

Minutes of the Footpaths & Allotments Committee Meeting**Held on 6th September 2010 at 7.30 p.m. in the Bush Room**

Present: - Cllrs. Brian Davis (Chairman), Peter Taylor, Hannah Richmond, John Cutland,
Terry Hunt
Mr. Bob Phillips (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation procedures were noted

3. Public Participation

The following allotment holders and neighbours of the allotment site attended the meeting to discuss the problems previously expressed to the Committee:

Cllr. Brian Lee, Mr Russ Wilkins, Mr Peter Watson, Mrs Fiona Watson, Mr Richard Hiscock, Mr David Walker, Mrs Erica Booth, Mr Richard Webster, Mrs Fran Webster, Ms Fiona Webster, Mrs Margaret Poole, Mr Scott Paton.

Mr Alan and Mrs Carol Morgan were unable to attend but had sent a letter.

4. Declaration of interests

Cllr. Hannah Richmond is the current holder of an allotment plot.

In view of the large number of people who had joined the meeting to discuss the allotment the chairman proposed that item 7 should be taken next.

7. Allotments

Cllr Brian Davis gave a brief history of the Parish Council's search for an allotment site and an update of the current position of the Parish Allotments at Forty Acre Lane:

1. After three years of searching and detailed negotiations with three different landowners, all with no success, the Parish Council was offered a one acre plot by Mrs Joan Hawkins. Outline terms were agreed and the site marked out. The land-owner arranged for site clearing, fencing and some tree removals and made the land available. Following discussion, the landowner created a pedestrian and occasional vehicle track into the site across her land.
2. The Alveston Allotments Association has been closely involved with all decisions and much of the physical work to prepare the site.
3. All the neighbours of the site in Gloucester Rd. and the residents of the Alveston end of Forty Acre Lane have been informed of the plans.
4. The formal lease has not yet been completed although there are no major items to delay and the solicitors are believed to be finalising the arrangements.
5. 34 allotments are under cultivation with an additional temporary allotment also being cultivated, all by the kind permission of the landowner, Mrs Joan Hawkins.
6. As soon as the lease has been arranged, it is the Parish Council's intention to finalise the rules and regulations by which the allotment site will be operated and offer a formal licence to each of the current allotment holders. It has always been and remains the intention to consult both the neighbours and the Alveston Allotment Association during this process.

The members of the public were then asked to address the meeting:

Mr Richard Webster – his main concern with the allotments is one of privacy. He had previously enjoyed many years with agricultural land backing on to his garden with horses grazing and a large

amount of wildlife evident. The clearing of the field, the preparation of the site and the cultivation of plots had all been completed without any consultation. Although the Council had written advising of the plan, there had been no meetings or opportunity to discuss the plans before action was taken.

Mrs Fran Webster – in supporting her husbands concerns added that a major disappointment was that the buffer between their garden and the fence in the field (a temporary stock fence) had been lost and that allotments were cultivated, in some cases right up to the boundary.

Ms Fiona Webster – endorsing the views already expressed by both her mother and father, Ms Webster was scathing about the Council's aggressive behaviour in creating the allotments and was particularly upset by the lack of consultation and thought for the community's views. She accused the Council of poor management and lack of clear organisation.

Mr Scott Paton – whilst not against the allotments and acknowledging that his greatest fears were probably misplaced in the light of the situation now, he was concerned over the lack of consultation and how the site was to be managed in the future. He was very keen to discuss the rules and regulations under which the site would operate before they became hard fact.

Mr Peter Watson – living in the Lodge next to the new access created for the allotments, Mr Watson expressed his concern, disappointment and anger at the cavalier way the work had been undertaken without any thought to the effect on his own property, his outlook, his privacy and security. With the obvious problems of access, he felt that the site was totally unsuitable for allotments. With the damage already done by the "slash & burn" route next to his garden, he was now hoping that some sort of physical boundary, hedging perhaps, could be planted along the track to replace some of that which has been lost. Mr Watson was particularly concerned that the track could be used by any member of the public and greatly impacts his security. On behalf of his neighbours in Forty Acre Lane, Carol and Alan Morgan, Mr Watson, asked if the Council could enforce a ruling where the allotments holders were prevented from parking in Forty Acre Lane. There had been many occasions since the allotments were started where drives had been blocked and on some occasions, large vehicles had been prevented from getting to the properties further up the lane. On the previous weekend, someone had to run to the allotments to get an allotment holder to move their car to allow a combine harvester to pass. This had caused a major problem with the road blocked for a considerable time.

Mrs Erica Booth - the joint secretary of the Alveston Allotments Association confirmed that draft rules were in place and being operated by all the allotment holders. She was also able to confirm that the allotment holders had all been asked on numerous occasions to park sensibly and not in the narrowing part of Forty Acre Lane. Several members who had ignored the request had been encouraged to adhere to the requirement.

Mr Richard Hiscock - was delighted with the allotment site. He thought the project had progressed well after a couple of years not really going anywhere. He had some sympathy with the allotments neighbours for the changes that had occurred but reminded the meeting that security, fencing and screening was an individual land owner's responsibility and you cannot rely on the benefit or permanence of attributes on adjacent land. He would be only too happy to help a neighbour plant some hedging but felt that much of the negativity from those who had so far spoken could be diverted if they appreciated that a long-term lease ensuring allotments on the site for many, many years was far better than other possible options, including housing or commercial development.

In the discussion that followed, fears were also expressed about the number and sites of sheds, the provision of water to the site, security of the access track and future communications.

All committee members took part in the discussion and Cllr Brian Davis summarised the actions that the Council would be taking.

1. Before the rules and regulations were agreed, the Councils consultation would include the Alveston Allotments Association and the allotment neighbours. This consultation would include where and what type of sheds could be erected.
2. Although the Council has no powers to stop people parking in parts of Forty Acre Lane, if requested, they could ask South Glos Council to consider a no parking area. They would

continue to discourage parking in Forty Acre Lane by any visitors to the allotments and work with the AAA in finding ways to “enforce” the requirement.

3. The Council would discuss with the landowner the security and use of the “access track” to the site.
4. As the land has been the responsibility of the landowner to date, all boundaries and access routes are as they determine. The Council will continue to discuss with the landowner all aspects of the lease and aim for a clear understanding by the time the process is completed.
5. The Council would continue with its long-term aim to ensure that the allotment site is sensitive to its rural aspect, the wildlife and its neighbours. We hope to be able to work with all concerned to encourage a productive, quiet, wildlife-rich and diverse community facility that is a pleasure to both enjoy as an allotment holder and neighbour.
6. The Committee were disappointed if the Council was viewed as disorganised or lacking in other ways. It was pointed out that all councillors were volunteers and were in many ways constrained by the requirements of law and Governance Rules. However, in its openness it is hoped that action can be taken with constructive criticism and to continue to strive to serve all of its community by its best endeavours.
7. The Council would continue to be open in all its activities and would make every attempt to ensure good communications are maintained with notice boards, Helmet and its own, currently under construction, Web site. Cllr Davis reminded everyone present that all Council meetings are open to the public and opportunity is always given to those who wish to make an address.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

5.1. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th June 2010

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting were agreed and signed by the chairman.

5.2. Matters arising

None

5.3. Outstanding Actions

5.3.1. (6/4/09) Clerk to write to Footpaths Group. Action to Clerk

5.3.2. (3/8/09) Clerk to collate walk information re. Revisions to text in Walk Books. Action to Clerk

5.3.3. (3/8/09) Clerk to discuss with SG the possibility of using their mapping facilities and also if any help was available to support the Council with Booklet production. Action to Clerk

All the above actions have been deferred until time allows for the Footpaths Project to be re-started.

5.3.4. (5/10/09) Clerk to purchase “no smoking signs” and arrange fitting to all Bus Shelters. Action to Clerk

The signs had been purchased and were now awaiting fitting.

5.3.5. FP100607-1 Clerk to request that CRK Garden Manicures remove the ivy from the roof of Bus Shelter 6 o/s The Old Vicarage at cost. Action to Clerk

The job had been completed at a cost of £90.00. Action Closed

5.3.6. FP100607-2 Clerk to advise which Bus Shelter is next for refurbishment and advise the F&GP Committee. Action to Clerk

The Clerk advised that Bus Shelter No.3 – A38 northbound opposite the masons Arms, Rudgey was the next most in need of attention. Action Closed

Resolved: To seek an updated estimate for the work from CY Street Furniture and as the programme had already been approved and in the budget, if appropriate, arrange for the work to be completed.

5.3.7. *FP100607-3 Clerk to purchase the paint and request Bryan Painter to carry out the remedial work on Bus Shelters 6 & 8. Action to Clerk*

Ongoing

5.3.8. *FP100607-4 Clerk to discuss with the SG Footpaths Officer the two hazards reported by Keith Maloney and Gillian Davies. Action to Clerk*

The Clerk advised that he had emailed the SG PROW department and was awaiting contact.

6. Bus Shelters

6.1. Report

Bus Shelter No 3 already discussed.
The re-painting of the stone shelters is in hand.
No other problems

8. Footpaths

8.1. Footpaths Report

The Clerk had distributed a recent footpaths report and had just received an updated CAMS “completed” report from SG Council. He had also received a CAMS “outstanding” issues report but was having difficulty in relating our own reports with those being progressed, or not, by SG.

In view of the time taken with Allotments, it was agreed that the Clerk should try and clarify the situation and report back.

8.2. Footpaths Walks Revision Project

This project has been delayed until Allotment matters are completed.

9. Correspondence

None

10. Any other business

None

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.