

**EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING of MUNDFORD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT MUNDFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL
TUESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2013**

Present: Cllr S Eyres Chairman, Cllr J Goad Vice-Chairman, Cllr C Weight, Cllr J Marston, Cllr J Burton, Cllr T Fox, Cllr L Pratt, Cllr A Shepherd, Cllr D Goodrham, Jane Scarrott from NALC, Mr N Hill Representative of Mundford Scouts, John Hayden allotment holder, Mr B McIsaac resident, Mr B Griggs allotment holder, Mr M Taylor & Mrs F Brown Clerk to the Council. There were no members of the public.

1. The Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting straight into a presentation from Jane Scarrott from NALC on allotments.

2. Apologies of Absence

None.

3. To receive declarations of interest

There were none.

4. Meeting suspended for public participation

There were no public for comments.

5. Matters Arising

Land transferred to Mundford Parish Council from the late Miss Mary-Ann Turner

As the legal transfer is now completed Mundford Parish Council now own a piece of land which houses the Scout hut and a handful of allotments.

Jane Scarrott from NALC outlined in her presentation that the Council have a lot of flexibility with regards to the allotment issue and gave advice on many aspects including planning permission, structures on the site, allotment leases, size of allotments etc.

The Chairman asked those present if there were any questions they would like to ask Jane.

Cllr Weight mentioned that in the Parish Councillors Guidebook, written by Paul Claydon, it states that allotments should be no bigger than 40 poles (1210 sq yards). It is clear that more allotments can be placed on the site, and it was the Chairman's view that another 6 plots would be sufficient, making the total to 9.

Cllr Fox asked whether it was normal practice to set up a separate allotments committee.

Jane stated that it would be a good idea to have a separate committee that was run by the Parish Council, and allotment holders are able to go on to the committee too if the Council wishes it. Another suggestion from Jane was to adopt a liaison officer or 'Steward' that can oversee the allotments to make sure that tenants are looking after them correctly and adhering to their tenancy agreement. The Steward can then pass this information to the committee so that decisions can be made separate to a Parish Council meeting.

Mr Griggs stated that he had had an allotment on the site for over 40 years and was concerned that he may lose this facility. The Chairman stated that it would not be in the Council's interest to evict any allotment holders from their allotment. This process is simply to make sure everything is documented properly on how the Council can manage the site.

Jane gave the Clerk a template of a tenancy agreement which showed that there is a lot of flexibility given to ensure that the right agreement is drafted for this council.

There were discussions on charges and sizing of the allotments.

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A question was asked as to whether bonfires are allowed as these are quite regular on the site. Jane mentioned that there is nothing to say people cannot have them, but to be careful they do not cause a nuisance to others. The Chairman asked Mr Griggs if there have been any issues with regards to bonfires previously, and he said that to his knowledge there had been no complaints before.

Jane mentioned that the pathways between the allotment patches should be managed. In her opinion, it would be wise to make a plan of the area and highlight the areas that are to be maintained by each tenant and state this in their tenancy agreement.

At present there is no mains water on the site, and water butts and an old bath that collects water is the only means of retaining it. Mr Griggs stated that this has been sufficient over the years. If mains water was allowed to be used on the site, you would need to rely on the allotment holders not to waste it.

Mr Griggs mentioned that the shed that is on the site has a leaky roof and the door is kept shut by a brick at the door. Even though this has been sufficient, due to the Council now taking on the responsibility of the site they may consider changing this.

Insurance was mentioned, and Jane stated that as long as a competent inspection has taken place then this is usually adequate. Trees may need to be inspected by a qualified tree surgeon depending on the issues involved.

There have been no reports of vandalism on the site.

There is no official vehicle access to the site and it was mentioned that on the original scouts leasing document that 1 scout leader per weekday was allowed to drop or pick up equipment from the site, which meant they were allowed to drive down the private drive leading to the scout hut.

Security to the site was mentioned and it was discussed that a fence next to the allotments may need replacing.

Jane stated that there were many issues to consider, but NALC is always able to help with queries and can pass any draft tenancy agreements to their legal team to look at before their distribution if the council felt this was necessary. There would be no cost to the council for this service.

There was a brief discussion on who owns the Scout Hut. After looking through the original leasing agreement it was discovered the Scouts own the hut and are liable to maintain it, but they leased the land from the late Mary Ann Turner for a 10p peppercorn rent. The tenancy agreement lasts for another 5 years.

It was commented by Cllr Fox that the Council have to be as transparent as possible with this matter and everything should be documented.

It was asked whether Mary-Ann Turner had left a request that the land should never be built on, but the clerk stated that she had asked this question to the solicitor who regretfully said no. It was also asked whether a covenant had been placed on the land. The clerk explained all the information she was given from the solicitor at the time and has these replies on e-mail format.

6. To receive reports from councillors, finance, items to be considered for the next Agenda and items of correspondence

The clerk read out a note from NALC about a forthcoming event.

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The clerk also asked for a cheque to be approved. The clerk had purchased Christmas lights, batteries, and the advert for her vacancy with her own finances. This was proposed by Cllr Fox and seconded by Cllr Goad and all were in favour.

Cheque	Description	Total
101627	Mrs F Brown (expenses)	£ 276.20

The vacancy will be placed in the Thetford & Brandon Times for 3 weeks and on their Jobs24 website. There has been one application for the position so far and a number of enquiries.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm