

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Allotment Holders' Annual Meeting, held on 14th April 2011 in the Hadwin Lounge, Hurworth Grange, starting at 7:00pm.

1. **Those present;** Cllr Val Hughes, Tony Sayer, Andy McQuade, John Buxton, Jane Parsons, Tony Needham, Vicky McCourt, Adrian Savage, Graham Wylie, Lynn Wylie, *Lawrence Burnside, Tony Hall.*

Also present: Peter Allan, Parish Clerk.

2. **Apologies for absence:** None received

The Clerk announced that the Chair, Cllr Hepplewhite had resigned from the Allotment Working Group. It was agreed that the Clerk would act as Chair for this Annual Open meeting.

3. **The minutes** of the Working Party meeting held on 20th January 2011 were read and adopted. Proposed by John Buxton and seconded by Val Hughes.

4. **All matters arising** are on tonight's agenda.

5. **Election of Representatives.**

Strait Lane allotments: Lynn Wylie, Andy McQuade and Tony Hall

Hurworth Grange allotments: Tony Sayers

The parish council representatives will be elected on 9th May at the PC AGM.

6. **Chairman's remarks**

The Chairman reported that it has been a very successful year for the Allotment Group. Seven new allotment holders received allotments as from January 2011, which reduced the Waiting List at Strait Lane to nil. However, four people have since, placed their names on the List. There are two people waiting for allotments at the Grange.

The Parish Council had been successful in obtaining a grant for £2,000 for water installation at strait Lane, and the PC had agreed to contribute the additional cost of £700, to complete the installation.

Initial enquiries and a general meeting had been held to investigate the potential for Group to set up their own Allotment Association.

7. **Report on the installation of water** at Strait Lane. John Buxton reported that the work has been completed and that the required pressure tests have been conducted by Northumbrian Water.

JB is expecting the water to be switched on by Easter, and will be following up on this. The Clerk stated that a Grant report is required as soon as the project is completed, and it is scheduled for 30th April 2011.

JB said that he would also talk to the civil contractor to obtain and sign off on the invoice for the work carried out.

Hosepipes are not be used to take any water from the water supply provided by the Parish Council.

8. **Report on water economy.** Val Hughes urged allotment holders not to abuse the use of water. The water will be metered, and the Parish Council have agreed to pay for the water this year. In future years allotment holders may be asked to pay a levy for water, and this would be across the board to all allotment holders, and probably based on the previous years usage.

There will be a turn-off procedure put in place, and the water will be turned off and troughs drained on 31 October and turned on at 1 March (subject to no severe frosts).

It was stated and impressed upon the meeting that use of any water and garden hose from someone else's house, is illegal and both the user and supplier can be fined up to £2000 and the supplier made to have a water meter. It was also stated that anyone using their own mains water with a static sprinkler is now apparently required by Northumbrian Water to have a water meter installed. The working group should inform other allotment holders and urge them not to break the law.

It was pointed out that it is for individual tenants to make their own decisions as to whether they use hosepipes and/or sprinklers, the Parish Council does not condone illegal use but it is not for the Parish Council to ban tenants from making their own decisions.

Tony Sayers asked whether a meter will also be installed at the Grange, and a water turn-off turn-on procedure put in place this year. This was confirmed.

9. **Hurworth Country Fair** Peter Allan gave a short report informing the Group that arrangements were now well advanced, and the Fair is expected to attract more than 2,000 people. He requested that all allotment holders should take part by entering their produce in the Fair competitions. Val Hughes is the Organiser arranging all the produce and similar competitions.

10. **Allotment Association** Val Hughes reported that there are several benefits from forming their own association. These included bulk buying discounts, access to legal aid and access to grants.

However, it requires a core of keen supporters to take on the roles of Chair, secretary and Treasurer, and unless volunteers come forward, it will not be practical to establish their own Association. Val, herself, is joining the National Association of Allotment Holders.

11. Matters to be referred to the Parish council

- a. The gate at Strait Lane required repairs to the gatepost and wheel. It was agreed that members of the allotment working group will arrange for the repair, and the Clerk will accept a charge of upto £100 to cover the repairs.
- b. The grass needs cutting in the Strait Lane allotment area. Andy McQuade said that he has the communal lawn mower, and he will undertake to cut the grass.
- c. It was reported that the allotment at Grange number 5 needs attention and is being neglected. Action the *Clerk to address this problem*.

12. The date of the next meeting was left open, and the Clerk will convene a meeting at an appropriate date.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and the meeting closed at 8:00pm

