

Environment and Allotments Committee



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Minutes of the Environment and Allotments Committee Meeting held on the 29th September 2020, 7:00pm, via Zoom

EA/19-20/5/1

Present

Cllr K Robinson, Cllr H Maxfield, Cllr P Waring, Cllr J Waring, Cllr G Burnett, Mr D Plimbley (Swan Bank Allotments)

In attendance: Sue Davies, Town Clerk

One member of the public was present.

EA/19-20/5/2

To receive and consider apologies for absence

Mr Steve Blaze had sent apologies of absence to the Clerk.

EA/19-20/5/3

To note declarations of Member's Interests

None declared

EA/19-20/5/4

To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th July 2020.

The minutes of the meeting of the 13th July 2020 were received and approved by the Committee.

EA/19-20/5/5

Public Participation – A period not exceeding 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions or submit comments.

No members of the public present.

EA/19-20/5/6

Matters arising not covered elsewhere

a) Footpath – Poplar Drive/Windmill Ave

It was agreed to remove this item from future agendas as it is likely to be quite a long time before the registration will be considered by Staffordshire County Council.

EA/19-20/5/7

Allotments update:

a) Lamb Street – To receive an update

Mr Plimbley provided an update:

There has been an issue with ensuring allotment holders abide by the rule of six Covid-19 regulation.

Cllr H Maxfield enquired how the progress of the land transfer from Newcastle-Borough Council as some clarity is needed regarding responsibilities for the hedge and grass cutting since hedge cutting contracts have passed to Staffordshire County Council from the Borough Council.

b) Crown Bank – To receive an update

The Clerk updated that there has been a fire on plot 18 as a consequence of a break in to the site via the gate. There is no apparent link to the previous fire and the incident has been reported to the police.

c) To receive and discuss a draft bee-keeping policy from the clerk.

The Committee debated a draft bee-keeping policy presented by the Clerk. Points raised were generally favourable to beehives and that an application should not be too complicated. Mr Plimbley informed that Lamb Street plan to just have one beehive managed on their site rather than on individual plots. Cllr Dymond questioned whether the Lamb Street hive currently complies with the policy and Cllr Robinson responded that the policy needs adopting first.

The Clerk asked the committee members to contact her with any further queries before the policy progresses to Full Council.

Mr Plimbley asked if policies for other live stock could be considered.

EA/19-20/5/8

Ranger Report: To receive an update from the Clerk

The Clerk provided an update on the ranger activity, including. It was agreed that a more detailed breakdown be brought to the next meeting.

EA/19-20/5/9

Play Areas and Greenspace: To discuss progress and actions

Cllr Robinson reported that the Town Deal has submitted for money to be spent on Clough Hall and Chinky Park.

The Clerk reminded the committee that there had been a proposal to look at a smaller park and identify some improvements. Cllr Robinson raised that the Town Council could support the Town Deal monies and provide for one of the projects.

The budget currently only has £1000 in this budget line, but it was highlighted that funding might be available.

It was agreed that this should be a standing item on the agenda.

Action: The Clerk to progress a meeting.

EA/19-20/5/10 Footpaths – To receive an update and agree actions required.

The Clerk asked for the committee to consider the purpose of the working party. The need for the definitive map was stressed. It was agreed that such a meeting would need to be face to face and that a small meeting could be arranged in the Town Hall.

EA/19-20/5/11 Parish Baskets and Planting: To discuss planting 2020-21

Planting schemes in the parish were discussed. The Borough Council have kindly watered the hanging baskets outside the Town Hall this year. It was noted that the borough watering of the baskets at the lights was insufficient this year and this has been reported regularly by Cllr J Waring. The Clerk agreed to pursue this.

The planting in the central part of Boat Horse Lane was raised by Cllr Dymond. It was felt that this area needs attention. The clerk was asked to write to the Borough Council to ask for this area to be tidied and Cllr J Waring agreed to chase this as part of her role as portfolio holder at NULBC. The need for a road closure was noted as a difficulty in dealing with this area.

Ideas for this area in the future were discussed. It was felt that a redesign which requires less maintenance was suggested. Anything that grows tall is unsuitable due to blocking vision. It was suggested that a membrane covered with chipping would look tidier with perhaps a sculpture instead of flowers. A poppy sculpture was felt a good option due to the proximity of the Remembrance Gardens.

Action: The Clerk and Cllr J Waring to progress and report to the next meeting.

EA/19-20/5/12 To discuss progression of an Environmental Policy

It was agreed that the Clerk should progress a meeting with an expert for to enable progression of this policy. The Clerk agreed to arrange this and to invite Cllr J Smith of Alsager Town Council to meet with the committee.

Action: The Clerk to progress.

EA/19-20/5/13 Budget Review: To receive a budget update.

The Clerk provided a budget update to the committee. The budget has not been spent to date, but the projects are still planned. It was noted that the asbestos removal is costing £1000 less than predicted. The Clerk suggested that the £500 allocated for the ranger equipment.

EA/19-20/5/14 Chair and Clerk's Items

None raised.

EA/19-20/5/15 Future Agenda Items

- Live stock policies for the allotments
- To consider ways of reducing single use plastics in the town – next meeting
- Community Orchard schemes
- Wild flower meadows and bee gardens
- Off road biking problems (Added by Cllr Burnett)

EA/19-20/5/16 Date of Next Meeting: 26th November 2020

The meeting ended at 20:30pm.