

Email from Stradbroke Trust

Friday, 4th October 2019 14:01

From: Jane Merritt

To: Odile Wladon

Cc: Lizzy Medvei, Roger Turkington, Peter Smith, Stuart Crane, Mike Grigg

Dear Odile,

The Stradbroke Trust has recently held a meeting with the Stradbroke Allotment and Gardeners Association to discuss various options for the way forward regarding the Allotment site. These were as follows -

- The total income from the Allotments amounts to £1,200 per annum which barely covers the cost of maintaining the whole site.
- A suggestion was made that we increase the rent for each Allotment
- The Trust could consider selling the whole area and re-invest the money for the benefit of all
- The Trust could ask the Parish Council to lease the Allotment site from The Trust in the knowledge that Parish Councils must make provision in their Parish for Allotments

Following a lively discussion, the SAGA Committee said, as a preference, they wished the Parish Council to lease the Allotment site from The Trust as they believe it would be more appropriate for the Parish Council to take responsibility for the provision of Allotments, as is normally the case.

We are, therefore, asking the Parish Council to consider leasing the Allotment site from The Trust at a fair rent. This will then enable to The Trust to continue to maintain the rest of the site and maybe deliver some new health-related projects for the benefit of the Village as it has in the past.

The individual leases for each Allotment plot are due for renewal in November and in fairness to all Allotment holders we should all try to resolve the current uncertainty over the future of the site.

Can you please forward this email to all Councillors for discussion and agreement at the October meeting of the Parish Council.

Kind regards

Jane Merritt

Secretary for The Stradbroke Trust

Email from Stradbroke Trust

Monday, October 14 2019 9:30 am

From: Jane Merritt

To: Chris Edwards, James Hargrave, Jeremy Fox, Kamal Ivory, Maureen John, Pam Cane, Peter Smith, Stuart Gemmill, Velda Lummis, Antoinette Wisbey, Dennis Merritt, Don Darling, Gill Rennie-Dunkerley

Cc: Roger Tukington; Peter Smith; Stuart Crane; Mike Grigg

Subject: The Stradbroke Allotments

Dear Councillors,

In anticipation of your meeting this evening the Trust throughout it would be helpful to have some further background information in respect of the future of the Allotments and Village gardens.

Kind Regards

Jane Merritt
Secretary for The Stradbroke Trust

Briefing for Councillors from Stradbroke Trust

The Stradbroke Trust

Briefing regarding the future of the Allotments and Village Gardens

This note in the form of FAQs is to help Councillors make an informed decision about the future of the allotments and the orchard, woodland, meadows and pond.

Q1. Why does the Trust want the Parish Council to take on a lease for the Allotments?

A1. The Trust has lost over 90% of its income and as direct consequence had meetings with the SAGA committee to discuss the future of the allotments. SAGA want more help with the overall day to day care of the site but SAGA are un-willing to either pay more in rent so that the Trust could employ contractors or volunteer to do the work in partnership with the Trust. SAGA believe the Allotments should be provided and managed by the Parish Council as is their statutory duty.

Q2. Why does the Trust want to lease the allotment section to the Parish Council and not the whole site?

A2. The Trust believes that they can manage the remainder of the site, recruit a few more volunteers and potentially help with a few more health-related projects, providing the Trust can secure sufficient income from the allotment area.

Q3. Why doesn't the Trust sell all or part of the site to the Parish Council?

A3. Under the terms of its agreement with Mrs Randall from whom the site was bought the Trust must not ever sell all or part of the site to the Parish Council. A relatively short-term lease (with options to renew) is permissible.

Q4. What is a fair price to pay for the lease?

A4. This can be considered in many different ways:

- The Parish Council could purchase 2 acres of land elsewhere for circa £20,000. It would then need to provide security, water, rabbit proof fencing, toilet, storage shed etc. A total cost of £30,000 to £50,000
- Amenity land can sometimes be rented for just a few hundred pound per acre but still the site would have to be brought up to standard and would a landowner allow this.
- The Trust needs an average annual income of circa £1,500 per year just to maintain the remainder of the site going forward.

- The Trust used to spend on average £7,000 per annum on health related projects and as you know the Trust was very successful securing substantial grants over the years for many important projects, not least the village gardens and allotments at a total cost over £90,000.

In summary a fair price should be somewhere between £1,500 and £7,000 per annum. The Trust believes a fair price would be £3,500 pa. The more money available to the Trust the more the village can benefit. The money will not be spent on staff time or expensive contractors.

Q5. What is the income from the Allotment holders?

A5. There are 28 full size plots some are divided into smaller ones. The annual fee for a full plot is £50. At present there are 2 or 3 vacant plots so the total income is approximately £1250. This income would pass to the Parish Council or the Parish Council may agree a different figure with SAGA.

Q6. Could the Trust sell all or part of the site to the new Community Land Trust?

A6. No, the CLT exists to build affordable housing and the site is not for development.

Q7. What will happen if the Parish Council does not agree to a lease at a fair price?

A7. The Trust will go back to SAGA and suggest a substantial increase in rent and/or an increase in the amount of work SAGA must do to maintain the Allotment area and associated fencing, gates, hedges etc. If an agreement cannot be reached the site will be sold and the Trust will apply the proceeds in accordance with its Charitable objects.



Stradbroke
Parish Council

Mill Hill House, Church Lane, Wickham Skeith, Suffolk IP23 8NA

tel: 07555 066147

email: stradbrokepc@outlook.com

21st October 2019

Revised 25th October 2019

The Trustees - Stradbroke Charitable Trust

Mr Peter Smith (Chair)

Mrs Margaret Norris

Mr Roger Turkington

Mr Andrew Hackett

Mr Harry Ereira

Mr Richard Reeves

By post and email

Dear Trustees

Stradbroke Parish Council has recently received communication from the Stradbroke Trust regarding the future of the Allotments and Village Gardens site off Drapers Hill in Stradbroke.

A copy of the correspondence is enclosed for your reference.

The matter raised in the enclosed correspondence was discussed at the full Parish Council meeting held on 14th October and Councillors noted that the Title Deed available at Land Registry shows the ownership of the whole site rests with the Stradbroke Charitable Trust and not the Stradbroke Trust. The Parish Council therefore needs to deal with the Stradbroke Charitable Trust in this matter.

On the assumption that the Trustees of the Charitable Trust wish to pursue the matters raised in the correspondence submitted by the Stradbroke Trust, I am writing to advise you of the outcome of the discussions at the Parish Council meeting of 14th October.

Councillors requested that a full report be prepared on the matter for review by the full Parish Council. This report should quantify the deficit the Trust face to run the allotments; with a clear financial case including a review of the income and costs related to the running of the allotments over the last five years to identify any loss and how this may have been funded. In addition, all different scenarios on the future of the allotments should be identified and analysed including the implications of the different scenarios on the precept.

To enable a full report to be prepared the following is requested from the Charitable Trust:

1. A copy of any document highlighting any charges/restrictions on the ownership and/or disposal of the land.
2. A copy of any rental agreement for individual allotment holders.
3. A copy of any agreement the Charitable Trust has with SAGA that shows a breakdown of responsibilities between the Trust and SAGA for the Allotment site.
4. A breakdown of the rent received for the Allotments since they were opened in 2012.
5. A complete breakdown of the annual running costs of the whole site since it was opened in 2012. The information should show the annual expenditure for the allotment section and what was spent annually on the remainder of the site.
6. Any information regarding restrictions placed on the site as a result of any grants or donations received.

The Parish Council looks forward to engaging with Stradbroke Charitable Trust in a constructive discussion on the future of the Allotments and to enable this to take place the Parish Council needs the Trustees to share as much information as possible. However, without the information requested above it will be difficult to prepare a report which will provide full guidance to enable the Councillors to reach an informed decision on the way forward.

All information supplied will be included in a report which will be circulated prior to the next full Parish Council meeting and will be published on the parish council's website as part of the agenda papers for that meeting – any personal information will be redacted before publication.

Yours sincerely

Odile Wladon

Miss Odile Wladon
Clerk
Stradbroke Parish Council

Enclosed: correspondence from Stradbroke Trust.

Cc Jane Merritt – Stradbroke Trust

Email from Stradbroke Trust

Mon 2019-10-28 18:27

From: Jane Merritt

To: Odile Wladon, Roger Turkington, Peter Smith, Stuart Crane, Mike Grigg

Subject: The Stradbroke Allotments

Dear Odile,

The Stradbroke Trust has decided to withdraw its offer of a lease for the Allotment area in the Village Gardens. We shall continue to seek an agreement with SAGA on respective roles and responsibilities.

Kind Regards

Jane Merritt

Secretary for The Stradbroke Trust