



## BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting** held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytyn House on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013 at 6.30pm

**Present:**

Councillors: C Bruce, J R Potts, O Potts and J Reid

**Officers:**

S E Rickitt - Town Clerk (Democratic Services)

S Noddings – Town Clerk (Corporate Services)

S Robinson – Assets Officer

A McCabe – Administration Clerk

L Forsyth – Committee Clerk

**Allotment Holders:**

P Buckley – Wensleydale

J Gilles – Newsham & New Delaval

**Members of the Public: 1**

Councillor J R Potts was nominated by the Committee to take the Chair following the absence of Chair and Deputy-Chair.

### **009/13/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr D Rutter, Cllr K Ellis, Cllr L Rickerby, Cllr G Thompson and Cllr R Parker.

### **010/13/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GRANT OF ANY DISPENSATIONS**

Cllr C Bruce sought a dispensation (for her term as a Councillor) as an allotment holder on the Bolam Avenue site. The document is attached to these Minutes as an appendix.

The Committee **AGREED** to grant Cllr C Bruce a dispensation for her term in Office.

### **011/13/03 MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2013**

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an outline and commented he had received no further communication regarding the previously outlined situation concerning the Wensleydale site. Councillor J Reid commented that this represented a lack of courtesy on behalf of those involved.

An update was provided to the Committee by the Assets Officer regarding rotation across the allotment sites. It was noted that the Town Council has now purchased a rotivator for £400.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) commented that regarding the site at 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue that no funding had been confirmed and apologised for any confusion that had arose. It was also commented that concerns expressed regarding flooding at the site were also now noted.

Councillor J R Potts requested an update regarding the potential development of allotments at the Beatrice Avenue site. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) commented that she believed the Northumberland County Council would agree to a land transfer following the rectification of a legal dispute over grazing rights. Councillor J R Potts thus wished to note that the preparation of this site for rent could be a potential cost within this year's budget for the Allotments Committee. The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he was seeking a resolution to this situation as soon possible. **Action: SER/SR**

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an update regarding the Central Link Road. It was commented that this project had been allocated no funding in this round, however the Committee noted that this issue may arise in the near future.

The Minutes of the Allotment Committee held on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013 were **AGREED** as a true record by the Committee and signed by the acting Chair.

## **012/13/04 REPORT OF THE ASSETS OFFICER**

### Bolam Avenue

The Assets Officer provided a further update regarding the developments at the Bolam Avenue site.

Councillor C Bruce sought clarification about the process in offering places for the remaining 10 plots. The Assets Officer commented that at present he has offered plots to 10 people and is awaiting response and will continue to address the situation as previous outlined.

Weeding and poorly managed sites were discussed and the Assets Officer stated that he had a good working relationship with Mr D Clough (Blyth Small Holdings Allotment Association) and would continue to address issues arising. **Action: SR**

Cllr C Bruce also commented that she had received queries regarding the Council providing top soil for the new sites. Both the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) and Assets Officer commented that this had neither been discussed nor approved.

### Newsham Side Club

The Assets Officer commented that he was seeking approval for a survey to deal with the drainage issues at this site.

It was **AGREED** that an initial survey and inspections were to be conducted, it was noted that these quotes and findings of the inspection are to be passed via the Chairs of the Allotment Committee and Finance Committee prior to further authorization.

### Wensleydale

Further to the update provided to the Meeting of the allotment holders. It was commented that the weeding and spraying at the site is to be investigated by the Assets Officer. **Action: SR**

### 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue

The potential provision of raised beds at the site was discussed at it was agreed that this was to be investigated further by the Assets Officer.

**Action: SR**

### Supply of water to Laverock Place and Delaval Avenue

The Assets Officer informed the Committee that he was seeking approval to achieve a quote for the work. It was noted that the Assets Officer had received a quote for the water at Laverock Place.

### 4.2 To consider authorising £5000 for boxing-in all water taps. Funds are available in reserves

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) commented that this was a legacy issue and was thus seeking authorisation to make use of money from the reserves.

Councillor C Bruce enquired as to whether this represented a priority as there are outstanding issues such as flooding at sites.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) outlined the current situation and abuse of water experienced. It was noted that this has stemmed from a recommendation from Northumbrian Water.

Councillor J Reid commented that as it had been agreed by a previous Committee and thus it must be actioned. It was further commented by the Committee that the best form of action would be to prioritise, identify and act.

It was therefore **AGREED** that this was to proceed with priority given to those in most need following further investigation.

## **012/13/05 POSSIBLE JOINT PROJECT WITH BEDE ACADEMY**

Councillor J Reid moved that this recommendation be agreed.

The Assets Officer provided an outline of the report and commented that he was seeking consultation with the Allotment Associations. It was further noted that the Vice-Principle was also seeking meetings with the Allotment Associations and seeking to tie in with wider projects.

The recommendation was **AGREED** to proceed.

### **013/13/06 POSSIBLE JOINT PROJECT WITH THE CYRENIANS AND BLYTH SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION**

The Assets Officer provided an outline of the proposed working arrangements outlining that this project would seek to create 4 new plots on the Bolam Avenue Site. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) outlined that external funding would be sought regarding the provision of raised beds on the 4 new plots.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) also commented that in initial discussions that it was outlined that the Cyrenians would provide management for the project as part of a wider project of long term engagement and retention for the Cyrenians.

Councillor J R Potts expressed support commenting that Blyth Town Council should seek to support the vulnerable in our community.

The further development of this project was **AGREED. Action: SR**

### **014/13/07 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2014/2015**

Councillor J R Potts provided an outline discussing the budget document, further commenting that he was now looking towards next year. Councillor J R Potts enquired as to whether assets such as fencing could be measured in order to generate a better maintenance plan and structure.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) stated that she was seeking a better structure regarding the budget and would be seeking to build in further developments if the quotes are achieved before January 2014.

Authority was also sought to investigate potential development sites. This led to discussion regarding 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It was agreed that further investigations are to proceed. **Action: SR**

The provision of a side gate was also agreed to proceed as with the provision of notice boards as discussed. **Action: SR**

An issue was also raised regarding the side gate at the Bolam Avenue site remaining open. It was agreed that the Assets Officer would seek contact with the Association and investigate this further. **Action: SR**

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) outlined an issue at the Bolam Avenue site. This involved suspected theft of livestock on the site. The

Town Clerk (Corporate Services) outlined that she was seeking to suspend the tenancy or future tenancy if charges arose from the allegations. Councillor J R Potts enquired as to whether there was potential for such a clause to be entered into the tenancy agreement.

This proposal was **AGREED** by the Committee. **Action: SN/SR**

Councillor O Potts enquired as to whether money could be set aside to address outstanding and future issues with the fencing of allotments.

Councillor J R Potts enquired as to what affect water rates had on the provision of water across the sites. The Assets Officer commented that the water provision was metered and that when the meters are boxed this should set findings to an equilibrium.

It was therefore **AGREED** that the water rates at the allotment sites was to be investigated. **Action: SN/SR**

Mr D Lyons informed that Committee that he believes there may be a potential water leak at the 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue Site, this is to be investigated.

**Action: SR**

The acting chair, Councillor J R Potts commented that the checking of maintenance by tenants, Officers and Members was important in order to stay on top of any issues that may arise.

### **015/13/08 ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR URGENT ATTENTION**

The Assets Officer outlined that he had received an application from a PhD student seeking to use the Bolam Avenue site to work with the Allotment Association to conduct a survey.

It was recommended by the Assets Officer that this proposal precedes as the information could be beneficial and of great use for both the Council and the Allotment Associations.

The Committee commented that they supported this proposal however noted that the applicant must be

aware of the tenancy agreement.

Councillor J Reid also enquired as to whether the findings could be presented to the Council at a future date. **Action: SR**

This proposal was **AGREED** by the Committee. **Action: SR**

## **016/13/09 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was **AGREED** that the next Meeting of the Allotment Committee is to be held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House.

**MEETING CLOSED AT 8.40PM.**

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

#### **Councillors :**

R Parker (Chair/Mayor)

K Ellis ( Vice-Chair)

C Bruce

J R Potts

O Potts

J Reid

L Rickerby

D Rutter

G Thompson