

Wheathampstead Parish Council Notes of Allotment Committee 3 March 2009, 20.00h

Present	Councillors:	S Walford G Clark	Chairman
		M Cheale G Copland F Shortt D Watson	Folly Fields Baxendale Hitchens (sub) Glebe
		Julia Warren	Parish Clerk
		Press	0
		Public	2

142-09 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Turner (personal commitment), Max Wade and Trevor Barton (Hitchens representatives). Fran Shortt substituted for Hitchens. Note, as there were only two councillor representatives the meeting was not quorate regarding decision making.

143-09 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Messrs David Pipe and Stuart Thompson enquired when their new allotments – the filled in pond - on Glebe (which had been ploughed) would be rotavated. It was agreed that this was in hand and would be actioned. They also asked about general processes and allotment representatives and were advised that contact details for allotment representatives for each allotment field would be included with the invoice information. The allotment representatives advised of the camaraderie and assistance which they could offer.

Messrs Pipe and Thompson left the meeting.

144-09 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

145-09 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 2 DECEMBER 2008

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2008 were approved and would be formally approved next meeting. In so doing the priority for Hitchens and Glebe allotment fields, as the largest fields, in any future allotment advisory association was noted.

146-09 BUDGET REVIEW

This was deferred to the next meeting. It was noted that the budget for 2008-9 was overspent.

147-09 BAXENDALE REPORT

Mr Copland reported that in general there was a lot of activity on the Baxendale allotments. One allotment plot was however severely shaded by overgrown hedging, it was hoped this could be cut back. The hole in the hedge on the Slype gave ready access and it would be appreciated if this were repaired/ filled in in the near future not least as this may alleviate some of the flooding problems experienced over the winter.

Many of the numbers identifying plots were missing or damaged, generally due to age. Councillor Walford agreed to do a 'numbers audit/purge.'

The gate to the allotments was generally left open and the stile unused. It was not clear who was responsible for maintaining these.

148-09 GLEBE REPORT

Mr Watson reported that plots 2 required attention following the death of the allotment holder, plot 3 awaited rotavation for which he could supply WPC with contact information. The allotment holder of plots 27 -28 had applied to keep bees. He was undertaking an extensive training course and was taking out £500m public liability insurance. It was suggested that the Clerk write to this plot holder to obtain sight of this insurance.

The matter of birds eating produce and untended chickens was discussed; it was noted that the Clerk had written and the matter now resolved.

A problem of dog fouling existed. A request for a padlock for the gates to Hitchens and Glebe fields to permit access to allotment holders was discussed, the suggestion being that gates be locked from 1 May 2009. The Clerk raised the matter of administration for keys for all holders and suggested a combination lock. The allotment representatives offered to assist in obtaining deposit monies and key distribution as not all allotment holders would be able to visit the Parish Council in office hours.

A further request for another water tap was made.

In reviewing the rental it was suggested that charges be varied for those with livestock who may use more water than plants.

The matter of multiple plots was raised. It was suggested that as a parishioners' waiting list exists individuals be allowed just 10 poles each. This was amended to permit existing multiple plot holders to retain their plots, but the ceiling be upon newly rented plots.

The observation that some plots were accessible via garden gates was made. This is not a public access route and allotment holders should be reminded of this, similarly allotment plots were not automatically associated with the garden that backed onto them.

149-09 HITCHENS REPORT

Mr Wade had submitted his apologies but submitted a report including that :

The pipework for the additional taps was started on the weekend of 22 February but the taps were still to be fitted as of 28 February.

There had been activity on the bottom most plot on the Necton Road side. It was not clear if this was the current allotment holder or a new one. Regardless, he believed, it was a step in the right direction.

(Clearance was confirmed by the chairman and that the plot had been re-let).

With all the snow and cold weather, overall there had been relatively little activity.

150-09 FOLLY FIELDS REPORT

Ms Cheale had submitted a comprehensive report giving her evaluation of plot status for all Folly Fields allotment plots.

The issue of cultivated area as compared to grassed/non cultivated land and land left for trees was discussed at length. The 75:25 ratio was reiterated.

151-09 ALLOTMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

The updating of the rules and regulations had been an ongoing discussion. It was suggested that this debate be continued outside the meeting. When the Clerk sent the invoices for 2009-10 out allotment holders should be advised of rent charges for 2010-11 plus that rules and regulations would be updated and expanded in the near future. A laminated copy would be on the notice boards in all fields.

152-09 ANNUAL COMPETITION & PRIZES

The annual competition was discussed. Prizes were given by the committee, one per field but with the proviso that the previous winner was not reselected. Recognition was also given to the best newcomer and most improved plots. Mary Cheale would again create the certificates to be presented at Village Day on 12 July 2009.

Discussion was given to a possible allotment stall at Village Day at which surplus produce could be sold for charity (ies). St Helen's churchyard wall was discussed at a local possibility

153-09 WAITING LIST

It was noted that a waiting list of 15 individuals existed. Some plots, it was acknowledged, may come free when the invoices were sent. The need to limit plots to 10 poles per parishioner, particularly when demand was so high was discussed. Additional plots would be created where possible and agreed by Council.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meetings were agreed as being 14.00h on 21 May and 16 July 2009

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.10h.

Dated this day of 2009

Chairman