



ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

A

Notes of Allotments Sub-Committee **Surgery**

Time and date

7.00pm on Tuesday, 26th April 2016

Place

Town Council Office, 66C High Street, Andover

Attendees:

Town Council Representatives

Cllr K Hughes – Chairman (P)	Cllr A Cotter – Vice Chair (P)	Cllr V Pond (A)
Cllr J Msonthi – (P)	Cllr C Bartholomew (P)	Cllr R Rowles (A)
Cllr G McBride (A)	Cllr B Long (P)	

Other Town Councillors Present:

Luigi Gregori

Michael James – arrived 1915

Borough Councillors

Z Brooks

Wendy Coulter – Town Clerk

Lisa Laing – Allotments Officer (Taking the minutes)

Allotment Wardens:

Mr G Black – Vigo Road	Mr M Cantillon – Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association	Mr T Bevis – Churchill Way (1923 arrived)

Allotment Holders

Mr Mic Laird – The Drove		
--------------------------	--	--

Members of the Public

Martin Benton	MB Pest Services	
---------------	------------------	--

Allotment Holders Surgery

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 and welcomed committee members, wardens and allotment holder.

Councillor Long – Allotment Committee

Cllr Long stated that the previous minutes from 21st January 2016 ASC meeting had recorded that Vigo Road Allotments had, had its own garden club. This was not the case and Vigo has never had its own garden club. Cllr Long requested this be documented for future reference.

Allotment Warden – Vigo Road

Informed the committee that a tenant was planning on giving up his allotment, however he would inform the tenant that he needs to put his decision in writing and send it to the Town Council Office.

The Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association

The Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association requested an amendment be made on page 5 of previous surgery notes, needed to be noted that the word vacate should say vacant. The Town Clerk acknowledged this error and thanked the Warden for highlighting it.

The Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association

The Secretary was concerned that there are still empty plots and that advertising should have been done 3 months ago. This would have meant that plots were being worked now. The Allotments Officer confirmed that a number of requests had come in recently and were currently being approached and forwarded to the appropriate wardens. The Town Clerk informed The Drove Secretary that as well as the list the Allotments Officer had to action there had been a constant flow of people signing up for allotments already.

The Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association

The Secretary enquired whether the Town Council Webpage was being used to advertise vacant plots. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would happen after the Allotment Officer had finished processing the requests already received. Once this task had been completed there may in fact be a waiting list.

The Chair – Allotment Committee

The Chair asked the wardens present if there was an ideal time that advertising should be taking place. It was suggested that November to January would be the most suitable time for any advertisement to take place.

Councillor Msonthi – Allotment Committee

Cllr Msonthi asked if there should be a push for allotments to be advertised on the webpage.

The Chair – Allotment Committee

Chair asked if this what the current situation was with the webpage and if it wasn't being used could this be looked at? The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be looked at and requested that the Allotment Officer needed to ensure that all future plots that become available after the annual invoices had been sent be advertised on the website from November onwards.

Allotment Warden – Vigo Road

Warden brought to the attention that a lorry had been seen on the Vigo site. The same lorry was seen at The Drove. Allotment Officer confirmed that written permission had been given to a potential new maintenance team and hopefully it was them going to view the sites for the preparing of quotes.

Councillor Msonthi - Allotment Committee

Cllr Msonthi referred to the report given at the last meeting by The Drove Warden regarding the Allotment Week on the 8-14 August 16. Cllr Msonthi requested an update from the Allotment Officer on whether any schools, families etc. had been approached. Allotment Officer confirmed that due to other more urgent matters this had not yet happened.

The Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association

The Secretary felt the idea needed to be aimed at the public and families to encourage them to take on an allotment.

Councillor Long - Allotment Committee

Cllr Long suggested wardens from other sites be invited to put on allotment open days. Allotment Officer requested to discuss with wardens for help getting the event organised and to include it in the next newsletter. Allotment Officer to provide an update to the committee on the 30th June 2016 on whether wardens would be prepared to get involved in helping to promote the event.

The Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association

The Secretary showed the group the newsletter from promoting the National Allotments week. The event takes place from 8th – 14th August 16. The Secretary enquired whether the Town Council received the email as it is an affiliated member. The Town Clerk confirmed that Town Council receives a magazine but not the email version. The Drove Secretary would provide leaflets to the Allotments Officer and Cllr Bartholomew said the Transition Group would be happy to advertisement.

The Chairman

Asked if anyone had any other suggestions, questions or concerns. As there were no further points the surgery was closed at 1918.

Andover Town Council



Minutes of Allotments Sub-Committee

Time and date

7.30pm on Tuesday, 26th April 2016

Place

Town Council Offices, 66C High Street, Andover

Attendees:

Cllr K Hughes – Chairman (P)	Cllr A Cotter – Vice Chair (P)	Cllr V Pond (A)
Cllr J Msonthi – (P)	Cllr C Bartholomew (P)	Cllr R Rowles (A)
Cllr G McBride (A)	Cllr B Long (P)	

Officers Present:

Wendy Coulter (Town Clerk) (P)

Lisa Laing (Allotment Officer) (P) (taking minutes)

ASC 32/15	Apologies	Action
	Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr G McBride, Cllr R Rowles and Cllr V Pond	
ASC 33/15	Declarations of interest	Action
	No interests were declared.	
ASC 34/15	Minutes	Action
	The Minutes of the Allotments Sub-Committee meeting held on the 21 January 2016 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record as proposed by Cllr Cotter and seconded by Cllr Bartholomew.	
ASC 35/15	Update from Bee Hive on The Drove	Action
	Mr Laird, registered Bee Keeper and Allotment holder was invited by Allotment Committee to brief the committee and members of the public on the proposal of having a bee hive on The Drove Allotment. Mr Laird informed the committee that he has been keeping bees for * years and is a member of * As part of the protection of bees Mr Laird would like to have an 1 swarm hive and 1 bait hive. Mr Laird was asked what type of bees and he informed the group he keeps Honey bees. Although, people have concerns with being sting and that having a Hive would increase the risk. Mr Laird explained that	Allotment Officer – to approach Basingstoke Council regarding their R&R's on keeping bees Allotment Officer – to arrange for work group to work with Mr Laird on the wording of ATC's requirements for having bees.

	<p>provided the bees are not interfered with the bees will not bother allotment holders. Mr Laird currently has a bee hive in his garden his family sit near to where the hive is and when the bees leave to feed they follow the bee wall, which ensures the bees fly upwards to disbursed. Mr Laird was asked if he would be using local bees** Mr Laird informed the committee that as part of being registered he is required to have their own insurance and to ensures his membership to the British Bee Keeper Association and therefore the Town Council is not held responsible for the upkeep bees or insurance. Due to the concerns of a few allotment holders Mr Laird was asked if he felt local residents should be informed of the plans to have bees. Mr Laird said that due to the fly net the bees wouldn't even be noticeable to the local residents and by highlighting to them that there was a bee hive on site could actually put the safety of the bees and the security of the allotment site at risk and therefore requested that no information was to be sent out. If any allotment holder had any concerns he would be more than happy for the Allotment Officer to signpost them his direction and he would answer any questions they may have. It was agreed by the committee that a working group be form and the group would regard Mr Laird's experience and knowledge in order to safe guard bees only registered bee keepers could applied to have a hive and in the interest of the bees with regards to the amount of food that would be available the ruling should state on 1 hive and 1 bait hive per allotment site. As Basingstoke Council already have bees on their allotments The Allotment Officer was asked to approach Basingstoke Council to see how they had worded their rules and regulations regarding having bees on allotments. Allotments Officer to arrange as a matter of urgency for the working group to form as ideally the bees should be in the hive already to prevent them from dying. Mr Laird was asked if the honey could be sold locally. Mr Laird informed the committee that he ran a natural hive and therefore didn't take the honey and this way it was left for the bees to feed on and help to make them non-aggressive. The Chair thanked Mr Laird on behalf of himself and the committee.</p>	
ASC 36/15	Pest Control - Update	Action
	<p>Following on from being appointed to resolve the rat issues being experienced across all sites Mr Martin Benton of MB Pest Services was invited by the Allotments Officer to give an update to the committee on the current situation. Mr Benton, thanked the committee for their time and then explained that as suspected the pest infestation was very severe and he was required to visit Vigo Road Allotment on a daily basis. Mr Benton is confident that he has now got all the sites including Vigo Road under control. Mr Benton explained that although he had the problem under control at Vigo Road, there would always be a bigger issue with rats than on other sites due the 4 lots of chickens currently on the site. Mr Benton explained to</p>	<p>Guidance on keeping Chickens to be produced by Allotment Officer and Pest Controller Rules on keeping Chickens to be reviewed by the working group and the rules and regulations updated accordingly</p>

	<p>the committee that due to the fact the allotment site is surrounded by residential properties he had a couple of calls from members of the public, whose houses backed on to the allotments. Mr Benton confirmed he had helped them sort the rat issue, however he had not charged them or the Council. Mr Benton then explained that although he has the situation as manageable, the fact there are still chickens there will always be rats. Mr Benton was asked, based on this, how often does he visit the site? Mr Benton confirmed that it was a fortnightly basis and that he offered an adhoc visit to prevent the rats being given time to breed. Mr Benton was asked how long the gestation period for rats is. The committee were informed that rats can reproduce within 2 weeks, hence why fortnightly visits are required. Mr Benton said that although the allotments have been improved, the allotment holders needed to ensure all rubbish was removed and that those allotment holders with the chickens cleared a space around their chicken pen, as rats do not like to be exposed in empty areas. Mr Benton was asked if he would be prepared to give a presentation to allotment holders. Mr Benton was happy to do this. It was also suggested that he worked with the Allotment Officer to prepare a document offering guidance on the best way to keep chickens on allotment sites to minimise having rats. It was agreed that the keeping of chickens needs to be reviewed by the working group and rules and regulations updated accordingly.</p>	
ASC36/15	Quotations for maintenance work	Action
	<p>Having shown 3 Contractors around the sites and explained our requirements, they were asked to provide a quote using documentation designed by the Allotments Officer to ensure all quotes provided a like for like comparison. All Contractors were given the same briefing on the work to be carried out and what work will be required in the future to ensure all allotments universal & tidy across all sites. Currently, black polythene sheeting is being used. It looks unsightly and offers nesting options for rats. Tyres are also used to hold the sheeting down. This will be looked into as they are both unfriendly for the environment and unsightly.</p>	<p>Due to quotes not being received back from all contractors no decision was made. Allotment officer requested additional time to be given to allow all quotes to be received.</p> <p>It was agreed that delegation be given to the Town Clerk, Allotment Officer and Chairman and Vice Chairman to approve the maintenance contract for 2016/2017.</p>
ASC37/15	Damage to the Track at OWR	Action
	<p>The Committee were shown pictures of the main track way into OWR allotment. The situation was explained to them and they were given 2 of the 3 quotes to consider. The reason they were only 2 quotes was due to the 3rd provider retracting their quote. The committee agreed that the quotes received were both too expensive and that other options and companies needed to be considered. A working group was requested and Cllr Bartholomew, Cllr Msonthi, Chair of Allotments and Allotments Officer agreed to complete a site visit to discuss other options.</p>	<p>Allotments Officer to arrange a convenient time for the Working Group to meet.</p>

ASC38/15	Review of Rules & Regulations	Action
	<p>The Allotment Officer requested that a small working group be set up to include both councillors and The Drove Allotment Association to review the Rules & Regulations with particular focus on the sizes:-</p> <p>A) poly tunnels and sheds. B) Ponds – health & safety + use of water C) Alterations to allotments e.g. fruit frames, raised beds etc. D) Universal standards - currently we spend on average £400-£700 clearing plots</p>	Allotment Officer to arrange a convenient time for working group to meet.
ASC 39/15	Storage Facilities + Site Clearance at The Drove	Action
	<p>The Town Clerk & Allotment Officer visited Mr Cantillion, Secretary of The Drove Allotment Association following the transfer of land from Aster Communities. During the visit Mr Cantillion showed the officers the new plots and an area for the possible sighting for a storage unit.</p> <p>The current storage facility being used is a shed belonging to a community group and they would like it back as a matter of urgency so they can use it as a class room.</p> <p>During the visit it was observed that there would be a considerable amount of rubbish to be removed as a result of clearing the new land/storage shed.</p> <p>The Town Clerk and Allotments Officer requested permission from the Committee to approach a suitable contractor to carry out this work to see if having them remove all the rubbish would be more cost effective than hiring a skip.</p> <p>As part of the clearance any other rubbish would be cleared from the vacant plots and once plots are cleared they could be covered to prevent further regrowth.</p> <p>Once the site has been cleared and the new plots marked, the storage container can be installed. The money to purchase the storage container was agreed and set aside in 2013 for approx. £3,000. Due to the time of original quotes TC/AO requested permission to get updated quotes.</p>	<p>Town Clerk & Allotments Officer to investigate options for Storage Unit.</p> <p>TC + AO to approach contractors on costings to remove any rubbish created by clearing the plot.</p> <p>TC/AO given permission to get updated quotes.</p>
ASC 40/15	Tree Survey	Action
	Contact has been made with Mr Andrew Murphy requesting details and costings of having HRG Trees Survey Ltd	Awaiting response from Mr Murphy
ASC 41/15	Bore Holes	Action
	Due to the absence of Cllr Rowles this item was deferred to the next meeting of the Allotment Committee.	
ASC 41/15	Solar Panels	Action
	Due to the absence of Cllr Rowles this item was deferred to the next meeting of the Allotment Committee.	

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Chairman

Date