



## CHURCHILL PARISH COUNCIL

### OPEN SPACES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23 September 2019 at 7.30 pm

**Present:-** Councillors Ruth Bruton (Chair), Jackie Bush, Bill Wilkinson and Rick Brafield.

**Co-Opted Members:** Tanya Cooper (in the absence of Sue List)

**Also present:** Ann Boote – Clerk of the Council and 1 member of the public

#### **1920/OS/020 Apologies for absence**

Councillor Tim Jessiman

#### **1920/OS/021 Declarations of Interest**

Whilst no pecuniary interest would be gained, Councillor Ruth Bruton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Allotment matters as she is an allotment plot holder.

#### **1920/OS/022 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Open Spaces & Allotments Committee meeting held on 20 May 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019 had been previously circulated and displayed on the Councils website.

#### **RESOLVED**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

#### **1920/OS/023 Public Participation**

A member of the public asked the meeting if anything could be done regarding the constant barking of a close neighbour's dog.

#### **RESOLVED**

It was suggested that North Somerset Council be contacted, as their Environmental Health Department may be able offer further advice. The resident agreed to do this.

## **ALLOTMENTS**

### **1920/OS/024 Update on Allotment Committee.**

A member of the Allotment Committee informed the meeting that through the sale of excess vegetables displayed on a table positioned outside the main gate of Field 1, a figure of over £130 had been raised. This money has been used to pay for sails to be erected over the community area. Hopefully, this will be in time for the end of season barbecue.

It was agreed to ensure that a sign be clearly visible on the table to read something like 'donation only'. It was agreed that the produce would not have suggested price(s), due to the fact that no trading licence had been obtained.

The Committee was informed that in the coming weeks a working party would be arranged to clear the allotment site, for tasks such as, cutting hedges back inside both fields, tidy the compost area and a general tidy up.

#### **Resolved**

It was agreed that (Chair) Ruth Bruton would supply several possible dates to Ann Boote (Clerk). The Clerk to write a letter to each allotment plot holder informing them of the dates. This was suggested as it is believed that not all allotment holders use email and may be unaware of what is happening at the allotments at the present time.

The Allotment Committee will be organising a Halloween barbecue at the end of October – date to be organised.

The Allotment Committee are aware of the high water bills, due to estimated readings and the very hot summer weather. They wanted the Council to be aware that a large increase would be not welcome, as allotment rents are one of the highest in the south west area. It was felt that some allotment holders would relinquish their plots if costs were prohibitive.

Clarification of the current waiting list would be appreciated.

### **1920/OS/025 Update on Budget vs spend to date 2019-20 Financial Year**

The Financial Report shows that most expenditure and income codes are generally where expected. However, code 5014 (Allotment Water Bills) was over budget. This was not unexpected, due to the amount of water used over a very dry season and the under estimate of water bills.

### **1920/OS/26 The produce table outside the Allotment Gate**

It was noted that the product table outside the allotment gate had been causing an obstruction, particularly for drivers exiting the allotments.

#### **RESOLVED**

It was agreed to move the table on the grass verge right back towards the hedge, which should be cut right back (& kept that way). This would then no longer block vision and be in a much safer place.

### **1920/OS/027 Waiting list and update on replies from allotment holders who are neglecting their plots**

The Committee were informed that there are currently 3 residents on the waiting list.

The tenant of Plot 1B, who had been contacted following the last OS&A Meeting regarding their unkempt plot, is no longer renting the plot. A new tenant from the waiting list is now using the plot to full advantage.

The tenant of Plot 1A, who had been contacted following the last OS&A Meeting regarding their unkempt plot, informed the committee that they wished to continue using the plot and that it has now been cleared up, roughly dug and planting winter vegetables.

### **1920/OS/028 Grass Cutting status**

The Committee discussed the fact that allotment holders were continuing to cut the grass, as the contractor employed by the Parish Council had not cut the grass.

The Clerk informed the Committee of the current grass cutting contract relating to the Allotments area:-

*'Cut the paths at the Allotments (including strim edges) – Once per month April to October. Once in December/January if required (8 cuts in total).'*

#### **RESOLVED**

It was agreed that Ann Boote (Clerk) would liaise with the grass cutting company and ask them to inform her when the contractor was planning to cut the area. The Clerk would then inform the allotment committee. This would hopefully stop the cross-over of cutting.

### **1920/OS/029 The water bill status.**

The Committee discussed at length the issue of extremely high water bills. The fact that expenditure well exceeded income. In particular whether it was fair to expect the majority of residents to subsidise a fairly small number of allotment holders (24 full plots, 21 half plots). It was mentioned that when the allotments were originally created water was not available. Plot holders collected their own water via water butts etc. Water was requested by plot holders and the Parish Council installed the water pipes etc.

#### **RESOLVED**

It was agreed that a small increase of £5 per full plot and £2.50 per half plot per annum be added to the annual rent, commencing February 2020. This would not cover the shortfall, but would help financially.

## OPEN SPACES

### **1920/OS/30 To discuss the purchase and planting of perennial shrubs/climbing plants and bulbs at the at the 'Hand' area of the Parish.**

The committee discussed the purchase and planting of perennial shrubs, climbing plants and spring bulbs at the Hand, fencing and surrounding areas. Ann Boote (Clerk) informed the meeting that Michele (Parish Orderly) had offered to purchase and plant any items suggested by the Committee.

The following ideas were put forward:-

#### The Fence Area

Climbing Rose, Honeysuckle.

#### The Fence Area (rear)

Shade loving plants

#### Near the bus stop (adjacent to the Hand)

Spring bulbs to add colour to the daffodils.

#### Around the Hand (in the grass)

Snow Drops.

#### The Hand

Double Heliboeres, plants of bright colours to lift the area.

### **RESOLVED**

It was agreed that Michele, having done an excellent job of planting, watering and maintaining the flowers around the Parish would be an ideal candidate to purchase and undertake the planting. A suggested agreed budget would be up to £200.

### **1920/OS/031 Dog Waste Bins**

The meeting discussed the ongoing abuse of the dog waste bins around the area. In particular bin bags full of clothing, nappies and other household waste. The worst case being the bin located at Ladymead Lane. An email had been received from a local resident suggesting it may be a communication issue with a new family moving into the area that did not speak English and maybe misunderstood that the bin was for dog waste only. Ann Boote (Clerk) informed the committee that she had responded asking if further information could be obtained to help try to resolve the issues.

### **RESOLVED**

It was agreed to remove the broken bin and replace with a new different style of bin, specifically designed not to allow large items to be disposed of.

It was also agreed that Ann Boote (Clerk) would look into the possibility of purchasing a sticker for the bin in several languages confirming that the bin is for dog waste only.

**1920/OS/032 Hedge Cutting status**

The winter hedge cutting around the Parish was discussed by the committee. With reference to the hedge within the children’s play area, several quotations had been received, one to trim the hedge and the other to radically cut it back. It was stated that the hedge had radically been cut a short while ago.

**RESOLVED**

It was agreed to accept the quotation of B2F to cut the hedges and remove the debris. This would mean that other areas could be cut at the same time and would be less expensive.

**1920/OS/033 Update on Budget vs Spend to date 2019/20 Financial Year**

The Financial Report shows that most expenditure and income codes are generally where expected. However, code 4215 (Open Spaces Maintenance & Improvements was over budget. This was not unexpected, due to work undertaken to solve drainage issues in the car park.

**1920/OS/034 Matters for information**

Councillor Jackie Bush informed the meeting that the Community Club car park was still being used for ‘airport parking’. It was noted that a letter seen in a car showing A2B car parks. At various times during the day, very expensive cars have been appearing in the car park, being driven and parked by the residents of Flat No. 4.

Ann Boote (Clerk) informed the committee that she had been in contact with the landlord regarding this some time ago. She agreed to contact the landlord again confirming the issue still stands.

A discussion took place regarding an older grave in the burial ground, which has been covered in recent layers of earth and is missing a plinth.

It was agreed to ask Michele (Parish Orderly) to flatten the ground and re-seed with grass.

Councillor Bill Wilkinson informed the meeting that large overgrown hedges encroaching into Front Street, from a recently purchased property had been removed. This gave a large amount of road back to the area. It was hoped that other house owners may see the advantage & follow suit. A discussion took place on whether this was the residents or Council responsibility to cut back hedges.

There being no further Business, the meeting closed at 8.40pm

**Next scheduled meeting – Monday 20 January 2020**

**Signed by Chair of Committee .....**

**Date .....**