



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Allotments Committee held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytyn House on Thursday 6th March 2014 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors: K Ellis (Chair), J R Potts, O Potts and J Reid.

Members of the Public: 8

Also present:

Sue Noddings – Town Clerk (Corporate Services)

Sean Robinson – Assets Officer

Liam Forsyth – Committee Clerk

025/14/01: ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (&VICE-CHAIRMAN IF THOUGHT APPROPRIATE)

The Committee **AGREED** that Councillor K Ellis is to become the Chairman of Blyth Town Council's Allotments Committee.

026/14/02: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Bruce, L Rickerby and D Rutter.

027/14/03: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS

Subject to ratification

None.

028/14/04: MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 17TH DECEMBER 2013.

Councillor J R Potts enquired as to whether there was any progress regarding the site at 9th Avenue. The Assets Officer replied that both himself and the Committee Clerk had visited the site however it is now believed that the focus for accommodating those on the waiting list is to be met by the development of the Beatrice Avenue site.

Councillor J R Potts also enquired as to whether there was an update regarding the PhD student analysing the allotments within Blyth. The Assets Officer, Sean Robinson commented that there was no update at present and one is not expected until the beginning of the academic year.

The Minutes of the Allotments Committee held on the 17th December 2013 were **AGREED** by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

029/14/05: REPORT OF THE ASSETS OFFICER

(Please find the Assets Officer report attached to the Minutes)

Following on from the presentation of the report, the Assets Officer invited questions from the Councillors.

Regarding the Allotment Waiting List, Councillor J R Potts enquired as to the process of declaring a preference. The Assets Officer replied that that the application from seeks 2 preferences with the option for no preference as a secondary option.

The Chair, Councillor K Ellis commented that regarding the Bolam Avenue Allotment site, that urgent rectification be sought. The Assets Officer commented that he had spoken to all involved and would seek rectification as soon as possible.

An update was also provided regarding the fly tipping at the Beatrice Avenue site. It was commented that this is now a Police matter and has been report to the Environmental Services department at Northumberland County Council. Councillor K Ellis requested that all Councillors be kept up to date with the developments of this item. **Action: SR**

Councillor J R Potts also enquired as to the progress and logistics regarding the bore hole at the Side Club allotment site. An outline was then provided by the Assets Officer who outlined that a hole is to be

Subject to ratification

drilled between 12m – 20m and then a soil sample to be taken in order to investigate feasibility.

Councillor J Reid expressed concern and shock regarding the quote received for the 10th Avenue site, commenting on the need to achieve and recognise a sense of proportion.

Regarding the water taps and their boxing in, Councillor J R Potts, enquired as to whether the issues associated with the locks could be addressed by using a combi lock. This is to be investigated by the Assets Officer. **Action: SR**

The Assets Officer also wished to comment that he would be seeking Allotment Associations support when Blyth hosts the National Allotments Society Northern Regional Allotment Officer's Forum which will be held on the 15th May 2014.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) enquired as to whether the Assets Officer had the figure to hand regarding the planned spends for this financial year. The Assets Officer responded that he would forward on the relevant information to the Town Clerks and Chair of the Allotments Committee. **Action: SR**

Regarding the 10th Avenue site, Mrs G Newell expressed concern at the progress regarding the raised beds at the site. Whilst wishing to thank Councillor J Reid for his Councillor's small scheme grant it was outlined that the 10th Avenue site was seeking support from the Town Council in accessing grants. It was further commented that the accessibility issues would need addressed prior to the grants being sought.

The Chair, Councillor K Ellis apologised to Mrs G Newell and commented that issues have arisen from a previous staffing concern.

It was **AGREED** that the Assets Officer is to investigate Allotment Funding and Grants in co-operation with representatives from the 10th Avenue site.

The Assets Officer commented that he understood the related frustration and will endeavour to assure accessibility is improved at the 10th Avenue site.

030/14/06: FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2014/2015

(Please find the Future Work Programme for 2014/2015 attached within the Assets Officers report).

Subject to ratification

The Assets Officer invited questions from those present. No questions were forthcoming.

031/14/07: ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR URGENT ATTENTION

Councillor J R Potts enquired as to whether there would be any associated costs with the hosting of the Allotment Officers forum, including transportation. The Assets Officer responded that he did not envisage any extraneous costs, commenting that the Allotment Officers ferried each other around at the previous Meeting.

032/14/08: DATE OF THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next scheduled Meeting of the Allotments Committee is to take place on the 3rd June 2014 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber.

Meeting Closed: 7.15pm

Date:

Signed:

Members of the Committee:

Councillor K Ellis (Chair)
Councillor C Bruce
Councillor J R Potts
Councillor O Potts
Councillor J Reid
Councillor L Rickerby
Councillor D Rutter
Councillor G Thompson

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL
Allotments Committee
06 March 2014

Report of the Assets Officer

Allotment Waiting List:

It was agreed at the last Allotments Committee meeting (17 Dec 13) that a letter would be sent to everyone on the Allotment Waiting list in order to update contact details and enquire if they would wish to be remain on the list. The letter was distributed on the 30th January 2014 with a closing date of 28th February 2014 to respond. There were 102 persons on the list and now with the closing date passed we have now 78 with a breakdown of the allotment preferences below:

TOTAL ON WAITING LIST	
Wensleydale	35
Bebside	6
Bolam Avenue	9
Delaval Avenue	0
Laverock	1
Newsham	6
South Farm	0
10th Avenue	4
20th Avenue	0
Beatrice Avenue	6
No Pref	11
TOTAL	78

This list will be updated on an annual basis to ascertain that prospective allotment holders wish to remain on the list.

Bolam Avenue

All of the new gardens have been taken as of Jan 14. Due to the recent adverse weather there has been some damage to the internal road running adjacent to Ford Drive from the pedestrian gate along to the new gardens caused by a NCC flat bed van as they were trimming the trees inside of the perimeter gate. I have contacted Leon Savage at NCC to rectify this problem as soon as possible. As a temporary measure they have filled in the ruts with surplus soil from the other areas and I am now awaiting NCC to deliver some road plainings to level out the surface. We have a similar problem adjacent to the new plots in the centre of the site where the ground is very uneven and there is a lot of standing water. I have asked NCC to provide additional plainings to rectify this problem also. I have spoken to Dave Clough and advised him to keep vehicle traffic to a minimum in order for the road not to be damaged further.

Subject to ratification

Acquisition of land at Beatrice Avenue

BTC received the official copy of register of title from Land Registry on 31 Jan 2014 and I am now in the process of acquiring plans/costs/quotes in developing the land for new allotment gardens. A clearer idea of costs will complete by the next Allotments Committee.

Drainage at Side Club

We are awaiting the date to commence digging the borehole at the Side Club with a revised cost of £1749 + VAT. This is due to prelims and organisation from the contractor. This was approved by the Vice Chair of the Allotment Committee. Further information will be provided.

10th Avenue

I have now received a provisional quote for the resurfacing of the entrance and car park of approximately £39,000 - £40,000. I am now awaiting confirmation of the final costs and will report back once they are received. Cllr J Reid has committed his small scheme grant of £1000 to provide raised beds. This will commence before 31 Mar 14.

Water Supply for Laverock Place & Delaval Gardens

Work commenced w/c 13 Jan 14 on installing a water supply to both Laverock Place and Delaval Avenue allotments. Northumbrian Water have now commenced testing the system w/c 24 Feb 14 and work should be complete by 28 Feb 14.

Water Taps

The boxing in of all water taps on all of our allotment sites is now complete. There is an ongoing issue on getting keys cut for all allotment holders and I am investigating the most cost effective way of managing this issue. There has been some concerns on the standards of the boxes which I am investigating.

Joint Project with Bede Academy

The project is still ongoing and the pupils have drawn up plans to build their allotment. The building of the allotment is due to commence w/c 3 Mar 14. This will comprise of 3 to 4 one hour sessions after school to complete.

Joint Project with Cyrenians

No change from the last Allotment Committee meeting. Work is to recommence in Mar/Apr as previously stated.

Subject to ratification

Wensleydale

External fence adjacent to the Persimmon development was damaged in the recent high winds. Scott Fencing LTD replaced damaged fence at a cost of £380 + VAT.

There is a requirement to re-site the water main from outside the perimeter fence to inside the boundary. This cost will be met by Persimmon, date (TBC). Tony Raffell has now taken over as point of contact for the Wensleydale site from Peter Buckley.

Future programme for 2014/2015

To survey all Allotment Sites, to include all internal roads and to map all plots.

Beatrice Avenue: to build new plots on acquisitioned land.

Survey all external fencing of all allotment sites.

Improvement to the internal roads at all sites.

Wensleydale: New gardens at front + seating and raised beds.

Investigate drainage and refurbishment on numerous gardens and dividing larger gardens into smaller plots to alleviate the waiting list.

AOB

As agreed at the last Allotments Committee meeting we are to host the next the National Allotments Society Northern Regional Allotment Officer's Forum which will be held on the 15th May 2014. The forum will consist of a meeting in the morning with lunch provided and then a site visit to one of our allotments in the afternoon. Further details will follow once known.

Sean Robinson

Assets Officer

06 March 2014.