**Allotment Holders questions as at 8/12/17**

The Parish Council have received the following points and questions. We are sharing via the allotment noticeboards, the parish council website and via email to all plot holders who have provided an email, to ensure everyone has the same information. Further updates over the coming weeks may follow.

Q1. Water supply – in the past there was a collection made plot to plot to cover the cost of water that was outside of the rent. Could something like this be done again?

1. If the vote is to maintain water supply we can discuss this (subject to the Parish Council continuing to be the managing authority) but individual valves and metering is not cost effective. Some councils do split the water costs from the rental costs and we could consider this but it is likely all plots would be treated the same even if they have water harvesting facilities. This would be an adjustment annually i.e. the cost of water used in 20018/19 would be the price in 2019/20 etc.

Q2. In the past more maintenance was done by allotment holders and paid for by them. Can we revisit this as part of onward discussions as it would affect the costs?

1. This will need to be an agenda item depending on the vote and who has management responsibility. Maintenance going forward needs to be to required standards ( regardless of manager) and done in a timely manner and we need to ensure the burden does not fall on just the willing few.

Q3. Allotments act 1922 regarding machinery is out of date. Can we keep items such as renovator’s, trimmers etc. on the allotments? Can there be separate discussion for larger items (as there will be for pigs)

1. Any equipment is kept on the allotments at owner’s risk and personal insurance. We need to explore further the issue of large agricultural. Business machinery is excluded as part of the tenancy as no business should be run from an allotment site.

Q4. Why is there to be a no dogs rule?

1. This is accepted allotment policy as allotments are to allow the growing and cultivation of food or the rearing of fowl. They have never been for the rearing /housing of canine stock. There are issues with dogs barking, fouling, safety and neighbourhood complaints/concerns regarding this. Whoever manages the allotments this will be the policy and a 2 year notice period has been built into the new lease.

Q5. There are registered small holdings with numbers people have applied for.

1. There are no registered small holdings on our allotment sites as far as we are aware and both sites are registered in their entirety as Allotments with the land registry. However people with letters as amendments/agreed variations to their leases will need to reapply but the PC has no wish to change this.

Q6. In the past allotment holders have invested personal money into the fabric of the allotments e.g. tarmacking the entrance, drainage etc. Why is this not being recognised?

1. We understand that allotment holders have undertaken various works – we need to get this on a more formal footing so it is recognised as to what is individual to a site and what is for the benefit of all. This point needs addressing whoever is the manager going forward.

Q7. Could Coldgill allotment holders undertake their own vermin control as Nook do? This would save £500.

1. The manager of the allotments needs to ensure that like asbestos this needs to be done by a registered contractor with the relevant tickets for chemicals/disposal involved. We can discuss this if there is an allotment holder who meets this criteria.

 Q8. If allotment holders fenced their own land including boundary to roads it would save money. Could this be part of the agreement?

1. It is the PC’s intention to only fence division of re-let plots. The wall to the public footpath is the PC”s responsibility as are the exterior boundaries on all other sites . Other fences and boundaries are the responsibility of allotment holders (sometimes in common with other tenants e.g. one side one tenant and one side the adjoining tenant)

Q9. Plumbing is a cost – could the allotment holders do this?

1. There are the Water Supply and Fitting Regulations 2009 that have to be complied with . This is why we use a register fitter to use anyone without the appropriate tickets would be an insurance liability that the Parish Council can not legally take on. We can discuss this if there is an allotment holder who meets this criteria.

Q10. Some concern over the notice boards have been raised

1. The new notice boards are there to support communication with allotment holders and have proved useful. Hopefully they will be well looked after and last a long time. Mr White has a key as does Mrs Bradley and we can discuss key holding going forward.

Q11. Concerns about the footpath and accesses to plots

1. We need to understand this better as part of on-going discussions

Q12. Why did you pay for someone to measure when we could have done it ourselves. I have measured my allotment and it is different to what you say.

1. We are a statutory organisation and needed to have a recognised starting point. There are a few anomalies which we recognise and will be corrected. We needed an independent assessor and used the university as a private firm of chartered surveyors would have charged several thousand pounds. If the PC remains the manager we will discuss this further with tenants.

Q13. Why is the PC doing this now?

1. The lease is out of date and we must have a new one. It also needs to address many of the issues that allotment holders keep raising and ensure the rents are fair with regard to the parish precept. We have considered singular issues for 5 years in piecemeal fashion and it became clear that a complete review was required. We have taken training, advice and comment to reach where we are today.

Q14. Who is the council spy sneaking around the allotments after dark?

1. No idea! - Both Becx and Mary walk the allotments individual regularly during the day to make sure all is well. We also have formal visits about 4 times a year and in future these will be published.

Q15. Is it true the council gave money to the Scouts ? will an allotment association be able to apply for money?

The scouts and other organisations have received grants under S137 terms. Any organisation in the villages can apply by writing to the clerk with a proposal for funding requests.

Q 16. Can some consideration be given to the following

1. Those with long leases who have paid regularly over the years with little support
2. Those with big plots now facing a significant hike in costs
3. Those with more than 1 plot
4. Those who are prepared to maintain a plot rather than it be fallow
5. Plots that are very over grown
6. People with special circumstances
7. People regarded as concessionaries
8. If PC remains manager we will listen to any suggestions but at the end of the day the cost of an allotment site , Coldgill or Nook will be the cost of running it which will need to be met by the allotment holders however it is divided up. We have stated that we will speak individually to allotment holders once the new leases are sent out.

Q17. If we opt for option 2 can we have a Coldgill committee and a Nook committee.

1. If that would be helpful and the PC remains manager for both, then there is no reason why this can’t be considered.

Q18. Can we submit further questions?

 A . The PC finds these useful as an aid to ensuring the final lease and arrangements are comprehensive. Any questions submitted will be shared with all parties as per the above communication methods.

**REMEMBER TO USE YOUR VOTE BY 20 December 2017**