

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL
Environment Committee
Thursday 22 February 2024
Decision Report

DEPOSITS FROM NEW TENANTS FOR ALLOTMENT PLOTS AND KEYS

Recommendations

The Committee RESOLVE to agree: to a deposit/bond scheme for when a new tenant takes on a vacant plot, said deposit/bond will be returned following an inspection where the plot is considered to be in a reasonable condition.

Additionally, a deposit for a site key which will be refunded when a plot is given up and the key is returned.

- 1. Deposit/bond of £100 returnable when relinquishing a plot if left in a reasonable condition.**
- 2. Deposit of £10 for site key returnable when relinquishing the key.**

Ward

Not Ward Specific

Risk Management

The only impact would be when collecting rent though this would be of minimal impact upon resources.

Objective

To further promote the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the town and its community. This course of action will also help to ensure allotment plots are returned to Blyth Town Council in a good standard.

Report

When new tenants accept a plot, they must sign a tenancy agreement and pay full rent or pro rata rent depending on where we are in the calendar year before receiving the keys to the site. Officers are constantly monitoring the plots over the following months for progress and when none is observed the tenant has been contacted to better understand if they have been unwell or for other reasons, why their plot is not at an acceptable state of cultivation.

We are constantly given a whole range of reasons why they haven't been to the plot, and we are then told that they will just give up the plot. The introduction of a deposit should ensure that future tenants are committed to the many years of the pleasurable and hard work developing and designing the plot to the way they envisage it. Officers then must go through the procedure of contacting another potential tenant who are then apprehensive about taking on the plot because it is not cultivated to a reasonable standard. Officers also spend considerable time trying to retrieve site keys from former tenants following them giving up the plot because the keys are issued free with no recourse, a deposit would hopefully improve the situation although in addition a record will need to be maintained of the deposits. The use of any non-returned deposits will be used for a variety of reasons including to offset rent reductions to assist the new tenants in clearing the site, additional skips or assistance toward the payment to NCC for site clearance work.

D Clough
General Services Officer

22 February 2024