

Raglan Community Council
Notes from the Allotment Meeting held on Wednesday 16 October 2018
at Fellowship Centre in Raglan
at 7.00 pm

Present

Cllr Hazel Davies
Cllr Brian Willott (Chairman)

In attendance: Adrian Edwards Clerk
14 allotmentees

Agenda 1:- Apologies for absence.

Cllr's Martine Dorey and Sylvia Price

Agenda 2:- Overview of the previous year

The chairman gave those present an overview of the income and expenditure from the last three years. The income is £1,127.00 and the expenditure £3,322.00 It was explained that would give those present an understanding of the finances.

One tenant asked if that is a reflection for the last ten years. The clerk explained that it relates to finances that have accrued for the past 3 years. It was asked do the council have any further figures to provide the meeting. The chairman gave an explanation relating to the past income and expenditure.

The chairman gave those present an overview of the issues that were raised during the last twelve months, relating to the ongoing state and width of the footpaths between allotments, and waste material being disposed of in the hedges around the allotments. He explained that the ombudsman appeal has now been concluded, and the community council have revised the appeal procedure and this was adopted by the community council at the end of June.

A number of questions were asked about the income and expenditure in the council account. The clerk explained that all the income is recorded in the council's accounts along with the expenditure

One tenant said that the community council spent very little on the allotment sites, and the costs are not the norm.

One member asked if the allotment income and expenditure is an individual heading, in the community council accounts. Yes the allotments income and expenditure is recorded in the community council's accounts under individual headings. Recommendations from last open meeting were presented to the members of the community council, and the clerk read them out for those present along with the resolution of the community council in November 2017.

Extract from meetings in November 2017:

Conclusion:

- Proposed the rent from 2019 will be £20.00

- Any rent increase from 2019 should be locked for five years.
- No changes to the tenancy agreement for 2019 were proposed
- Letter/s sent to individual tenants where allotments are not maintained
- The vacant allotments should be sprayed and covered with a ground sheet.
- Install access only to authorised persons signs
- Install access closed sign from High Street
- Replace both field gates on both sites

Conclusion:

Agree.....	Proposed the rent from 2019 will be £20.00
Disagree...	Any rent increase from 2019 should be locked for five years.
Agree.....	No changes to the tenancy agreement for 2019 were proposed
Agree.....	Letter/s sent to individual tenants where allotments are not maintained
Agree.....	The vacant allotments should be sprayed and covered with a ground sheet.
Agree.....	Install access only to authorised persons signs
Agree.....	Install access closed sign from High Street
Agree.....	Replace both field gates on both sites
Disagree...	Breakdown of costs to the next meeting showing the income and expenditures for the last ten years.

One tenant explained that a break down of costs is part of the accounting process, and the tenants know what the allotment rent is being spent on and allotmentees are having value for money. It was requested for a vote to be taking to publish the income and expenditure on the community council website, so everyone can see was the rent is being spent.

The chairman asked what is it the tenants would like to see. It was explained this autumn it was agreed in the last allotment committee that skips will be provided to allow allotmentees to remove any unwanted waste, and to clear the debris from the hedge alongside the adjacent properties. It was explained that the community council have received a number of complaints about waste in the hedges and letters were sent out last year asking for this to be removed but the situation has remained. One tenant asked where this concern was, and the clerk explained. One allotmentee said the county council will provide skips free if seven or more request a skip and can't that be done. It was explained that county council doesn't offer that service any longer.

It was explained that if the allotmentees are not prepared to undertake the work the community council will need to engage the services of a contractor which will involve a cost. There was some debate relating to this and some of those present explained that they would do that work, and any soil that is removed can back fill the areas adjoining the footpaths.

One allotmentee asked about the agreement and she was unaware that this was part of the agreement, as she sent her agreement back. The clerk explained that allotmentees are asked to sign the back page and just return that page.

A number of allotmentees asked who the representatives on the sub-committee are and who voted them onto it. It was explained that this was one of the outcomes from the 2017 meeting.

Agenda 3:- Allotment management and cultivation.

The chairman stated that he was unsure what this agenda item is, this will be removed.

Agenda 4:- Subletting or dividing allotment plots and the insurance implication relating to subletting, and non-payment.

The chairman asked the clerk to give those present an understanding. It was explained that those who are named on the agreement or related to a tenant are covered. Those that are not named will not be covered. It was explained that anyone that there is still an issue with health and safety where tenants are still leaving items on the allotment plot which could be deemed as dangerous, ie forks, rakes and other equipment where someone could stand on it and be injured, and that could be someone that shouldn't be on the site. If this was the case there could be a claim. It was explained that it was noted that the sites were inspected and equipment is still lying on the ground that could cause an accident.

Agenda 5:- Allotment access and security

There was some debate about the security of the allotments. It was explained that one element has been concluded as the hand rail has been installed, but what can be classed as security. Who should be responsible for equipment and the produce, is it the community council or is it the allotmentee. If equipment is left in and around the site that is an allotmentees responsibility not the community council. The community council are not responsible for personal items of equipment. The produce that is grown is the sole responsibility of the allotmentee, the community council have placed signs on the access points into the allotment sites.

One allotmentee stated that the community council cannot be responsible for 24 hour security on both sites. One allotmentee explained that when there was a joint working committee no-one could agree what the wording should be. It was explained that signs have been installed and two of the signs have been removed. One person said that the allotmentees must live with some reasonability.

There was some discussion that there has been some vandalism over the last year. It was asked where the legal responsibility remains if someone should fall or trip as the footpaths are not 600mm wide. It was explained that allotmentees are required to keep any paths to a minimum 600mm and roadway included therein or abutting thereon reasonably free from weeds.

Agenda 6:- Update on the management of the allotment sites.

The chairman explained that the community council's allotment committee has met and two allotmentees also attended the committee meeting. A number of those present asked who those allotmentees are. The chairman informed those present that they are Mr Peter Williams and Mr Peter King.

Agenda 7:- Consider setting up a management group.

There was no enthusiasm to form a management committee, and it was thought that the sites are too small to form a management committee.

Agenda 8:- Any amendments to the statutory tenancy agreement.

No amendments were proposed

Agenda 9:- Amendments to the tenancy agreement

The chairman explained that there are no changes to the tenancy agreement for the next year, and the community council have revised the complaint policy. One allotmentee asked why the tenants have no input into this and why the allotmentees have not been made aware of it. There was some discussion around this. It was explained that the policy document is a policy to manage the way complaints are dealt with. The new policy document was agreed in June 2018.

Agenda 10:- Improvements proposed by current allotment tenants.

No improvements were proposed other than the issues relating to the path width and clearing the waste from within the hedges. A question was asked about the cutting of the hedges, and the maintenance will be the same as every other year. No further requests were made.

Agenda 11:- Consider the tenancy rent from April 2019.

The clerk explained that the Applications must be submitted by the first day of February in the year and the tenancy will be from 1 April to 31 March in any year. It was agreed in the 2017 meeting the rent will be £20 for the 2019 growing season 2019. The proposal that was presented to the members of the community council disagreed with freezing the rent for following five years. It was explained again that the community council are required to give twelve months' notice of any increase in the rent.

There was some discussion over the rent and if the community council are going to increase the rent for the 2020 growing season. All the allotmentees will be informed by the end of the calendar year if there is going to be an increase. The rental period is between 1st April and the 31st March.

One allotmentee asked about the skips the community council are considering, as he believes that they will take some filling with unwanted waste from the allotment sites.

One allotmentee asked if anyone has any timber for the path edging. There was some discussion around what can be used.

Agenda 12:- Agree the provisional date for 2019 as the date of next meeting.

The date of the next meeting will be the 15 October

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 19.45 hrs.

The date of the next meeting 24th October 2018

Signed by _____

Chairman Date 24 October 2018