



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Allotment Committee held at Arms Everytne House on Thursday 4th June 2013.

Present:

Councillors: C Bruce, K Ellis (Vice-Chair) R Parker (Chair) J R Potts, O Potts, J Reid, L Rickerby and D Rutter,

Also Present:

S E Rickitt - Town Clerk (Democratic Services)

S Noddings – Town Clerk (Corporate Services)

L Forsyth – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public: 4

001/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received for Councillor Gordon Thompson.

002/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GRANT OF ANY DISPENSATIONS

Cllr C Bruce stated that she was on the waiting list for an allotment.

003/03 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE HELD ON 9th APRIL 2013

Point 5.5 from the Minutes of the Assets Committee meeting held on the 9th April 2013 was noted as it concerned Allotments and ongoing projects and work.

004/04 WENSLEYDALE ALLOTMENTS

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an update of the current situation concerning the Wensleydale Allotments.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) first wished to apologise for previous consultation failure. Within his outline, he noted that it was his personal belief that within the dispute that whole area is designated for statutory allotments. In these circumstances, disposal of part of the allotments would require the Secretary of State's agreement. It was expected that a condition of such consent would be re-provision within the near proximity.

A brief history of the land was also given and this provided an outline of the land transfer process from Northumberland County Council to Blyth Town Council.

Following on from this it was therefore noted that the affected land needs to be maintained and this must therefore be conducted by the Town Council. Potential avenues were discussed for this land, for example car parking for allotment holders.

It was also outlined that following further consultation it is the Town Clerk (Democratic Services) desire to present a preferred option to the Meeting of the full Council on the 18th July.

Councillor Ken Ellis following on from the outline stated that the Council should look to keep the land as allotments, with the possibility of raised beds for the disabled. His preference that the fence not to be moved was also declared as well as desire to delay a decision regarding potential for car parking to a later date. This was seconded by Cllr Doug Rutter.

Councillor Bob Parker noted the importance of the need to maintain the site and options available for this process.

Councillor Lesley Rickerby enquired as to where the responsibility for the perimeter fence land. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) replied that this fence was the responsibility of Blyth Town Council.



Councillor Olga Potts asked whether any residents use this area in question to place bins out for collection. Stephen Rickitt replied that no residents use this route to take bins out, however it was also outlined that if required keys could be provided to address this issue.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) stated that as follow on from this, an investigation would be conducted in order to generate a price and options list for the required work.

It was agreed by the Committee that the preferred option would go to the Council Meeting on the 18th July 2013.

Action: SER to send letter to Mrs Smith and Mrs Maltman and to distribute letters to properties overlooking that part of the allotments setting out the preferred option.

005/05 INTRODUCTORY BRIEFING ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE.

Councillor R Parker and the Town Clerk (Democratic Services) gave a update on the background, the transfer from Blyth Valley Borough Council / Northumberland County Council & the current position.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) provided an update on the development of model allotments at the Bolam Avenue site. It was also noted that whilst the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) had been covering the work of the Assetts Officer that a local plumber had been negotiating on the Town Council's behalf for the supply of water to the Allotment Sites at Bolam Avenue, Laverick Place and Delaval Crescent. For sites 1 and 2 at Bolam Avenue an initial quote of £17,500 has been received.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) continued to provide an outline of the current situation at the Bolam Avenue site. At present:

- The allotments have not been cleared and need rotivated.
- The fence surrounding the allotments is to be completed by the end of the month
- The 12 gates are to be fitted when the fences are completed, with the allotment association to be provided locks by the Town Council.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) also noted that on a previous site visit that the team appeared to be diminished and that a future site visit is planned to check on the progress. **Action – Officers.**

Councillor Ken Ellis commented that all efforts should be made to contact the contractors to speed up the process. It was also noted that there



could be potential to advertise somebody to support the rotation of the plots.

The Chair enquired as to what condition the sites are let from. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) stated that they were to be modern allotments that are to have no livestock, no homemade sheds and can be let without water.

With regards to the water at Bolam Avenue, the Chair wished to seek further clarification. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) stated that 5 taps were to be installed covering the new 32 allotments. A breakdown of the cost of installation was then provided with £6512 for equipment, £9200 for Labour and £420 for storage of equipment, equalling £17,412 with work expecting to last 4 to 5 weeks.

Councillor Jeff Reid commented that from his experience he believed that the aforementioned cost was a strong quote given his previous experiences at Northumberland County Council. It was also outlined that he believed that for this particular project it was appropriate to use the quote from the negotiated offer on behalf of Blyth Town Council. This was seconded by Councillor John Potts.

The Chair commented that all outstanding work for plots 1 and 2 at Bolam Avenue were crucial and that the costs were to be noted upon completion.

RESOLVED: It was resolved that the water for Bolam Avenue would go ahead with the priority being given to the sites plot 1 and 2. It was also noted that the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) is to contact the Allotment Association regarding the associated rents for the new allotments.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) also noted that she believed that the provision of raised beds at 10th avenue site had begun. Councillor Jeff Reid also noted that he had received a phone call concerning this site. The progress of this is to be checked up by the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) and reported back at the next Committee. Councillor J Reid also wished to note that he would be willing to use his Councillors Allowance to cover any potential funding shortfall. **Action: Sue Noddings**

The Chair enquired if any further news had been received regarding flood prevention at the Newsham allotment site. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) is to investigate this and report back. **Action: Sue Noddings**

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) also briefed the Committee regarding a tenant who is in arrears and has started a business on the site.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) notified the Committee that it should be noted that "Plotment sites" are not statutory protected. He



noted that this issue had drifted and ownership issues with County Council are to be investigated. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) noted that there are 56 plotment sites in Blyth and that any outstanding issues will be investigated. **Action: Sue Noddings**

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) also wished to notify the Committee of potential development of a Central Link Road for Blyth. He noted that the Planning and Development Committee was taking a keen interest in developments and would feedback to the Allotments Committee as at present any preliminary plans for the road would involve the removal and thus re-provision of allotments.

Councillor Carol Bruce sought clarification regarding the waiting lists for allotments within the Town. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) replied that Blyth Town Council have a waiting list which is generated in co-operation with the Allotment Associations support.

Councillor Carol Bruce enquired as to whether updates could be provided to those on the waiting list for an allotment and potentially yearly updates. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) replied that potential to be informed would be investigated and that a complete outline of the list was needed. **Action: Sue Noddings**

Councillor Carol Bruce also enquired regarding the plans for raised beds within the Tenth Avenue site. The Chair responded it was his belief that no policy or plans had been agreed at present. It was also noted that any such project would need financing. The Town Clerk stated the further provision of allotments would be an issue for Blyth Town Council and outlined other avenues such as the need for wider inspections to ensure that 75% of the land was being cultivated. Councillor Lesley Rickerby stated that the Council should seek to involve and encourage young people in any future provision of allotments.

006/06 FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee agreed to meet the allotment holders prior to the next meeting which is to be held on the 3rd September 2013.

The Chair commented that notice board facilities within the allotments are lacking and improvement of such facilities would help to publicise the meetings.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) noted that there was a programme of dates for site meetings to be circulated. **Action: Stephen Rickitt**



007/7 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND URGENT MATTERS

None.

008/8 DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Allotments Committee is to take place on the 3rd September 2013 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber of Arms Everytne House.

TRP 3/9/13