

Meeting	Clapham Parish Council Wednesday, 8 th February 2023 at 5.00pm In the Committee Room, Clapham Village Hall
Committee Members in attendance:	Cllr. Ian Gaskin (IG) - Chair Cllr. Eric Cooper (EC) Cllr. Charlie Tomkins (CT) Maria Dunne – Allotments Association Robin Bhullan – Allotments Association
Apologies Received:	Allotment Association Committee Members: Brian Canning Mark Ingledew Nick Southern Linda Bird Mike Campbell
Clerk to the Council:	Rosemary Plum (RP)

MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received as indicated above.

The Chair noted there had been some confusion regarding the number of Allotment Association committee members invited to attend this meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr. Eric Cooper – allotment plot holder

3. Open Forum

a) Introduction to the Parish Council Allotment Committee

- I. Introduction from EC outlining the need to establish working relationships between new Allotment Association and the Parish Council, setting baselines for how the Parish Council Allotment Committee will work.
- II. This committee has to work within the formal Parish Council structure.
- III. All decisions agreed by this Allotment Committee will need to be ratified by the Parish Council.
- IV. The Parish Councillors on this committee want to become knowledgeable about allotment operation in the first instance.
- V. The possibility of adding more representatives of the Allotment Association Committee should be considered in future.

- VI. The Allotment Association is a newly created organisation and is represented by an interim Committee pending its AGM in March when a committee will be formed for the year. Clapham Allot and Gardens Association set up to represent the plot holders. Advantages in being member of the national association and every Clapham plot holder has been given membership within their rent this year.
- VII. The Allotment Association committee meets every two weeks on Wednesday morning at 10am. Parish Councillors are welcome to attend at any time.
- VIII. The Allotment Association issues regular newsletters to all Allotment plot holders.

b) Dogs on allotments

- I. Large number of dogs being allowed to walk through and across the allotments without being kept on a lead. RP-Signs
- II. Signage is required. The Parish Council has agreed to pay for these. RP to arrange make arrangement with EC. RP-Maps
- III. The Public Right of Way through the allotments needs to be clarified with a definitive map from Bedford Borough.

c) Rent payments

- I. Some plot holders complaining they haven't received a payment receipt. Majority of payments made by cheque or bank transfer. It is not common practice to issues a receipt in those instances. RP-receipts
- II. RP agreed to issue receipt for any cash payments for allotment rent. EC to clarify in next newsletter. EC-newsletter

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

Inaugural meeting with no previous minutes.

5. Matters Arising (*for information only*)

Inaugural meeting with no previous minutes.

6. Clerks Report (*for information only*)

The Clerk reported on the following activities:

- I. Creation of a plot holders database.
- II. Payment of rents.
- III. Update on water usage.
- IV. Security fence at main entrance – update.
- V. Investigation of flooding at entrance – update.

7. Establishment of Roles and Responsibilities

a) The Role of the Parish Council

- I. To support the allotment committee financially and practically

b) The Role of the Allotment Committee

- II. To support the Parish Council with suggestions of how it could support the allotment site and plot holders.
- c) The following administrative/regulatory requirements were discussed:

Allotments Inspections

- Large number of plots not being managed properly.
- A procedure to inspect and take action is required.
- Association will send tenant an initial advisory letter and copy-in the Parish Council. If no response, report to the Allotment Committee who will try to contact the tenant with letter from the Parish Council. If still no action from tenant, matter is referred to a full meeting with approval for eviction and ensuing notice from the Parish Council.
- Photos should be taken before, during and after the above process.
- Enforcement of weed control aligned to Weeds Act 1959 and identification of injurious Weeds

Inspection and removal of trees

- Need authority to inspect and cut down trees.
- Requests from plot holders to cut down trees must be considered and approved by this Allotment Committee.

Maintenance and transformation.

- Need to develop a strategy

Terms of Reference

- To be distributed at next meeting.

General comments

- We're starting to get a lot of compliments about the changes in the allotment management and atmosphere on-site is changing in a positive way.
- Allotment Association Committee are volunteers and will struggle at times to achieve everything on their own.

8. Any Other Business

a) Plot Boundaries

- I. What can and can't the Allotment Association do?
- II. Necessary to avoid confrontation amongst allotmenters.
- III. Support from Parish Council would be welcome when required.

b) Parish Council commitment

- I. Parish Councillors prepared to put time into this Committee and want to do it for allotment holders and wider village.

- II. 500 houses coming in the next 12-24 months. A number will want allotments so keen to get the allotment area up to scratch for more tenants in the future.
- III. Terms and conditions of plot holding to be reviewed through this Allotment Committee.

c) Maintaining order and discipline

- I. Parish Council backing required to maintain discipline.
- II. Livestock policy for those who keep it on allotments.
- III. Chickens attracting rats. Rats in brambles and ditches. Ask Borough Council 01234 718099 for advice and further investigation.
- IV. Consider amnesty when introducing new rules
- V. Get feedback from plot holders on what they might like to see.
- VI. Add information to website and Facebook.

RP-phone

9. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on 8th March 2023 at 5:00pm

Meetings to be held on the second Wednesday of the month at 5:00pm until further notice.

Meeting closed by the Chair at 6:30pm

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	

Chair