

Raglan Community Council
Minutes of the Special Allotment Meeting held on
Wednesday 29th January 2014 at the Raglan Junior School at
7.15pm

Present

Cllr Dennis Brown
Cllr Ewen Brierley

Cllr Richard Moorby (Chairman)
Cllr Noel Porter

3546 In attendance:

Adrian Edwards, Clerk to the Council.

3547 Agenda Item 1:-Apologies for absence.

Cllr's Sylvia Price, Mr Chris Shaw and Mrs Louis Curley.

Cllr Richard Moorby opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. One member asked about the agendas which had not been received. It was explained that the agendas were sent out on the 23rd of the month.

3548 Agenda Item 2:- Overview of the previous year

The Clerk gave an overview of some of the points raised over the last year. He explained that the sub-committee have met on four occasions and the minutes are available on the council website. He explained that the sub-committees members inspected the allotments and the points below were highlighted.

Points raised during a Site inspection were:

Point: The width of the paths

- ***Concern was expressed by allotmentees about the width of the footpaths on the allotment site. A recommendation that the widths of the footpaths are reinstated to a minimum width.***

Point: Produce growing over or onto the path areas

- ***Members of the committee believed that any produce overgrowing footpaths should be cut back.***

Point: Top soil had been removed from the side of the paths to level the plots leaving a reduced level alongside the footpaths

- ***Concern was expressed by the sub-committee about the width of the footpaths and allotmentees reducing the width of the paths by encroaching onto the footpaths.***

Point: Unused equipment left on the side of the allotment plots

- ***Items are still being left on allotments.***

Point: Fences and hedges need maintenance or repair

- ***Estimates have been obtained and presented to the Council for funding. The first estimate was not considered and further estimates were obtained but they came back higher than the first estimate. No further action has been taken.***

Point: Consideration was given to parking to the west allotment site

- ***No action has been taken on this matter as it's been an issue for a number of years and no solution can be found.***

Point: Grass cutting adjacent to the west allotment site

- ***Contact MCC regarding ownership of the land.***

Points raised during Meetings were:

- ***If allotments become available, existing allotmentees should be given the opportunity to transfer allotments should they wish.***

Point: That a price is obtained for a skip to allow allotmentees to dispose of unwanted equipment and materials.

- ***Members of the Council would not agree to pay for a skip.***

The Chairman explained that he visited the allotment site before the meeting and he explained that there was unwanted machinery and gardening equipment left in the hedges and thought the council should provide a skip to clean the area up. This item will be raised at the next council meeting.

Point: A letter to be sent to a number of allotment holders asking them if they intend cultivating the land. It was agreed a time limit should be imposed.

- ***Concern was expressed by members of the sub-committee about the state of some allotments.***

Point: Allotmentees be asked if they wish to give up their allotment or reduce the size of their allotment giving people on the waiting list an opportunity to cultivate their own vegetables.

- ***Would any member like to reduce the size of their allotment or give up their allotment? The Clerk explained that he only has two individuals who have applied for an allotment. He explained since becoming Clerk to the Council he has only received 4 enquires and two have allotments. He also explained that several existing allotmentees have not reapplied to date. It was agreed that a reminder should be sent to the existing allotmentees extending the time to the 14th February. Mrs Compton explained that she would like to hand her plot back.***

This was agreed by everyone:

The Clerk explained the results from the survey:

| | | | |
|------|--|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. | If and when surplus funds are available, what are your priorities and how these funds might be spent? e.g. upkeep of fences, general allotment maintenance etc. | | |
| i) | Fences..... 11 For | | |
| ii) | Hedges..... 8 For | | |
| iii) | Equipment Hire..... 2 For | | |
| iv) | Rabbit fencing..... 1 For | | |
| v) | Grass cutting..... 1 For | | |
| | | | |
| 2. | Would you like the option of an individual shed or container within your allotment space? | Yes 7 | No 3 |
| | | | |
| 3. | Would you be interested in any of the following money saving ideas? | Yes 6 | No 7 |
| i) | seed and plant sharing | Yes 5 | No 3 |
| ii) | bulk buying of equipment e.g. canes, fleece | Yes 6 | No 3 |
| iii) | the sharing of larger pieces of equipment on a formal or informal basis? e.g. strimmers | Yes 5 | No 4 |
| iv) | an on-site communication notice board | Yes 5 | No 3 |
| v) | a specific area(s) to leave surplus plants and produce | Yes 5 | No 3 |
| | | | |
| 4 | Are you interested in fostering a more family friendly environment? If Yes what would you like? e.g. smaller allotment areas for families, sand pit, other ideas (please state) | Yes 4 | No 7 |
| 5. | Would you be interested in an annual "Best Kept Allotment Award" as an encouragement to keeping allotments tidy? | Yes 4 | No 6 |

One person explained that he has a half plot not a full plot. He stated that he has been asked to pay the full amount of £10.

The Chairman explained that some of the allotmentees have made a list of items outstanding and issues that need addressing. He explained, following the open meeting in late 2012 to discuss the future of the Raglan allotments, and the subsequent formation of the working group to meet with the Raglan Community Council's Allotment Committee we, the working group, would like to take this opportunity to update you with the proceedings from 2013.

- The Raglan Community Council Allotment Agreement needed amending and updating so that the terms and conditions made more sense. *We have given further suggestions but are waiting to see if these have been included*
- Issues of security and safety have been brought to the attention of the clerk and councillors, for example the broken gate and the fence on the top site. *The gate has been repaired but may need further attention. The fence still needs resolving.*

The Chairman explained this was explained earlier in the meeting.

- We have pressed for details of up to date accounts regarding the allotments and have requested that money received from allotment rent is to be reinvested into the allotment sites for maintenance. *Unresolved. It was agreed that recent accounts would be assessed, expenditure itemised and that information brought to a future meeting.*
The clerk explained that the income and expenditure was identified in the open meeting and one of the first sub-committees.
- We wrote and requested distribution of a questionnaire designed to find out what the allotment holders wanted from the allotments and where they would like the money from rent to be spent. *Awaiting finalised written summary of the results from this survey and actions to be taken.*
The clerk explained this was presented to the sub-committee in November.
- We have researched possible storage containers for inclusion on individual plots, if wanted, and which are deemed acceptable to the Allotment Sub-committee. *Mrs Danzigar passed this information on to the clerk on November 26th in time for the December 18th council meeting. Awaiting a decision.*
The clerk explained this is included in the tenancy agreement for 2014.
- We have looked into the implications of setting up an allotment association. Due to the financial costs, and legal and administrative responsibilities which would be attached to any formation of an association it was decided that it is not a viable option for Raglan allotments. *Resolved:*
The clerk explained that an allotment association would be able to apply for grants and other funding which the council cannot apply for.
- We have impressed on the clerk and committee the need to keep plots in cultivation rather than allowing them to become overgrown. *Further action required in 2014.*
- It has been agreed that rents will be kept at their current rates for 2014. *Resolved.*
The Chairman asked those present if improvements are needed the rent would need to be increased to £15.00 and asked for any objections. After some debate it was:

Agreed to increase the ground rent to £15.00 from 2015.

- Following June's site meeting and the issue regarding the shrinking path. *Still needs to be resolved.*
The Chairman explained this was explained earlier in the meeting.
- Realistically priced plot markers. Unresolved. The Chairman explained this was explained earlier in the meeting.
- Health and Safety signage. Unresolved.
The Chairman explained this was explained earlier in the meeting, the council will obtain signs.
- Waiting list transparency. Unresolved.
The Chairman explained this was explained earlier in the meeting.
- Clarification of boundaries. Resolved.

Recommendations for the future

- The allotment sub-committee and clerk carry out an annual inspection of the allotments, preferably in summer, to assess any potential maintenance issues that may have arisen.
- Improved communication between the allotment sub-committee, clerk and allotment holders in order to address any problems.
- A written summary of results from the questionnaire to be made accessible to allotment holders.
- Action to be taken on points addressed by the questionnaire.
- To resolve outstanding actions from 2013.

Agenda Item 3:-Consider the management of the allotment sites.

3(a) Consider appointments onto working group with the Community Council subcommittee.

It was explained that the allotmentees on the working group have stood down from the committee.

The Chairman asked those present if anyone wished to join the working committee. No one in attendance volunteered to become a member. It was agreed that the council will remain with the sub-committee.

3549 Agenda Item 4:-Amendment to the statutory tenancy agreement.

No further amendments made since the ones agreed in the sub-committee.

3550 Agenda Item 5:-Set up an Improvement Management Plan.

The sub-committee will consider any changes and inform the allotmentees in due course.

3551 Agenda Item 6:-Consider the tenancy rent

This item was considered in the debate above: it was:

Resolved: to increase the ground rent to £15.00 from 2015.

3552 Agenda Item 7:-Agree date of next meeting

The dates will be confirmed by the subcommittee Chairman over the next several weeks.

3553 The Chairman thanked members for attending. The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed by _____

Chairman Cllr

Date 26th February 2014