

**BRANDON & BYSHOTTLES PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**HELD VIA ZOOM**  
**ON TUESDAY 1ST JUNE 2021, AT 10.00 AM**

**PRESENT**

**Councillor Mrs Bonner (in the Chair)**  
**and Councillors Bell, Mrs Elmer, Grantham, Jamieson, Sims and Turnbull**

**All. 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

To nominate the Chairman of the Council.

**RESOLVED:** To elect Councillor Mrs Bonner as Chairman.

**All. 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**All. 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received.

**All. 4 LANGLEY GROVE ALLOTMENT SITE**

**a) Request for a skip**

Tenants from the above mentioned allotment site had requested a skip for the site.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend approving the provision of a skip for the site.

:To recommend that the Allotments Officer organises the provision of a skip and writes to all tenants to inform them.

: To recommend that the Community Highways Worker is present to discard of any rubbish on paths and around the allotment site.

**b) Pest Control**

The Allotment Officer was informed by several tenants that an abundance of rats were present on the allotment site. The Allotment Officer had requested and received a quote from Durham County Council Pest Control Team.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer goes ahead with the short cycle of pest control treatments recommended by Durham County Council and writes to all tenants to inform them of the dates.

: To recommend that the Allotments Officer liaises with Councillor Mrs Elmer to obtain contact details for the relevant person at Durham County Council in order to arrange for a meeting to discuss the substantial rise in the presence of rats in the Brandon, Langley Moor and Meadowfield areas.

**All. 7 LOW MEADOWFIELD ALLOTMENT SITE – PLOTS 7/8/9/10/11**

The Allotments Officer informed the meeting that a section of allotment land at the rear of Low Meadowfield allotment site had recently been surrendered by its previous tenants. The previous tenant accessed the allotment land via his own private land (which has now been sold). As access to this section of allotment land is limited, the new owner of the private land had contacted the Parish Council to ask if they are able to rent a portion of the allotment land from the Parish Council. Another tenant who would also be able to access the allotment land through his current plot, has also asked to rent a section of the allotment land.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer contacts the current tenant of the grazing land situated next to plots 7/8/9/10/11 to inform them that the Parish Council may want to erect a path and fence on the grazing land in order to allow access into the rear plots.

: To recommend that the Allotments Officer contacts contractors in order to obtain a quote for the necessary path and fence work to be carried out.

: To discuss quotes at a future meeting.

Following the Allotment Committee meeting the Allotments Officer had received concerns from residents regarding means of access to the allotment site.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer liaises with the Ward Members to further investigate the issues regarding access.

Subsequently that the Allotments Officer and Ward Members report their findings at a future meeting.

**All. 8 COMMERCIAL STREET**

**a) Garage 9B – Request for a reduction in rent**

A tenant who currently rents the above mentioned garage had requested a reduction in rent due to the fact that the garage was situated on an allotment plot and also due to the size of the garage.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer writes to the tenant to inform him that his request has been denied, due to the fact that the Parish Council has many garages of all different sizes, which are all charged the same amount of annual rent.

**b) Garage 20 – Non-payment of rent**

A tenant from the above mentioned garage plot had failed to pay the rent for the garage. The Allotments Officer informed the Members that she had written to the tenant on a number of occasions and had displayed a notice on the garage.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer places a Parish Council padlock on the garage lock so that the tenant is unable to access the garage without contacting the Parish Council first.

Following the meeting the tenant had contacted the Parish Council to arrange rent payment for the garage.

All. 5 **BROOMPARK ALLOTMENT SITE – PLOT 5 - REQUEST TO REPLACE SHED**

A tenant from plot 5 at Broompark Allotment site had requested permission to replace an existing shed with a new shed – dimensions 2 metres x 3 metres

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer writes to the tenant to inform him that his request has been approved.

All. 6 **ALDER PARK ALLOTMENT SITE**

a) **Complaints regarding fires**

The Allotments Officer had received several complaints from residents living near to the allotment site that there was too much smoke coming from fires on the above mentioned allotment site. The Allotment Officer had put a temporary ban on fires at the allotment site until the matter could be discussed at the Committee meeting.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer writes to all tenants to inform them that they are able to continue having fires on the allotment site, however to remind them of the rules and regulations regarding fires. To recommend advising tenants that they should take residents into consideration when choosing the best time to have a fire i.e early on a morning or on an evening, when the smoke is less likely to affect nearby residents.

b) **Pest Control**

The Allotments Officer had received several complaints from residents living in the houses next to the allotment site that rats were coming into their garden via the allotment site. The Allotments Officer, with permission from the Clerk, had arranged for Durham County Council Pest Control Team to carry out a short cycle of treatments in order to try and resolve the issue.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer liaises with the Pest Control Team to find out if the treatments have been affective and subsequently the best course of action to take.

c) **Plot 14/15- Request to plant fruit bushes**

A tenant from plots 14/15 had requested permission to plant fruit bushes: x2 Blackcurrant, 3x Gooseberry and 2x Rows of raspberry canes.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer writes to the tenant to grant permission to plant the trees on the condition that they are not planted next to the fence (in order to avoid complaints from neighbouring residents) and that the tenant harvests the fruit in order to avoid encouraging rats as well as keeping the bushes well pruned if required.

**All. 9 FOLDS CLOSE ALLOTMENT SITE**

**a) Request for a skip**

Tenants from the above mentioned allotment site had requested a skip for the site.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend approving the provision of a skip for the site.

:To recommend that the Allotments Officer organises the provision of a skip and writes to all tenants to inform them.

: To recommend that the Community Highways Worker is present to discard of any rubbish on paths and around the allotment site.

**b) Plot 86 – Request for reduction in rent**

A tenant from the above mentioned allotment plot who had contacted the Parish Council on several occasions regarding flooding on the above mentioned allotment plot, recently contacted the Allotments Officer requesting a reduction in rent due to the issue of flooding.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer liaises with Councillor's Turnbull and Bell to discuss land ownership of the neighbouring field, subsequently that the Allotments Officer contacts the land owner to request permission for a contractor to dig a ditch around the allotment site to try and resolve the issue of flooding.

: That the Allotments Officer visits the allotment site with a contractor to request a quote for the work required.

: To monitor the situation and to discuss the findings at a future meeting.

**All 10 LOW BROWNEY ALLOTMENT SITE – LAND OWNERSHIP**

Several tenants from the above mentioned allotment site had contacted the Allotments Officer to request permission to use the land next to the allotment site. The section of land in question has always been considered as private, however has not been used for many years, has been left overgrown and in the past suffered from fly tipping.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer contacts the County Council to enquire about taking ownership of the section of land.

: To discuss the outcome at a future meeting.

**All 11 HAMILTON ROW – PLOT 52 – REQUEST FOR GATE POST**

A tenant from the above mentioned allotment plot had requested a gate post, as the gate post was already broken upon commencement of their tenancy.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer writes to the tenant to inform her that the request for a new gate post has been declined, as the agreement states that the Parish Council is only responsible for the boundary fence and that tenants are responsible for the replacement and repair of all internal fences and gates.

**All. 12 BLACK ROAD – UPDATE ON FENCE**

The Allotments Officer informed the Members that work had been completed on the fence and path at Black Road, Langley Moor. Following a site visit the Allotments Officer was still not satisfied with the condition of the fence. The Allotments Officer had tried on numerous occasions to contact the manager of Tesco however had not yet received a response. A quote was obtained to stabilise the fence and to cover the water pipe which had been left exposed.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer conducts a further visit with the contractor who erected the fence to enquire the total cost for the final fence and path work required and subsequently for the work to be carried out.

**All. 13 SITE VISITS**

Members discussed options and;

**RESOLVED:** To recommend site visits with the Allotment Committee Members and the appropriate Ward Members are arranged as soon as possible.

**All. 14 DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF QUOTATIONS FOR WORK AT THE FOLLOWING ALLOTMENT SITES:**

**a) High Browney – Plot 6**

3 quotes for a boundary fence at the above mentioned allotment plot were obtained.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that a 1.8 metre boundary fence is erected.  
: To recommend awarding the contract to Wharton Landscapes.

**b) High Browney – Plots 2 & 3**

A quote for a fence at the above mentioned allotment plots was obtained however the Allotments Officer informed the Members that she was unsure if this particular fence was classed as a boundary fence.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer informs the tenants that the fence around the above mentioned plots are not classed as a boundary and therefore the responsibility for repairing or replacing the fence is with the tenant.

**c) High Meadowfield – Plot 58**

3 quotes for a boundary fence at the above mentioned allotment plot were obtained.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that a 1.2 metre boundary fence is erected.  
: To recommend awarding the contract to Kevin Wilson Gardening Services.

d) **Station Avenue – Plot 3**

3 quotes for a boundary fence at the above mentioned allotment plot were obtained.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that a 1.8 metre boundary fence is erected.  
: To recommend awarding the contract to Wharton Landscapes.

e) **Low Browney – Plot 43**

3 quotes for a boundary fence at the above mentioned allotment plot were obtained.

**RESOLVED:** That the Allotments Officer enquires about the Parish Council obtaining land ownership of the adjacent plot, in which case the above mentioned plot may no longer be classed as the end plot, meaning that the fence would no longer be a boundary fence and therefore the fence would then become the responsibility of the tenant to erect. (relating to min no. 10)

f) **Broompark – Plots 9 & 7**

A quote was obtained to replace x3 rotten posts on the perimeter fence at the above mentioned allotment plots.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that the Allotments Officer arranges for the posts to be replaced.  
: To recommend that the contract be awarded to Wharton Landscapes.  
: To recommend that the Allotments Officer writes to tenants requesting that they do not lean anything against the fences as this can contribute to the posts snapping.

g) **Broompark – Main path**

A quote was obtained to put down dolomite/gravel in order to make the path less slippery in wet weather and also to make the path less of a trip hazard.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend approving the work to the path be carried out.  
: To recommend awarding the contract to Wharton Landscapes.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am

Signed ..... *Annaliese Bower* .....