



# ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of Allotments Committee **Surgery**

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### **Time and date**

6.30pm on Thursday 4 November 2021

### **Place**

The Lights, Andover

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Cllr K Hughes (Chairman) (A )	Cllr N Long (Vice Chairman) (P)	Cllr D Coole (P )
Cllr L Gregori ( P)	Cllr R Hughes ( P)	Cllr B Long ( P)
Cllr S Waue (P)		

### **Officers Present:**

Wendy Coulter (Town Clerk)  
Tor Warburton (Deputy Clerk) *(Taking the notes)*  
Jo Whiteman (Allotment Officer)

### **Other Councillors:**

### **Allotment Wardens Present:**

Mr G Black – Vigo Road  
Mr T Beavis – Churchill Way  
Mr D Bolland – Admirals Way  
Mr M Cantillon – The Drove  
Mr Ted Reynolds – The Drove

**Members of the Public:** Unknown

### **Allotment Holders Surgery**

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor K Hughes, the Vice Chairman, Councillor N Long, opened the surgery at 6.30pm and welcomed all attendees.

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

**Warden 1:**

We've got a new combination lock on our gate and to be honest they only last about 6 or 7 months. In the old days we used to have padlocks with a key. They were brilliant. I've recently been called to let people out due to codes being forgotten. If they had a key, it would save a lot of work. The weather seems to affect them too when it rains.

**Vice chairman:**

People from across all the site are telling me these locks are having problems. Almost £2,000 a year has been paid out in locks.

**Admirals Way Warden:**

We've still got a problem with our fence. We are getting deer coming in. Needs to be sorted. Rubbish piling up behind the portaloo has not been moved. Plot 4 has a lot of plastic sitting there, not moved. Contractor not good at cutting trees back along the fencing.

**Vice Chairman:**

This is the site where photos have been taken. Your fence will be discussed at item 15 on the agenda.

**Councillor B Long:**

Has the contractor been to do the trees?

**Admirals Way Warden:**

He has but not what I call good enough.

**The Drove Tenant 1:**

I've had my allotment plot for 3 years now, but enough is enough with all the mess on there now. So these pictures I took yesterday of the plot next to mine.

**Vice Chairman:**

Can you email these to the Allotment Officer?

**The Drove Tenant 1:**

Yes. Even to get from the car park to my plot now, I've got to go through that mess.

**The Drove Warden:**

This is a matter we've brought up on a number of occasions because we have a number of plots that are not being cultivated and not being cared for. We do sympathise with the tenant because the only access to her plot is through 18 inches of grass.

Going on from that there is the matter of vacated plots covered in rubbish and glass. Did you want to discuss that or leave it to the warden's meeting?

**Vice Chairman:**

If you could give us a list and copy me into the email so I've got a list too, I would appreciate that. Or I could come and visit you.

**The Drove Warden:**

I think a visit would be worthwhile.

The biggest problem is that tenants are saying this stuff was there when I took the plot over, therefore I'm entitled to leave it there when I go. Unless we take photographs of every single allotment and allocation, which is probably not a bad idea and a photo afterwards, I know it's a lot of work especially for the ladies in the office, but it's a way forward. We have got to come up with a sensible solution.

**Vice Chairman:**

I'll be in contact with you.

**Vigo Road Warden:**

Would like to thank Allotment Officer Jo, for her role in dealing with the nasty water problem we had.

Tenant:

We have a fire hydrant inside the fence, that the water board was supposed to have moved quite a while ago.

Vice Chairman:

Yes, it sits about 3 foot inside the fence, so if the fire brigade needs it, they would need to cut the gates down and fences to gain access to it. So that needs sorting as soon as possible.

The Chairman closed the surgery at 6.16pm.



# ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of Allotments Committee

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### **Time and date**

6.17pm on Thursday 4 November 2021

### **Place**

The Lights, Andover

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Cllr K Hughes (Chairman) (A)  
Cllr L Gregori (P)  
Cllr S Waue (P)

Cllr N Long (Vice Chairman) (P)  
Cllr R Hughes (P)

Cllr D Coole (P)  
Cllr B Long (P)

### **Officers Present:**

Wendy Coulter (Town Clerk)  
Tor Warburton (Deputy Clerk) (Taking the Notes)  
Jo Whiteman (Allotment Officer)

### **Other Councillors:**

### **Allotment Wardens Present:**

Mr G Black – Vigo Road  
Mr T Beavis – Churchill Way  
Mr D Bolland – Admirals Way  
Mr M Cantillon – The Drove  
Mr Ted Reynolds – The Drove

**Members of the Public:** Unknown

**Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and Government legislation regarding Social Distancing, it was not possible to hold this meeting at a normal public venue. Therefore, the Town Council made arrangements under the Coronavirus Act 2020 and subsequent Regulations permitting remote**

**meetings, to hold the meetings virtually. A voting procedure was actioned via role call method with each Member's name and response recorded in the Minutes.**

**AC 023/11/21 CONFIRMATION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING**

It was proposed by Councillor B Long and seconded by Councillor R Hughes that Councillor N Long be elected as Chairman for the Allotment Committee meeting on 4 November 2021.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That Councillor N Long be elected as Chairman of the Allotment Committee meeting on 4 November 2021.**

**AC 024/11/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillor K Hughes.

**AC 025/11/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor N Long declared his Membership to the Drove Association.

**AC 026/11/21 MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor S Waue and seconded by Councillor R Hughes that the Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on Thursday 9 September 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on Thursday 9 September 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

**AC 027/11/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

**Member of Public 1:**

Under The Drove in the accounts, I've noticed a rather substantial amount spent this year on water charges. We've had problems in the past where we've been overcharged, then we've had zero charge for a couple of months, couple of years, now it looks as if we have a hefty water bill due to come next year. Is this an accurate bill that we are aware of?

**Vice Chairman's response:**

It comes from a water meter, so it should be correct. The sensible thing to do is get it re-read.

**Member of Public 1:**

We have attempted to read the meter ourselves, however you can't see the dials. It's impossible to read.

The other thing on the accounts is under services, each site has the same amount against them of £833.00 except The Drove which has £865.41. Is there something peculiar about The Drove?

**Vice Chairman's response:**

Can you remind me what those services are for?

**Town Clerk:**

The services are for the toilets.

**Councillor B Long:**

I have a question on behalf of a member of the Public regarding waiting lists. He has been told he is on the waiting lists. He has put his name on the waiting lists against Vigo Road, Old Winton Road and Admirals Way, but he's been told to reapply in 6 months' time. If his name is already on the waiting list, why should he have to reapply?

**Deputy Clerk response:**

Please could you find out when, how and by whom he was told that information and we will follow that up.

**Councillor B Long:**

Knowing that there are some vacant plots on those 3 sites he has requested, where are we on contacting people on the waiting lists to fill them?

**Deputy Clerk:**

The lists are sent out every week.

**AC 028/11/21 UPDATE ON OX DROVE ALLOTMENTS**

Members received a verbal update and noted that an email had been received from the developer confirming that everything had now been completed. Officers have checked this. The site had been strimmed. The skips will be removed. The numbered plates for the plots would be going in the next day. Allocation of plots had also begun.

**AC 029/11/21 UPDATE ON PICKET TWENTY ALLOTMENTS**

Members received a verbal update and noted that Officers and Councillors had made a second visit to the site. All requests made which included the hardstanding for the sheds, fencing, movement of pipes and the provision of parking spaces, had been actioned. The only outstanding item was a noticeboard, which was due to be completed soon. It was hoped that a handover would be scheduled for February 2022. The Vice chairman gave his thanks to the Officers for their hard work.

**AC 030/11/21 UPDATE ON AUGUSTA PARK ALLOTMENTS**

Members noted that a site visit had been made. A further visit will be required to clarify the plot size and to confirm what state the allotment site would be delivered in prior to arranging a handover date.

**AC 031/11/21 UPDATE ON ALLOTMENT PLOT UPTAKE**

Members noted the update report on the allocation of Allotment Plots and the waiting lists. It was questioned as to how many plots would become available due to non-payment of tenancy fees and how many tenants would be evicted because of the state

of their plots. Members were advised that 15 letters had been issued for payment reminders and eviction notices would follow to those tenants that do not pay their tenancy fees. It was also mentioned that consideration could be given to unsuitable plots for above ground cultivation purposes and therefore more plots could be allocated this way.

It was requested that it be investigated by Officers, how many tenants that had left their plots uncultivated since Covid, had paid this year's tenancy fees, by cross checking with the Warden's report. Any such tenants would need to be moved on in accordance with the Rules and Regulations which state the plots must be cultivated. This would significantly reduce the waiting lists further.

#### **AC 032/11/21 UPDATE ON WARDENS' MEETINGS**

Members noted that a Warden's meeting was held on 11 September 2021.

There were some concerns that not all wardens were being sent the details of the warden meetings or the agenda. Questions were raised regarding what the Allotment Officers actually do in relation to the what the wardens do. It was also suggested that Allotment Officers should visit the plots three times a year to oversee what was happening on them.

Items discussed in the meeting also included the Wardens Terms of Reference with suggestions for an updated Terms of Reference, plot inspections and reporting back. It was requested that the suggested Warden Terms of Reference was sent to all Committee Members for consideration at the next Allotment meeting.

#### **AC 033/11/21 RULES AND REGULATIONS (POLY TUNNELS)**

Members considered the Rules and Regulations specifically regarding the use of poly tunnels on allotment plots. It was felt that more emphasis was required in the rules relating to the securing of a poly tunnel into the ground. Inspections to be carried out to ensure the security of a poly tunnel. In addition to this, clarification of liability and what is and is not covered under the insurance, to be included. It was further suggested that the tenant would be liable for any damage caused by a poly tunnel from their plot. Careful consideration would need to be given to the wording when signing off a secured poly tunnel by an Allotment Officer, in order not to absolve the tenant of any liability for any damage caused by it.

#### **AC 034/11/21 ALLOTMENT BUDGET 2022/2023**

Members noted the Allotment Budget 2022/2023 report.

The Vice Chairman made the following recommendations:

That the Town Council reviewed the site fees once every 3 years. The Town Council has only made one review of its fees in the 7 years of running the allotments and it was felt the Town Council was not up to date in comparison with other town and parish councils.

Rents being paid with a 50% reduction, by tenants since the allotments were run by Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), be reviewed.

The toilets be removed from all sites, However, if tenants on a particular site wished to keep them, then the costs of the toilet facility should be included in their allotment tenancy fees.

To reduce the grass cutting to once a month, which would save £2,500.00 a year.

Pest Control visits be reduced from monthly to only when a warden required their services.

Members were reminded that any increase in allotment fess would require a year's notice to all tenants.

A suggestion was made that toilet facilities were not provided on any new allotment sites with less than 20 plots, due to not being cost effective.

It was suggested that new contractors' agreements included the submission of reports on a monthly basis.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor N Long that any allotment tenancy fee discounts be removed.

Councillor D Coole proposed an amendment that people who struggle financially were not taken into account when removing discounted fees. There was no seconder.

A vote was taken:

FOR – 5, AGAINST – 1, ABSTENTIONS – 0

**RESOLVED: That any allotment tenancy fee discounts be removed.**

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor N Long that no toilet facilities will be provided on any new allotment sites.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That no toilet facilities will be provided on any new allotment sites.**

Officers were instructed to obtain quotes for Pest Controller call out charges on an ad hoc basis.

It was proposed by Councillor B Long and seconded by Councillor N Long that grass cutting on the allotment sites be reduced to once a month, subject to a review of reports.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That grass cutting on the allotment sites be reduced to once a month, subject to a review of reports.**

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole that the toilet costs be removed as a standard charge from existing sites and those sites choosing to have toilets are charged separately. There was no seconder.

Some Members felt that it would be better to review the results from the survey before the decision to remove toilet costs as a standard charge, was made.

It was requested that Allotment price increase was added to the next Allotment Committee meeting agenda for discussion.

**AC 035/11/21 APPROVAL OF MAINTENANCE WORKS**

This item was removed from the agenda.

**AC 036/11/21 BEE KEEPING**



Members were informed that it had been noted some bee keepers were not conforming with the bee keeping policy as agreed in the Allotment Committee meeting on 9 September 2021. Officers confirmed that the new bee keeping policy had been sent out, however, to date no responses had been received. Therefore, this matter would be investigated with letters being issued to the relevant tenants. Those tenants who do not comply, would lose their allotment plot.

**AC 037/11/21 FENCING REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENT**

Members noted an update report on fencing repairs to Old Winton Road, Churchill Way and Admiral Way allotment sites.

It was commented that repairs did not seem to be made quickly enough. However, it was pointed out by some Members that sourcing contractors and obtaining quotes from them can be difficult and it would take time.

It was mentioned that the warden at Vigo Road Allotment site, had previously emailed Officers in June 2021, regarding the removal of a large section of fencing. Officers confirmed that a contractor did visit the site, however, the section of removed fencing could not be located.

**AC 038/11/21 CONTRACTORS**

Members considered the creation of a section on the front page of the Andover Town Council website, to publicise works needed and to invite quotes.

**AC 039/11/21 ALLOTMENT OFFICERS REPORT**

Members noted the Officers' report.

**AC 040/11/21 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The following items were requested to be added to the Committee Work Programme:

- Allocation of plots to non-Andover residents
- Net costs for padlocks for the new Allotment sites gates
- Front page section of the Andover Town Council Website, to publicise works needed and to invite quotes

**AC 041/11/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next Allotment Committee meeting would take place on **Thursday 2 December 2021, at The Lights, Andover, starting at 6.30pm.**

The Chairman closed the meeting at **8.52pm**.

Chairman

Date