

**MINUTES OF THE HARDEN PARISH COUNCIL
ALLOTMENTS PROJECT TEAM HELD ON 21st MARCH 2019
IN HARDEN MEMORIAL HALL**

Present: Cllr Andy Macdonald
Carol Gaskill
Trish Leach
Ann Leetham
Jim Leetham
Roger Timbers
Gwyn Timbers
Graham Irons
Gary Nettleton
Ken Eastwood (Clerk)
Bob Thorp (Guest)

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Gerwyn Bryan

2. Introductions

Cllr Macdonald opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Project Team meeting held on 21st February were proposed as a correct record.

4. Guest Speaker

Bob Thorp, Tree & Woodlands Manager, Bradford MDC was in attendance and addressed the meeting.

It was explained that the entire St Ives estate, including the grounds are Grade 2 listed. The listing restricts the use of the estate and is a material consideration in planning terms. From a heritage point of view, keeping the estate intact is a priority.

Bob Thorp stated that the second element that is an important consideration is biodiversity. The lower land is woodland pasture. The Council has been working on developing this further and the management of the land is leading to an increase in invertebrates and enhancing biodiversity.

The final consideration is use of the land. A local tenant farmer sympathetically manages the grass, taking hay from the site and managing the pasture without the use of artificial fertilisers.

A resident asked about the cricket ground expanding on two occasions over previous years and how that was compatible with protecting the woodland pasture.

Bob Thorp replied that it didn't but that the scale of expansion wasn't material.

The Chair mentioned that allotments make a positive contribution to biodiversity.

A resident asked for clarification on whether the use of any part of the estate would be supported. Bob Thorp replied that his position was opposed to that.

A resident observed that the estate had changed considerably over the years. Uses including golf, archery and horse riding for example. The allotments project would be of benefit to the village.

A resident asked about measures that would or could enhance the estate. Bob Thorp replied that agricultural enhancements were of interest. There were legitimate concerns about fall off in natural habitats, having negative impacts on invertebrates and birds. The Council would like to get back to the management of the site in the way it was originally managed by the Ferrands. The Friends of St Ives are also very keen on maintaining heritage within the estate.

A resident asked whether it was true that the Council had offered the Friends of St Ives opportunity to create a new herb garden. It was stated that consideration was being given to ways of using existing planted areas or former gardens for such a purpose.

A resident asked who would make any final decision. Bob Thorp replied that any decisions on asset disposals would be taken at Assistant Director or Director level.

The Chair thanked the guest speaker for attendance at the meeting. Bob Thorp stated he would be happy to answer any further queries in the future and he left the meeting.

5. Discussion on next steps

Residents discussed the stance taken by the Council representative and considered next steps and how to respond.

It was suggested the focus could be on how allotment proposals, in some shape or form, could enhance the site. Maybe there are examples elsewhere of heritage allotments, in keeping with traditional land management methods.

It was noted that the team hadn't had any discussion with private land owners.

A possible site on Altar Lane was mentioned. Residents discussed a preference to be able to walk to an allotment site.

Actions

- That the Clerk and residents research the conversion of woodland pasture to allotments and more natural and traditional approaches to allotment gardens.

- The Clerk to make enquiries with the Allotments Society.
- To twin track such research with identifying private land and exploring ownership.
- Cllr Macdonald to obtain a detailed map of Harden, identify potential sites and request the Estates Manager at Bradford MDC to identify ownership.
- Residents to determine the date of the cricket field extension.

6. Next Meeting

To be announced.