

25th September 2019

Minutes of the Allotment Committee of Stantonbury Parish Council
Held on **Wednesday 25th September 2019**
At Stantonbury Parish Office, 126 Kingsfold, Bradville

Committee Members

Cllr GA Davison (Chairman)

Cllr A Anwar

Cllr L Morgan

Cllr M Millen

A29/19	<p>Present: Cllr GA Davison (Chairman) (GAD) Cllr A Anwar Cllr L Morgan Cllr M Millen</p> <p>Mr P Hyde – Parish Ranger Mr L Shuttlewood – Parish Ranger Mrs S Tozer – Note Taker 12 members of the public</p>	
A30/19	<p>Apologies: None</p>	
A31/19	<p>Minutes To approve the Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on 26th June 2019. These were signed as a correct record. Agreed by 4 votes for.</p>	
A32/19	<p>BATs The Chair of BATs reported that the Allotment open day held in August went very well and was attended by both allotment tenants and residents. The Craft show which was held in Bradville Hall was also well attended and entries were received from both plot holders and residents. The Chair conveyed his thanks to the Parish Rangers for the rubbish collection and clearing of plots.</p>	

Signed Date

A33/19	<p>Financial Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water - GAD reported that the estimate for the water bill for the end of the year will be approximately £800. GAD recently visited the site and reported that he had witnessed tenants using hoses on at least four occasions and that this was unfair on other plot holders who were not using hoses. The committee had therefore considered the introduction of plunge baths at the tap points currently in situ and to ban all hoses across the allotment. The total cost of water will be calculated and divided pro rata per tenant based on the square metre of their plot. • GAD confirmed that SPC are not obliged to provide water. • It was agreed that the water will be turned off as from 1st November 2019 for the winter period. • To agree rent increase - GAD advised that from the extensive re-measurement of individual plots approximately 80% of plot holders will receive a reduction in their rent for the coming year. • Based on the water charges received so far rents will increase by 11p per square metre, the rent for 2020-2021 will be 38p per square metre inclusive of water charges. There will be no increase in rent. • Water usage charges will be applied to tenants annually commencing from the date of charging 19/3/2019. GAD advised that SPC are looking into applying for Section S106 Allotment Contribution monies (£1,875) related to the development of Oakridge Park. This money will be used to offset further purchases for the allotment. <p>SPC to source free water cans and water butts. Proposed rent increase. Agreed by 4 votes for. Proposed water charges to be implemented from anniversary date. Agreed by 4 votes for.</p>	
A34/19	<p>Tenancy Terms & Conditions</p> <p>GAD expressed his concern regarding complaints received from tenants on several occasions regarding the delay in removing tenants from uncultivated plots, the maintenance of livestock, gathering of groups on allotments plots and verbal abuse on the part of some plot holders. Consequently, some important revisions to the T & C are proposed.</p> <p>As from 1st October 2019 the deposit will be increased to £70 which can be paid in 2 x 6 monthly instalments. This deposit will be used should the tenant</p>	

Signed Date

	<p>vacate the plot and there is a need to rectify the plot before being offered to the next person on the waiting list. GAD expressed his thanks to the Rangers who have made a very good job of clearing plots which have become very overgrown.</p> <p>General Conditions Moving forward Tenants will not be permitted to keep any form of livestock on the allotment, however those who already have livestock can still keep them on their plot. Hose pipes are banned from use and the connections will be removed. Large groups of visitors will not be permitted onto the allotment plots and will be limited to 4 people at one time, including children.</p> <p>Cultivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of the plot must be cultivated, this rule will be enforced from the 1/10/19 and plots will be prepared over the winter period ready for sowing/planting. • SPC will purchase black matting, this can be used for covering uncultivated areas for allotment tenants in times of need. However, it will also be available to other tenants at a cost. Parish Rangers will be available to advise on this. • Liability Insurance – The Chair of BATs advised the Committee that they provide third party insurance to tenants via The Royal Horticultural Society Insurance. • GAD requested a copy of the insurance and reiterated that all holders should ensure they are covered as any claim for loss/damage of items cannot be made to SPC. <p>Agreed in favour of changes to the Terms & Conditions. Agreed by 4 votes for.</p>	<p>Chair BATs</p>
<p>A35/19</p>	<p>D1 Community Plot Estimates to update the Disabled plot have proven to be very expensive. Therefore, for the time being the plots will be rented out to people currently on the waiting list until a full size plot becomes available for them to rent. However, if a disabled person registers interest in the D1 plot SPC will take this into account and look into modifying the plot. BATs chair asked if the shed on the D1 plot could be relocated to another part of the allotment. GAD asked the PRs to survey and report back on the possibility of relocating the shed.</p>	<p>PRs</p>

Signed Date

A36/19	<p>Water Supply As discussed earlier in the meeting it was agreed by the Committee that plunge baths will be installed at each current tap point. Proposed change to plunge baths. Agreed by 4 votes for.</p>	
A37/19	<p>Parish Ranger Report The PRs advised the meeting that they have been very busy at the allotments tidying up and digging over plots in readiness for new tenants. The overhanging branch has now been removed by MKC. The monthly rubbish amnesty is working well and PRs have taken a considerable amount of rubbish to the tip. PRs requested that any rubbish left for collection is of a reasonable, manageable size. GAD advised that SPC hope to purchase a chipper in the future to help with the clearing of the on-site rubbish.</p>	
A38/19	<p>Waiting Lists and plot requests ST advised that SPC currently have 5 ½ plots vacant. There are a total of 15 people on the waiting list. Three of these residents are currently in the process of taking over the vacant plots and the rest of the plots will be offered to the next person on the waiting list when they have been brought up to an acceptable standard for renting. GAD advised that the changes to the T&Cs is designed to speed up the eviction of those in breach of the conditions.</p>	
A39/19	<p>Notice Board Update The notice board has now been installed at the allotments and the Chair of BATs was given the key to enable allotment notices to be put inside. This notice board will be shared with SPC.</p>	
A40/19	<p>Livestock Complaints As discussed earlier in the meeting no further livestock will be permitted on the allotments. Agreed by 4 votes for.</p> <p>Allotment Tenant Survey GAD reported that from the recent survey it would appear that very few allotment holders participate in the BATs meetings. GAD requested a copy of the BATs Agenda and Minutes of the last meeting. Chair of BATs to supply.</p>	Chair BATs

Signed Date

A BATS member queried whether the troughs if placed by the taps will encroach onto plots – LM advised that SPC will survey all locations of where the troughs are to be placed.
GAD advised the meeting that in the future survey stations will be installed. These will be used to accurately measure plot sizes.
It is proposed to undertake an aerial survey (drone) of the plots.
BATs Chair asked for financial details from 2017-2018. GAD advised that he had already provided these figures to him. But confirmed the following cost estimates

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/20*
Rents received	£1414	£2058	-
Parish ranger costs	£650	£2600	£1300
Admin Costs	£1560	1£1560	£780
Allotment maintenance	£463	£879	£316
Water	-	-	£434
Income-expenditure	-£1259	-£2981	-£2830

*Year to date figures (50% of year)

The BATS Secretary put forward the view that allotment tenants were being charged twice for the allotments since all the costs of running and maintaining the allotments were covered by the Parish precept. It was stated that the Parish Council do not charge parishioners for coach outings or provision for summer children events.

GAD advised that parishioners contributed to the coach trips and the Parish Council did not expect children to pay for the summer events they provide.

GAD also advised the meeting of the following:-

- SPC have previously provided BATS with an explanation regarding the collation of costs for running the allotments. Any further breakdown of costs would mean the introduction of cost centres and time sheets This was not felt to be necessary nor efficient within the current function of the office and that the estimates provided to BATS (above) were reasonable.
- The Allotments Act 1908 – 1950 – allows SPC can make reasonable charges for maintenance of the allotments.
- SPC's approach to charging and level of charges for allotments was very similar to other Parishes that provide allotments, within the Borough of Milton Keynes.

Signed Date

	In response to the chairman's remarks the BATS secretary accused the Parish Council of "being rotten to the core from the top to the bottom and corrupt and is a matter of fact."	
A41/19	Cesspit It was agreed that this would be emptied at the beginning of next season (March 2020)	
A42/19	Dates for next meetings: The following dates were agreed for future meetings: Wednesday 25 th March 2020 Wednesday 24 th June 2020 Wednesday 23 rd September 2020	

The meeting finished at 8.25pm

Signed Date