

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11 JULY 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
	Pat Harding	-	Alton Allotment Association - Secretary/Site Rep - Borovere
	Maggie Martin	-	Alton Allotment Association - Treasurer
	Marion Morgans	-	Site Rep - Hawthorns
	John Pritchard	-	Site Rep - Whitedown
	Yvonne Thorne	-	Site Rep - Wooteys

1 **Apologies**

No apologies were received.

2 **Minutes of meeting held on 21 February 2018 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 February 2018 were accepted. Mrs Brown updated the Sub Committee on correspondence she had received from the Countryside Access Ranger for Hampshire County Council's Countryside Team in respect of a possibility of having a kissing gate on footpath 26C. This would not be possible as a licence for a kissing gate would need to be obtained, but this would not be allowed as the licence on a Right of Way is for keeping livestock from straying only. Mrs Brown advised the meeting that she had a site meeting arranged with the Ranger on the 31 July for a possible solution.

{Post meeting note – Mrs Brown met on site, no licence would be issued for a bollard as the footpath is too narrow to accommodate a bollard. There is a minimum requirement of 1.2m each side of the bollard to enable access for pushchairs and people using mobility aids such as wheelchairs and mobility scooters.}

Councillor Cullen asked if there was any movement in obtaining land at Holybourne for allotments. Mrs Brown informed the meeting that a lot of the land at Holybourne was owned by Froyle Estates and they might be reluctant to sell land. Councillor Jones asked there would be any potential in approaching Froyle Estates with the possibility of renting land for an allotment site. Mrs Brown advised that there was not many people on the waiting list for all site, nor were there current ploholders from Holybourne, or had shown an interest in having an allotment.

3 **Email from the Allotment Association's Secretary and Treasurer and the Town Clerk's response** (copy attached to the minutes for reference)

Councillor Jones was surprised to hear that the Chairperson of the Allotment Association had recently resigned. Mrs Harding confirmed that the Association was actively seeking a new Chairman and was continuing to run. There were a number of items the previous Chairman still had in their possession belonging to the Association and Mrs Brown advised that she had made contact with the previous Chairman to have these delivered back to her at the Town Hall. Unfortunately, this had not happened. Mrs Brown agreed that she would try and make contact again and see if the items belonging to the Association could be returned. Mr Pritchard felt Mrs Brown should not be contacting the previous Chairman for the items to be returned to the Association and they should be the ones making contact. Mrs Harding stated that Mrs Brown had acted as the "middle man" as the previous Chairman may have had a grievance with the Association and therefore did not want to make contact with them direct.

The maintenance of the sites was discussed. The Town Council in the past had maintained some of the sites in tandem with the Association. The Allotment Association only have a few "volunteers" who carry out the maintenance of the sites. The "volunteers" are recompensed for work undertaken on the sites from the Association, who are in turn repaid by the Town Council as part of the maintenance budget. In the Town Clerk's email response to the Association she had offered the Association the Maintenance budget for them to administer which they declined to accept.

Mr Pritchard felt that there was a danger of rents increasing to secure additional town council staff. He also added that as allotments are a statutory obligation/responsibility of the council future grounds team vacancies when advertised, should emphasise maintaining the allotments. Councillor Cullen therefore added that therefore the maintenance of the sites should be the responsibility of the Town Council.

A discussion was had by the Sub Committee around insurance of the "volunteers" that carry out the maintenance of the sites. It is believed by the Association that if the volunteers, which the majority are, members of the Allotment Association, are covered under the employee element of the Association's insurance. Councillor Jones asked therefore if a "volunteer" was not a member of the Association would they be covered on the Town Council's insurance. Mrs Brown would seek clarification from the Town Clerk.

{Post meeting note – Mrs Brown has spoken with the Finance and Admin Manager who informed her that "volunteers who carry out "work" on behalf of the Town Council are covered until the Town Council's insurance.}

Plot inspections were also discussed. Mrs Brown explained that when she first carried out the inspections she was accompanied by the Chairman of the Association and met the site representatives on site. The site representatives were able to provide background information on the ploholders and raise any concerns at that point. Since Mrs Bond has been carrying out the inspections she has met the occasional site representative on site or they have provided a list of concerns to support her inspections. It has been propositioned that the site representatives carry out the inspections on a regular basis and feedback to Mrs Bond to issue any letters arising. A majority of the site representatives are in agreement and said they would accompany each other to give an unbiased opinion. Mr Pritchard however felt he was not in a position to carry out the inspections and wished the inspections to continue be carried out by the Town Council.

4 Any Other Business

Mrs Martin enquired about the grassed area in front of the Spitalfields/Wooteys site, at the end of Edward Road, if there was any progress on the area being made into a car park due to new parking restrictions in the town. Mrs Brown advised that the District Council is not in a position to relinquish the land at this current time.

Mrs Martin also added that the Association was in need of replacing some of their equipment. Councillor Jones said it may be worth the Allotment Association applying to the Town Council for a grant. Some of the sites are having issues with the padlocks, Mrs Brown confirmed that she has sourced an alternative locksmith for these but their supplier is in Spain. Additional padlocks have been ordered and will be available.

Mr Herbert asked when the boundary hedge between the Spitalfields/Wooteys site and the cemetery was going to be cut back as Mrs Brown had written to ploholders asking them to clear an access on their plots. The Wooteys part of the hedge had been cut-back and reduced in height from the cemetery side but the contractor had not completed the whole hedge down to Spitalfields. Mrs Brown believed the District Council had completed the works but would speak to the Contracts Monitoring Officer.

{Post meeting note – Mrs Brown and Mr Herbert spoke with the Contracts Monitoring Officer who reported that the “old part of the cemetery” (Spitalfields) was not on the job sheet for the contractors. When asked the Contracts Monitoring Officer believed there was no need to cut the hedge back from the cemetery side. Mr Herbert disagreed as there is a lot of foliage coming through from the cemetery.}

Mrs Morgans asked about the vacant plots on Hawthorns. Mrs Brown advised that there was currently no-one on the waiting list for Hawthorns. Mrs Harding asked if the town council could purchase weed suppressant for the vacant plots.

Mrs Brown confirmed the general waste trailer will be going out to sites from October and asked site representatives to remind ploholders it was for general waste only from plots. Later on in the year the trailer would return to sites for green waste.

{Post meeting note – Mrs Brown informed the meeting that a contractor had been appointed to rotavate, trim down and weed suppress vacant plots at Hawthorns.}

5 Date of next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 10:47am.

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