

The Town Clerk
Witney Town Council
Market Square,
Witney

7th February 2020

Dear Town Clerk

Further to our meeting this afternoon with Councillor Gwatkin, Adam Clapton (Office Manager) and John Hickman (Operations & Estates), Witney Allotment Association would like to place on record our thanks for this very useful and productive meeting.

We agreed:

- 1) A resolution of the issue of Lakeside sheds. Lakeside tenants will be individually responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and/or replacement of any sheds on that site.
- 2) A draft form which tenants must in future use to request permission for the erection of sheds, greenhouses or polytunnels which clearly showed the requirement for the approval of the Town Council for structures larger than 2 x 2.5 metres. We also agreed to get the tenants who had put up such large structures without your consent to apply for retrospective permission from you; discussed the sorts of criteria that might lead to the refusal of permission; verbally agreed on the general principles to be applied; and you acknowledged that WTC would carry out the removal of oversized structures erected without your permission.
- 3) That Lakeside tenants whose plots abut the roadside hedge/**public footpath** would be responsible for cutting back their side of the hedge and you confirmed that WTC would maintain the side abutting the road and the top of the hedge.
- 4) That trees growing on allotment sites should be either fruit-bearing or nut-bearing and ~~that you would take down~~ **the allotment association should state their case to Council requesting the silver birch trees at Lakeside be removed outlining how the loss of these trees would be compensated for.** ~~We agreed that we~~ **It was suggested that the allotment association** would purchase fruit or nut trees to replace them **2 fruit/nut trees for each Silver Birch to be removed** although not necessarily in the same position, and draw up and submit to ~~you~~ **Council** a green plan for the entrance and central area of Lakeside to encourage biodiversity and pollinating insects.
- 5) To take forward the idea of group composting on all sites but to trial this on one site first to see what lessons could be learned. Your Operations and Estates Officer kindly ~~offered to provide~~ **suggested council if requested may possibly provide** an occasional 'shredding service' when sufficient composting material had been gathered to make this worthwhile, which WAA gratefully accepted. WAA also agreed to carry out further research into suitable group composting systems.

There was also a discussion on what constituted an appropriate shed and I undertook to forward to you by email some advice one of our Committee Members had found. The issue of using health and safety to determine the appropriateness of a structure was accepted as a good one. We also touched on the matter of the Lakeside cesspit but neither side anticipated that it would need emptying in the next few years.

I think I have covered all the matters discussed and apologise if anything has slipped my memory.

In the light of the usefulness of this meeting WAA would like Councillors and Officers to consider calendaring future meetings – perhaps twice a year – to maintain our currently excellent communications.

Once again, our thanks for the goodwill shown at today's discussions.

Yours sincerely,

G.H.J. Branner

WAA Negotiating Secretary

c.c. Mary Killick, Chair, Witney Allotment Association
Rachel Barber, Treasurer, Witney Allotment Association
Cllr Gwatkin, Chair of the Amenities Committee, Witney Town Council
Adam Clapton, Office Manager, Witney Town Council.
John Hickman, Operations and Estates Officer.