



ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Allotments Committee

Time and date

6.31pm on Thursday 28 September 2023

Place

Upper Guildhall, Andover

Cllr K Hughes (Chairman) (P)
Cllr J Hughes (P) (Arrived at
6.34pm)

Cllr E Reynolds (Vice Chairman) (P)
Cllr R Hughes (P) (Arrived at 6.34pm)

Cllr L Gregori (P)
Cllr R Kidd (P)

Officers Present:

Gail Foster (Town Clerk)
Tor Warburton (Deputy Clerk)
Jo Whiteman (Allotment Officer)

Allotment Wardens present representing:

Admirals Way
Barlows Lane
Old Winton Road
Saxon Heights
Vigo Road

Members of the Public: 13

PUBLIC SESSION (*The notes below are a precis of statements/questions. They are not recorded word for word.*)

AC 192/09/23 Admirals Way Warden

Q. What is happening about the fence?

A. We will be looking at the strategies and priorities in this meeting. We also need to establish the owners of the fences and the condition of the fences. Once the Councillors

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Chairman/Vice Chairman:..... Date:.....

have reviewed that, we will be closer to deciding which fences will be replaced. It is ongoing and it can't be done as quickly as everyone wants.

Q. What is the outcome of clearing plot 5, the tree is spreading over the plot?

A. We have asked the contractor, Charlies Gardens, to come in Monday or Tuesday.

AC 193/09/23a Member of Public 1

Q. Last 12-14 months adversary attitude between plot holders and council. There does not appear to be any form of encouragement, consideration, education, or support. Would it not be sensible for plot holders and yourselves, to try and provide an aid memoir, so new plot holders have got an idea of what is in front of them. Divide a plot into thirds, one third to be offered to each new tenant for 6 months at £15, after which they can apply for a full plot or half a plot, if it has been maintained properly.

(Councillors J Hughes and R Hughes arrived at 6.34pm)

A. Each new tenant is provided with a yearly guide. In addition, we have already been looking into the suggestion of giving extra help. The Council has written to the National Association for any form of leaflets that we can send. An allotment holder wrote in about an article in the Royal Agricultural Society and asked if we could copy it onto the Town Council's paper. However, it looked like it was giving orders. So, we have asked the National Association to add it to their papers as well as the Town Council. We do take on board all suggestions and do try to encourage people where we can.

AC 193/09/23b Councillor L Gregori

Q. May I suggest we put the yearly guide onto the Town Council website?

A. Yes, we can do that.

Action: Town Clerk

AC 194/09/23 Member of Public 2

During the spring and summer, we did teach a lot of new allotment holders, providing lessons at the community garden and that was funded by Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC). We will be offering that again next spring. No cost to the Town Council. It's just passing on basic knowledge. You may want to publicise that when we start. We received lots of good feedback from plot holders.

AC 195/09/23 Barlows Lane Warden

In my experience as a warden showing tenants around and what they receive in terms of documentation, they have received information about how to grow and what to grow and where. I feel the guidance is there if the tenant wants it, but not everyone wants advice.

AC 196/09/23 Member of Public 3

Q. What is happening about the water at The Drove Allotment?

A. We are trying to find contractors to come in and give quotes to replace everything and to also provide smaller remedies. We will advise you when we have more information.

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AC 197/09/23a Member of Public 4

Q. Can you enlighten me as to why dogs are not allowed on allotments?

A. Many reasons including other plot holders do not like dogs, are afraid of dogs and the dog's mess. Councillors' reasons have been sent out in the past. We can do that again to everyone at Barlows Lane, so you all have the same information. If you would like to bring the question up again and talk to the councillors, that is a possibility.

Action: Town Clerk

AC 197/09/23b Q. Who makes the rules about dogs being allowed on allotment sites and how can that be changed?

A. The Town Council makes the rules. This topic can be added to a future Allotment Committee agenda for discussion.

Action: Town Clerk

AC 198/09/23 Member of Public 5

I agree with fellow plot holders on the points raised. The biggest thing is the lack of communication from yourselves.

Q. I would like to know how much the new gates cost for Barlows Lane. Can I have a full costing please?

A. That has been put on the Facebook page already. I can email it to you.

Action: Town Clerk

AC 199/09/23 Old Winton Road Warden

Q. Do the warden receive the information that new tenants get? They also need to be given a guide on the percentage of cultivation expected on arrival and what is expected of them on termination.

A. Yes and we can send that information to you. Also, we can look at making a separate document outlining what the expectation of new tenant is upon arrival and on departure.

Action: Town Clerk

AC 200/09/23 Member of Public 6

Q. Please can you confirm the size allowed for greenhouses?

A. The Council can consider the current rules and regulations in regards to greenhouses and building sites and address this at a future Allotment committee meeting.

Action: Town Clerk

A Member of the Public gave his thanks to the Town Clerk and Allotment team for their hard work.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

AC 197/09/23 There were no apologies received at the meeting.

INTERESTS

AC 198/09/23 Councillors were reminded of the Standing Declarations of Interests which had been approved by Council for Councillor E Reynolds as a Member of the Drove Allotment Association and a plot holder.

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Councillor L Gregori declared an interest as his wife is an allotment plot holder.

MINUTES

AC 199/09/23

It was proposed by Councillor R Hughes and seconded by Councillor R Kidd and **RESOLVED: FOR – 5, AGAINST – 0, ABSTENTIONS - 1**, that the Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting, held on Wednesday 28 June 2023, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Action: Committee Officer

ALLOTMENT OFFICER’S REPORT

AC 200/09/23

Members noted the Allotment Officer’s report. The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the amount of rental payments received since the report was written and confirmed that £14,000.00 was the current figure. Councillor L Gregori thanked the Officers for a thorough report. He suggested that the winners of the Scarecrow and Veg competitions should be shared on the website, Andover advertiser and Love Andover.

Action: Town Clerk

TREE ISSUES

AC 201/09/23a

Members received verbal updates on: Admirals Way – Tree by Young Carers SSE will be trimming a tree situated on the corner by the Young Carers land, that has an electric cable running through it and to also trim back a section that is hanging down into their ground.

AC 201/09/23b

Vigo Road Tree Survey Officers are currently awaiting a booked contractor to do the survey but no report has been received to date. However, a different surveyor from TVBC who had contacted Officers previously because of a branch that fell on a shed in Churchill Way, could be approached to carry out the survey if the first contractor does not complete it.

AC 201/09/23c

Tree Assessment Training for Officers. Councillor E Reynolds had found a course, which the Deputy Clerk will be looking into with regards to participants, dates and times.

Action: Deputy Clerk

PRIORITIES & STRATEGY

AC 202/09/23a

Members noted the Maintenance Strategy update. It was commented that the water for The Drove should be highlighted in red, with the current situation in mind.

Action: Town Clerk

AC 202/09/23b

Members noted the report on Priorities & Plans. It was questioned when the deeds were last seen. The Deputy Clerk advised that scanned copies of the deeds are held on the Andover Town Council (ATC) SharePoint. The previous Town Clerk had advised that the original copies were in a file. A thorough search will need to be done to locate them. Officers do have the name of the Solicitors,

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who had previously dealt with the original handover of allotments from TVBC, and a request to see if they hold copies has been made.

NEW TENANTS

AC 203/09/23a

Members reviewed an Allotments Allocation Policy draft.

An amendment was suggested to change the Eligible Persons section to read "live within the Parish of Andover."

A second amendment was suggested to add in the Documentation required from new Group Applications section, the wording "At least one DBS checked Trustee/volunteer must be present as required."

A third amendment suggestion was made to add the Equality Policy to the Allotments Allocation Policy.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the draft Allotments Allocation Policy, with the 3 amendments, be accepted and presented to the Policy and Resources Committee for review.

Action: Town Clerk

AC 203/09/23b

Members reviewed the current process followed for new tenants and considered the need for any improvements.

It was suggested that Officers could assist with showing tenants around the plots, during busy seasons. The 1-week deadline for viewing a plot should be adhered to, however, with the use of discretion.

It was agreed that Officers would revise the current process with the suggestions and bring back to a future meeting to note.

Action: Town Clerk

NEXT MEETING

AC 204/09/23

Members noted the date of the next meeting: **Wednesday 25 October 2023**, to be held in **The Lights, Andover, starting at 6.30pm.**

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

AC 205/09/23

It was proposed by Councillor R Hughes and seconded by Councillor L Gregori and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the Members of the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting, due to the confidential nature of agenda items 11 to 16 and to comply with GDPR.

CONFIDENTIAL 1

AC 206/09/23

Eviction at Vigo Road

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the appeal be dismissed.

Action: Allotment Officer

CONFIDENTIAL 2

AC 207/09/23

Eviction at Admirals Way

It was proposed by Councillor K Hughes and seconded by Councillor J Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the appeal be allowed on final notice.

Action: Allotment Officer

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CONFIDENTIAL 3

AC 208/09/23

Contract, Potential Legal Action and Costs

It was proposed by Councillor R Hughes and seconded by Councillor K Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the billing will be finalised once the 30th September figures are known.

Action: Town Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL 4

AC 209/09/23

Evictions in Special Cases

It was agreed that Officers would write the Equality Policy and be mindful to treat everyone reasonably.

Action: Town Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL 5

AC 210/09/23

Members received a verbal update on a potential new allotment site.

CONFIDENTIAL 6

AC 211/09/23

Members received a verbal update on the eviction of a tenant following threatening emails & behaviour.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **8.35pm**.

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