

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL  
ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 9 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 9:30AM**

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Present:	Councillor Pam Jones	-	Chairman
	Alexandra Bond	-	Grounds Administrator
	Samantha Brown	-	Allotments Officer
	John Pritchard	-	Alton Allotment Association
	Pat Harding	-	Site Rep - Borovere
	Marion Morgans	-	Site Rep – Hawthorns
	Ty Smith	-	Grounds Manager
	Yvonne Thorne	-	Site Rep – Wooteys

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sharon Cullen, Nancy Clarke, Site Rep – Whitedown and Steve Herbert, Site Rep - Spitalfields.

2 **Minutes of meeting held on 7 September 2017 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 September 2017 were accepted.

3 **Quarter size plots**

A discussion was had on the possibility of creating quarter size plots. It had been reported back to Site Representatives and the Allotments Officer that some relinquishments of plots were due to the size of the current plots. Some of the plottolders reported that the size being offered, half a plot, is too much when taking a plot on for the first time and find it quite daunting.

The Hawthorns site was created to have half and quarter size plots and this works well. A couple of the plots on both Spitalfields and Whitedown have been made into quarter plots and current plottolders have took over these plots in addition to their half size plot to maintain rather than leave the plots vacant.

The Advisory Sub Committee agreed that quarter plots would be created on an ad hoc basis as the need arose.

4 **Allotment Inspections**

The Grounds Administrator advised that the inspections for the season had concluded in October. These were carried out on a monthly basis from March in attendance with Site Representatives if they were available to accompany her. It was agreed that the inspections for the coming season will continue on a monthly basis and it was agreed that if a Site Representative was not available to accompany the Grounds Administrator they would provide details of any issues relating to their site prior to the inspections taking place.

Plot clearance was also discussed prior to a new tenant taking over a tenancy. It was agreed that the Town Council's Grounds Team would clear rubbish that had been left by the previous tenant and also trim down the plot prior to the plot being offered and a new tenancy being taken-up.

The Allotments Association Chairman suggested that he would write a piece for the Spring issue of their newsletter about the routine inspections and also reminding tenants it is their responsibility to remove excess rubbish from their plots. The Grounds Manager asked the Allotments Association's Chairman to add in his article that rubbish should not be "stock piled" behind sheds and added that in exceptional circumstances the Town Council will remove larger items from the sites and asked that ploholders initially discuss their request with the Allotments Officer.

The Grounds Manager also asked if the article could include a reminder to ploholders to keep their pathways clear especially those who have a boundary on the sites to make the routine maintenance, such as hedge cutting, more accessible for the Grounds Team and their equipment.

#### 5 **Feedback from the National Allotment Society Forum**

The National Allotment Society Forum held on the 17 October was hosted by Alton Town Council with Councillor Jones and the Grounds Administrator attending. It was chaired by Paul Nearey from the Society and attracted 25 people from the southern region which included Parish Councillors and officers from other parish councils. The main focus of the Forum was to share ideas between those attending, some of the items discussed were:- insurance, water bills/harvesting, pest control, tenancy agreements and rents.

Councillor Jones shared with the Forum the Town Council's new edition of the Ploholders Handbook, which received praise from those attending.

#### 6 **Any Other Business**

The Chairman of the Allotments Association asked if the footpath (26c) could be closed off or modified to cease before it reaches the Wooteys/Spitalfields sites, this would hopefully prevent unauthorised access to the sites. The footpath runs from Linnets Way to Eastrooke Road and a request would have to be made to Hampshire County Council as this owned and maintained by them. The Allotments Officer agreed to seek guidance from the County Council.

Councillor Jones advised that due to the commencement of a number of new housing developments in the town the demand for allotments may increase. As part of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan, published in November 2015, the Town Council stated that it would not permit development, other than in exceptional circumstances, on the allotment sites (policy CH5) and also identify additional land for allotments (policy CH7).

The Chairman of the Allotments Association also added that we need to maintain a healthy demand for allotments and wished to confirm that the allotment sites were on the list of assets of community value with East Hampshire District Council. The Allotments Officer would make contact with the District Council to ensure the sites are included on the list.

The Site Representative from the Hawthorns site asked the Grounds Manager if the trees around the perimeter fence could be reduced down to the height of the fence. The Grounds Manager agreed that the works would get programmed in.

The Allotments Officer advised the Sub Committee that East Hampshire District Council had advised her that the boundary hedge between the Spitalfields/Wooteys site and the Alton Cemetery would be cut down to a height of 6ft/7ft in early November. She had written to all ploholders whose plot runs adjacent to the hedge asking them to ensure there is the 3ft maintenance strip between their plot and the hedge and to also clear debris away from behind their sheds. The ploholders had worked very hard in clearing their areas and the Town Council's Grounds Team had cleared all the rubbish and debris arising from her request. Once the District Council's contractor has reduced the height of the hedge the Allotments Association's maintenance team would match the height on the allotments side and keep the hedge at a maintainable height.

*[Post meeting note – the Allotments Officer had been advised by the Contracts Officer at East Hampshire District Council on the 15 November that the works will not commence until January 2018.]*

The Allotments Officer advised that a budget request would be made to the Town Council for new plot markers to assist the Grounds Administrator in identifying plots when she undertakes the plot inspections. The Allotments Officer asked the Sub Committee for ideas on the material to be used for the plot markers but a conclusion could not be met. The Allotments Officer would therefore seek advice from other parishes on how they identified their plots.

7 **Date of next meeting**

The date of next meeting is 25 January 2018 at 9:30am.

The meeting closed at 10:45am.

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