

WORKINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the meeting of Workington Town Council Allotments Committee held at 10am Thursday 22 August 2013 in the Town Hall, Workington.

C Armstrong (chair); J Wright (vice chair); G Humes B Cannon; A Lawson	P Ap Ab Ab Ab	B Miskelly W Bacon M Jones E Johnsen J Bracken	Ab Ab P P P
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A13.18. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr J Wright.

A13.19. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

A13.20. Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

None

A13.21. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 3 July 2013 were received and affirmed as a true record.

A13.22 Occupancy 2013

The Clerk reported that occupancy rates were improving, with a number of long term waiting list residents now offered sites. There would be a push once the Estate Worker was in position to bring as many plots back into production as possible. Collection rates had also been high with only a small handful of non-payers being left to chase.

There was still an unmet need for around 60 plots in the town (perhaps requiring an area of upto two football pitches or more – depending on plot size).

It was queried whether the Town Council had a duty to meet allotment demand in the town and the clerk confirmed that it was one of the Town Council's few statutory duties under the Smallholding and Allotments Act 1908.

Resolved: To note the clerk's report

A13.23 Estate Worker

The clerk reported that Joe Copsey had been recruited as Senior Estate Worker and would be starting work on 16 September. He would be based in the Town Hall but would be mostly working in the field.

A13.24 Noticeboards

The clerk reported that he had been looking at costs for new noticeboards around the sites. These would be used for informing tenants about developments and other news, as well as spreading best practice.

Resolved : To allow the purchase of vandal-proof noticeboards for the various sites – in the region of £300 per noticeboard plus fitting.

A13.25. Longer Term Occupancy of the Allotment Estate

The clerk reported that he had met with property officers at Allerdale Borough Council to discuss the practicalities of transferring the town's allotments over to the Town Council. There were a number of issues to consider, not least the extent of some of the sites and what access arrangements could be put in place. Mountain View for instance was a sprawling site with no common access area. Cranbourne Street, Moss Bay might be considered as development land. The Borough Council had also asked if other sites would be included – Rose Hill, Harrington; Siddick; Moss Bay. These would be included in the Property Dept's report to Borough management.

It was noted that other sites exist around the town that might be suitable for occupation by allotments. It was also noted that some information had been received about the Zebras site which may be worth following up.

Resolved: To await ABC report on sites.

Resolved: To follow up other leads with the Zebras and the Housing Associations

A13.26. Review of the Sites

The committee considered the day-to day management issues of the following sites

a) Annie Pit

The clerk reported that he had re-let a number of vacant plots on the site, but a handful remained that required more preparation.

The land behind the billboard on Harrington Road was overgrown and required attention.

Plots 1-5 were good open, vegetable plots and should be retained in that condition.

Resolved: To contact JC Decaux about the land behind the billboard.

b) Beeby Street

It was noted that there may be a leak on the site as the water bills seemed to be higher than expected.

A tenant had recently died and his sons, who had been working the plot asked if they might continue to do so. It was agreed that such a request would be treated on a case by case basis, and on this occasion it was agreed to allow them to continue to work the plot in their own name.

Resolved: To investigate the possibility of a leak

Resolved to allow the deceased tenant's sons to take on the tenancy

c) Cranbourne Street

There seemed to have been a problem with water, perhaps related to a tenant leaving a tap running, which made identifying a leak very difficult. The water had been turned off as a precaution and would be investigated further. Access to some individual plots remained a problem because of high fences and locked gates.

d) Mountain View

There was nothing new to report beyond the issues previously identified, which would be addressed once the estate worker was in place as resources allowed.

e) Newlands Lane

There had been complaints about petty pilfering and disrespectful behaviour between tenants. A letter had been sent out by the clerk reminding all tenants of their responsibilities and the reasonable expectations for their behaviour.

f) Park Lane

It was noted that BT had still not replaced the telegraph pole they had discussed several months ago.

g) Soapery

The clerk was considering the best way to manage parking on the plot as there had been a number of complaints from other tenants. How serious a problem this actually was would be investigated as resources allowed.

The vacant plots were now badly overgrown and these would require strimming and letting for effective pest control.

h) Stoneleigh

There was nothing new to report here, other than acknowledgment of the ongoing issues of site security and the future of the site.

h) Northside

Water continued to be an issue.

Resolved: To turn off supply when possible.

A13.27 Other matters for future discussion.

Mr Newby and Mr Barnes from Newlands Lane spoke to the meeting about their idea for a bee project. They would like to see three hives on each site, to encourage the regeneration of the natural bee population. They will seek National Lottery funding but would like the Town Council to identify 6m x 3m areas on each site, and one site for a 'beebase' hut. The project would include equipment and training for volunteers.

Resolved The matter would be brought to the next meeting for consideration.