

Notes of the meeting of the Allotment Management Liaison Meeting held on 10th January 2019 in Committee room 2 of the Spetchells Centre.

In attendance: - Councillor Russ Greig (Chair); Councillor Andy Gill; Councillor Angie Scott; Paul Muto; Julia Muto; Amy Miller; Karen Cumberledge; Ami Cumberledge; Christine Hewitt; Pauline Cant- Prudhoe Town Council (P.T.C.) Administrative Officer.

The Meeting was opened by the Chair who asked those present to introduce themselves briefly and identify their role within the Prudhoe Allotment Association (P.A.A.) Introductions were made and it was noted that those present had the following roles within the P.A.A.: -

Paul Muto- Chair Person; Christine Hewitt- Secretary; Julia Muto- Minutes Secretary; Amy Miller-Social Media/PR; Karen Cumberledge-Treasurer; Ami Cumberledge-Stores Controller.

Budget & Expenditure

The meeting reviewed the previously circulated Allotments Budget & Expenditure 2018-19 and it was noted that further clarification was required in relation to the £449.24 committed to Northumbrian Water Ltd. relating to Edgewell Allotments.

Following discussion, it was confirmed that: -

1. The £750 committed for the Castle Dene allotments boundary fence would be spent this financial year, as an invoice was awaited – billing will be submitted in phases a further £4,500 will be required to be budgeted in forthcoming years to complete this significant task.
2. The clearance of Castle Dene allotments budget (£500) will still be required as although no invoice has been submitted it was awaited.
3. The budget sum of £500 for the beds at the Community Allotment will not be required.
4. The budget sum of £500 for the footpath to Castledene still required.
5. The budget sum of £62.50 is required for the gate of Redwell Allotments.

It was further noted, following an update from the treasurer, that the stated income from rent required revision as it would be £3,482. The treasurer confirmed that as far as she was aware, all invoices had been received, and subject to those items already discussed, no further invoices were anticipated within the 2018/19 budget year.

In so far as planned works for the future budget were concerned the meeting asked for it to be noted by P.T.C. that there would be an ongoing capital requirement for the works to the fence at Piggy Bank and that capital provision would also be needed to address the parking issue at Stonyflat site.

Northumberland Estates (Castle Allotments) rent

The meeting was advised that notification had been received from Northumberland Estates that the rent charged on the Castle Allotments site would double. Concern was expressed about this and the meeting agreed that the Town Council should be requested to write to Northumberland Estates requesting that future rent increases

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would be in line with inflation. It was also suggested and agreed that enquiries should be made of Northumberland Estates regarding the site that was historically designated/pledged as allotment land near to the Orchard Hill Area, as part of the Castlefield Estate Development plans, (it is believed that the site has sufficient land to accommodate 10 allotments).

Water Meter Readings

Following discussion around water usage and meter readings and the anomalies around estimated readings and bills it was agreed that all site officials would submit to the Town Council Officer quarterly water meetings on 1st April, 1st July, 1st October and 1st January, it was acknowledged that in some cases this is not always an easy task physically and that the location of some of the meters was not clear, it was agreed that the Committee members would assist their colleagues where necessary and that enquiries would be made of the water board to ascertain the precise location of the water meters.

Allotment Management Roles and Allotment Management Agreement

A discussion took place around the wording of the allotment management agreement and whether a full self-management / devolved management agreement would be feasible enabling the full retention of rents by the association as the current arrangement of the association collecting rents, paying the monies over and receiving one third back was cumbersome. Concerns were raised about the insurance implications for the association of going entirely self-managed, and the general consensus at this stage was that the P.A.A. were not minded to have a full devolved/self-management situation but that the agreement could be reviewed and updated.

P.C. agreed that she would look at the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners website and explore best practise on devolved/self-management to inform further discussions.

Disputes with allotment neighbours

Recent concerns about a complaint from a neighbouring property owner following a fire on Castle Dene allotments took place, the situation will be kept under review. The consensus of the meeting was that such matters were best referred to the Town Council as landlord, to attempt to resolve and mediate, rather than individual plot holders or Committee members becoming involved, in recognition of the fact that the Committee were volunteers who enjoyed allotment gardening as a leisure pursuit.

Prudhoe Town Show

Councillor Greig confirmed that arrangements were underway for the Town Show which would take place on 7th and 8th September 2019

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PRUDHOE GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

Date 07th February, 2019

Prudhoe Town Council
The Spetchells Centre
58 Front Street
Prudhoe
NE42 5AA

For the attention of the Town Clerk
CC Pauline Cant, Allotment Officer

Dear Sarah

The problem of parking and the complaints generated from this at one of the town's allotment sites was raised at the latest liaison meeting on 10th January, 2019.

As a result we, the committee of the Prudhoe Gardeners' Association, request that Prudhoe Town Council Investigate and provide a dedicated parking area on the grassed area next to the Stonyflats Allotments to be used by parking permit issued to allotment holders only to solve this problem.

Name: *Christine F Hewitt*

Secretary, Prudhoe Gardeners' Association