

**MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE OF CHOPPINGTON PARISH
COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2016 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES**

Members present:

Cllr E A Barrell (arriving 19.40)
Cllr A Iley
Cllr P Munley
Cllr P Vaughan (Chairman)

In attendance:

Mr D L Nicholson Parish Clerk and Mrs A Brindley Assistant Parish Clerk. The meeting was also attended by 7 members of the public.

A001/16 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr R Butler (sick absence), Cllr J Foster (prior engagement), G Huntley (prior engagement) and J Oswell (work commitments). The meeting accepted these were proper reasons for absence.

A002/16 2. MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST, PREJUDICIAL AND NON-PREJUDICIAL

No declarations were made.

A003/16 3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR 2016/17

Cllr P Vaughan being the sole nominee was appointed to serve as Chair for the council year 2016/17

A004/16 4. APOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2016/17

Cllr A Iley being the sole nominee was appointed to serve as Vice Chair for the council year 2016/17

A005/16 5. TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE INFORMAL MEETING WITH TENANTS HELD ON 7 JUNE 2016

Following the distribution of the notes of the informal meeting held on 7 June 2016 the Chairman invited the tenants in attendance to ask questions on any issue covered in the notes. The following questions were raised:

1. Tenants expressed concerns that the newly constructed ditch running alongside the willow plantation had not solved the water problems experienced by those allotments adjacent to the north/south track. The Parish Clerk explained that the Council had previously advised that the ditch, whilst improving drainage would not provide a full solution to the problem until such time as it was linked into the larger drainage scheme

planned to serve housing development on adjacent land.

2. Tenants questioned when the north/south track would be repaired. The Parish Clerk expressed the Parish Council's view that the track required substantial works that will only be effective once the ground water issues had been resolved (see 1. above). Until that time limited works will be undertaken to level the track and prevent pooling. The Parish Clerk advised that a safety inspection was to be undertaken within 7 days and that if the track was considered unsafe then it would be closed until spring.
3. The Parish Council was requested robustly manage uncultivated and vacant tenancies, to minimize problems caused by weeds. The Parish Clerk said that this was an area where he considered performance could be improved.
4. The Parish Clerk advised that the 5 year improvement plan agreed with tenants in 2012 was substantially completed and that the only item to be progressed was that of track improvements. The meeting was advised that the Parish Council needed to consider the establishment of an allotment association to manage East Terrace allotments. Tenants indicated that they preferred continued direct management by the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk indicated that direct management was more expensive than other management models and will need to be considered in the future.

A006/16 6. REPORT BY THE PARISH CLERK.

1. Lettings and charges 2017/18.

The Parish Clerk indicated that the Parish Council hoped to limit any increase in charges to an overriding maximum of 3% per annum over the period 2017/18 to 2020/21.

2. Progress towards the transfer of allotments.

Members were advised that the good offices of the Deputy leader of Northumberland County Council had been sought to resolve outstanding issues preventing the transfer of allotments into the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at the conclusion of this item, there being no further business to be transacted.

Chairman

Date