

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2015**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Roger Bailey (Vice-Chairman), Clive Webb, Len Purnell, Richard Tucker and Robert Payne, together with non-voting co-opted members: George Raines (Chairman of the Allotment Club) and allotment site representatives: Kevin Pearce (Hutton Moor), Mike Phillips (Kewstoke), Clive Wall (Rectors Way) and Mike Tansley (Redpits)

IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Thurston (Grounds Manager), Theresa Donald (Amenities Officer) and Jennifer Lawley (Committee Officer)

Councillor Roger Bailey (Vice-Chairman) took the chair and opened the meeting in the absence of Councillor Clive Darke who had resigned as Chairman of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee. The election of a new Chairman would be referred to the next meeting of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee.

212.	<p>Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Tony French and Jane Loveridge.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the apologies be received and noted.</p>
213.	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that agenda item 4 ‘Allotment rent increases for 2017/18’ was a consultation and voting would not be required.</p>
214.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 11th August 2015 had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>The Allotment Club Chairman requested updates on various resolutions from the last meeting. The Vice-Chairman approved the request as no objections were raised.</p> <p>Asbestos training: The Grounds Manager advised that officers were currently undertaking online training. Asbestos training for site representatives would be arranged as soon as possible and would be delivered in a classroom environment.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That asbestos training be an agenda item at the next meeting.</p> <p>Contribution of £5000: £5000 had been offered by the Allotment Club towards the</p>

	<p>cost for the removal of asbestos from the potholes in the track at Hutton Moor allotments. The Town Clerk was in contact with the asbestos removal company, and as soon as confirmation was received on the costs involved, the Allotment Club would be notified.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the costs for the removal of the asbestos at Hutton Moor allotments be an agenda item at the next meeting.</p> <p>Redpits: The Grounds Manager confirmed that a letter had been circulated to local residents in Wayside and Spring Hill to advise on fly tipping and/or litter thrown over the boundary fence being an illegal act. To-date there had been no response from residents.</p> <p>Environmental Health Monitoring: In response to questions about outcomes, the Amenities Officer advised that she would circulate an update on the analysis recently undertaken in the vicinity of TOWENS and Hutton Moor allotments.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Environmental Health Monitoring analysis be an agenda item at the next meeting.</p> <p>Purchase of trees: Permission had been granted for the use of Persimmon Section 106 funding for the purchase of mature trees for planting at Old Mill Way allotments. The Amenities Officer would issue a purchase order once costs had been identified by the Allotment Club.</p> <p>Lorry container: It was confirmed that s106 funding for a container at Old Mill Way for storage provision was going ahead.</p>
<p>215.</p>	<p>Allotment rent increase 2017/18</p> <p>The Vice-Chairman advised that this was an opportunity for members to voice their opinions regarding a possible allotment rent increase in 2017/18.</p> <p>The Town Council were proposing a 5% increase. The Chairman of the Allotment Club challenged the Town Council's involvement in proposing a rent increase as it was the Allotment Club who collected the rents and managed the allotments.</p> <p>The Grounds Manager advised that the Policy & Finance Committee set the rent allowances for the allotments on the basis that rents remained at a commercial level. This was a consultative process, and recommendations would be presented at a future Policy & Finance Committee meeting.</p> <p>The Allotment Club Chairman reminded members of an agreement between the Town Council and the Allotment Club. It was the Allotment Club's responsibility to raise rents and there had been a rent increase of 16% 2 years ago. Although it had been agreed at that time that there would be no further increases for 5 years, the rent was in fact increased by 5p last year. The Grounds Manager suggested that in order to move forward, a recommendation for a rent increase be proposed to a level that members deemed acceptable and that the original agreement be brought to the attention of the Town Clerk. The Allotment Club Chairman advised that until a meeting with the Town Clerk had been</p>

	<p>concluded, recommendations should not be forthcoming. He clarified the Allotment Club's stance that they do not want to raise rents. The Grounds Manager referring to other allotment providers advised that if the rents were left to drift it might be an issue at some point in the future. It was about keeping a balance. In response, however, members were reminded of the devolved management agreement between the Town Council and the Allotment Club which therefore accredited no comparison to other local authorities. Discussions on the current terms of the devolved management agreement between the Allotment Club and the Town Council were presently ongoing.</p> <p>In conclusion the Vice-Chairman of the Allotment Management Sub Committee advised on the importance of justifying decisions made and the committee being seen to do the right thing.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the subject of allotment rent increases be included in discussions on the current terms of the devolved management agreement between the Allotment Club and the Town Council.</p>
<p>216.</p>	<p>Hutton Moor allotments and access track</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>In summary, members of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee were reminded of the options offered to resolve the issues which had resulted from badgers seriously undermining the access track to Hutton Moor allotment site in 2014. The lack of progress had been an extremely frustrating experience. Town Council members and officers had spent a considerable amount of time and resource trying to achieve a long term solution.</p> <p>The Town Clerk's report reviewed the background and a number of possible solutions identified, the professional advice taken with the option of access across Hutton Moor recreation grounds and the legal risks and difficulties recently presented. His report concluded with the current position and 3 options available to the Town Council. In brief these were:</p> <p>Option 1: To continue to pursue the access across Hutton Moor playing fields. Option 2: To seek quotations and a licence to lay a reinforced track. Option 3: To apply to Natural England for a licence for the badgers to be completely removed.</p> <p>The Community Services Committee had met on the 9th November and having been presented with the same report resolved the following:</p> <p>Option 2: That quotations and a licence be sought to excavate and lay a reinforced track the whole length of the access, designed to be badger resistant but accepting some risk of badger undermining incurring further costs in the future. Option 3: To make enquiries to Natural England about a licence for the badgers to be completely removed and relocated 20km away from the site.</p> <p>The Allotment Management Sub-Committee questioned North Somerset Council's commitment to the option of a new access track from Hutton Moor Leisure Centre to</p>

	<p>Hutton Moor Allotments.</p> <p>Debate ensued on the 3 options available, licences and timescales.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To seek quotations and a licence to lay a reinforced track (excavate the surface of the track and lay a reinforced track the whole length of the access) designed to be badger resistant but accepting some risk of badger undermining incurring further costs in future.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Allotment Club enquired as to the possibility of clearing the vegetation around the surrounding area to help deter further habitation by a badger sett.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Adrian Coward (Natural England) be consulted on the legitimacy of clearing vegetation to deter further habitation by a badger sett.</p> <p>In response to the matter of timescales for the commencement of the work to least affect allotment holders, members considered the seasons and the granting of a licence.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That work to the track commences in September 2016 and also concludes in that month.</p> <p>In the meantime, it was noted that the access track remained open to light vehicles which prompted the issue of weight bearing capacity and tonnage. The Grounds Manager advised that he would be meeting with the Town Council's Surveyor on the 1st December and would at that time seek clarification regarding the access track's weight bearing capacity.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That clarification on the weight bearing capacity of the access track be confirmed.</p>
<p>217.</p>	<p>Devolved management of allotments</p> <p>Members were informed that discussions on devolved management of allotments were currently ongoing between the Allotment Club and the Town Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED: It was noted that a report on the devolved management of allotments is to be brought back to a future meeting of the Allotment Management Sub-Committee.</p>
<p>218.</p>	<p>To receive verbal reports from allotment site representatives:</p> <p>Rectors Way – Clive Wall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 on the waiting list. • No plots empty. • Track needing attention. • No big issues. • Won an RHS award – 'It's Your Neighbourhood Award'.

Redpits – Mike Tansley

- Boundary fencing panels had been removed.
- No further flying tipping to-date.
- No plots to let.
- No further complaints to-date.

Kewstoke – Mike Phillips

- All plots let.
- Gate repaired.
- Massive trees overhanging allotments from the playing fields.

RESOLVED: That the Grounds Manager consults with North Somerset Council on the issue of the overhanging trees.

Hutton Moor – George Raines

George Raines in the absence of Tony French presented comments submitted by him relating to the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting. Debate had already ensued and was reflective of the topics highlighted by Tony French.

Debate ensued on the repair of the tracks around Hutton Moor allotments in relation to weight load capacity of the access track with the delivery of stone/gravel and the possible use of a Town Council vehicle. The Chairman of the Allotment Club advised that the Allotment Club would pay for the stone/gravel. However, the Amenities Officer informed that she would clarify responsibility for payment.

RESOLVED: That the option to transport stone/gravel to Hutton Moor Allotments with the help of a Town Council vehicle be explored.

- All plots let.
- One plot coming up.
- All rubbish taken away.
- Moved a lot of green waste although it can be burnt or composited.

Bournville – George Raine (in the absence of Cheryl Puttnam)

- 3 plots had been let and site was now full.
- Problems with fencing owned by British Rail. British Rail erected new fencing which they considered adequate.

Old Mill Way – George Raine (in the absence of Jane Loveridge)

- 2 plots to let.
- At one edge of the allotments trees were impinging on high tension wires.
- A quote had been given to the Amenities Officer for the urgent purchase of a storage container. There had been a break in a month ago and equipment taken

	<p>which was used for the nature reserve. Access had been gained through the car park fencing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two water troughs were required. <p>RESOLVED: That two water troughs be purchased through s106 funding for Old Mill Way allotments.</p> <p>For information, the Grounds Manager advised that he had been contacted by Hi-Line the Town Council's tree surgeons regarding Weston Power pylons and the cutting back of trees. The Chairman of the Allotment Club advised that trees were an issue not only at Old Mill Way but at Hutton Moor allotments too.</p>																					
<p>219.</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 23rd November 2015.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="451 808 1279 1138"> <thead> <tr> <th>No of individual residents requesting allotment plots</th> <th>42</th> <th>Second Plot Requests</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>HUTTON</td> <td>15</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CLARKES</td> <td>18</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>REDPITS</td> <td>12</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KEW/S</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BOURN</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LOCKING/C</td> <td>10</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>RESOLVED: The number of individual residents requesting allotment plots be noted.</p>	No of individual residents requesting allotment plots	42	Second Plot Requests	HUTTON	15	1	CLARKES	18	0	REDPITS	12	1	KEW/S	6	0	BOURN	5	2	LOCKING/C	10	2
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	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm.</p>																					

Signed.....
Chairman

Dated.....