will allow this to bed in and collect feedback before revisiting the topic.</p>	Chair

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030	<p>Budget 2024-2025</p> <p>All PPC committees have been asked by the Chairman to provide figures for the budget.</p> <p>Allotment Committee waiting for the Government's October CPI/RPI figures before firming up figures for 2023-2024, however costs of water and maintenance expenses e.g. gravel for tracks, tree works expected to rise again next year. A rent increase of ~6% was discussed - would increase Half Plot rent from £33 to £35 per annum with Full plot rent increasing from £51 – £55 (gradually creating parity between the rent of half versus full plots). To be discussed fully at the next meeting and voted on to allow the tenants to be informed within the three month period as required by T&C Para.1.c.</p>	Chair
031	<p>Terms and Conditions – discuss any changes required with regard to Item Allot23/12 matters for future consideration:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Link to current version Terms and Conditions</p>	
/1	<p>Ponds – many Plots on the site have a pond. Discussion covered: whether to allow new ponds – if so size, whether to get rid of existing ponds, the issue of safety - particularly of children visiting the site with their parents, benefits to wildlife, ponds not a traditional allotment feature and the Committee is already concerned that there is a trend towards gardens rather than allotments with large areas of lawn, this issue is being tackled on a plot by plot basis.</p> <p>It was decided that more research was needed before a clause could be drafted for the T&Cs – to be revisited at the next meeting.</p>	All
/2	<p>Fruit trees – the size and number of fruit trees on the site (particularly apple). The Committee is concerned that there are on some plots far too many fruit tree and some are very large. A discussion covered permitted rootstock types which should be permitted, number of trees per plot, whether the planting of any trees should require permission from the Committee. It was agreed in principle that nut trees should not be allowed on plots, but not whether current trees should be removed, and that plot tenants are responsible for removing self-seeded sapling from their plot. A draft of clause for the T&C to be circulated so it can be tweaked before being voted on at the next meeting.</p>	PK/all
032	Infrastructure & Maintenance:	
/1	Water – Meter reading 08768 on 23 September 2023.	
/2	<p>Trees – update following tree inspections. Councillor Gardener toured the site with a tree specialist. No trees were identified that required immediate attention. Ownership of one tree was queried – to be followed up. Agreed that the oak on Plot 11B. The large fir tree on the site to be removed as planned.</p> <p>Chairman spoke with Cheltenham Borough Council tree officer earlier in the year, shortly before the eucalyptus was felled, none of the trees on the site have Tree Protection Orders (TRO) and as the allotment site is not in the Prestbury cont. Conservation Area it is not necessary for PPC to contact CBC before undertaking work on any trees on the site.</p>	JG

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Parish Council Office - The Pavilion - New Barn Close – Prestbury – Cheltenham – GL52 3LP

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/3	Gravel – no further gravel delivery required at the moment.	
/4	Toilet – following discussions at several previous meetings it was reluctantly decided that the Allotment Committee could not take on the maintenance of a toilet facility on the site at the moment. Although a toilet facility could be purchased and installed, possibly with a grant, the day-to-day running was not something that PPC could undertake. As the Chairman and other Councillors are aware, a considerable amount of work and expense is generated by the public toilet on the Playing Field which has to be cleaned, serviced and all to frequent acts of vandalism dealt with.	
033	Matters for future consideration - none	
	Meeting adjourned for the public to leave.	
028	Report from Allotment Representatives (AR) Quite a number of plots reported to be untidy and neglected/not worked as required under the allotment Terms & Conditions (T&Cs), to be sent Plot of Concern (PloC) notices. Tenants who were sent PloC notices following the last meeting but have not taken action will be sent a second PLoC notices asking them to consider giving up their tenancy if they are unable to meet the T&Cs. Two plot holders to have tenancies terminated. Chairman to write to tenants. *Committee members see Appendix 1/28Sep2023	
029	Waiting List, Plots of Concern and Vacant Plots update There are 54 people on the Waiting List (WL), 25 are Prestbury Parish residents (who take priority over non-residents). List continues to be closed to non-Parishioners).	
	Date of next meeting – Thursday 30 November 2023 @ 10:30 in the Parish Office <i>Please check the Prestbury Parish Council website Events calendar for any changes to date/time.</i>	