

**ST CUTHBERT (OUT) PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE ALLOTMENT GARDEN PLOT HOLDERS HELD IN
WOOKEY HOLE COMMUNITY HALL, WOOKEY HOLE
ON MONDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2017, 7:30PM**

The meeting took the format of an informal forum.

PRESENT: Cllrs D Ball; M Gaunt; Ms Michele Exton (Parish Clerk), 12 Members of the Public.

The Clerk welcomed attendees to meeting and explained that the meeting was an informal consultation forum for Plot Holders to ask questions and raise issues of concern.

A question was asked in relation to clause 7 i) "not plant any tree, shrub, hedge or bush without first obtaining the Council's written permission". Cllr Gaunt clarified that plots should be kept clear and open for optimum growing. Dwarf varieties that grow no more than 10' tall could be planted but Plot Holders should ensure that anything they plant, does not shade any neighbouring plots.

It was asked if the water taps should be turned off for winter. There was a suggestion that the water tap should be insulated. Cllr Gaunt undertook to action this. Cllr Ball advised that the water bill has been cheaper since the allotments switched to metered water.

The Clerk explained that the allotment rents cover maintenance costs but that there is no fund to make improvements. Plot Holders were asked if they felt the current rent is fair. The majority of Plot Holders were in agreement that they think the rent is expensive.

When asked if they would like to see any improvements, Plot Holders said they would like the following:

- Car parking.
- Another water tap at the top/north of the allotments.
- A communal lawn mover.
- A communal strimmer – health & safety issues would need to be researched and considered. It was suggested that there could be a health & safety pack which included a disclaimer, use instructions, protective goggles. If the strimmer was petrol, there could be a loose change box for Plot Holders to contribute towards petrol.
- A secure container for the storage of communal equipment.

Cllr Ball talked about the possibility of self-management in the future should Plot Holders be interested and suggested that a couple of Plot Holders could join the Allotments Working Party.

Cllr Gaunt will look into the possibility of access to cheaper seeds if a group of Plot Holders join the National Allotment Society.

Cllrs Gaunt and Ball explained that Plot Holders are only allowed to drive their vehicles down the central track to load and unload and not to stay parked.

The Clerk advised Plot Holders that the Council had sought pre-application planning advice for a car park and that Full Council on 4th December 2017 will be discussing this item. It was suggested that if the application is successful, a "concealed entrance" sign should be erected.

Plot Holders asked about the sale of the land next to the allotments. The Clerk confirmed that the Council were progressing this issue and Plot Holders would be informed if the land is sold.

Cllr Ball talked about the new noticeboard and encouraged Plot Holders to put notices in it.

Cllr Ball confirmed that bonfires are permitted on the 1st Sunday of the month and asked Plot Holders to be considerate of the neighbouring residents. Cllr Gaunt clarified that Plot Holders should ensure their bonfires are within the boundaries of their plot.

When asked if barbeques are permitted, it was agreed that this could be trialled.

Cllr Gaunt was pleased that allowing Plot Holders to bring their dog onto their plot was working well and reminded the meeting that dogs were not to be loose but kept within their owner's plot.

There was a complaint that 6 to 8 allotments were not being worked. Cllr Gaunt explained that there can be reasons, such as sickness and that a degree of tolerance is appropriate. She will monitor unworked plots.

There was a complaint that there are lots of nettles on the bank area and that it is not cut frequently enough. Cllr Gaunt explained that it is very expensive to cut this area and that there are no funds to cut it more often.