

BINGLEY TOWN COUNCIL



Bingley Town Council, Myrtle Place, Bingley, BD16 2LF

Notes from the Allotment Forum held on Thursday 25th July 2024 at the Beck Lane allotment site, Bingley

Councillors present: David Heseltine

In attendance: Eve Haskins (Town Clerk), Debbie Ioanna (Admin Assistant), PCSO Rayment

Allotment holders: 16

Start time: 18:00

End time: 19:15

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr David Heseltine welcomed all the plot holders and introduced himself, apologies sent from Cllr Andrew Fenton who was at the Friends of Bingley Pool Meeting. Also introduced Eve Haskins as Town Clerk and Debbie Ioanna as Admin Assistant. Introduced PCSO Alex Rayment who was present to talk to residents regarding the recent break in and to give advice on crime prevention. Also mentioned that we now have a gardener, Adam, to keep certain spaces tidy and do other jobs as needed.

2. Items raised by plot holders

a. Trees

A plot holder (PH) mentioned overgrown trees being in a conservation area which was preventing any work being carried out on them. Also when they reach a certain height and width it is harder to make a change. The sycamore trees are sending too many saplings out which are difficult to dig out. Tenants need to be cautious of this.

Cllr Heseltine acknowledged that it is a valid point as saplings can be a nuisance. It is all about management on plots, for tenants and the council.

b. Communal Plot

PH questioned whether there were still plans to move the communal plot from 2B to 23.

Cllr Heseltine confirmed that this would be too expensive to change and it was his view to retain the current communal plot. PH commented that 23 is not ideal for communal plot and that 2B acts as a barrier to mare's tail.

c. Composting

PH asked if plot 23 could be a composting site.

Cllr Heseltine confirmed that the gardener is looking into composting options and that anything set up would be on plot 23.

d. Free bark

PH said they had been asked by a local tree surgeon if they wanted any free bark, was this allowed?

Cllr Heseltine confirmed that we promote the use of natural materials as opposed to plastic alternatives.

Different PH commented that another PH received an order of free bark, and the tree surgeon offered to drop off more. Dumped a load by a tree to be abandoned and it then began to smoke. It was stopped by other tenants.

Cllr Heseltine advised that if any deliveries were dropped off, to act on it immediately.

e. Items left at gate

PH commented that lately, a lot of items are being left at the gate. Pots being left by unknown tenants and sit there.

Cllr Heseltine advised that if anyone does leave items by the gate as a way of recycling/donation, to leave a note so people are aware.

f. Communication

PHs do have a WhatsApp group set up which helped with the recent break in. Cllr Heseltine encouraged communication between the plot holders.

g. Vacant plots

PH asked if any plots are vacant for some time, and no one is responsible for it, could the gardener work on keeping weeds down until a tenant is found?

Cllr Heseltine said this could be a possibility.

h. Holidays/Absence

Cllr Heseltine mentioned that if there is going to be a long period of absence from allotments which cannot be avoided (illness/bereavement) to reach out to the staff to keep us informed and see if we can help to avoid plots becoming overgrown and complaints from neighbours. Or make arrangements for other people to help if going on holiday etc.

Or, if you are giving up the plot, give plenty of notice before beforehand to give us time to find someone new.

PH mentioned that it was previously at Christmas when new tenants were found so they had time before spring to get the plot ready.

Admin Assistant commented that some people give notice mid year, and as plots cannot be left empty they cannot wait until Christmas. Also, this year's renewals caused a lot of plot holders to give notice in March/April.

PH acknowledged that there had been a lot of empty plots this year to be filled.

i. PCSO Rayment

PCSO Rayment from the Shipley Neighbourhood Policing Team introduced himself. Has been made aware of recent break ins over the last couple of months.

Advised to leave sheds etc unlocked and take all valuables home. Then if someone opens it, there is no damage and they see there is nothing there.

Acknowledged it is easy for people to jump over the wall but advised against barbed wire etc due to damages. Said natural brambles would be a possibility as less appealing to jump over/into.

Brought leaflets and UV pens to be distributed among anyone who wants them.

PH asked what to do if they ever encounter anyone on site who shouldn't be there when alone.

PCSO advised to never approach. Ring 999 if concerned. Always think about personal safety (alarms). Or shed cameras.

PH mentioned her disappointment by recent police reaction to the break in. They had a strimmer stolen, reported it but advised no further action and closed the case. Very upset by the lack of support from the police and for victims of crime.

PCSO acknowledged that this case was not great in terms of service. He received the email to alert him to the meeting this evening but the report itself passed him by. Advised that as well as reporting to the police, could email the local Neighbourhood Police Team at shipleynt@westyorkshriepolice.co.uk

Cllr Heseltine reiterated personal safety if on site alone. Suggested using the WhatsApp group to alert others to being on site and if other could join around the same time as the allotment site is a very remote area.

PH asked about the gate and if it would be advisable to lock the padlock on entry

Comments to support this however some tenants would struggle to reach the padlock once inside to get back out.

j. Facebook group

PH asked if there could be a closed Facebook group for tenants only.

Admin Assistant said she could work on this and be 'admin' for the group to make sure only tenants are added into it to keep it secure. Will speak to the PH about this who offered to help.

k. Friendly reminders

Cllr Heseltine gave a few reminders for plot holders.

- Paths – keeping all paths around plots tidy.
- Absence – if will be away for a prolonged period of time, reach out to neighbours for help or friends/family.
- Out of hours – if an emergency on a weekend, contact the councillors. Not the staff as they work weekdays only and cannot help.
- Skip – booked for 3rd August. Possibly another one later in the year if it fills too quickly, but advised to be mindful when filling it. Stack things correctly and efficiently.

3. Actions

- a. To set up a meeting between staff and councillors to discuss safety measures and other business.
- b. To look into cost of CCTV signs to distribute as a deterrent.
- c. Admin Assistant to liaise with plot holder re setting up Facebook group.