

Silloth-on-Solway Town Council
Minutes of a meeting of the Allotment Committee
Held on Tuesday 26 January 2016 at 7.00pm at Silloth Community Hall

Present:-

Councillors

G. Wilkinson (GW), A. Emmerson (AE) & J. Cook (JC).

Also present: Wendy Jameson – Town Clerk (WEJ), Gordon Baker & Frank Denard.

493	Apologies Cllrs. I. Baty & D. Graham.	
494	Declarations of Interest None	
495	Exclusion of Press & Public There was no reason to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting.	
496	Minutes It was questioned why the decision to issue a Notice to Quit to three allotment holders was rescinded by the Town Council. No work has been done to those particular allotments despite them being told that work needed to be done by 31 December. Frank has dug over half of his allotment but the poor weather had prevented him from doing any more. RESOLVED that a site meeting be held at 11.00am on Saturday to consider what action to take. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2015 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.	
497	Waiting List and Vacant Plots There are currently 9 people on the waiting list. It was decided at the last meeting that the list would come back to the Council to administer. Frank gave the Clerk a list with 4 names on it and will provide the additional names when he finds them. There are two people interested in taking over Plot 3a – Mr Barwise who is an existing allotment holder and Steven & Ashley Litt who are keen to take it on. Ken had looked at it to see if the concrete could be removed but it would be too difficult and costly to get a machine in to do it. It was agreed that priority be given to a new allotment holder and to allocate the allotment to Mr Litt. Plots 19a and 19c are now vacant as Mr Morgan has handed them back. Mr & Mrs Bailey have expressed an interest in taking them over but it was agreed that priority be given to people on the waiting list. There are two allotment holders who have not paid their rent – Mr Brierley (plot 25a & 25b) and Mr Irving (Plot 3b) which was due by 31 December. A reminder letter has been sent but received no response. If rent remains unpaid for 40 days then Notice to Quit can be issued. Letter to be sent to Mr Irving to say that if his rent is not paid by 9 February, then a Notice to Quit will be issued. Mrs Brierley has told Gordon that they are giving up their allotment as they are both working now during the day and don't have the time. It was agreed that plots 25a and 25b be divided into two, to create four individual plots which will be allocated to people on the waiting list along with 19a and 19c.	
498	Allotment Association There has been a positive response to the questionnaire slips sent out with the allotment bills. 21 people were in favour of an allotment association being created and 1 person was against. 14 people would be willing to be involved with the Allotment Association and 5 were not. Setting up an association would enable funding to be obtained to improve the allotments, funding which the Council would not be able to access. An association would	

	<p>encourage people to work together. The Council has included £500 in its budget to support the setting up of an allotment association which could be used as match funding. Discounts on the cost of seeds could also be obtained. The association would be able to get smart water kits at a discounted price to mark their property and make it easier to return if it were stolen. Various suggestions have been made of possible improvements to the allotments which includes:- improving boundary fences; plots to be kept tidy and if not then given to someone else; mole catcher and rats; regular newsletter; overall tidy up; disposal of waste; security fence; drainage improvements. Mrs Searle's allotment has flooded this year and she has lost a lot of crops. A lot of work was done to improve the drainage at the allotments a couple of years ago but there are some which flood as they are lower than the rest. There has been a lot of rain over the last couple of months and the water is simply not going away. The level of the allotment could be raised with loads of top soil, raised beds could help the problem or Mrs Searle could be offered an alternative allotment but the problem still needs sorted. The allotment will be looked at during the site visit and possible solutions considered.</p> <p>RESOLVED that a meeting be arranged of allotment holders to progress with setting up an allotment association. It was suggested that someone be invited to the meeting to speak to allotment holders to explain the benefits of having as association.</p>	
<p>499</p>	<p>Problems/Issues</p> <p>The Clerk obtained a price from Cumbria Wildlife Management to deal with the problem of moles at the allotments and was quoted £35 to set the traps and £5 per mole. Nothing can be done until the ground dries out. There have also been rats down there but it is inevitable when there is livestock and food left out.</p>	

Signed.....

Date.....