

Skipton Middletown Allotment Association (SMAA) Meeting 04/05/23

Attendees from Skipton Town Council – Mark Robinson, Dale Wilkinson, Emma Wakley

Attendees from SMAA – Jeff Harrison

1) Who pays for the tree pollarding?

All costs for any required works on trees are deducted from the associated allotment sites budget. Dale suggested the possibility of having a comprehensive survey conducted of all the trees at MT allotments. It was discussed that all work on the trees that is conducted is on recommendation of our qualified arborist and based on inspections that may cause concern for the tree's health or the safety of the public.

2) Rat control?

Avanti Pest Control Services are used for our pest control. We have a Rota of when they visit each allotment site. This shows the week of each month a visit is to be expected, rather than specific dates. There is current concern from tenants about an increase in vermin at the allotments. Dale advised that we have only received one recent report of this issue, which our pest control services are aware of. It was advised that tenants with specific concerns can report to Emma, and we can advise our pest control of this to help them specifically place bait boxes in problem areas.

There was previously an issue with rats nesting in the garages to the rear of the allotments. This was reported to Craven District Council at the time. We will look to speak with them about this again and see if North Yorkshire Council (who own and manage the garages) can inspect the garages and ask tenants to clear any rubbish where required, in hope that this improves vermin on the allotments.

3) Rubbish on plots?

Dale and Mark do monthly allotment inspections to ensure that plots are not building up to an unacceptable level of waste or non-cultivation. Any concerns can be reported for investigation to Emma.

Jeff expressed there is an issue with the tenants 'swap shop' that has been formed at a location on the allotments, whereby junk is left for other tenants to exchange for things they no longer would like to help the rest of the allotment community. There are several large items that have been left there that are not of use to anyone. As hiring a skip is currently unaffordable, Jeff said that the association will move from site what they can themselves in the meantime.

4) Obstruction Posts?

Tenants can call Mark or Dale to request the posts are lowered if vehicle entry is required. Posts were installed as the track was becoming very muddy and worn.

5) Plot measuring?

This has been completed and carried out by Pear Technology Services. Copy of maps are now available and will be sent to the association in due course.

6) Skip availability?

Unfortunately, the price of skip hire has doubled since last year and as a result it is not currently possible for a skip to be arranged.

Jeff mentioned that he could discuss with the association splitting with the council the cost to hire 3 skips for a weekend. We will re-address this in Autumn.

7) Car parking?

There is currently parking for 10-12 cars around the site. PP1 will be turned into a car park but not the time or funds to do this now. Currently looking to seek materials for this to happen soon. There will also be parking made available where there is currently a large tree stump that will be removed once Mark and Dale receive delivery of the tractor bucket.

8) STC composting?

This is now complete. We will have a bucket delivered for our tractor to allow us to turn the compost when needed. We have not been able to use the bays until this week as we were awaiting delivery of the mowing machine to collect the grass. Once the compost is ready for tenants to use in about a years' time, we will build another bay and move the available compost into this for tenants to help themselves to. This will be located near Plot 1.

9) Security/fencing?

Fencing around allotment plots is optional for tenants. Security fencing was installed around the whole site a few years ago. North Yorkshire police did a site security session in April and gave tenants advise about how to secure their plots and keep belongings safe.

It was discussed that to ensure the site is secure, all tenants should lock the main gates behind them when entering and leaving the site.

Current Vacant Plots: 18

Current Applicants waiting: 21

Additional comments: Jeff discussed that many feel the main gates at the bottom of the allotments, near the garages, are an issue for access. As Craven District Council implemented and own these, unfortunately Skipton Town Council cannot review this point. These gates are now managed by North Yorkshire Council.

Proposed date for next quarterly meeting: Thursday 10th of August at 11am.