NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ALLOTMENT WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD AT 92 BIGGLESWADE ROAD, UPPER CALDECOTE ON MONDAY 11TH JANUARY 2010 AT 7.30 PM.

Present: Councillors S Mandley and M Morgan, Mr I Robinson, Mr J Crawley and the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. UPDATE FROM MR ROBINSON REGARDING INITIAL ENQUIRIES CONCERNING SUITABILITY OF AVAILABLE LAND FOR POSSIBLE ALLOTMENT PROVISION WITHIN UPPER CALDECOTE

Mr Robinson and Mr Crawley updated the Councillors and Clerk on the work they had carried out with regard to finding suitable land for allotment provision. They did point out, however, that they had only looked for land within Upper Caldecote. Currently there are approximately 30 people who have expressed an interest in renting an allotment within this parish. The Clerk was provided with several sites within Upper Caldecote that have or could be considered for allotment provision

3. UPDATE FROM THE CLERK ON ALLOTMENT PROVISION AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Clerk advised that the Council do have a statutory requirement to look into the provision of providing allotment land within the parish having received the letter signed by local residents requesting this. The Council's obligation is the provision of land and the marking out of allotment plots but there is no requirement to fence the land, provide car parking or water, although the Council could and may provide these. The standard allotment size is 1/16th of an acre or 10 square rods in area (253 sq. metres). Planning permission is not required for allotments (Section 55 (2)(e) and Section 336 Town and Country Act 1990) and agricultural land specifically used for allotments will accede to Statutory status. The management of any allotment site could be devolved to an allotment society or association which in turn could attract funding that a Parish Council would not be entitled to. Land can be leased or purchased for the provision of allotments but it would not be prudent to lease any land for less than 15 years. If land cannot be found to lease or purchase then the Parish Council does have the option of asking Central Bedfordshire Council to look into compulsory purchase but it was hoped that this would not be necessary.

3. TO CONSIDER THE WAY FORWARD REGARDING THE PROVISION OF ALLOTMENTS WITHIN THE PARISH OF NORTHILL

A general discussion took place concerning land availability and the Clerk agreed that she could make initial enquiries in order to be able to take some information to the next Council meeting. The matters agreed were:

a) Clerk to contact the Allotment Association to find out if they would be willing to provide some information or come and talk about allotments, possibly at the Annual Council Meeting on 29th March;
b) Clerk to begin investigations locally to ascertain what, if any, land is available within the parish by talking with local farmers/landowners;
c) Mr Robinson to contact those people who have expressed an interest in renting an allotment to ascertain if an Allotment Society could/should be formed.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

T.B.A. There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05 pm.