Andover Town Council

# Allotments Committee
## Minutes

**Time and date** 6.30pm on Wednesday 28 October 2026

**Place** The Lights, Andover

| **Councillors Present:** | | | Arrival time noted if after meeting start | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cllr K Hughes (Chairman) | **P** | | Cllr E Reynolds (Vice Chairman) | **P** | | Cllr T Burley | **P** | |
| Cllr J Cockaday | **P** | | Cllr R Kidd | **P** | | Cllr L Gregori | **P** | |
| Cllr J Hughes | **P** | | Cllr R Hughes | **P** | | Cllr T James | **A** | |

| **Site Wardens Present:** | | | Arrival time noted if after meeting start | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Admirals Way | **P** | | Old Winton Road | **P** | | The Drove | **P** | |
| Barlows Lane | | | Ox Drove | | | Vigo Road | **P** | |
| Churchill Way | **P** | | Picket Twenty | | | | | |
| Mylen Road | | | Saxon Heights | | | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Officers Present:** | Tor Warburton (RFO and Town Clerk)<br>Leah Walsh (Committee and GDPR Officer |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Members of the Public:** | 5 |
| **Members of the Press:** | 0 |

**ALLOTMENT HOLDER SURGERY**

**AC 062/10/26** **Admirals Way warden:**

The warden raised the question on whether wardens could be given tenants details. It was confirmed that this had already been resolved in a meeting in February of this year

***(AC 085/02/26**- It was proposed by Councillor K Hughes and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that it be approved for authority to be granted for Allotment Site Wardens to be provided with access to a complete list of tenant details relevant to their site, including names, plot numbers, and email addresses*.)

**AC 063/10/26** **Vigo Road warden:**

The Warden discussed matters relating to a vacated plot and a plot that was unusable, which had been the subject of previous discussions. Councillor E Reynolds confirmed that a meeting would be arranged with the Allotment Officer to discuss the issues and agree on the necessary actions.

DRAFT

The possibility of using a digger to excavate a trench and install an additional drainage line was also discussed. It was suggested that the existing pipework may need to be split and a new connection installed to improve drainage in the affected area. Members agreed that a meeting would be arranged with Jo and the relevant parties to discuss potential solutions and remedial works.

The Warden also requested that he be sent a site map.

It was noted that a contractor had attended the site to carry out grass-cutting works.

**AC 064/10/26** **Allotment Holder – Barlow's Lane:**

The tenant raised concerns about the 10% increase in allotment rents, questioning whether it was justified given the level of maintenance undertaken at the site. The tenant also queried the cost of replacing the gates, suggesting that repairs to the previous gates may have been sufficient, and asked how allotment rental income was allocated.

Members explained that allotments were heavily subsidised by the Council, as rental income did not cover the full operating and maintenance costs, including staff time and administrative expenses. It was confirmed that rental income was pooled centrally and allocated according to the needs of individual sites. Members explained that the 10% increase was considered the lowest increase the Committee could justify, balancing allotment costs against the financial burden on local taxpayers. It was also noted that rents had remained unchanged for many years and that phased increases had been introduced to address the shortfall between rental income and operating costs.

The tenant asked whether annual rents could be paid in instalments to help alleviate financial pressures on plot holders. Members acknowledged that this could create additional administrative costs. It was agreed that the feasibility of introducing instalment payments would be investigated and reported to the next meeting.

The tenant also raised concerns about grass-cutting arrangements at Barlow's Lane, suggesting that plot holders could undertake some of the work to reduce maintenance costs. Councillors explained that the Council remained responsible for maintaining its facilities and that expenditure extended beyond grass cutting to include fencing and other infrastructure. Members welcomed suggestions for potential cost savings, which could be explored further.

A query was also raised regarding the sharing of tenants' contact details with allotment wardens. Members confirmed that consent and data protection requirements would be checked before any information was shared.

**AC 065/10/26** **Allotment Holder – Barlow's Lane:**

A tenant expressed frustration at the perceived lack of communication between the Council and allotment holders at Barlow's Lane, despite regularly checking the Council's website, agendas and minutes for updates. Concerns were also raised about the level of site maintenance, including grass cutting and pest control, with the tenant explaining that plot holders were already undertaking some maintenance themselves.

DRAFT

Drawing on experience at another allotment site, the tenant suggested that the Council could provide shared mowing equipment for plot holders to maintain communal areas, with the Council arranging annual servicing. Members discussed the potential for this approach to reduce costs and encourage greater community involvement.

The tenant also raised concerns about the effectiveness of the current warden arrangements and difficulties obtaining responses to queries. Members proposed reinstating warden meetings, with a representative from Barlow's Lane invited to attend, to improve communication and address site-specific issues. The tenant also highlighted that the site noticeboard had not been updated for several months and suggested displaying meeting agendas and relevant information.

The Chair confirmed that wardens were not responsible for communicating all Council updates to allotment holders and brought the 30-minute surgery to a close. The tenant was invited to submit their concerns in writing for further consideration.

**PUBLIC SESSION (*The discussion below is a short summary and is not recorded word for word.)***

**AC 066/10/26** An allotment holder from The Drove Allotment site questioned the value of continued annual rent increases, suggesting that higher rents would place further financial pressure on plot holders without necessarily resulting in improvements to the allotment site.

**AC 067/10/26** An allotment holder from Old Winton road raised concerns about increasing water costs and the difficulty of allocating charges fairly between plot holders where individual water usage was not measured. They suggested that, when the Council acquires or develops future allotment sites, individual plot water meters or a prepaid water system should be considered to ensure tenants pay for the water they use.

Members acknowledged the suggestion but noted that installing individual meters or a controlled payment system could involve significant costs, potentially exceeding the savings achieved. It was agreed that the proposal could be considered as part of any future allotment site development, subject to a feasibility assessment and cost considerations.

The tenant also shared their experience of using more efficient watering methods to reduce water consumption.

**APOLOGIES**

**AC 068/10/26** Apologies were received from Councillor T James.

**INTERESTS**

**AC 069/10/26** Non-pecuniary declarations were received from:

1. Councillor E Reynolds, as a member of the Drove Association and as an allotment plot holder.

**MINUTES**

**AC 070/10/26** It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the Minutes of the Allotment Committee meeting held 16 September 2026, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**NOTICEBOARD MAINTENANCE**

**AC 071/10/26** Quote

DRAFT

Members considered the report and quotation received for maintenance of noticeboards across the allotment sites, including replacement of three magnetic whiteboards and repairs to locks.

A concern was raised that only one quotation had been obtained and that the proposed rate of £80 per hour was considered high. Members acknowledged the difficulty in sourcing contractors for this specialist work but agreed that further quotations should be sought to establish whether better value could be achieved.

It was proposed by Councillor K Hughes and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that officers seek additional quotations and advertise the work as widely as possible before bringing the matter back to a future meeting for consideration.

**ALLOTMENT WATER CHARGES: PROPOSED CHANGE TO BILLING METHOD**

**AC 072/10/26** Report

Members reviewed and discussed the report.

It was proposed by Councillor K Hughes and seconded by Councillor T Burley and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that Route 2 be accepted. A survey would be sent to all allotment tenants, with the results reported back to the Allotment Committee in 2027. Following consideration of the results, the final recommendations would be submitted to Full Council for approval of the proposed rule changes. The revised Tenancy Agreement would then be issued to tenants as part of the 2027 renewal process.

**AC 073/10/26** Members reiterated, as discussed at the previous meeting, that tenant education is key to promoting responsible water use. This includes providing advice on water conservation and practical measures to help reduce usage, particularly in preparation for future periods of drought (*AC 056/09/26*).

**ALLOTMENT OFFICER'S REPORT**

**AC 074/10/26** Members noted the Allotment Officer's report. The Allotment Officer was not present to answer questions.

Members discussed the number of vacant plots and surrenders, noting that there were currently 12 vacant plots and 13 people on the waiting list. It was acknowledged that this did not indicate a lack of demand overall, although the suitability and size of individual sites could affect how easily plots were reallocated.

Members discussed the longer-term efficiency of maintaining a number of smaller allotment sites and suggested that future discussions with Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) should consider opportunities to review site provision and potential land availability. It was also suggested that allotment provision outside existing urban areas could be considered as part of the Council's wider strategic planning.

**SERVICE OF GRASS-CUTTING EQUIPMENT**

**AC 075/10/26** **Report**

Members considered the report and three quotations for servicing the grass-cutting equipment used by the Site Warden at Old Winton Road Allotments. It was clarified that the equipment was a domestic petrol lawnmower.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor K Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that Option 3 be approved for the servicing of the grass-cutting equipment at a cost of £75, inclusive of parts and VAT.

**NEXT MEETING**

**AC 076/10/26** Members noted the date of the next meeting would be on **Thursday 19 November 2026** at **6.30pm**, at **The Lights**.

**MEETING CLOSURE**

**AC 077/10/26** The Chairman closed the meeting at **7.30pm**

DRAFT