

**Notes of Annual Plot Holders Meeting
28 October 2019, 7.30pm**



Plot Holders: 12

Cllr Hazel Hodd (WPC) - Chair of Open Spaces
Cllr Graham Overbury (WPC)
Mr O Armstrong (WPC) – Deputy Clerk
Mr R House (WPC) – Grounds team Leader
Mr Noel Williams (Allotment Rep)

Apologies

Mr Nigel Powell (Allotment Rep)

1. Welcome & Introduction

Cllr Hazel Hodd, Chair of the Council's Open Spaces committee which included the oversight of the allotments, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself and Oliver Armstrong, the Deputy Clerk who currently manages the allotment site on a day-to-day basis. The Deputy Clerk is also an admin on the Allotments Facebook page. Mr House, Grounds Team Leader, was also in attendance. His team are responsible for undertaking the operational maintenance of the allotments.

Mr Noel Williams and Mr Nigel Powell are plot holders and represent the views of the allotment plot holders on the working party.

It is with fondness that we remember Mr Brian Richards, who died on 13th September, and was also a working party member.

2. Annual Allotment Report

The following report was given by Cllr Hodd:

Plots	167
Vacancies	15
Occupied	152

Percentage Occupied	91.02%
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The area currently occupied by birds is being vacated and the holder is clearing the space with a target date of March 2020 to complete.

- The council will be keeping a maintenance log so raised items can be tracked and resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Troughs - if there are any issues with the troughs please will you let the Parish Office know. This can be done via Facebook, popping in to the office or contacting one of your Working Party members.
- The area by the Prospect, there is an issue with strimming and signage. The Prospect have been contacted but have not responded so they will be chased again. This is on the Maintenance Log.

- The ditch on the East boundary of the site is unkempt and has low overhanging trees. This is being investigated and a report will be provided to the next Working Party for a decision on the way forward.
- Wroughton Parish Council have had a request to remove an Ash Tree. The council will have a tree survey planned, whereby all the trees that the council are responsible for will be reviewed and a recommendation made on their status etc. This ash tree will be included in that.
- Gates - just a gentle reminder to close the gates after you enter and leave the site.

3. Projects

Cllr Hodd explained that the Allotment WP have decided to concentrate on bringing three projects forward over the next year.

Project 1 - Wroughton Parish Council will be providing an industrial sized skip in December for the purpose of plot waste clearance. This will give an opportunity for plot holders to dispose of unwanted items. The skip will only be on site for one full day 8am – 5pm during a weekday – a letter will be sent to all plot holders when the details have been confirmed.

There will be restrictions on what can and can't go into the skip and Wroughton Parish Council staff will be in attendance to help advise. To ensure only items from the allotment site area put into the skip a member of staff or volunteer will be in attendance throughout the day.

Project 2 - An area encompassing plots 59a, 60a, 59, 60, 36a and 36 has been in a very poor condition for some time and the WP agreed this could be converted into a communal area as the plots were still not taken on. The area was visible from the road and did not give a good impression of the site.

Project 3 - The repairs for the allotment track will be re-considered after previously being removed from the budget. The council will need to consider whether a budget should be included for 2020/21. A report will be submitted to the Open Spaces committee supporting the inclusion of a set budget with recommended repairs and maintenance.

4. Pest Control

Mr Armstrong met with the pest control contractor on Friday 25th October 2019 to discuss the current situation, the contractor apologised he was unable to attend this meeting.

Rats – The contractor is concentrating on the area where chickens had been present. The tenant was in the process of moving off the site and the contractor suggested this could increase activity for a short period of time. The council will meet with the contractor on site to further mitigate any issues but sightings should still be reported to the office.

5. Appointment of Plot Holder Representatives to the Allotment Working Party

Noel Williams, Brian Richards had Nigel Powell were the allotment representatives for 2018/2019. Cllr Hodd thanked the representatives for their work over the past 12 months. Mr Powell and Mr Williams had confirmed that they would be willing to re-stand. Mr King and Mr Wells also nominated themselves for allotment WP representatives.

Noel Williams, Nigel Powell, Josh King and Daniel Wells were appointed plot holder representatives for 2019/20. Wroughton Parish Council welcome them on board and look forward to working with them.

The next meeting has been scheduled for 12th November 2019, but can be changed to suit members.

Action: Allotment reps to sign contact disclosure form.

4. **Comments/Questions from the Floor**

The following provides a summary of the questions/comments raised by plot holders.

Memorial Plaque for Mr Richards – An allotment holder suggested a memorial plaque on the site for Mr Richards.

Action: To be considered at the next WP meeting.

An allotment holder was dissatisfied with theft and vandalism on the site and did not consider the police took this criminal activity seriously. There was a mention of a security fence to be installed on the perimeter of the site.

Action: Referred to allotment WP

The rent was raised to bring the allotments in line with those run by SBC. However, SBC allotments have physical security, the Wroughton allotment site does not. It was agreed that costs of fencing would be investigated and presented to the Working Party.

Action: Deputy Clerk to investigate

A particular plot was recorded as being untidy and nothing had been done. The Deputy Clerk made a note of the plot and offered to look into what had happened in this instance.

Action: Deputy Clerk to investigate.

There was a request that the notes from this meeting be published.

Action: Notes will be officially noted at the Open Spaces meeting and published on Facebook.

The gates on the site were not closing properly due to the level of the ground under the gates. This made it more difficult to close the gates.

Action: Grounds team would investigate the gates and this item will be added to the maintenance list.

The central track pot hole filling repairs were unsuccessful and it was suggested tarmac could be used instead.

Action: Allotment WP will investigate the options for track repairs and Open Spaces to consider an appropriate budget for 2020/21.

An allotment plot holder stated that brambles were overgrowing the central track and scratching cars on both sides.

Action: Grounds team to investigate and remove brambles from unallocated plots. Deputy Clerk to write to allotment plot holders if necessary.

It was suggested that the grounds team could trial stinging and covering of allotment plots. The Deputy Clerk stated this has been trailed but was not continued due to cost implications.

Action: Referred to allotment WP

The T junction emerging onto Moormead Road was considered dangerous due to the vegetation on the McCarthy & Stone site.

Action: Deputy Clerk to arrange a meeting with Cllr Hodd and McCarthy & Stone.

Baiting around the site was suggested to see the extent of the problem.

Action: Allotment WP to consider pest control actions and reviewing the contract.

Action: Deputy Clerk to invite pest controller to the next meeting.

An allotment plot holder suggested using emails rather than paper to reduce paperwork.

Action: Deputy Clerk to write to all plot holders to see if they would be able to be communicated to via e-mail as opposed to letters.

A deposit system was suggested to ensure plots don't fall into a poor condition. The Deputy Clerk advised that this was explored but was advised against by the auditor at the time.

Action: Referred to allotment WP

An allotment holder questioned why allotment holders pay for the use of the open space where as other open space users do not.

Action: Referred to Open Spaces.

An allotment plot holder questioned why bee hives were not permitted on the site. The Deputy Clerk advised the plot holder that this was a decision made by the WP following several objections to the idea.

Action: Referred to Allotment WP.

The ditch on the East of the site boundary needed reviewing and possibly needed maintenance.

Action: Referred to Allotment WP.

Allotment troughs were frequently tampered with and breaking. The grounds team leader suggested that the taps are turned off when the troughs are full. There was a suggestion that the water could be switched off over the winter period.

Action: Referred to Allotment WP for review.

The Grounds Team Leader asked whether allotment holders could not scrape the ground where manure and chippings are as it was damaging the ground. There was also reports of non-allotment holders taking the wood chippings and manure without permission. The Deputy Clerk conceded that it was difficult to police such an issue.

Action: The Deputy Clerk is to arrange a meeting with The Prospect Hospice and McCarthy & Stone with Cllrs and the Grounds Team Leader.

The meeting concluded at **8:45pm**