

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Committee

Minutes of Assets Working Group Meeting held at Blyth Town Council Offices, Ebor House, Blyth, on Tuesday 1 June 2010 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors: P Lovatt (Chair) R Parker
J Condon P Reid
A L Gibbs-Barton

IN ATTENDANCE:

Town Clerk: S Noddings

A007/10 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors K Ellis and J Newman.

A008/10 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

A009/10 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2010

The minutes were discussed and, with the amendment to page one, they were agreed and signed.

A010/10 4. REVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIONS REGARDING ALLOTMENTS

The following actions were discussed and updates provided where appropriate: -

No:	Action:	Responsibility:
1.	Risk Assessment to be conducted regarding the locking of gates at all allotment sites. <i>It was agreed that this should be 'Guidelines' not Policy.</i>	Policy - P Reid

2.	<p>Review Newcastle City Council's scheme/policy on allotment gates and share good practice.</p> <p><i>It was agreed that this should be 'Guidelines' not Policy and that this should be part of Item1.</i></p>	<p>Policy - P Reid Costing - K Ellis</p>
3.	<p>Facilitate a Training Course for representatives of all allotments for the handling of Rat Poison.</p> <p><i>David Clough provided S Noddings with contact details for Kill Germ. Robin Moss, Head of Technical Services has offered a choice of three dates in July and the event would cost £421.00 + VAT. The Course is certificated so it can be cascaded by successful participants. 10 to 14 people could be accommodated on one course.</i></p>	<p>Training - S Noddings</p> <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Noddings to notify volunteers of proposed dates before meeting on 15 June 2010. • S Noddings to approach Roy Hugman at NCC regarding funding and or support for training. • The cost of training to be included as an agenda item for the Finance Committee scheduled for 8 June 2010. Done by Councillor Gibbs-Barton.

4.	<p>Establish the extent of the Waiting List for Blyth Town Council Allotments and individual allotments and share information with all concerned.</p> <p><i>Allotment waiting list anomalies identified through programme of visits and Associations asked to share information regarding their waiting lists.</i></p>	<p>S Noddings</p> <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Clough, Alan Howe and Peter Buckley to be asked for their lists before the meeting on 15 June 2010. • Potential to resurrect disused allotments at South Farm, Beatrice Avenue and Wensleydale. • Councillors to notify the Town Clerk of any other plots of land that may be suitable for allotments. • It was also agreed that all Councillors would be emailed regarding the identification of any additional derelict land in their individual Wards.
5.	<p>Review funding opportunities for Blyth Town Council Allotments and individual allotments and identify opportunities for support.</p> <p><i>S Noddings developing list of funding opportunities. Expanding knowledge and contacts plus National Association knowledge and expertise.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing Activity</p>
6.	<p>Invite Police involvement at future meetings of the Assets Working Group with particular reference to the Allotments.</p> <p><i>Future involvement agreed - meeting took place on 27 April 2010.</i></p>	<p>S Noddings</p> <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Noddings to ensure representation at the meeting on 15 June 2010.

7.	<p>Priority - Establish Blyth Town Council Policy on pensionable age and eligibility for discounted rent.</p> <p><i>No Update</i></p>	<p>Policy - P Reid</p> <p>Agreed Actions: Important that Policy ensures inclusivity.</p> <p>Information from various sources awaited. Once information available decisions regarding: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do we do it? 2. At what age? 3. How much? <p>Consultation document to go to all allotment holders.</p>
8.	<p>Review all policies and procedures that have been introduced e.g. Partnership in Allotments, Grandfather Rights, etc to establish a framework for all allotments to work with.</p> <p><i>No Update</i></p>	<p>Policy - P Reid</p> <p>Agreed Actions: Policy to include guidelines for Allotment Associations on the minimum service requirement in return for the Management Fee.</p> <p>Specification/Management Agreements to be reviewed.</p>
9.	<p>Establish whether all Blyth Town Council Allotments have Statutory Status. (<i>Statutory Status applies to land bought or leased for the express purpose of providing allotments. Non Statutory Status applies to land bought or leased with a long term alternative purpose.</i>)</p> <p><i>Still awaiting confirmation.</i></p>	<p>S Noddings to confirm with NCC Legal Team but it is believed Blyth Allotments are all Statutory Status.</p> <p>Pressure now to agree perimeter of all allotment sites so that the NCC legal team can transfer land to Blyth Town Council. Sue Noddings to speak with allotment holders about</p>

		accuracy of perimeter boundaries.
10.	<p>Agree rents for 2010-2011.</p> <p><i>Proposal made to full Council Meeting on 13 May 2010 that there would be no increase in rents in 2010-11 and 2011-12.</i></p>	<p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Noddings to process invoices as soon as possible. • Issue of 2012-13 rents to be included in the next Budget Setting Meeting.
11.	<p>Establish whether the number of allotments is appropriate for the population in Blyth Town Council catchment area.</p> <p>(No minimum requirement although there are examples of good practice. Average of 1 allotment for every 73 households in England and Wales).</p> <p><i>Suggested that some guidelines in the Allotment Act - to be reviewed.</i></p>	<p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of appropriateness to be reviewed.

5.1 ADDITIONAL ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- It was recommended that Blyth Town Council subscribe to membership of the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners at a cost of £60.00. **Agreed Action: AG-B**
Application completed and submitted and membership pack now received.
- Delegated Authority for the Assets Working Group was discussed and the need for a cash limit to be defined for expenditure. **Agreed that the Chair recommend this to Council on the 13th May 2010. Action: PL**
Individual items up to a maximum of £200.00 can be authorised by the Assets Committee providing it is within the total budget.

- The Town Clerk to contact Northumbrian Water regarding meter readings, leaks, stand pipes and to explore the possibility of locked access. **Action: SN** *Some progress made but still issues regarding the lack of clear accounting with Northumberland County Council and the notification of transfer to Blyth Town Council. PLUS SN to contact Northumbrian Water again to set up accounts once land is transferred from NCC to BTC.*

- The Town Clerk is to arrange a schedule of visits to all allotments sites for the mornings of Saturday 10th, Sunday 11th, Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th April 2010. Schedule of visits to be circulated to all Councillors. **Action: SN** *Visits completed and discussed under item 5. PLUS Report prepared by PL.*

- The Town Clerk is to check which sites require skips/trailers, identify secure locations, and establish frequency. K Ellis to establish the cost of hiring skips and trailers and identify potential contractor. **Action: SN and KE** *Tenders in progress. PLUS SN to contact KE to establish current position regarding skip/trailer hire tender and replacement locks.*

- **PLUS** a report to be drafted for the Staff Working Group regarding a potential Assets Manager post and other duties. This will be required pre budget setting and will include a Job Specification. The Staff Working Group will then review and develop a Job Specification and Person Specification along with grading guidelines. Recommendation will be presented to the Finance Committee.

A011/10 5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE AND THE ALLOTMENT HOLDERS REPRESENTATIVES

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 15 June 2010 at 7.00pm. Venue confirmed as the Isabella Community Centre.

Signed by the Chair: _____

Date: _____