

Drinkstone Parish Council

Allotments

Report to the Ordinary Meeting Dated Monday 7th March 2022

Agenda Item; Councillor Portfolios

During the last month I have visited both sets of allotments and can report that the general condition is good on both sites. We also held a trustee meeting at the VH in January, the minutes of which are below.

Drinkstone Allotments

Meeting with Trustees Wednesday 26th January 2022

Present

Trustees Richard Edmondson (Chair) Michael Lambert, Joyce Cocksedge

Allotment Holders Mile Chandler, Daphne Youngs, Jacqui Tomkins, Giles Youngs, Robert Irving, Christine Lambert, Peter Holborn, Nigel Rose, Cathy Smith

Richard Edmondson kicked off by explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to promote and encourage allotment holders to work together where possible to ensure maximum benefit for all was achieved. He also updated those present on a few amendments in the contract for the coming growing season, namely:

- Some allotments will be getting a new plot number to reflect changes in plot sizes over the last few years.
- There is now a new height limit of 2metres for any frameworks or protective netting.
- From 1st March it is illegal to use slug pellets containing Metaldehyde.

One of the joint projects agreed was to arrange for working parties to collect manure from Hall Farm and tip on both allotment sites. Richard agreed to organise this and speak to Robert Baker the land owner.

It was also agreed that the allotment holders on Gedding Rd would look to form a working party to clear the ditch which runs at the side of Chapel Lane.

There was a consensus that stock fencing on the inside of the hedges on both sites would be appreciated. This will need to be approved by the PC as they will be responsible for funding it. In the meantime, we will need to purchase some whips to fill in the gaps in the hedge on GR.

One tenant asked if it would be possible to have a brown bin and after discussion it was agreed it would be impractical and composting would be a better option.

One Rattlesden Rd tenant complained that the compost bins which were purchased for their use in 2020 were not fit for purpose as they were too small. It was agreed that Michael & Richard would obtain some second-hand pallets so that the tenant can build additional bins as has been done on Gedding Rd.

Another RR tenant requested a lawn mower for the site for all to share it was agreed that Richard would look into a low or no cost option.

A tenant from RR asked about access to the GR site from Chapel Lane as it is an unadopted road. Richard to discuss with the Parish Clerk.

Rats have been reported as a common problem and accepting that prevention is better than cure it was agreed that compost bins should be emptied on a regular basis and the plastic bins would benefit from being stood on chicken wire to prevent the rats tunnelling in from beneath.

Finally, it was agreed that the meeting had proved beneficial and another should be arranged for next year. In the meantime, all those present were happy to share e mail and other contact details so that working parties could be arranged in the future.

Subsequent to the meeting I have arranged for manure to be delivered to both sites, provided RR with a second-hand lawn mower which they returned as it wasn't suitable, sourced and provided pallets for RR to build more compost bins and managed to find a second hand shed RR which the tenants declined on security grounds.

The Youth club will hand back its plot from 1st April and this has been re let as has another allotment on GR following the move of a tenant from GR to a smaller plot on RR. As a result, there are currently no people on the waiting list for

Rattlesden Rd, however we have 1 waiting for a plot to become available on Gedding Rd.

The invoices and contracts for the allotment rents have been issued and a data base created with e mail and contact details for tenants to make communication more efficient and timely. This meets with one of our strategic objectives to improve operational efficiency.

Michael Lambert and myself have made 2 x bespoke 5 bar gates from recycled materials to fit at the double entrance on Chapel Lane. To complete the installation, we require 6 large hinges.

Proposal. The council to agree the purchase of 6 x heavy duty hinges at a cost of £40 excl vat to complete this project. The money to come out of the allotment Lloyds account.

The make shift gate currently in position will be recycled and used to fill in a large gap in the hedge at the corner of Chapel Lane & Gedding Rd. In addition, we will need to purchase some whips of native hedging to fill in some of the smaller gaps along with a large area to the south of The Old Chapel.

Proposal The council to agree the purchase of some 100 x 60 to 90 cm bare root hawthorn whips at £120 excl VAT for the GR allotments. The money to come out of the allotment Lloyds account.

Councillor Holborn and myself visited the land on RR with a view to a tree survey. Whilst there we discussed the future of the land once the existing tenant hands it back in November. We both feel that it will substantially benefit from a more permanent fence and work on the existing hedging to make it more presentable. No action is required for the moment but consideration needs to be given before potentially deallocating allotment funds.

Prepared by Cllr Edmondson

15th February 2022