

WORKINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the meeting of Workington Town Council Allotments Committee held at 10am Thursday 24 October 2013 in the Town Hall, Workington.

C Armstrong (chair)	Present
B Cannon	Present
W Bacon	Absent
J Bracken	Present
E Johnsen	Present
M Jones	Present
A Lawson	Absent
B Miskelly	Present
J Wright (vice chair)	Present
(Vacancy)	

A13.28. Apologies

No apologies were received.

A13.29. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

A13.30 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

None

A13.31 Minutes of the previous meeting

The committee received the minutes of the meeting on 22 August 2013

Resolved: To affirm them as a true record.

The chair brought forward one aspect of agenda item 9, so that it may be considered by the full committee.

A13.32 Water supply

The clerk reported that there were problems with the water supply to Beeby Street and Annie Pit/Feenans, and that there had been problems at Cranbourne Street over the summer. There were leaks at these sites, which due to the layout of the site and its supply pipes, were proving

very difficult to locate. As a result the risk to the council's resources was quite high, and required constant monitoring. Beeby Street was a particular problem because the leak would appear to be under the road, which would normally be United Utilities' responsibility, but because of the peculiar land ownership arrangements there, may be under Derwent and Solway Housing Association land. The latest bills were for over £1,000 despite the monitoring by council staff.

All water supplies were now turned off for the winter.

Considering the risk, the committee considered possible mitigations site by site.

Resolved: To deal with water supply differently at each site as follows:

Beeby Street	disconnect supply and help tenants with water collection.
Newlands Lane	install water dipping troughs
Cranbourne Street	install water dipping troughs
Park Lane	install water dipping troughs
Mountain View	disconnect supply and help tenants with water collection.
Annie Pit/Feenans	install a combination of dipping troughs and water collection facilities
Stoneleigh	install water dipping troughs
Northside	install water dipping troughs

A13.33 Collection of Rent

Three tenants were identified as still being in arrears for 2013.

Resolved: To take steps to repossess the plots where arrears were still owed.

A13.34 Bee Project

The committee received a presentation from Mr M Barnes on a proposal for a sustainable public beehive project in Workington. The project would require lottery funding, and although originally planned for three hives per site, might be amended if it was felt this could strengthen its resilience as a project.

It was suggested that one or two larger sites might be easier to maintain and keep secure.

Contact had been made with Derwent & Solway HA about their Workington Food Project

Borough Council staff may be able to offer advice on successful funding bids.

Resolved: To support the project and to consult with the Borough Council over the allocation of land from the Allotment Estate.

A13.35 Noticeboards

The Senior Estate Worker reported that he had found sites and noticeboards requiring around £5,000 total spend.

Resolved: To authorise this from the Allotments Development budget.

A13.36 Fencing

The clerk reported that fencing quotes had been sought for projects at Feenans, Annie Pit and Newlands. The latter had been in response to advice from the Police Crime Prevention Officer. The projects were estimated at around £55 per linear metre, with gates coming in around £110 per linear metre.

Resolved: To proceed with fencing schemes at Feenans, Annie Pit and Newlands Lane, requiring up to 350m of new fencing and up to 36m of gates from the Allotments Development budget.

A13.37 Longer Term Occupancy of the Allotment Estate

The clerk reported that a report from the Borough's property officer was still awaited. It was understood that there were staffing changes at the Borough and these might contribute to the delay.

A13.38 Review of the Sites

a) Northside

There was concern about the continued presence of dog breeders on the site and the dilapidated look of the external fencing. It was suggested that a revamped Northside site would be better for growers and would make a suitable venue for the bee project.

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council that the tenants be given notice to quit this winter, allowing the site to be comprehensively revamped for garden plots.

b) Soapery

The Senior Estate Worker reported that he had cleared four plots and was marking them out ready for letting to new tenants.

There was considerable discussion about incursions on to the site by residents of Hall Park View who were not tenants. It had been suggested that an easement might be sold to some property owners on Hall Park View. This idea was rejected, in favour of better enforcement of

the site's boundaries. Notices to cultivate should be used to ensure tenants to abide by agreements.

Resolved: To put a lock on the side gate.

Resolved: To issue notices to cultivate where appropriate.

c) Stoneleigh

The Clerk reported that the boundary to the school field had at last been secured. It was noted that the site seemed unlikely now to be a target for Cumbria County Council's Extra Care scheme. This meant that the council could now cautiously move towards re-occupying the site in partnership with the remaining tenants.

The ground was very wet, but perhaps raised beds could be deployed.

Resolved: To cost out improvements to the site for approval at a future meeting.

d) Mountain View

Further investigations were ongoing into the occupancy of the site – identifying plots and plot holders and bring more land back into production.

e) Newlands Lane

A tenant had requested a skip for the disposal of several items of waste. It was suggested that it would be more appropriate to explore the possibility of extending the garden waste scheme to the site.

Resolved: To contact Allerdale Borough Council officers to discuss the possibility of using the garden waste scheme. A skip would not be provided at this stage.

f) Park Lane

There had been a number of thefts on the site which had been reported to the police.

g) Cranbourne Street

It was noted that Plot 21 was still vacant and required clearing out and re-letting.

h) Annie Pit/Feenans

There was nothing new to report here, other than acknowledgment of the ongoing issues of site security and the preparation of vacant plots for re-letting.

h) Beeby Street

No further issues were reported.

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A13.39 Other matters for future discussion.

Priority must be given to a budget plan to meet the requirements set by Full Council for committees.

The bee project and ownership of the estate should be carried forward to the next meeting.

It was noted that Mr G Turner had recently allowed the council to take over some redundant site fencing at no cost. It was suggested that some non-pecuniary gesture of thanks be made for this very generous act.

The meeting closed at 12.18pm