

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 11:00AM**

Present: Councillor Mrs Sharon Cullen - Chairman
Councillor Mrs Pam Jones
Mrs Samantha Brown - Allotments Officer
Mr Ty Smith - Grounds Manager
Mr John Pritchard - Alton Allotment Association
Mrs Anne Foulkes
Mrs Marion Morgans
Mrs Yvonne Thorne

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mrs Pat Harding, Site Representative.

2 **Minutes of meeting held on 7 October 2015**

Mr John Pritchard advised the Sub Committee that he attend the Open Spaces Committee on the 26 October 2015 where the minutes of this meeting were presented. The Terms of Reference for the Allotments Sub Committee were also tabled and Mr Pritchard said that Councillor Matthew Bayliss had asked that item two should be removed as it was outside the scope of a sub-committee. It was also suggested that this Sub Committee might remove the definition of its purpose. Mr Pritchard informed the Sub Committee that he would email Mrs Samantha Brown, Allotments Officer, the revised Terms of Reference to accompany these minutes.

The minutes of previous meeting were therefore agreed.

3 **Plot Inspections for 2016 – to set dates and enforcement**

Councillors Mrs Sharon Cullen and Mrs Pam Jones both asked at the previous meeting if they could visit the allotment sites for the first inspection of the season. Mr Ty Smith, Grounds Manager, suggested to wait until after Easter for the first inspection. Mrs Brown said previously the first inspection of the season is in March and it is used as a benchmark throughout the rest of the season. It was therefore suggested that the first inspection of the season would be on the 1 March and subsequent inspections would be on the first Tuesday of every month starting at 9:00am at the Spitalfields/Wooteys site.

Councillor Mrs Cullen asked Mr Pritchard if he could provide Mrs Brown with up to date contact names and telephone numbers for all site representatives. These could then be used to contact the Site Representatives if there was any delay in arriving at the next site at the time agreed.

A discussion was had on issuing notice to tenants who had not cultivated their plots and the process. Mr Pritchard felt that an easy to follow chart should be produced to show plotholders are the process of inspections worked. The chart would go into the Allotment Association's newsletter and also the Plotholders Handbook. A draft of the proposed chart would be tabled at the next meeting.

4 Site Security

Mr Smith visited the sites earlier in the week and advised that unfortunately he had seen a shed left open with a strimmer in full view. He asked if the Association could remind plotholders to not leave items of value visible or even encourage them to take these items home. Mr Smith apologised to the meeting that he had another meeting to go to and left the meeting. He would supply Mrs Brown with a report of his site findings to accompany these minutes which are below.

- Borovere - Chain link fence on roadside plastic coated and sound. Gates ok. Wooden fence on two sides ok at present no immediate need for replacement. No tree work pending. Wall and hedge all sound and maintained.
- Whitedown - Lower boundary weld-mesh fence ok. Vehicle gates are both sound, pedestrian gates both ok. Top boundary ok, one tree over hanging a plot 61 needs reducing.
- Hawthorns - Gates ok, fence weld-mesh and sound. No trees overhanging.
- Spitalfields - Lower gate twisted but operates ok. Top gate needs rehangng but no adjustment available. Fence weld-mesh on boundary ok low chain link on property boundary. Trees overhanging from cemetery.
- Wooteys - Gate needs recovering with fence. Boundary fence needs replacing in places due to being cut during break-ins needs replacing with weldmesh.

Mr Pritchard added that there were various holes in the hedge boundary between the Wooteys site and the cemetery. He also asked if Hampshire County Council could erect a bollard at the Edward Road to try and deter vehicle access. Councillor Mrs Cullen said this was raised at the Open Spaces Committee in October where Councillor Bayliss read out Mr Pritchard's letter. Mrs Brown would make a request to the County Council and report back at the next meeting.

Councillor Mrs Jones informed the meeting that she attends the Community Tasking Co-ordination Group (CTCG). When she attends the next meeting she will ask representatives from Hampshire Constabulary if they would be willing to attend a meeting of the Allotment Association to share information on reducing thefts from the allotment sites and also have an increased visual presence around the sites to deter crime.

5 Improvements and Maintenance Budgets

Mr Pritchard was grateful to the Town Council for the recent improvements to the car park at Hawthorns. He commented that he had attended East Hampshire District Council's Community Forum where the cost of the car park was paid for by Developer Contributions and asked if the cost would go back into the maintenance budget. Councillor Mrs Jones confirmed this and was also able to provide Mr Pritchard with a copy of the Town Council's proposed budget for the allotments for 2016/2017.

6 Site Issues

It has been brought to Mr Pritchard's attention that there has been sightings of rats on the Wooteys site. Mrs Brown said this may be due to unkempt plots or simply nesting under sheds and asked if there were any additional sighting she could be made aware and she would arrange for a visit from a local pest controller.

Mr Pritchard advised that there was a large willow tree overhanging from a neighbouring property at Borovere. Mrs Brown would ask Mr Smith to visit the site and assess the tree. Mr Pritchard added he would also provide Mrs Brown with a photograph of the tree. Councillor Mrs Jones also suggested asking the local Tree Warden, Mr Jim Dickinson, to write an article for the next edition of the Altonian to promote being neighbourly in respect of overhanging hedging and trees.

Mr Pritchard also raised that some of the padlocks were sticking, Mrs Brown asked if she could be made aware and would ask the Town Council's Grounds Team to either repair or replace where necessary. He also asked about the replacement of noticeboards on the sites, a discussion was had by the Sub Committee and it was agreed that Mr Pritchard would ask Men's Shed if there would be able to assist in producing new noticeboards.

Mrs Morgans asked if she could sow a wildflower meadow at the top of the Hawthorns site. Both Councillors Mrs Cullen and Mrs Jones thought this would be a wonderful idea. Mrs Foulkes suggested a mix of perennials and annuals. Mrs Brown would ask the Grounds Team to prepare an area for the sowing of seeds and planting and would also ask Doctor June Chatfield to make contact with Mrs Morgan for ideas of plants for the site. Councillor Mrs Jones advised Mrs Morgans to look at the Coronation Meadows website for ideas. This was established in 2013 to set-up meadows to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II Coronation.

Mrs Thorne asked if Site Representatives could be advised when tenants relinquished their plots. Mrs Brown would provide a list of relinquishments after the end of February once rent renewals had been received and also advise Site Representatives of any relinquishments or terminations during the course of the season.

7 Allotment Handbook

The Plotolders Handbook was first produced in 2003 written jointly by the Town Council and the Allotment Association with three minor updates since then such as contact details and discounts given by various suppliers. The last update was in 2011 when the new site at Hawthorns was established. It was agreed that the Handbook was very wordy and looked out of date. It was agreed that a one-off meeting would be held to solely look at updating the Handbook.

8 Date of next meeting

The date of next meeting is Wednesday 27 April 2016 at 11:00am to review the Plotolders Handbook.

The meeting closed at 12:11pm.

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