



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Allotments Committee held at Arms Everytyn House on Thursday, 2 February 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillors: J R Potts (Vice-Chair), B Elliott, R Parker

The Vice-Chair chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chair.

In attendance:

M Wilkinson Deputy Town Clerk
D Clough Allotments Officer
M Hawthorne Committee Clerk

Members of the Public - 9

No	
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillors: K Ellis (Chair), C Bruce, O Potts, L Rickerby
2	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND GRANTS OF DISPENSATION None.
3	MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2016 and SPECIAL ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 5 JANUARY 2017 Committee agreed to ADOPT the minutes.

3.1	MATTERS ARISING Councillor Elliott asked if the Allotment's Officer had progressed action from the last meeting, to speak to all allotment holders and compile a repair list, in priority order. The Allotments Officer advised that although he has not done this, allotment holders are aware they should report any problems directly to him and in general are very proactive in doing so. The Deputy Town Clerk commented said that when invoices are sent out in March of this year allotment holders will be reminded of this.
4	ALLOTMENTS OFFICER'S REPORT
4.1	Removal of Trees The Allotments Officer has been advised that NCC are unable to complete the work before the end of this financial year, but would be able to do this in April/May 2017 and the quote for carrying out the work will be honoured. Quotes from other contractors were considerably higher and the Allotments Officer asked Committee to agree to retain the existing contractor. Committee agreed to this and acknowledged that it may be necessary to access emergency funds to pay for the work.
4.2	Allotment vacancies Councillor Elliott asked the Allotments Officer to reflect the number of vacancies for each site. He also asked if the current turnaround time for letting empty allotments could be reduced (approximately 28 days at present).
5	NEW WATER SYSTEM AT WENSLEYDALE A report was circulated by the Allotments Officer which outlined the progress of the work, including final costs. The Chair commented that extra charges were incurred due to additional work being carried out on instruction from Northumbria Water. The Allotments Officer added that a document has been included to the procurement checklist which will be used for future work and help avoid unexpected costs.
6	NEW TENANCY AGREEMENT The Allotments Officer asked Committee to approve the new tenancy agreement which was circulated to Councillors.

	<p>This agreement is based on guidance from the National Allotments Society, is more informative and will assist the Allotments Officer in his role. Committee supported the new agreement which will be sent out to all allotment holders in March 2017 with a view to in coming into effect in April 2018. Comments are welcomed from allotment holders.</p>
7	<p>VERMIN CONTROL</p> <p>The Allotments Officer asked Committee to consider the proposal set out in his report, following an approach from the Secretary of Blyth Smallholdings:</p> <p><i>"That permission is granted for Mr Ferrow to carry out vermin control on the sites at no cost to the Council. Mr Ferrow is a registered Gamekeeper and carries out vermin control on a private shoot in Northumberland. He follows the procedure put in place by Northumbria Police and they have confirmed there is a log of every time he has carried out vermin control on a Town Council site."</i></p> <p>Following discussion Committee agreed to the request. Councillor Elliott asked the Allotments Officer to explore if there were any other ways to control the problem.</p> <p>There is a problem with rats on the sites and due to changes in legislation allotment holders are no longer authorised to use anti-coagulant poisons. The Chair asked the Allotment Officer to check with Northumbria Water that there are no issues with the sewerage system and to keep Councillors informed.</p> <p>The Allotments Officer advised that he has made a request to attend the Rodent Stewardship Course which would enable him to administer second generation anti-coagulant in a safe and professional way. He confirmed that any action taken in relation to vermin control is carried out within current legislation.</p>
8	<p>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>None.</p>
9	<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Thursday, 8 June 2017, 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber.</p>

Final
Subject to ratification

MEMBERS OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Councillors:

K Ellis (Chair)
J R Potts (Vice Chair)
C Bruce
B Elliott
R Parker
O Potts
L Rickerby
D Rutter
A Turnbull