

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes of the Allotment Meeting held at Hurworth Grange, Hurworth –on-Tees, on Wednesday 17th June 2015 starting at 7.15pm.

Those present: Graham Wylie, George Lawman, Tony Sayers, Bryan Cooper, Andrew Robinson, Michelle Edwards

Also attending: Peter Allan (Parish Clerk) and John Edwards (Allotment holder).

1. The Clerk opened the meeting welcoming the committee, and introducing Michelle Edwards and Andrew Robinson as the two Parish Council representatives.
The Clerk outlined the purpose and objectives of the Allotment Committee, as follows:-
 - a. The Parish Council has a mandatory obligation to provide allotments for the residents of the parish.
 - b. The allotment holders have a responsibility to maintain and keep the plots in good condition.
 - c. There is a set of rules and bye laws which both parties are required to adhere.
 - d. The clerk reminded the gathering of the date of this year's Hurworth Country Fair, and encouraged all allotment holders to participate.
2. **Apologies for Absence** All present.
3. **Election of the Chairman**
George Lawman proposed and Bryan Cooper Seconded that Graham Wylie should be Chairman for the year. All agreed.
4. **Minutes for the AGM dated 19th November 2014**

The minutes, having been previously distributed, were accepted, Proposed by George Lawman and Seconded by Tony Sayers.

5. Allotment Register and Waiting List

The Clerk reported that the Grange allotments are all taken, and there is one probably one plot becoming available at Strait Lane. Mr Lol Burnside has moved out of the parish, and therefore his allotment 23b must be vacated. It was agreed that this plot will be offered to the next qualifying person on the Waiting List. The council was reminded by Andrew Robinson that the 'qualifying' rules for allocation include:-

'one person' means one 'household', incorporating husband and wife or partner.

At present there are six people waiting for allotments at Strait Lane and six waiting for an allotment at Hurworth Grange.

It is thought that another allotment at Strait Lane may becoming vacant soon.

The Clerk reported that two people had vacated their allotments in 2014, and in both cases their Bond of £30 was returned, as they had left their plots in good order. Tony Sayers observed that this proved that the system of Bonds was working to our satisfaction.

6. Allotment Upkeep

Graham Wylie reported that all the Strait Lane allotments are in good order, and no plots appear to be neglected. Bryan Cooper has been tending Lol Burnside's plot since he left the parish. The holder of allotment 13a has recently died, and is being tended by the family; George Lawman will enquire whether they wish to keep the plot. Plot 18a is not being regularly used, and Graham Wylie offered to make enquiries about Mrs McGough's intentions.

Tony Sayers reported that all the plots at the Grange are in good order, and no neglect has occurred.

Darlington Borough Council have now cut the grass path alongside the Strait Lane allotments and also trimmed back the hedge. We have had reports about the path becoming inaccessible, leading to people walking through the allotments; this is now resolved.

The internal grass cutting has been contracted to B Green, out at £60 per month, and this will continue until the end of September. HPC will pay this amount.

The Clerk drew attention to the water bill, which appeared to start prior to 1st April, but after discussion everybody was satisfied with the bill, and HPC will pay it.

7. Hens on allotments

George Lawman said that the National Association were mounting a campaign to force councils to allow the keeping of hens on allotments. Although he himself has no interest in keeping hens, he said that he agrees with the principle. He requested that HPC send a letter addressed to him, stating that it rejects requests to keep hens on Hurworth allotments, as it is contrary to the Allotment rules and local bye law,

8. Water taps at Strait Lane

There was a discussion about the possibility of extending the water pipes at Strait Lane and to allow allotment holders to use hoses. Some allotment holders find it difficult to carry cans of water from the basins to their plots.

After the discussion, it was agreed to leave the situation as it is, particularly as the water bill would be likely to escalate.

9. Allotment Association Report

George Lawman reported that the 'Hurworth Allotment Association', which operates independently, now has 17 paid up members.

One of the important benefits of the Association is the legal representation and assistance it offers.

10. Requirements for 2015

- a. The water will continue to be paid by the council.
- b. A skip will be required in October 2015
- c. The grass cutting arrangements at Strait Lane will continue in 2015.

11. Any Other Business

- a. Micelle Edwards reported that there have been incidents of fires been lit during the afternoon. This is contrary to the allotment rules which state that fires are not permitted until 6:00 pm or one hours before dusk. Notices to this effect have been put on the notice boards at strait Lane.
- b. It was suggested that a central manure heap be established, and plot holders could take what they need. After discussion, it was decided that the concept was unlikely to work, and the actual location could be a problem.
- c. The Clerk advised the committee that a group from Bishop Auckland would be attending the Hurworth Fair, and they were interested in collecting surplus produce from the allotments and using it to make juices.
- d. It appears that one or two people may be selling produce, and it was re-iterated that produce should not be sold. or the allotments used as a market garden, as it is contrary to Rule 9 of the Allotment Rules.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:35pm