

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS WORKING PARTY
Held on Tuesday 30th June 2020 at 10.30am via Zoom

Present: Cllrs Mr R Flemming, Mrs A Hall, Mr M Hall, Mr B Walker

In attendance: Hazel Thomasson (Principal Officer/Meeting Host), Rachel Parrish (Project Officer)

The Principal Officer signed-in all attendees then left the meeting

Election of chairman – Cllr Mrs Hall was nominated and agreed

Appointment of minute taker – RP to take minutes

Apologies for absence – All members were present

Minutes of last meeting, held 26th February 2020 – Agreed as a correct record

Covid-19 update:

RP updated Members on matters arising since the start of lockdown on 23rd March 2020 during which time there had been 7 new tenants at Woodland Avenue (Plots 4, 5, 22A, 35B, 40B, 41A & 50) and one new tenant at Blackways Meadow (Plot 11).

The issuing of formal notices to carry out work or to terminate a tenancy had been put on hold during lockdown, at Members' request. Following discussion, it was

Agreed - that notification procedures be resumed.

Woodland Avenue updates:

Waiting list

RP reported 20 people on the waiting list, 6 of whom were also on the waiting list for Blackways Meadow

Plot 22A (item 1)

Knotweed was reported on the plot in May 2020. HBBC was informed and is to treat as previously. New tenant was informed before confirming tenancy agreement. Estates Officer is liaising with HBBC on this matter.

Plot 22A (item 2)

A request had been received for a refund of deposit to a previous tenant. Following discussion, it was

Agreed - that the former tenant receive a refund of 50% of the deposit paid.

Plot 28A

The tenant of 28A had requested that Plot 1 be swapped for Plot 31A which was to become vacant. There had been no communication from the tenant of Plot 1. Following discussion, it was

Agreed - that no plots be swapped.

Plot 41A

Complaints about this plot had been received by 2 different plot holders in May and June. The tenant had been contacted informally by email. Following discussion, it was

Agreed - that the tenant of Plot 41A be given notice to improve the plot by the end of August 2020, after which time, if insufficient improvement had been made, Members would consider issuing a notice to terminate the tenancy.

Plot 43B

Had been noted as in need of attention on a staff plot inspection. The tenant had been contacted informally by email. Following discussion, it was

Agreed - that the tenant be requested to improve the plot by the end of August 2020.

Plot 46A

RP reported that a bonfire had been lit on the plot, contrary to requests to not light fires while coronavirus measures were in force. A complaint had been received from another plot holder. Contact with the tenant revealed ongoing breaches of plot use. A letter was sent to the tenant and a response received giving assurances that the breaches would not happen again.

Plot 50

A request had been received to build a 2.5m x 6m combined shed and greenhouse. Following discussion, it was

Agreed - that, provided there was no other structure on the plot, permission be given for a combined shed-greenhouse measuring no more than 2.5m x 6m, with each section measuring no more than 3m, in accordance with the maximum dimensions given in the Allotment Rules & Regulations.

Plot 53A

Had been noted as in need of attention on a staff plot inspection. Telephone contact had been made with the tenant. Plot to be monitored.

Use of plot for leisure/social purposes

An inquiry had been received from a potential tenant. Members discussed provisions in the Allotment Rules & Regulations which might be relevant if raised as an issue in the future.

Dogs on site

A complaint had been received from a plot holder. Signs to be put up reminding tenants of the rules relating to dogs on site.

Site padlocks

The Estates Officer had reported that gate padlocks were frequently being left unlocked and, in cases, missing. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the ongoing cost of replacements was unsustainable. Allotment Rules & Regulations require padlocks to be locked every time gates are used. The Principal Officer had invited suggestions for alternative security arrangements. Signs were to be put up as an interim measure. Following discussion, it was

Recommended - that the cost, installation and other implications of introducing a keypad system on the allotment site gates be investigated.

Blackways Meadow updates:

Waiting list

There were 9 people on the waiting list, 6 of whom were also on the waiting list for Woodland Avenue.

Dogs on site

A complaint had been received by a tenant in March. Posters had been put up reminding tenants of their responsibilities if taking dogs on site. No further complaints had been received.

Private allotments group

The new secretary of the Blackways Meadows Allotments Association had been in contact by email to introduce themselves.

Other matters:

Tenancy minimum age

The adopted Allotment Rules & Regulations 2020 did not stipulate a minimum age for tenants. An inquiry had been received from a student aged under 18. Following discussion, it was

Recommended – that the Allotment Rules & Regulations be amended at item 2.3 (a) to include the words ‘and be aged 18 or over’

Best allotment/Most improved plot awards

Judging for these awards had not gone ahead due to Covid-19 restrictions. It was

Agreed – that no further action be taken at this time.

Burbage Gardening Club

RP gave an update on the Club’s arrangements for a new, long-term lease with the Parish Council for the use of the Club store at Woodland Avenue Allotments.

Date and time of next meeting

It was agreed that a meeting be called when the chairman next felt there were matters to be discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.22am