



## BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Allotments Committee** held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 6.30pm.

*Please note the audio recording equipment failed at this meeting*

**Present:**

Councillors BW Elliott, K Ellis (Chair presiding), JR Potts, O Potts and D Rutter

**Officers:**

Stephen Rickitt – Town Clerk (Democratic Services)

Sue Noddings - Town Clerk (Corporate Services)

Sean Robinson – Assets Officer

David Clough – Assistant Assets Officer

Liam Forsyth – Committee Clerk

Five Allotment Holders or Association Representatives

**056/14/01: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENSE**

Councillor C Bruce.

**057/14/02: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS**

See item 064/14/08 below.

## **058/14/03: MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THE 7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2014**

The Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014 were **AGREED** by the Committee and signed by the Chair with the addition of Councillor Elliott's apologies.

### **059/14/04: REPORT OF THE ASSETS OFFICER**

1. The Committee considered the report attached to these minutes and agreed any suggested actions.
2. The survey report will be placed on the Town Council's website when complete.
3. The Assistant Assets Officer will commence discussions with disabled groups regarding use of the newly created disabled plots at 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
4. The Committee authorised officers to take remedial action for the top soil problems on the new gardens at Wensleydale, but any action is to be the subject of consultation with the Committee's Chair and Vice-Chair.

### **061/14/05: ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR URGENT ATTENTION**

1. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) presented the report attached to these minutes and intended for the Town Council seeking provision for the involvement of allotment holders and association representatives in meetings of the Committee. Some of the holders / representatives expressed a wish to revert back to the process of holding separate meeting with members of the Committee. Following discussion the Committee agreed to recommend adoption of the report by the Town Council.
2. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) updated the Committee on the proposals for the 2015/2016 budget to be considered at the following week's Town Council meeting. In order to avoid potential capping issues, the precept rise was likely to be restricted to a maximum of 1.99%. The probable reduction in the Committee's anticipated budget would be met by achievement of a reduction in water charges resulting from actions to be taken to avoid abuse.

### **062/14/06: DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was noted as 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015

**The Committee then resolved to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the remaining items concerned either an individual allotment holder or the consideration of contracts.**

### **063/14/07: ALLOTMENT TENANCY**

The Committee were provided with details of non-compliance with the terms of the tenancy for a particular allotment. After discussion Officers were authorised to commence the eviction process but were also tasked with trying to see if a management solution was available by a relocation to a smaller allotment (Councillor Elliott abstaining).

At this point Councillor Ellis declared that he was a close friend of one of the possible contractors and left the meeting. Councillor JR Potts (Vice-Chair) presided for the remainder of the meeting.

### **064/14/08: PROPOSED CONTRACTS**

1. The lowest tenders were accepted in each case as being the most economically advantageous for the Council (Councillor Elliott abstaining). The Committee noted that the cost would need to be spread over two financial years.

2. In the case of the tender for water supply remedial works, officers were authorised to accept the next highest tender if the lowest tenderer indicated that they no longer wish for the work.

3. In the case of external fencing for one site, the Committee endorsed the approach to a single supplier as enquiries revealed they were likely to supply other prospective tenders with materials in any event.

4. The Committee made general observations on the process. Whilst they were content with the anonymised papers being available at the meeting and collected in afterwards, Councillors would like future reports to include the specifications and invitations to tender, together with a schedule comparing the different tenders.

### **MEMBERS OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE:**

Councillor K Ellis (Chair), Councillor C Bruce, Councillor B W Elliott, Councillor J R Potts (Vice Chair), Councillor O Potts, Councillor L Rickerby, Councillor D Rutter, Councillor G Thompson & Councillor A Turnbull

Confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair

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**BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Allotments Committee**  
**13 Jan 15**

Report of the Assets Officer

**Site Survey:**

GEOMATICS have been contracted to provide a detailed survey of all Allotment sites. Work is presently ongoing with a provisional completion date of 30 Jan 15. All data will then be made available for viewing to all Councillors.

**Bolam Avenue:**

NTR

**Beatrice Avenue**

The double gates were installed on 23 Oct 14 for access into the adjacent field. Once this work was completed, quotes/costs were obtained in order to fence off the access from the stables in the adjacent field in order to stop horses grazing on the land. The Chair & V/Chair approved the work to be carried out with a provisional date of 01 Dec 14 set. A number of letters were sent to the proprietor of the stables setting out the time line for the work to commence and Northumbria police were also informed prior to the erection of the fencing. The horses were removed from the field the day before the work commenced (01 Dec 14) with no further incidents.

Quotes/costs have now been obtained to carry out the construction of the new allotment gardens on the additional land (please see separate quotes). Once the Allotments Committee selects the contractor work can commence as soon as possible.

**Side Club**

NTR

**10<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

The resurfacing of the entrance and car parks commenced 23 Oct 14 and was completed 07 Nov 14. There has been a positive response from allotment holders stating how well the work has gone. The installation of the raised beds was carried out at the same time as the resurfacing of the entrance and car park. They are now available for let to disabled users. An update will follow.

**Laverock Place**

NTR

**South Farm**

NTR

**20<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

NTR

**Bebside**

NTR

**Wensleydale**

Plot 5:

Work commenced on 13 Nov 14 to install raised beds and paths. The work was completed on 17 Nov 14. The garden has now been let to a disabled tenant.

Plot 29:

Work commence to clear debris from plot 29 on 13 Nov 14 and has been made ready for re-letting. As the plot is quite large we recommend that the garden should be split into 3 plots. In order for this to happen there is a need to install a path (consisting of sub base) and post and rail fencing with pig netting to divide the plots.

01 – 07 New Gardens:

There is a requirement for water to be provided to these gardens as the nearest water tap is a considerable distance away from the plots. Quotes/costs have been obtained and are awaiting your approval.

All plots have now been let however, 2 tenants have already giving up the plots stating the lack of top soil on the plots. Investigations are underway to find a suitable solution to this problem with a possibility of using a soil conditioner to improve the plots. A further update will be made once more information is received.

**Future Planning:**

Once the survey is complete a provision to improve the internal roads and external fencing should be the priority of the coming years. Quotes/costs will be obtained in order to submit a long term plan to complete the relevant work.

**Sean Robinson**

**Assets Officer**

13 Jan 15

**BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Allotments Committee**  
**13 January 2015**

*Participation by Allotment Holders and Association Representatives*

1. The Town Council has a general policy of not allowing public speaking as part of its meetings. The Town Council does however recognise the importance of involving the allotment holders and the association representatives in decisions concerning the allotments.
2. The Town Council wants to emphasise that the provisions below are no substitute for early dialogue between the allotment holders & associations and the assets officers. If the issue remains unresolved then the holder or representative is encouraged to write to the Town Council with full details.
3. The Allotments Committee will invite allotment holders and the association representatives to participate in appropriate items of business, normally after the introduction for that item by an officer.
4. Participants will be expected to observe the normal courtesies of debate and for the debate being recorded.
5. The right to participate will not generally extend to the discussion of items where the Allotments Committee resolve to consider a matter in private, although in exceptional cases specific individuals may be invited to attend such a discussion.
6. Notice of meetings of the Allotments Committee will be displayed on the Town Council's website and emailed to association representatives and any other allotment holder who asks to receive details of such meetings.
7. For the sake of clarity, decisions remain the responsibility of members of the Allotments Committee who will be the only persons with voting rights.
8. This process shall be reviewed by the Allotments Committee every 6 months.

Adopted.....