

HANSLOPE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Allotment Committee held on Thursday 13th July 2023, 2pm the Pavilion, Hanslope Recreation Ground, MK19 7LG.

Minutes

Present: P Cook (Chair) R Simpkins
F Scott I Laurie
G Merry (recording) Members of Public: 0

23.020 Appointment of Chairman for next 4-year term.

MOTION: To elect Mrs Pat Cook as chairman of the committee, NOMINATED by Mr Laurie SECONDED by Ms. Scott and AGREED.

23.021 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Proctor

23.022 Declarations of interest

Ms. Scott, Mr Laurie and Mrs Cook declared an interest as allotment tenants themselves.

23.023 Minutes of the last meeting

MOTION: To agree the minutes of the meeting held April 13th 2023, PROPOSED by Ms. Scott SECONDED by Cllr Simpkins and AGREED

23.024 Public Participation: No items.

23.025 Admin.

- i. **Vacancies, waiting list and payments:** Cllr Simpkins advised there was one person on the waiting list and one application, so likely to be no availability. All payments were up to date.
- ii. **Review of Allotment Rules:** Cllr Simpkins had amended the rules in line with what was agreed at the last meeting and had circulated these to all tenants for comment. There had been no issues so the new rules were proposed. It was discussed and reiterated that no new glass greenhouses were permitted but any pre-existing ones could stay.
MOTION: To agree to implement the revised rules PROPOSED by Cllr Simpkins SECONDED by Mrs. Cook and AGREED.
- iii. **Rents:** In 2018 it had been agreed by the tenants that for 5 further years, the annual increase would be 10p/pole/per year until £2/pole is reached. The clerk requested clarity on this and it was agreed the £2/pole limit will be the deciding factor. Until then the 10p increase will be implemented, taking rents to £1.70/pole in 2024.
MOTION: To agree to set the rent for 2024 at £1.70/pole PROPOSED by Cllr Simpkins SECONDED by Mr. Laurie and AGREED.
- iv. **Tool Hire Procedure:** Mr. Laurie stated the system is working well with few clashes in requests for tools. Hiring is not possible when he is away, unless another committee member happens to be available/willing. A heavier duty brush cutter is needed. All tools will need to be serviced at the end of the season and the clerk agreed to make the arrangements.

- v. **Progress on CAD:** Mr. Laurie distributed copies of the updated CAD which is still a work-in-progress. Plot sizes are accurate so far, with measurements rounded-up.

23.026 Maintenance

- i. **Maintenance of Machines:** Mrs Cook recommended a Honda 4-stroke brush cutter with metal blade and this was discussed & agreed @ £388 + VAT. It was agreed advice on suppliers would be sought before buying.
MOTION: To agree the purchase of the brush cutter as above PROPOSED by Mrs Cook SECONDED by Cllr Simpkins and AGREED.
- ii. **Communal Spaces and plots:** The plot south of 75 had been cleared of rubbish and is now a communal plot. It was agreed this would not be tenanted but the tenants from surrounding plots would be invited to use it for planting if they wished, in exchange for keeping it strimmed and weed-free. It was agreed the clerk would send a general email to all tenants, reminding them that they are responsible for keeping the areas between plots weed-free, in addition to their own plot and if they have chicken wire fences, these must also be kept clear and tidy. The communal area adjacent to plot 32 is mowed by the contractors but tenants do not all know it is a communal area. It was agreed Mrs Cook will send the clerk some wording for signage for this area.
- iii. **'Back' Fence and gates:** The gate has not been fixed and the contractor has advised it is a larger job than first thought. The concrete post will need digging out and replacing. It was agreed the clerk would discuss with him as to why this had happened, as he had been the original installer, prior to obtaining a quote. It had been suggested that gaps-only in the back fence could be repaired, with new fencing just inside the current fence line. It was discussed and agreed not to take any action on this at present and the neighbouring landowner would be contacted to see if he wishes to buy the fencing materials previously purchased.
MOTION: To agree that the back fence will not be fixed and the original installer of the gate will be approached to fix it, PROPOSED by Mrs Cook SECONDED by Cllr Simpkins and AGREED
- iv. **Any other Maintenance Issues:** Mr Laurie mentioned that the car parking area where type 1 had been installed last year, needs regular weed killing. No further action was agreed on this, however. Cllr Simpkins suggested trying to get a group of tenants who were willing to take ownership of the allotments and carry out clearance work, tidy communal areas etc. It was agreed this would be via the WhatsApp group and Ms. Scott will initially post something to generate interest, by initiating some produce-sharing ideas.
MOTION: Not required – actions as above.

23.027 Plot Inspections/issues with plots

- i. **Plot inspection:** Plot inspections had been carried out earlier in July by IL, FS and PC. A list of issues was circulated and discussed. It was agreed that all tenants would receive a general email reminding them to keep their plots cultivated, tidy and weed-free and that this included the entire plot, not just areas they may be cultivating. Additionally, to keep pathways mown and weed-free. Specific 28-day letters will be sent to plots 44, 55c, 69, 74a and 73. Mr Laurie will double check plot 50 and revert to the clerk. Cllr Simpkins stated that an open morning could be held in the autumn, if the 28-day letters resulted in plots being given up.
MOTION: To agree letters to go out as above PROPOSED by Mrs Cook SECONDED by Ms. Scott and AGREED.
- ii. **Rule Breaches – any new issues – Flags:** The issue of flags being erected at the allotments was discussed. The clerk confirmed that permission had not been sought at the time and the tenants had been asked to take down the flags on the basis of no permission requested. The

tenant had been invited to request permission but had not done so. The clerk confirmed that she had received messages and calls both from those believing the nature of the flags was 'political' and should not be permitted, and those who wanted a more 'live and let live' approach. She had felt conflicted and hence put the matter on the agenda. Any decisions would then go to the full council for discussion. The matter was discussed in detail and it was agreed that the committee could not reach a decision regarding imposition of any rule and requested that the parish council as landlord, makes an over-arching decision which all should then abide by. This would then be reverted back to the committee to agree any administrative actions.

MOTION: To agree the above action, as no decision could be reached **MOTION NOT REQUIRED**

- iii. **Rats:** Pest control had attended once. However the problem persisted and a second visit would be needed. The clerk agreed to arrange this. The committee will continue to monitor the situation.
- iv. **General:** None

23.028 Date of next meeting:
Thursday October 5th 2023 – 2pm

..... **Signed (Chairman)**

..... **Date**