

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 21 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 9:30AM**

Present:	Councillor Sharon Cullen	-	Chairman
	Councillor Pam Jones	-	
	Alexandra Bond	-	Grounds Administrator
	Samantha Brown	-	Allotments Officer
	Steve Herbert	-	Site Rep - Spitalfields
	John Pritchard	-	Alton Allotment Association
	Pat Harding	-	Site Rep - Borovere
	Marion Morgans	-	Site Rep – Hawthorns
	Yvonne Thorne	-	Site Rep – Wooteys
In attendance:	John Geoghegan	-	Community Officer – East Hampshire District Council

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Ty Smith, Grounds Manager.

2 **Minutes of meeting held on 9 November 2018 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9 November 2017 were accepted. Councillor Mrs Jones confirmed to the Sub Committee the importance of allotments as it had been documented in the Alton Neighbourhood Plan which was published in November 2015.

3 **Assets of Community Value**

Mr John Geoghegan, Community Officer at East Hampshire District Council had been invited to the Sub Committee following Mr John Pritchard's request for the allotment sites in Alton to be registered on the Assets of Community Value.

Part of Mr Geoghegan's role is to look at Assets of Community Value in Alton and the surrounding area. Communities have the right to bid for "assets" that are important to the community when they become available. The majority of these assets are village pubs and shops. It is very unlikely that an allotment site would need to be registered.

Mr Geoghegan asked the Sub Committee for the rationale why the allotments sites should be registered. Mr Pritchard explained that the Allotment Association was set up in the 1990s as the Borovere site was reduced in size due to a housing development. The Association wanted to explore greater protection of the five sites in the town. Mr Geoghegan said an application to East Hampshire District Council could be made and assessed for consideration but believes as the Town Council owns the sites, he does not believe the Council would look at selling them and there would be no real gain. If, however, the Town Council did in the future sell any of the allotment sites the community would be given six weeks to purchase the site.

Councillor Mrs Jones reiterated to the Sub Committee that it is the Town Council's statutory obligation to provide allotments to its residents.

Mr Geoghegan informed the Sub Committee that he would be happy to support the Town Council and the Allotment Association if they wished to register the allotment sites as Assets of Community Value.

The Sub Committee thanked Mr Geoghegan for attending and welcomed his support should the need arise.

4 Footpath 26c Update

The Sub Committee received in their agenda papers an email from Hampshire County Council's Countryside Service Access Team explaining that if bollards were to be installed to prevent vehicular access a licence would have to be obtained under section 115 of the Highways Act. This would result in a considerable cost, which would include; the landowner obtaining a licence, the issuing of notices and solicitors time. The landowner would also have to purchase and install the bollard and include future maintenance.

For the County Council to consider any licence they would have to be provided with documentary evidence of the break-ins, with crime reference number etc to prove a valid reason for the installation. They also emphasised that termination of the footpath would not be an option.

Councillor Mrs Jones asked if it would be beneficial asking the Access Team if they would consider a kissing gate to be installed rather than a bollard. A volunteer group, such as the Alton Ramblers, could try and obtain a grant from Hampshire County Council and install it.

The Sub Committee asked Mrs Brown to ask the Access Team if a kissing gate would be acceptable.

5 Allotments Association - Benefits

Mrs Brown advised that there had been a reduction in ploholders joining the Association during the rent renewals. The main reason for ploholders not joining was they believed they could see no benefit from joining. Mrs Brown asked Mr Pritchard to provide a paper for the Sub Committee which was distributed with the agenda papers.

Apart from a few omissions, which would be included and submitted by Mrs Harding, it was agreed that the information would be distributed with the Allotment Association membership application to all new ploholders.

6 Any Other Business

Mrs Bond advised the Sub Committee that the inspections would commence in April.

Mrs Morgans asked if promotion of allotments could be included in the Welcome Packs that are being produced by the Town Council. Mrs Harding added that would it be possible to put posters in the Town Council's noticeboards. Mrs Brown advised that the noticeboards are generally to promote events in the town, but if space permits, an approved poster could be

displayed. Mrs Morgans also advised that she had a plotholder who would be happy to promote allotments on Wey Valley Radio. Mrs Brown agreed she would liaise with Wey Valley Radio and the plotholder to arrange a time.

Mr Pritchard advised the meeting that the Allotments Association Annual General Meeting would be held on the 9 April at 7:30pm in Alton Methodist Church and this Sub Committee, would be his last as Chairman of the Association. He wished to thank Mrs Brown, Councillors Mrs Cullen and Mrs Jones, the Town Council and the Sub Committee for the issues raised which had been very beneficial.

Mrs Harding asked if the general and green waste removal from sites could be reinstated. Mrs Brown said she would ask Mr Smith on his return to work if this could be undertaken again by the Grounds Team.

Mr Pritchard asked if the development of allotments at Holybourne could be considered and also any future sites within the town. It was agreed that this would be added to the next agenda.

7 **Date of next meeting**

The date of next meeting is 18 April 2018 at 9:30am.

The meeting closed at 10:34am.

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