

## Bosden Farm Allotments Association Meeting –

### Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017 – The Harvester

#### Present:-

Cllr. W Meikle	J Stratton	N Wilbourne
Cllr. Laura Booth	S Hope	W Hadfield
W Law	D Hope	D Oliver
C Read	A Nuttall	W Dawson
P McIntyre	D Blower	G Grey
A Humphrey	P Williams	R Hayward
M Shaw	G Williams	R Grey

#### Apologies:-

H Savage  
S Mellor  
C McCann  
M Ratcliffe  
S Walton

#### 1)Welcome and Introductions:-

\*Attendance list and apologies.

\*Introductions around the table.

\*A welcome to those attending the meeting for the first time.

## 2) Previous Meeting Minutes

Previous meeting minutes were discussed:-

We had a meeting with Ian Keyte from Carillion – Discussion took place regarding the planning process. Ian was unsure as to whether we would need a full planning application and we were advised to complete a Pre-application enquiry. We were informed that the land is owned by the Council, not the Church.

Allotment site visits have been undertaken in Offerton and Marple.

Concerns were raised by residents at the previous and this meeting regarding issues including:-

### **1) Wooded area / path way**

Although this is a separate issue to the allotment plot per se, Cllr. Laura Booth, Cllr. Wendy Meikle, the Committee and everyone present are concerned that residents of Nightingale are being charged a maintenance fee for this wooded area.

This has been a timely reminder for the Councillors and they have committed to champion this and hope to change the ownership and bring this land back to council ownership which will mean the maintenance will no longer apply. They have asked that all affected (the residents of Nightingale) to contact them immediately so they can action a response and take this issue to the council

### **2) Car parking**

One resident raised a concern that car parking would prove a problem, the committee has previously stated that they are looking to make a provision for a small car park onsite, would make it a rule not to park on Nightingale and would openly encourage all allotmenters to walk to the site as much as possible.

### **3) Local Residents Only**

The waiting list is now 50 people (which are needed to ensure continuity of the site) and almost all are from the Bosden farm Estate. The waiting list situation was discussed and the area to which people could travel to the site from. Cllr. Wendy Meikle discussed options for limitations on the waiting list, i.e. losing their plot if people move away. M Shaw stated that the Council usually want the sites to be open to Stockport residents. The vast majority of those on the waiting list live on the estate and by the nature that the project came about; the priority was given to the residents on the estate. Our concern is mainly that the plots are maintained by considerate people who look after their plots and the site is viable so that bills can be paid and the site is well kept. Options are to be discussed further with the Committee.

### **4) Privacy**

Concerns were raised by two residents from Peregrine and Nightingale that privacy is a worry. The Committee agree this is a justifiable concern for both parties and will do further

research and will offer a plan that suits all interests. Initial thoughts would be to plant fast growing trees (alder and silver birch) along the main boundary with the gardens of Nightingale where the fencing is the lowest (at a reasonable distance from the garden fence to allow for fence maintenance). The trees planted could already be at least around 2m tall so that screening formed quickly while other trees/bushes grew up. A security fence may also be advisable on the far side of the access space for the residents' fences. This again is to be considered by residents and investigated further by the Committee.

A resident mentioned that more fencing may need to be constructed alongside (western side) overlooking the gardens of Nightingale, Again, no firm decision has been made and full consultation will be needed with Nightingale / Kingfisher and some Peregrine residents to determine best course of action.

### **5) Water**

Water drainage needs to be investigated and it may be that the site may need drainage (or not) Once the site has been skimmed of the brambles we will all have a better idea of the water table and drainage needed.

### **6) Biodiversity**

There was a general consensus that we do not want the site to be a formal ugly old-fashioned allotment. We all agreed the site should be very well planned and thought out, using ideas from residents and neighbours and using the landscape to create a natural looking space. Sheds and greenhouses will not be allowed and the site could be created to encourage wildlife with ponds / soak-aways etc. The site may also be an informal, natural setting with fruit trees within the site.

The neighbours and residents will be openly encouraged to aid / add / volunteer their own ideas and help design a space which looks good and is enjoyed by all (allotmentees, viewers AND residents)

### **7) Out of hours access and noise**

Later in the meeting, one resident wanted reassurance that the Allotment will be closed at night and noise would be cut short in the evening. Everyone agreed the site would be open approx dawn until dusk and rules would prohibit anyone working on the site in the late evening. The site should be minimum noise following set up and this will be enforced by the committee. There will be rules and regulations set up by the committee to make sure all users respect the needs of the neighbours and unruly behaviour by any allotmentees etc will not be tolerated.

We are looking at the concerns raised and we have produced a further list of FAQs which have been circulated to everyone on the information list.

Discussion took place regarding working alongside residents to address issues. Cllr. Laura Booth said that there will be conditions to any agreement and advised that residents can also contact them with any concerns.

### 3) Updates and Planning

We have submitted our Pre-application enquiry and have received a letter to acknowledge this.

Cllr. Wendy Meikle informed that a report will be coming to Area Committee for nine members to approve the land for this purpose. Once the Area Committee agree in principal to a change of use of this land, the Council will be looking to seek views from all parties locally. Further due process will include reports from the Highways agency about the traffic impact.

Further full impact will be the next steps, a study which will include the views of all residents and neighbours and all interested parties. The findings will then provide critical evidence and be able to include conditional clauses instrumental in gaining full permission.

A Fuller plan / design / ideas will be drawn up to include the needs of all residents and all ideas would be welcome. Full consultation will be given and all needs will be considered.

It will go to Area Committee on **12<sup>th</sup> December 2017**.

Cllr. Wendy Meikle and Cllr. Laura Booth said that the land has been mentioned in previous Area Committee meetings and could be identified for housing at some point. It was expressed mainly that the preferred option would be allotments over this potential use. Expression from Kingfisher residents indicated that they don't want housing on there.

Dan Oliver informed that, if approved, the next stage would be for the project to go to the Greenspace department who would then work with us. The contacts there would be Ian Walmsley and/or Jane Bardsley.

There was a query regarding whether the soil had been tested. We informed that we hadn't conducted any tests as we are awaiting approval before these next stages. Again, larger funding cannot be applied for unless we have approval and confirmation of a length of lease.

### 4) Activities to date

We have been to a couple of sites around Stockport, Dial Park in Offerton and Seven Stiles in Marple.

M Shaw suggested possible visits could be Flowery Fields and Billys Lane in Cheadle.

These visits have helped us to look at the possible planning of the site, facilities and methods for gaining water etc.

Some sites have bees being kept and this is an area of interest.

There was expression of a need for the site to be aesthetically reasonable and natural looking. Discussion regarding fruit trees to break up the site and flowers could be grown. We have already

discussed that we do not wish for sheds or greenhouses on site. However, there will need to be a place to store tools which will further encourage people to walk to the site. We discussed the possibility of there being a hard-standing at the beginning of the site. This was thought to be left from the building work and could form part of the parking arrangement. It was again discussed that the likelihood of many cars at the same time on the site was unlikely due to different working patterns and commitments.

#### 5) Next steps

The project will go to Area committee on 12<sup>th</sup> December. We are welcome to attend and a representative for the project should be there to answer any questions.

Cllr. Wendy Meikle and Cllr. Laura Booth suggested that we show a site plan at a meeting following the Area Committee so that residents can raise any concerns or make suggestions.

C Read will continue to organise site visits for anyone interested in seeing how other sites are run.

#### 6) AOB

Questions were raised as to whether we have received any funding so far and what is available.

Cllr. Wendy Meikle and Cllr. Laura Booth discussed the option for funding up to £1000 available and this can be applied for from more than one Area Committee.

We have previously discussed the option for larger amounts of funding and possible options could be Airport fund matching, Lottery or Education.

We would like to provide at least one high rise plot for disabled gardeners.

A question was raised regarding how much work is required to level the site. The site is flat on top and sloped to the road. Currently though, the site is very overgrown and very thick with brambles. It is hard to walk on. There is drainage where it slopes down to small trees.

Concerns were raised as to whether the timing of the allotments and the pathway being adopted would tie together. It was expressed that the pathway is a very separate issue to the allotments and that we would be encouraging people to be considerate and not travel that way to the allotment. It is not a practical route anyway.

As previously mentioned, concerns were also expressed regarding people creating noise late at night in the summer months and concern that people need to be getting up for work. Whilst summer months bring longer days, there is no electricity on site for such tools to be used but the expectation is for people to be considerate as they would be in their own back gardens. Allotments can be a lot of physical work and it is likely that people will spend short, regular times on the site.

Action Points:-

C Read to organise further allotment visits.

Cllr Wendy Meikle and Cllr. Laura Booth expressed that the residents could contact them with any concerns.

The Area Committee Meeting will take place on **12<sup>th</sup> December**