

HENNOCK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15TH MAY 2018 IN HENNOCK VILLAGE HALL STARTING AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT: Cllrs Baker, Parker (Chairperson) & Williamson

PART I (Open to the Public)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE: Cllr Parker was unanimously elected as Chairperson of the Allotments Committee.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING OF MEETINGS: The Chairperson reminded all in attendance at the meeting that they may be filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise reported about. Hennock Parish Council's protocol on the filming and recording of meetings was on display and those undertaking these activities were deemed to have accepted them whether they had read them or not.

3. TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA & A REMINDER TO COUNCILLORS TO UPDATE THEIR REGISTER OF INTERESTS WHERE APPROPRIATE: None.

5. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS: None.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK TO THE COUNCIL ABOUT MATTERS WHICH CONCERN THEM:

Comments were received from members of the public in relation to Hennock allotments as follows:

- An offer to replace the bottom entrance gate for the cost of the materials.
- A fantastic area with great views and is a great place.
- Some allotments are doing really well but some are neglected and full of weeds.
- If tenants give up allotments they should weed them before doing so in order that they can be re-let.
- 13 plots at Hennock are under cultivation; 8 are let and there are 5 vacant plots which will be kept rotovated as the weed suppressant has been ineffective.
- A massive clean up took place last week – the piles of rubbish on the vacant area has now gone.
- The area on which asbestos was found and removed is being monitored and will be marked on the plan.
- A great deal of rubbish has been left on Plot 1 – the Chairperson confirmed that if the former tenant does not clear it, the Council will pay a contractor to do so and pass the charge on to the former tenant.
- The Chairperson expressed her wish to see an allotment association created and Cllr Williamson added that 8 people is enough to do so. There was a mixed response with some members of the public keen to do so and expressing the view that they think it will happen and it is just a matter of time and another of the view that this was not the preferred option.

The Chairperson thanked Alec Jacobs for all the hard work he and the team continue to undertake at the allotments.

7. APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF THE MINUTES: The minutes of the Allotments Committee meeting held on 20th February 2018 were approved and duly signed.

8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

8.1. Path forming right of way through Hennock allotments: The Clerk asked Simon Lee, Dartmoor National Park Authority [DNPA] Ranger if he could have a look at the footpath to the side of Hennock allotments and perhaps put someone up there with a mini digger and some gravel. She has also asked Simon if he could help with the damaged entrance gate. Simon has agreed to have a chat with the new sector ranger for the area, Pete Rich, and ask him to sort this – the Clerk is awaiting a return call from Pete Rich.

8.2. Entrance gate at Hennock allotments: Please refer to comments under item 8.1.

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9. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I & II: There were no items to be discussed in Part II.

10. ALLOTMENT LETTINGS UPDATE: Chudleigh Knighton allotments: All plots have been let; 2 x rents outstanding but invoices were only sent out that day. Hennock allotments: 5 vacant plots with 1 x rent outstanding (new address to be ascertained and tenant chased).

11. HENNOCK ALLOTMENTS REVAMPING UPDATE: Refer to item 6.

11.1. Request to strim track which runs around the allotments & track which runs up the middle of the allotments:

Standing orders were suspended to allow Alec Jacobs to speak:

Alec and the Clerk had met Mike Neck of Dartmoor Heathers & Gardens on site that day and asked him to quote for strimming the access path and turning/unloading area. Alec and the team are undertaking a significant amount of clearance and maintenance work at the allotments and would like some help – the area identified needs strimming as it cannot be effectively cut with the tractor & flail. Dartmoor Heathers & Gardens has quoted £150 based on 6 cuts with the grass cut left insitu. The cuts would be undertaken between May and October when required which would need to be funded from the Allotments budget.

The tenant of the bottom plot strims 2 sides of his plot currently and confirmed that he is happy to strim the third side which is the access track which runs up from the bottom of the allotments.

Standing orders were reinstated.

After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the Council could spend up to £150 for strimming the access paths and turning/unloading area at Hennock allotments as required. Appendix A includes a map and hatched in red are the areas to be strimmed - the access past the hut starts at 1.5 metres wide but reduces to approx. 1 metre wide alongside the hut/shed.

12. SMALL ENTRANCE GATE & SIGNAGE TO CHUDLEIGH KNIGHTON ALLOTMENTS: The small entrance gate to Chudleigh Knighton allotments is rusted, parts are missing and it is in a very poor state of repair. The Chairperson thought she may have a suitable replacement and, if so, the Clerk was instructed to arrange for it to be fitted. She was also asked to arrange for a “No dogs” sign to be fixed to it as well as to the large entrance gate on the other side of the allotments.

13. ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATIONS: The Chairperson explained that Teign Village Allotment Association had been formed 5 years ago. The Parish Council wanted allotment holders to have more autonomy and it makes sound financial sense. The Council charges the Allotment Association a rent and the Allotment Association sets its own rents for the plots.

Cllr Williamson added in relation to Teign Village Allotment Association [TVAA]:

- 58 plots.
- 6/7 people on the Committee.
- Depends on lots of people helping.
- Vacant plots last year for the first time and so 2 are being made in to a community plot to include a greenhouse, shed and meeting place.
- People wanted more say.
- Talks arranged including “Community & City Gardens” & a pruning workshop.
- There is far less admin.
- There is no need to bring individual issues to a Parish Council meeting.
- TVAA is an unregistered society.
- Its accounts are audited.
- Rents are really low - £20 per plot.
- The Association has put in a water supply.
- “It’s not all plain sailing” – e.g. if someone is not looking after their plot.

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- Generally, works much better.
- Fundraising undertaken and have applied to Tesco’s “Bag for Life” grant which funds community projects.
- Works well and members can have a direct influence on what happens.

Standing order were suspended and members of the public were able to contribute to the discussions in relation to a possible allotment association for Hennock:

- There are 13 plots and 8 tenants.
- Still need 3 people on the Committee (Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer) – Cllr Williamson added that TVAA has 42 plot holders but there are only 6/7 on the committee.
- With so few tenants will be in a more invidious position in relation to “defaulters”.
- A strong feeling from one tenant that an allotment association is not viable for Hennock.
- Too small but “as we grow” more likely.
- As the plots look more attractive more likely.
- Need resources and energy.

The Chairperson explained that if the allotment holders come to the Parish Council and say they’d like to explore the possibility of an allotment association; the Council can help with that process and advise.

Standing orders were reinstated.

14. MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD BY PARISH COUNCILLORS: Cllr Williamson advised that TVAA had 6 vacant plots at the end of March; someone in the village put something on social media and they have been inundated with interest from people outside of the village; they have filled all but one of the plots. The Chairperson agreed to put something on the Council’s Facebook page about vacant plots at Hennock.

Cllr Baker questioned the requirement to cover areas where chickens are kept in relation to Bird Flu regulations. The Clerk was instructed to check the current requirements.

15. AGREE DATE, VENUE AND TIME OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING AND ALLOTMENT INSPECTIONS: It was agreed that the next meeting would be an inspection of Chudleigh Knighton allotments on Tuesday 16th October 2018 – time to be agreed. It was not considered necessary to inspect Hennock allotments.

Part II (Private): None.

As there was no further business the meeting ended at 8.25pm.

..... **Chairman**

Dated.....