

Freckleton Parish Council

Minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on Monday 16th September 2013

Present: Councillor St J Greenhough, (Chair)
Councillors P Walton, Mrs. L Willis, Mrs. G Cowell and K McKay.
Mrs. K Pye, representing the FIB committee
Councillors Mrs. J Cartmell and Mrs. S Delany to observe.

1) To accept Apologies for absence.

Councillors Mrs. M Whitehead and T Fiddler (holiday)
It was resolved to accept the reasons for absence.

2) To record the Declaration of interest from members in any item to be discussed.

All councillors, as trustees, declared an interest in the Croft Butts lane, Bush lane allotments and the Bush lane sports field.

Councillor Mrs. L Willis, as tenant of the Bush lane allotments, declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9 - The review of the Bush lane allotment agreement.

3) To approve the minutes of the Open Spaces meeting held on 15th July 2013.

It was resolved that the minutes of the above mentioned meeting, previously circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman.

4) To receive the Clerk's report.

The comments in the Clerk's report, previously circulated, were noted.

5) To inspect the Croft Butts lane allotments.

It was noted that the allotments were kept clean and tidy.

It was resolved to write to the Chairman of the Allotment holders Association to pass on the Council's appreciation for the effort that has been put in to keep the allotments tidy.

It was reported that the trees on the allotments need inspecting to see if they were in need of trimming or cutting down. One in particular was pushing over the wooden fence and the roots were disturbing the footpath.

It was resolved that the Clerk should obtain a quotation from a tree surgeon.

It was further resolved to write to the Bush lane allotment holders association requesting that the hedges and grass verges, adjacent to the allotments, should be tidied up and to quote Croft Butts lane allotments as the example.

It was further resolved that the Clerk should write to the Bush lane Allotment holder of plot 6a (F Foster), requesting that he undertakes the previous request to remove the caravan from the plot.

6) To consider a request for an additional name to be added to one of the lease agreements on Croft Butts lane.

It was resolved that the additional name may be added to the lease agreement for plot 4Ta, on the understanding that if the original tenant gives up, or stops using the plot, before the new tenant has reached the top of the waiting list, that person will have to give up the allotment.

7) To consider an alternative site for the recycling of the grass cuttings.

It was suggested that two sites should be investigated:-

Behind the Cricket score box on the Bush lane playing fields. – The Chairman agreed to investigate

At the bottom end of the Bush lane allotment lane. – Councillor Willis agreed to investigate.

Both would report back to the next meeting.

8) To consider the requests from Freckleton in Bloom

The following issues were considered:-

1. The untidiness of the Marsh Gate area and Greenacres.

Councillor Mrs. Willis agreed to check who owned the land at Marsh Gate and ask for it be kept tidy.

The Clerk reported that the Open Spaces area on Greenacres has been cut back at the request of the two residents whose properties back onto the area. Councillor Greenhough agreed to seek the views of these two residents to see if there is a problem.

2. Tubs that need repairing/replacing.

Karen Pye agreed to provide a list of the Council owned tubs that need replacing with an estimated cost. This estimate would then be submitted to full Council for consideration.

3. Ideas for commemorating 2014

All the members agreed to consider ideas for commemorating 2014 and report back to the next Open spaces meeting with estimated costs. This estimate would then be submitted to full Council for consideration.

4. Shrubs for the centre of Council owned tubs.

Karen Pye reported that this suggestion has been withdrawn by FIB.

9) To review the allocation procedure and tenancy agreement for the Bush lane allotments

The Clerk reported that the Chairman of the Allotment Holders has expressed concerns that new tenants are being allocated allotments and there is no way of checking that they understand the requirements from DEFRA for looking after livestock. The Clerk has compiled a questionnaire to ensure the new tenants have checked the DEFRA web site before the plot is allocated to them. In addition, he has received a complaint that new tenants are being allocated a plot when they already own or rent other pieces of land and this was unfair to the people on the waiting list that do not have any land.

It was resolved that the new questionnaire should be sent to all new tenants to ensure they understand their responsibilities prior to the allocation of an allotment plot.

It was further resolved that all existing tenants should be asked to complete the questionnaire to ensure they understand their responsibilities should they change the livestock.

An enquiry was raised as to why horses, ponies, donkeys etc had not been included on the questionnaire.

Councillor Mrs. L Willis left the room.

The Clerk pointed out that horses, pony, donkeys etc. are not on the questionnaire as the use of the allotments for stabling and grazing horses was contrary to the wishes of Mr. William Sagar Hodgson. When he left the land, in trust to the Council, he specified that one of the uses should be for allotments. The definition of an allotment is “a small piece of usually public land rented by individuals for cultivation”. In addition, the current lease agreement states that the allotments should be used for “the purpose of breeding, rearing and keeping poultry or other purpose of husbandry”. The definition of husbandry is “The act or practice of cultivating crops and breeding and raising livestock for food, (i.e. agriculture or farming)” and he felt that this does not include stabling and grazing horses etc. He stated that out of the seventeen tenants currently on the allotments there are four that are stabling/grazing horses or donkeys. There are a further four, on the waiting list, that have expressed a wish to have an allotment for stabling horse, etc. There are others on the waiting list that have not indicated what the use would be but have expressed a wish to have a full or half plot.

If no action was taken then at least 50% of the allotments would be used for stabling and or grazing horses, etc, in the not too distant future.

It was resolved that the allotments should not be used for stabling horses, ponies, donkeys, etc. and no new tenant would be allowed to keep horses etc on the allotments.

It was further resolved that the Clerk should write to the all the allotments tenants and the people on the waiting list to inform them of the Committees decision regarding horses etc.

It was further resolved that the Clerk should write to the tenant on plot 5.a to inform her that she was contravening the new lease agreement she has recently signed and ask that the donkeys are removed.

It was further resolved to refer to the full Council for a decision regarding the action to be taken for the other three tenants with horses, who have been plot holders for at least 10 years.

Councillor Mrs. L Willis returned to the room.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Signed.....St. J Greenhough, Chairman.....

Date.....06/11/13.....