

Leek Town Council
Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held Tuesday 13th June 2023 at 10.30am

Chairman: Cllr. Barry Birch

Present: Cllr. Dee Young (Vice Chair), Ben Benefer, Sue Coleman, Mavis Weaver, Gaynor Tatton,
Denise Wheat (Town Clerk)

Minutes: Victoria Johnson (Admin
Assistant)

1. **Welcome:** The new Chairman of the Allotment Committee introduced himself to the Committee members, introduced the new Vice Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** John Hodgkinson
3. **The minutes** of the meeting held on 18th April 2023 were received as a correct record. Discussion was held about 3 matters contained in these minutes:
 - It was confirmed that the horse box had been removed from the Cheadle Road allotment site and that the tenant had given assurances that it would not return;
 - The person who rents the land adjoining Beggars Lane has been emailed regarding erecting a fence but has not replied yet. The Clerk is to contact SMDC to ascertain boundary responsibilities;
 - The abandoned car is still on the Crescent allotment site. The owner has agreed to move it but has not done so as yet.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - A copy of the current Tenancy Agreement was given to each Committee member for them to familiarise themselves with;
 - The ariel photographer is still planning to take photographs but has not done so yet;
 - Members of the Allotment Association (John Hodgkinson and David Lownds) have made new Notice Boards for all the allotment sites and are replacing the old Notice Boards with the new ones. Admin Assistant to send a letter of thanks.
 - The overall improvement on the site on Badnall Street was noted and thanks were passed to the Lengthsman by the Committee for all his hard work in achieving this.
5. **Allotment Reports**
 - Cheadle Road**
 - A number of plots are in poor condition or uncultivated. The Clerk and Lengthsman are currently compiling a list of these plots and it was agreed that a warning letter be sent to these tenants indicating that their plot is untidy and a Notice to Quit will be issued if no improvement is visible on the next inspection.
 - It was noted that some of these plots have only just been allocated by new tenants. The Admin Assistant is to check this before letters are sent out.
 - CH 01 is currently vacant, and CH N is going to be relinquished.
 - Beggars Lane**
 - A number of plots are in poor condition or uncultivated. It was agreed that a warning letter be sent to these tenants indicating that their plot is untidy and a Notice to Quit will be issued if no improvement is visible on the next inspection.

- The tenant on BL 38 had requested access to erect a fence to identify her access route but has erected it before permission has been granted. The tenant on BL 37 has raised issue with this as he is concerned that access to his plot will be restricted. The Clerk will phone the tenant of BL 36 to discuss their understanding of access routes to then try and reach a mutual agreement.
- BL 37 currently has a child's trampoline on it. It was discussed as to whether the Tenancy Agreement should state that play equipment is not allowed without prior approval, but it was then suggested that we may need a disclaimer in the agreement in case there is an accident.

Peggs Field

- PF 08 has installed a very large polytunnel and other allotment holders have queried if this is allowed. The Admin Assistant is to check if permission was requested for the polytunnel, and it was agreed that adding a size limit for polytunnels to the Tenancy Agreement should be considered.
- An inspection is to be carried out to see how many polytunnels there are on the allotments and if they are all being utilised correctly.
- The allotment neighbouring PF 35 has been cultivated well but the weeds are not being controlled. The Clerk is to send a kindly reminder letter re: responsibility for keeping weeds under control.
- The tenant on PF 20A originally had a full plot but was moved to PF 20A (half plot) as they were not working the full plot. They are not cultivating the half plot, so the Clerk is to send a warning letter.
- Rubbish is being dumped behind PF 33 and the Tenant has complained. The Lengthsman is to be asked to see what the rubbish is and to clear it. The Clerk is to send a letter to all Peggs Field allotment holders asking them to be mindful of where they dispose of their rubbish.

Crescent 1 & 2

- The Head of The Meadows school has written to the Council regarding 2CR 03, asking that various improvements are made to accommodate the needs of their children working on the allotment. The Clerk is to send a letter informing them that it is their responsibility to make the required changes to the allotment and suggest that they apply for appropriate grants.
- Part of 1CR 01 has been reclaimed by the Council to accommodate a car park. The tenant has asked for a fence to be put up and as it is a boundary fence the Committee agreed to do this. The Lengthsman is to be asked to provide a quote to the Clerk for this and the Chair of the Allotment Committee is to put it in his report to bring to Council.

Badnall Street

- BA 10 is to receive a warning letter.

Parrs Field

- Nothing to report.

6. Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association:

- The Chairman of the Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association, Ben Benefer, provided a very useful overview document relating to the purpose, contacts, meetings, activities and upcoming events of the Association (copy attached).
- He invited the Mayor/Deputy Mayor to attend the Annual Flower and Vegetable Show on the 19th August. The Admin Assistant is to put this in the Mayor's Diary.

7. Tenancy/Waiting List Report:

- There are 8 people who paid £35 (the previous rent) and not £40 (the new rent). They are to be sent a letter in the post and have the same letter pinned to the inside post of their allotment asking for the outstanding £5.
- There are currently 49 people on the Waiting List.

8. Any Other Business:

- The Chairman explained that discussions are taking place regarding all the main entry roads into Leek with suggestions that, if we can obtain a grant, sloping wooden frames or planters are placed there as a "Welcome to Leek". He asked if the Allotment Association would consider looking after these installations.
- It was agreed that County Council would have to give permission for anything installed on roundabouts, and that the Lengthsman would have to be asked about watering any plants. It was also confirmed that this is in its early stages so it will not be possible this year but we could have plans in place ready for the beginning of 2024.
- The Chairman of the Committee will continue to pursue this idea and will keep the Committee members of any progress.

9. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 25th July 2023 at 10.30am

The meeting finished at 11.50am