



## **BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Allotments Committee** held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 at 6.30pm.

**Present:**

Councillors K Ellis (Chair in the chair)

JR Potts (Vice-Chair)

BW Elliott

O Potts

D Rutter

Also present Councillor R Parker

18 Allotment Holders and Association Representatives

**Officers:**

Stephen Rickitt – Town Clerk (Democratic Services)

Sean Robinson – Assets Officer

David Clough – Assets Officer

**065/15/01: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENSE**

Councillor Bruce

**066/15/02: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**067/15/03: MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THE 13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2015**

The Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015 were **AGREED** by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

**068/15/04: REPORT OF THE ASSETS OFFICER**

The Assets Officer presented his report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes. During the course of the debate, the Chair invited contributions from allotment holders and the association representatives.

A: Areas identified for Programmed Works at Allotment Sites

Issues raised included

- *The need for the concrete fence to be replaced at the car park leading from the Sports Centre entrance road at the Bolam Avenue allotments. The current fence severely restricts the sight lines.*
- *The roadways at Bolam Avenue need proper attention. A holder stated that continued patching by adding chippings/planings was ineffective and causing access problems to the allotments. A long-term solution was needed.*
- *Holders at 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Allotments would like the Council to investigate the prospects of gaining proper vehicular access.*
- *Councillor Elliott reminded the Committee of his suggestion that the Council's officers be trained in asbestos investigation. Holders were concerned that investigation would cause disruption to long-cultivated plots.*
- *The provision of skips for sites, especially Bebside, was discussed. It was suggested that plot holders be encouraged to stockpile waste to avoid unauthorised use of skips.*

Councillor Elliott expressed concern that the second recommendation was removing both power from the Committee and consultation with the allotment holders. Other Councillors disagreed but after discussion a revised recommendation was agreed (Councillor Elliott abstaining) in the following terms

- 1: That the programme of works shown in section 1 is adopted as the programme for the forthcoming three years

2: Following appropriate consultation, that the Assets Officers be given delegated powers to implement the programme, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Allotments Committee, provided that costs are within the allocated budget provision

3: That the Assets Officers have delegated powers to make minor adjustments to programmes, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Allotments Committee, if circumstances change or it is economically advantageous for the Town Council, subject to Town Councillors being advised of the reasons for any such change.

#### B: Quotes received for identified works

The Assets Officer took the Committee through the items in the report and responded to questions. The Committee resolved

4: That authorisation is given for the works described in section 2, with powers to the Assets Officers in the terms of Resolutions 2 and 3 above.

#### C: Update on Programmed Works at Allotment Sites

The Committee was pleased to note and endorse the actions taken. They were advised that there were now only four unallocated plots at Beatrice Avenue extension site.

#### D: Water Charges

The Assets Officer presented his analysis of the differing ratios between plot rents and charges for each of the sites. Allotment holders and association representatives made the following points

- *Should the Council consider introducing a higher charge for plot holders with livestock as was done when the plots were rented from The Blagdon Estate?*
- *There was abuse at 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue with one holder using the supply to fill a small swimming pool in their adjacent garden.*
- *On a number of sites, the practice had grown up of plots having individual connections within the plot. Some of these were left running as sprinklers when there was no horticultural need.*
- *There was general support for communal taps being located outside individual sites but the previous boxing-in was condemned as being inadequate. The example given was the boxes not enabling the filling of watering cans.*

- *It was confirmed that the location of all the water meters had been identified and work was in hand to relocate those outside the sites.*
- *There was discussion about the best methods of communicating with plot holders. Individual letters with the annual invoices emerged as the most cost-effective solution. Although the display of notices regarding the Committee's meeting had occurred later than wished, it was clear from the numbers attending that this was a successful trial.*

The Committee resolved to note the comparison in water charges set out in section 4 of the report and endorsed the need for investigation of the cause of the differences with the holders concerned.

### **069/15/05: THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) presented his report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes. The association representatives indicated they were content with the idea of exploring the possible concept of one association for all the Council's Allotment Sites. Holders felt that at least two week's notice should be given for any roundtable discussion.

The Committee agreed to authorise a roundtable discussion as suggested in the report.

### **070/15/06: ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR URGENT ATTENTION**

None.

### **071/15/07: DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Allotment Committee is to be held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House.

Before the commencement of the items to be discussed in private, the Chair thanked the plot holders and association representatives for attending and contributing to the debates. He gave an assurance that the individual issues would be the subject of investigation by the Council

### **072/1/08: ALLOTMENT TENANCY**

For consideration of this item the Council **RESOLVED** to consider the remaining business in private with the press and public excluded pursuant

to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the basis that the business involves the consideration of issues related to an individual.

The Assets Officers updated members on the actions taken in respect of one particular plot. The Committee endorsed the actions taken in the light of the individual's personal circumstances.

**Agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair**

**Signature.....**

**Date.....**