

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON 25TH MARCH 2015**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Clive Darke (Chairman), Roger Bailey, Clive Webb, Simon Stokes and Peter Fox (S)

IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Thurston (Grounds Manager) and Jennifer Lawley (Committee Officer), Allotment Representatives: George Raines, Mike Phillips, Mike Tansley, Tony French and Kevin Pearce.

407.	<p>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cyril King and Holly Young and an allotment representative, Clive Wall.</p>
408.	<p>To receive and record Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No declarations of interest were received.</p>
409.	<p>To consider and approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th February 2015</p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be accepted and signed as a true record by the Chairman.</p>
410.	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>The Chairman reiterated that two meetings had already taken place with North Somerset Council on the 14th and 21st January 2015 regarding an alternative entrance to Hutton Moor Allotments, and North Somerset Council had been extremely helpful. Although what had transpired was not the original plan proposed by the Town Council, North Somerset Council had in a short time supplied a sketch of their proposal for an alternative entrance, a copy of which had been tabled. The Chairman could not thank North Somerset Council enough for their prompt response following the concerns he had expressed that the work should be progressed quickly due to the fast approaching growing season. The new route and access were presented in detail to committee members by the Chairman and debate ensued.</p> <p>The Grounds Manager advised that the Town Council's technical expert had raised queries on the specifications with regard to the gates and their angle of turn for vehicles accessing the allotments. The Grounds Manager informed that there were a few details to be 'ironed out' before putting tenders out to contractors.</p> <p>In response to the question of badgers laying claim to the new area and the embankments surrounding the gates, the Allotment Club Chairman proposed that the banks adjacent to</p>

	<p>the gates be covered by mesh, advising that the law allows the prevention but once setts were established they could not be moved.</p> <p>The question of cost was raised with the hope that quotes were going to be significantly less than previously anticipated. The tendering process would be properly progressed but the Grounds Manager emphasised that clarification and getting the specification right was paramount before proceeding. The Chairman informed that he had underlined the urgency of the work to the Town Clerk in view of the growing season. The Grounds Manager reiterated that procedures had to be followed but that within that framework the work would be taken forward as quickly as possible.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Allotment Club informed members of the committee that the Allotment Club would donate £5000 towards the cost of the work. The committee were very appreciative and formally thanked the Allotment Club.</p> <p>Everyone had worked very well together and the Chairman hoped that the Town Council and North Somerset Council could work together again in such a positive manner in the future.</p>
<p>411.</p>	<p>Allotments</p> <p>411.1. Bonfires</p> <p>The Town Council had received a telephone call from a resident living near Redpits Allotments about a bonfire burning on the allotments.</p> <p>In terms of rules and regulations, plot holders are allowed to have bonfires providing they stay with the fire. It can be an emotive subject for residents living around allotment sites and in particular if an amount of green material was being burnt this creates a dense smoke. The Grounds Manager acknowledged that this could be annoying to local residents and advised that it would be helpful if plot holders could be mindful about the time of day and circumstances, such as wind direction. The Chairman of the Allotment Club advised that bonfires were not allowed between the 30th April and 30th September, and that due consideration was given to residents. However, there would always be one or two plot holders who would inadvertently gather debris for the bonfire which causes excessive smoke.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Allotment site representatives reiterate to plot holders the conditions under which bonfires are permitted with the recognition that due consideration be given to local residents.</p> <p>411.2. Bee Keeping</p> <p>A request for bee keeping on an allotment site had been received.</p> <p>The site representative of Hutton Moor allotments thought this a challenging topic and, therefore, requested the subject be included as an agenda item to seek the committee's views. Considerations such as the flight path of the honey bee and possible allergic reaction if a person was stung needed to be taken into account when siting a hive.</p>

Members were informed that the flight of a bee was at an altitude of at least 8 feet and as a precaution a fence could be erected to force the bees up. The Chairman of the Allotment Club had kept bees for 8 years on his allotment having been granted permission by the political group in administration at that time. He managed three hives and to-date no one had even noticed. In his opinion, he could not see anything wrong in keeping bees on an allotment but was aware that three or four years previously the Town Council had refused a request to site a hive at Rectors Way due its close proximity to a school.

Debate ensued. Some sites may be more suitable than others in siting a hive. To identify the suitability of a location it was suggested that guidance should be sought from the BBKA (British Beekeepers Association) and the decision made by the site representative with the approval and input of the Chairman of the Allotment Club. The nature reserve at Old Mill Way already had permission to site a bee hive.

RESOLVED: Applications for siting a bee hive on allotment sites be referred to the Allotment Club.

411.3. Plot Rent Increase

This agenda item had been brought forward from the last meeting of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee.

The Chairman of the Allotment Club did not understand why the Policy & Finance Committee make decisions on whether or not to raise plot rents. The Town Council did not benefit from any rise and the Allotment Club did not want to raise rents. Four years ago the rents were 80p and they went up to £1.00. The Grounds Manager advised that the Policy and Finance Committee were the main policy making Committee of the Town Council and considered the broad social and economic needs of the Parish.

The Grounds Manager had sought clarification from the Responsible Financial Officer and had been informed that the charges for 2015/16 had been set by the Policy & Finance Committee on the 24th February 2014 and plot rents for 2016/17 were considered at the Policy & Finance Committee on the 23rd February 2015.

RESOLVED:

1. The Chairman of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee raises the subject of allotment plot rent increases with the Leader of the Town Council and questions the reasoning for the Policy & Finance Committee setting the rent increase when the Town Council do not collect the rent or manage the allotments.
2. That the plot rent increase for 2015/16 is increased by 5p to £1.05 per metre which is an inflation rise.

To receive the report of the Grounds Manager

411.4. Hutton Moor

Hutton Moor allotments and the alternative access route had been extensively debated under agenda item 4, Chairman's report.

It be noted that:

1. The Allotment Club have donated £5000.
2. Three to four quotes would be sought in line with the Councils procurement rules.
3. A licence from North Somerset Council was being sought for the use of the access at Hutton Moor Leisure Centre.

At the last meeting concerns had been raised about the identified asbestos found when a shed had been removed. The Responsible Financial Officer had contacted contractors to arrange an inspection and advise on how the material should be handled. The Chairman of the Allotment Club informed members that the asbestos had since been removed professionally.

411.5. Redpits

The Grounds Manager reiterated that the Allotment Management Sub-Committee resolved on the 4th February 2015 that they would proceed with the clearing of the boundaries/steep banks at Redpits and commission Somerset Wood Recycling, splitting the cost between the Town Council and the Allotment Club.

In confirmation with the Chairman of the Allotment Club, the Grounds Manager updated members and informed that on the basis of 2 days' work – 1 on each side of the allotments i.e. 1 day @ £290 plus VAT and 1 day @ 160 plus VAT the work could proceed. The Grounds Manager had emailed Somerset Wood Recycling to arrange for the work and a response was awaited. Once the work had been undertaken the ongoing maintenance of boundaries was to be assumed by the Allotment Club.

411.6. Old Mill Way

The Chairman had noted at the last meeting that the work to complete the track at Old Mill Way had been outstanding for many months.

The Amenities Officer had advised that the contractor would not be able to undertake the work at Old Mill Way Allotments until early March. The work had now been outstanding since the purchase orders were written on the 12th and 13th August 2014 and the Grounds Manager reiterated that this does seem to have been an extraordinarily long timescale to wait for the completion of this work.

As resolved on the 4th February 2014, the Grounds Manager contacted the contractor in order to seek confirmation that the contractor was able to complete the work and that the work would be undertaken at the earliest opportunity with a committed date. The contractor was also advised that the Chairman of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee was keen to explore other options to carry out the work if the contractor could not complete the work soon. The contractor was now on site and the Grounds Manager had been advised that the work would be completed by the end of next week. The Chairman of the Allotment Club updated members on the progress of the track and confirmed that the contractor was doing a 'great job'.

At the last meeting of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee, the site representative (Old Mill Way) had requested that mature trees be planted to afford some protection from

children throwing stones from the bridge and damaging green houses. It had been requested that funding from the trust for Old Mill Way be used. As a result the Grounds Manager had sought the Town Clerk's advice about the ability to use Section 106 funds held for this site for the purpose of tree planting

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk approves the use of Section 106 funds (Old Mill Way) for the planting of mature trees.

411.7. Bournville

Bournville Lottery Bid, Growing together on three sites: Concerns had been raised at the meeting on the 26th June 2014 regarding a 1 to 8 ratio of instructor to students. The Allotment Club had recommended that a ratio of 1 to 5 was appropriate and manageable, citing Health and Safety has one of the reasons for their recommendation. In terms of ratio, Alliance Homes were not clear what the concerns were as the ratio established came from guidelines used by their organisation which was detailed in an email to the Grounds Manager. The Chairman of the Allotment Club's view was that stalemate had been reached. However, the Grounds Manager advised that the Allotment Club did have the ability to monitor the situation and if problems were experienced, the Town Clerk could be advised.

To receive the reports of the Allotment Site Representatives

411.8. Rectors Way (Clarks Field) – Clive Wall *(not in attendance)*

- Two plots to let.
- Require stone.
- Rhyne fine but will need clearing out next year. The Allotment Club will go halves with the Town Council.

411.9. Redpits – Mike Tansley

- One plot to let.
- Require stone.

411.10. Kewstoke – Mike Phillips

- Gates had dropped and could not be closed but being addressed.

411.11. Hutton Moor – Tony French

- The fence needs looking at.
- Require stone for the new entrance.
- Responsible Financial Officer to advise Town Surveyor that as it had been a year, it was estimated that 3 skip journeys across the bridge would be required rather than one.
- George Raines was no longer site representative but remained Chairman of the Allotment Club.

Councillor Clive Webb left the meeting at 8.05 pm

411.12. Bournville – Cheryl Puttman *(not in attendance)*

- Two plots to let otherwise fine.

	<p>411.13. Old Mill Way – Jayne Loveridge <i>(not in attendance)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track underway. 												
<p>412.</p>	<p>To receive and consider details of the current Allotment Waiting List</p> <p>The Chairman of the Allotment Club advised that the allotment waiting list changed daily and that the document tabled was as of 24th March 2015.</p> <p>Total requests at 24th March 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individual residents requesting allotment plots: 39 • Total plot requests: 63 <table data-bbox="342 674 781 884"> <tr> <td>Hutton Moor</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rectors Way <i>(Clarkes)</i></td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Redpits</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kewstoke</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bournville</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Old Mill Way <i>(Locking Castle)</i></td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table> <p>RESOLVED: The number of individual residents requesting allotment plots be noted.</p>	Hutton Moor	8	Rectors Way <i>(Clarkes)</i>	15	Redpits	6	Kewstoke	13	Bournville	12	Old Mill Way <i>(Locking Castle)</i>	8
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	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm</p>												

Signed..... Dated.....
 Chairman