

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council

Allotments Committee Thursday 16th December 2021

MINUTES

Present Andy Rogers (AR) Steve Campkin (SC) Stefan Heathfield (SH)

The Clerk opened the meeting at 19:14 and asked members to elect a Chair.

Resolved: By unanimous agreement to elect AR as Chair

24/21 Apologies for absence and approval

NT apologised due to ill health. JH Did not attend and no apology was approved.

25/21 Declarations of Interest

SC declared he is a tenant of Gas House Fields.

26/21 To agree minutes of the last meeting January 2021 and sign.

Resolved: Proposed AR Seconded SC unanimous agreement to sign the minutes at the next meeting when NT would be present.

27/21 To review an update report from the Allotment Officer for Quarter 4 and consider recommendations.

Resolved 1) The Committee recommend to Council to

1) Advertise the waiting list ready for the new year.

2) Tenants day is booked for the Saturday after Easter and agreed at Council, the Committee will recommend pencil a backup day the following Sunday for bad weather or other eventualities.

Also to suggest request toilets and back up drinking water from the Salvation Army for this Event.

3) Queens Canopy Jubilee in SWAN to support ABC target for trees to be planted on the long fence of the main site with support from the handyperson services to tend if necessary. To also consider purchasing and planting fruit trees to compliment this. Members to recommend Council refer this to the FGP Committee to approve in line with the Councils procurement policy

4) To recommend to Council that it refers to FGP consider the costs, available grants from NAS and possibilities of a composting toilet to site to fit under the handyperson services aim of the Community Plan.

5) Security to request PCSO to patrol GHF over Christmas and New Year when possible. **Action SE** to follow up with PCSO and NHW.

Noted Remedial work Desilting has not been carried out

Resolved Action SE to follow up.

Noted Further remedial work required is

1) The bay tree near plots 55 BN1 onward s by neighbouring properties fences needs to be loped

2) The ready fusion pole by plot 55bn1 needs to be removed.

3) 2 unsafe sheds and some very old rusty staging need to be removed.

Resolved: By unanimous agreement to Council to refer the requirements to FGP.

28/21 To review a verbal report of the Clerk on the timetable for inspections 2022 and agree.

Resolved: By Unanimous agreement That a walk through for safety issues and prudent management is conducted by the Allotment Officer and Site Rep between 20th December and the 3rd January and then normal inspections resumes and then carries on the third or last week of the month from the end of January 2021 and subsequently each month.

29/21 To review an update of the Living Workshop.

Members discussed a previously circulated report and noted the project was ahead of schedule and well executed and currently running under the budget due to volunteer time and equipment.

Members were advised that tenants on the site had decided to dig the plot without permission – most likely with goodwill but that it had caused 9 hours extra work to put it back to a condition that meant the photography and filming could carry out sequentially. That the Allotment Officer had written a polite letter to all tenants to ensure they do not dig without permission on other plots and explaining its purpose again.

Resolved: By unanimous agreement **1)** AR will arrange for a weather proof sign to be printed and put on the plot to prevent and further confusion. **2)** SE will ensure that all tenants are made aware again in the next Tenants update. **3)** AR proposed and SC seconded and resolved unanimously for the project to begin to be written up and then given to CWG to review along with a plan to share the project updates onto the Council social media once the sign is in place.

30/21 To review an update of the Community Plot.

Members discussed a previously circulated report and an update from Site Rep Stefan Heathfield regarding an abandoned greenhouse on site which could be recycled for the community plot in the next financial year.

Resolved by unanimous agreement

- 1) It would be efficient and beneficial to use the event to also invite residents to sign up for the community plot. It would be a friendly day and ideal time to visit the site as a newcomer it would make it easier for new people to access the site and set a good running ground for the social aspirations the Council has for this site to improve wellbeing and mental health, an excellent opportunity for community engagement.
- 2) To correlate the plot with the living workshop between March 2022 and September 2022 when the plot will be dug with winter digging.

Members discussed that the community plot needs to be in use and recruiting, especially over the summer period.

Resolved:- Proposed AR and Seconded SC To agree the added workshop themes and rotate the attendance of Councillors to them

With this in mind to expand the living workshop within its allocated budget to use the Community Plot with the following workshops

Potted gardening

Herbs and bushes

Wildflower planting and attracting wild pollinators

Growing summer salads.

- 3) **To recommend to Council that they agree a children's Sunflower workshop on site and a visit to the allotments when the pumpkins are ready for harvest.**
- 4) Members agreed unanimously to investigate the possibility of repairing the greenhouse and to its storage on the path next to SH plot. Action SE to ensure greenhouse is safely moved with SH and mark out area on Community Plot and investigate any further costs for Council to consider as a recommendation at the next meeting

31/21 To agree the date of the next meeting as 16th December 2021 and items to be included on the Agenda.

Resolved :- By Unanimous agreement to correct date to 16th February 2021.

Items for Agenda- Fencing of GHF, Recycling of Fencing of nature reserve on Frog Island Shed Quick CIC.

There being no further items to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 20:03

Signature and Date

Appendix of Reports

Update Report from Allotment Officer

Living Workshop Powerpoint to stand with these minutes

Community Plot

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council

An update report from the Allotment Officer with recommendations.

Since the last Allotment Meeting,

1. **Autumn Invoicing update**
2. **Mental Health Policy update**
3. **Letting of Plots and Waiting List**
4. **Inspections**
5. **Remedial Works**
6. **Coded Locks**

1) **Annual Invoices**

Annual Invoices were sent in October and paid in full. 1 plot was returned and 1 plot is requested to be split from March as the tenant is looking to downsize due to mobility challenges. This tenant was very glad to reduce as he has been on site for years and otherwise would have had to give up the whole plot. This was a very positive outcome.

2) **Mental Health Policy Update**

2 Mental Health referrals have been received 1 has received a small plot from the Community Plot area and 1 has requested a larger plot and this has now been allocated and is awaiting payment.

3) **Letting of plots and Waiting Lists**

1 plot remains to be let out but is waiting for the new tenant to have availability to attend an induction. The waiting list is now at 1 person and its likely 2 plots will be ready to let out in the new year. It is there the allotment officer's recommendation that

The Committee recommend to Council to advertise the waiting list ready for the new year.

4) **Inspections**

The monthly inspection routine has been kept up to date and the administration is all in order.

2 plots were terminated with Chair approval and 1 plot remains outstanding for Chair approval to be terminated due to non-cultivation.

The December inspection falls over Christmas week when the office is closed. It is the Allotment Officers recommendation that a walk through for safety issues and prudent management is conducted by the Allotment Officer and Site Rep between 20th December and the 3rd January and then normal inspections resumes and then carries on the third or last week of the month from the end of January 2021 and subsequently each month.

5) **Remedial Works**

No update was received regarding the De silting works from Ashford Borough Council and reviews of the site do not suggest the work was completed other than the cutting back of undergrowth.

Remedial work required is

The bay tree near plots 55 BN1 onwards by neighbouring properties fences needs to be lopped
The ready fusion pole by plot 55bn1 needs to be removed.

2 unsafe sheds and some very old rusty staging need to be removed. The terms and conditions require that we pass the cost onto the departed tenant however it is a matter to refer to FGP.

Recommendation Members refer this to the FGP Committee to approve in line with the Councils procurement policy.

6) Coded Locks

Were changed as agreed and signs put up as agreed to remind tenants to scramble the locks. No further complaints have been received by the Allotment Officer.

Sarah Evans

Clerk Allotment Officer

10th December 2021

7) Tenant Open Day

This is booked for the Saturday after Easter, it is suggested that the Committee pencil a backup day for bad weather or other eventualities. Also to request toilets and back up drinking water from the Salvation Army for this Event.

Security

The Council have made the PCSO aware that the allotment site has a history of theft over the Christmas to new year period, alongside other measures the committee have taken, the Clerk has also requested the PCSO to patrol the area whenever possible and this has been agreed.

Queens Canopy Jubilee in SWAN

The Gas House Fields could host trees for the Queens Canopy and be tended by volunteers for the Community Plot or placed under the Handy Person Services in the Community Plan. This could be sited on the side of the main Field where the land is unusable due to the land drainage pipe and hard core sited there. A tree would still be able to thrive and there is less potential of damage as they would be protected.

Going forward

As the allotments are opened up and more community activities begin to happen the Council is going to need to assess the need for toilets. The National Allotment Society do advise composting toilets and grants are available.

Recommendation That the Allotment Committee recommend to Council that FGP consider the costs and possibilities of a composting toilet to site to fit under the handyperson services aim of the Community Plan.

Sarah Evans

Clerk, Allotment Officer

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council

Community Plot Update

The Clerks have requested FGP to agree the suppliers and labourers needed for the tools and shed to set up the community plot by March 2022. Alongside this an application has been agreed by Council to apply to KCC for the remaining matched funding for the project. The plot cannot be worked on until the grant is agreed due to the criteria of the grant application.

However as soon as possible that work can start the planned scheme of works is as below

Even up the ground and edge and border.

Rotavate and tidy

Put in shed and tools

Covid19 allowing recommend Council ask the EWG to work with the Allotment Committee to arrange the formal opening with the Mayor by end March 2022. With a cutting of ribbon and planting of wildflower seeds, if capacity allows also the planting of sapling trees along the border fence of the main plot.

Once the arrangements for the open days for tenants and back up date for bad weather have been finalised, it is the Allotment Officers recommendation it

It would be efficient and beneficial to use the event to also invite residents to sign up for the community plot. It would be a friendly day and ideal time to visit the site as a newcomer it would make it easier for new people to access the site and set a good running ground for the social aspirations the Council has for this site to improve wellbeing and mental health, an excellent opportunity for community engagement.

To correlate the plot with the living workshop between March 2022 and September 2022 when the plot will be dug with winter digging.

The community plot needs to be in use and recruiting, especially over the summer period. With this in mind it would be worthwhile expanding the living workshop project to cover short workshops on possible themes below: _

Potted gardening

Herbs and bushes

Wildflower planting and attracting wild pollinators

Children's Planting session working with the local primary school

Growing summer salads.

This could easily be prepared and run at minimal cost to not affect the living workshop budget, and improve Community Engagement in the site. The Allotment Officer and Site Rep feel equipped to run this but it would need commitment and attendance from the Allotment Committee to be a success. It would also require liaising with the EWG for the schools workshop, and to be balanced against the demands on the Council.

Recommendation:- To agree the added workshop themes and rotate the attendance of Councillors to them and to recommend to Council that they agree a children's workshop on site. Either over the Summer term after the Jubilee or in October at Pumpkin time.

Sarah Evans
Clerk Allotment Officer
10/12/2021