

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 29 JUNE 2016 AT 9:30AM**

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 Pat Harding
Mr Steve Herbert

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mrs Marion Morgans and Mrs Yvonne Thorne.

2 **Minutes of meeting held on 27 April 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 27 April 2016 were accepted.

3 **Matters Arising and Site Issues**

Due to Mr Ty Smith having to leave the meeting for another appointment it was agreed that Matters Arising and Site Issues will be taken from this point/

Mr Smith reported that there were no real problems with any of the sites. Councillor Mrs Sharon Cullen had been made aware of an altercation between Mr Smith and Mr Steve Herbert, Site Representative at Spitalfields. It was confirmed at the meeting that this matter has now been resolved.

Mr Smith added that the Grounds Team had collected the green waste sacks from sites after the Spring Bank Holiday. Mr John Pritchard apologised for the breakdown in communication as he had not notified all sites about the waste collections. Hedge cuttings have been removed from the Borovere site. Mr Smith explained due to various factors the Grounds Team had not been able to trim vacant plots before being offered. Mr Pritchard stated it is the Town Council's duty to present offered plots in a decent standard and extra resources should be provided by the Town Council to enable plots to be offered in a decent condition.

Mr Pritchard asked Mr Smith for a date for a non-green waste collection from the sites. Mr Smith was unable to provide a date but will share this with Mr Pritchard when he is able to.

Mrs Pat Harding and Mr Herbert both confirmed that they are receiving copy letters from Mrs Samantha Brown following allotment inspections. Mr Smith advised that he may not be available for the next scheduled inspection on Tuesday 5 July and Mrs Brown confirmed she would undertake the inspections in the absence of Mr Smith.

Mr Pritchard raised his concern about dog fouling on the Whitedown site, he had posted a comment on the Allotment Association's Facebook page and wished to bring it to the Town Council's attention as he believed enforcement action should be served by the Town Council to offending dog owners. A discussion was had by the Sub Committee of what enforcement could be imposed to offenders and also how it would be regulated.

Councillor Mrs Cullen asked Mrs Brown if she had received any complaints from other ploholders on other sites to which Mrs Brown confirmed she had not. Mrs Brown said initial complaints are addressed by Site Representatives and if it cannot be resolved it will then be passed to the Council. Councillor Mrs Jones asked Mr Pritchard if he could seek guidance from the National Allotment Association to which he agreed to.

Mr Smith informed the meeting that the sites had been inspected by South East Water as the water supply to allotment sites has now change from domestic to an agricultural supply. Every five years, as part of the inspection, the taps are checked and six taps were found to be not suitable as they were not fitted with non-returnable valves. The Grounds Team have subsequently gone round and replaced the valves and whilst they have gone round noticed some of the taps have been turned off too tightly and the threads have been stripped. Mr Pritchard said he would put an article in the next edition of the Allotments Association newsletter.

Mr Pritchard informed the meeting that the shed lock at Whitedown had been repaired by members of the Association and Mrs Brown confirmed that the cost would be reimbursed by the Town Council. Mrs Brown had also received from a couple of ploholders on Whitedown that one of the padlocks was not working and provided Mr Pritchard with a replacement padlock.

4 **Rent renewals, current tenancies, enforcement of neglected plots and waiting list**

Current tenancies

Monthly inspections continue to be carried out on the first Tuesday of each month with enforcement letters being sent to ploholders and copied to Mr Smith and relevant Site Representatives.

Waiting List

The waiting list for all sites currently stands at 22.

5 **Parking at Spitalfields/Wooteys**

Some tenants have taken to park on the grassed area in front of the main gate off of Edward Road. The Town Council has received a couple of concerns raised by residents and also Radian Housing in respect of car using a dropped kerb to park on the area. Notices have been placed on the fence without any effect. Mr Pritchard informed the meeting that he had met with Councillor Andrew Joy over this issue.

Councillor Mrs Jones asked if we knew who owned the land. Mrs Brown said she would ask Councillor Dean Phillips as he was also the District Ward Councillor at East Hampshire District Council to try and ascertain ownership of the land. It may be worth the town council taking ownership of the piece of land to allow limited parking on the area.

Mr Pritchard had also met Hampshire County Council's Highways Engineer, Mr Derek Rawle on site to discuss the possibility of having a bollard installed at footpath 26C to act as a deterrent for vehicular access. *Post meeting note – Mrs Brown spoke with Mr Rawle who advised that the footpath comes under Hampshire County Council's "Rights of Way" department. The Rights of Way department currently has no budget to install a bollard but advised Mrs Brown that if Alton Town Council would fund a bollard they could seek permission from Rights of Way to install a bollard in a suitable location on footpath 26C.*

6 **Insurance**

Mr Pritchard confirmed that the Allotment Association insurance company is affiliated to the National Association and wished to ascertain what the Town Council's insurance covers in respect of the allotment sites. Mrs Brown advised the meeting that the Council has appointed a new insurance company, the previous policy covered the whole site for example fencing and the gates and also includes the communal shed. The policy did not cover individual sheds and their contents on plots.

Councillor Mrs Jones added that due to the appointment of the new insurance company she would ask the Open Spaces Committee what the Council's policy covers and what it does not.

7 **Any other business**

Mrs Harding had written and circulated information to ploholders at Borovere guidance on fruit trees. Mr Pritchard asked if she could send this onto him to be added to the next issue of the Allotments Association newsletter.

The Ploholders Handbook was discussed as it is in need of an update. It was agreed that a meeting would be held to review the Handbook with the hope a new edition be distributed to all tenants with the annual renewals in November. Councillor Mrs Jones, Mrs Brown, Mr Pritchard, Mrs Harding and Mr Herbert agreed to meet on 25 July 2016 at 2:00pm in the Town Hall to share ideas for a revised Handbook.

8 **Date of next meeting**

The date of next meeting is Wednesday 31 August 2016 at 9:30am.

The meeting closed at 10:54am.

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