

Middleton St.George Allotment update for Parish Council

5th October 2011

The last Parish Council update was July 2011 and the next steps listed in that update were:

- Set a date in September to have an open meeting for all plot holders. This would be circulated and publicised once agreed.
- Put together a question and answer sheet about self-management, from their point of view for all plot holders, with the findings from the working group. This would be distributed before the public meeting with an agenda.
- To get more of an understanding of the existing lease arrangements that the Parish Council have with the Landowners.

All the above have been achieved and this update summarises what has happened to date and following the outcome of the public meeting the next steps.

The working group met without Groundwork at the end of August and with Groundwork at the beginning of September. As a result the working group had a number of queries which required responses from the Parish and these were all followed up.

From this a information/fact sheet was put together by the Working Group, with an Agenda which was posted out mid September to all plot holders ready for the public meeting on Sunday 25th September (copies attached).

The public meeting was run by the working group, they gave an overview of what they had found, set out the options and answered questions. The meeting was attended by 36 people. At the end people were asked to vote firstly on whether they supported self management or wanted the Parish to continue with the day to day running, and secondly if they supported self management what did they think was the best option, one association or individual associations.

Including votes that were given to us by those that couldn't attend:

35 were in favour of self management and 1 vote to continue with the Parish

Of the 35 in favour 30 voted for a single association and 5 individual associations

Based on 76 plots a turn out of 47%.

Once the results of the vote were known we asked for volunteers to form a working committee initially, as committee members would need to be voted in once a constitution could be agreed. We got 17 volunteers, 11 of whom were part of the working group.

The overall objective now is to form the group officially and put everything in place to hand over the day to day management of the allotment sites to the new group for Rent Collection in March 2012.

Out of the process the working group have worked well together and the feedback is that they have enjoyed the process, it may have been challenging at times but there's nothing wrong with this. The Working Group has been very proactive and took the lead at the last public meeting. The end result has been a very clear vote for self management and one association.

Next Steps

Regarding the next steps a summary of the main items to address are:

- running of the working committee and Groundwork's role
- updating all ploholders re outcome of public meeting
- sorting the agreements that need to be put in place with the Parish Council, i.e. Role and Responsibilities of Association, boundary maintenance, asbestos, tree liability, payment of lease, hedge cutting etc
- relationship with the MSG show group
- preparing a constitution
- setting a date an inaugural meeting to adopt the constitution, elect officers and a committee
- review of tenancy agreement
- working with the parish re the leases and getting updated
- processes that need to be put in place i.e plot letting, site inspections, checking water useage, rent collection , taking out insurance, membership of NSALG etc.

To achieve the above it is anticipated that the working committee will meet once every month.

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