



# ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of Allotments Committee **Surgery**

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### **Time and date**

6.00pm on Thursday 9 September 2021

### **Place**

Upper Guildhall, Andover

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Cllr B Long ( P ) (Chairman of the  
Surgery)

Cllr N Long ( P )

Cllr L Gregori ( P )

Cllr R Hughes ( P )

Cllr K Hughes ( P ) (Arrived at 6.26pm)

Cllr S Waue ( P )

### **Officers Present:**

Wendy Coulter (Town Clerk) (Taking the notes)

Tor Warburton (Deputy Clerk)

Jo Whiteman (Allotment Officer)

### **Other Councillors:**

Cllr D Coole

### **Allotment Wardens Present:**

Mr M Cantillon – The Drove

Mr Ted Reynolds – The Drove

Mr T Beavis – Churchill Way

### **Members of the Public: 6**

### **Allotment Holders Surgery**

In the absence of a Chairman of the Allotment Committee, Councillor B Long opened the surgery at 6.00pm, as acting Chairman, and welcomed all attendees.

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

**Barlow Lane Tenant 1:**

I have a plot on Barlows Lane. I would just like to say you got some lovely ladies in the office; they've been really helpful.

I've noticed there are 16 plots that are overgrown or not allocated. I asked for an update and wanted to know how many plots are vacant and how many have been allocated?

Also, what are you going to do about the ones that are allocated, but overgrown and all of the weeds that have blown over to my plot?

**Chairman's Response:**

Many tenants have not attended, which could be due to the Covid. If you look at page 15, it does show on Barlows Lane there are 4 vacant plots. That means that the tenants have paid their rent for this year. They are due rents again. If rents are not paid within the next 40 days, then those tenants can be evicted. It is in hand.

**Councillor N Long:**

Last 2 months I have personally visited every single allotment site that the Town Council owns, twice. I have written a report, containing a list of plots that appear uncultivated. Letters have been sent to the respective allotment holders.

**Barlows Lane Tenant 1:**

Did you notice plot 16 has got maize plants half way down the plot and they are 8ft high, taking away all of my light? They did the same last year.

**Chairman's Response:**

There is going to be another site inspection very soon. Officially the Allotment warden is contacted and it is all in hand.

**Churchill Way Tenant 1:**

The gate at the Churchill Way site, there was nearly an accident there the other week. You have to step into the road to see what is coming. I had to chop down the overgrown grass amongst the cars parked.

**Councillor N Long:**

That gate is on the agenda. Photographs have been taken to show what the problem is and it will be discussed this evening.

**Barlows Lane Tenant 1:**

I would like to say the lady who works in the office is very good. You have one lady who left to have a baby and one on long term leave. The one left in the office has twice as much work.

**Prospective Barlows Lane Tenant:**

Prospective allotment holders have been invited down to the Barlows Lane allotment site. A lot of the plots are uncultivated and it would cost a prospective tenant, lots of money to get the plot back to an acceptable standard. Is there an acceptable standard?

**Chairman's Response:**

Yes, there is an acceptable standard. It is in the Terms of Conditions that if it is not kept cultivated, they will receive an eviction notice. Eviction notices have gone out already and this will be discussed in the confidential session.

**Vigo Road Tenant:**

It's the same on Vigo Road. There are a number that are bad.

**Chairman's Response:**

Eviction notices have gone out to tenants on Vigo Road. There are only 2 vacant plots that tenants have not paid the rent for this year. Invoices have gone out for this year with 40 days from 1 September to pay.

**The Drove Warden:**

I'd like to compliment Allotment Officer Jo; on the professional way she has been handling the complaints and we have had a degree of success with some evictions.

**Councillor N Long:**

Well done to the Drove Association on doing an exemplary job on The Drove site.

There was a presentation given on Re-Wilding from Mr Mic Laird, an allotment holder of 2 plots and a bee keeper on the Drove Allotment site. Re-wilding involves the reintroduction of species and the redirection of interfering with habitats. Reduction of grass cutting, weeding, sprays and being more aware of the diversity of the environment that we have. It also involves the encouragement of returning the species that are in loss or decline. A place in West Sussex called Met started the Re-wilding in May, with 3500 acres of land. It allows flowers & species to regenerate. The Hants & Isle of Wight Trust are keen supporters of Re-wilding.

Mr Laird advised that as allotment holders could put set aside areas to be deliberately left in a different managed situation, to reduce the level of fertility over time.

As a bee keeper, he also advised more pollinating plants were needed. The Drove Allotment site have done a good job of fertilising and the proliferation of bees has been great this year.

Over 50 different species have been identified on The Drove site. Also, there has been an increase in frogs, slow worms, hedgehogs, crickets, different types of bumble bee, butterflies and moths.

Mr Laird emphasised the need to manage in a different way to increase diversity and would be happy to work with the Town Council going forward.

(Cllr K Hughes arrived at 6.26pm)

Mr Laird will send a copy of the presentation to Allotment Officers.

**Councillor N Long:**

Acknowledged Mr Laird's passion regarding Re-wilding.

He reiterated that non cultivation of the allotment plot is against Andover Town Council's Rules and Regulations, however, the verges around the edges are ok to be re-wild.

**Chairman:**

According to the Rules & Regulations, the length of time you have been on your plot, 75% to 100%

should be cultivated for food, not re-wilding for animals. I agree that diversity is needed but an allotment plot is not the right place for re-wilding, however, we could educate people about unwanted plants on the plots.

It was asked if there were any unusable plots. It was confirmed there were none on The Drove All spare ground being used for allotments.

**Vigo road Tenant:**

I like the idea of Re-wilding. There is one plot on Vigo Road that perhaps could be used.

**Councillor L Gregori:**

The allotment act is clear, the allotments are all for cultivation. Re-wilding involves a lot of maintenance, needs to be well managed and is expensive to do. We have a shortage of plots and any that could be cultivated will be used for cultivation. Town & Parish Councils don't own much property, therefore, any plots that can be cultivated will be. Urban parks could be used as an alternative. Andover has less green space than central London. The Environmental responsibility falls to Hampshire County Council; however, Andover Town Council will do what it can to support more green space.

**Councillor R Hughes:**

I'm grateful for the presentation. Allotments are for the production of food.

We all want to be supportive. You have our support but we have to provide allotments. If Re-wilding can be done down the edges of the sites, I would be happy to support that.

**Councillor K Hughes:**

We should be looking into whether a plot is viable as a plot for cultivation or Re-wilding. We are bound by law that plots are for growing food. Any unused space that isn't suitable as a plot or no longer cultivatable, I would be more than happy to support the Re-wilding.

The Chairman closed the surgery at 6.40pm.



# ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of Allotments Committee

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### **Time and date**

6.40pm on Thursday 9 September 2021

### **Place**

Upper Guildhall, Andover

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Cllr L Gregori (P)  
Cllr N Long (P)

Cllr B Long (P)  
Cllr R Hughes (P)

Cllr K Hughes (P) (Arrived at 6.26pm)  
Cllr S Waue (P)

### **Officers Present:**

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

### **Other Councillors:**

Cllr D Coole

### **Allotment Wardens Present:**

Mr M Cantillon – The Drove  
Mr Ted Reynolds – The Drove  
Mr T Beavis – Churchill Way

### **Members of the Public: 6**

**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 001/09/21 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Cllr N Long and seconded by Cllr R Hughes that Cllr Kevin Hughes be elected as Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year 2021/2022.

There were no other nominations.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That Cllr Kevin Hughes be elected as Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year 2021/2022.**

Councillor B Long handed the Chair over to the elected Allotment Chairman, Councillor K Hughes.

Councillor K Hughes thanked the Members for electing him as the Chairman of the Allotment Committee.

**AC 002/09/21 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Cllr B Long and seconded by Cllr S Waue that Cllr N Long be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year 2021/2022.

There were no other nominations.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That Cllr Nigel Long be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year 2021/2022.**

Councillor N Long thanked the Members for electing him as Vice Chairman of the Allotment Committee.

**AC 003/09/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

**AC 004/09/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor N Long declared his Membership to the Drove Association.

**AC 005/09/21 MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor B Long and seconded by Councillor L Gregori that the Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 14 April 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

A vote was taken, 4 for, 2 abstentions.

**RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 14 April 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

**AC 006/09/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

**The Drove Warden:**

Under item 15, Warden Meetings - The Drove Allotment Association would be quite happy to host the Warden Meetings. We have availability on Monday evenings at 7.00pm.

**Cllr D Coole:**

First issue as a Town Councillor – On the 10 January 2020 Policy and Resources Committee meeting, a resolution was passed to the Allotment Committee for ways to reduce expenditure for 2021/2022 and make the allotments cost neutral.

Can you please advise if expenditure was reduced and if there has been any progress towards being cost neutral?

**Chairman's Response:**

Contracts are being reviewed. It is in the agenda for discussion.

**Cllr D Coole:**

I noticed the Town Council's Rules & Regulations were last reviewed in 2017 in an Allotment Committee, in particular the rule of giving a plot to a non-Andover Parish resident of Andover. I understand from one of my ward residents that despite this regulation, non-Andover Parish residents have been put on the waiting list.

How many non-parish residents remain on the waiting list?

How many non-parish residents currently have an allotment plot?

Will Andover Town Council give allotment plot grandfather rights to non-Andover Parish residents who currently have allotment plots or will the Council terminate their agreements?

My last issue as a Borough Councillor – Carbon sinks and security fencing. If it has not already been addressed as part of the contracts, could the Council consider planting native hedges on the outside of any exposed security fencing, to help capture carbon? I would be happy to support such an initiative at the Test Valley Borough Council.

**Chairman's Response:**

Thank you for your questions Cllr Coole. We will send a written answer.

**Member of Public 1:**

Barlows Lane – Question regarding the overgrown plots. Would it be acceptable for the wardens to take photos and show them to the Allotment Officers and have letters sent so they can be dealt with?

**Cllr B Long:**

All wardens do a report on the state of the sites, take photos. These photos are sent to the Allotment Officers via email.

**Member of Public 2:**

Fences on Vigo Road - Fences around individual plots. Someone was previously told they couldn't have one. Someone else on the same site, erected a fence, resulting in a complaint being raised. The complainant was advised it was being dealt with, however, the fence has not been moved yet. Can fences be erected if only up to a certain height?

**Chairman's Response:**

The plot you are referring to will be discussed in the meeting tonight.

We can get a written answer to you.

#### **AC 007/09/21 COMMITTEE MEETING START TIME**

Members considered a start time for the Allotment Committee Meetings. A member commented that consideration should also be given to the Officers, the extra hours they would be working and late home times, whilst debating the Committee start time. Going forward once the Warden meetings resumed, it was felt that surgery time would become considerably less and the Committee meetings would start at 6.30pm or before.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor R Hughes that the Allotment Surgery start time be 6.30pm and the Allotment Committee Meeting to commence directly afterward, with the Surgery lasting up to half an hour.

A recorded vote was taken, 3 for, 3 against.

The Chairman, Councillor K Hughes gave his casting vote as for.

**RESOLVED: That the Allotment Surgery start time be 6.30pm and the Allotment Committee Meeting to commence directly afterward, with the Surgery lasting up to half an hour.**

#### **AC 008/09/21 MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

Members noted a report on a suggested maintenance schedule for all Allotment sites. It was clarified that the Pest Controller would only visit the allotment sites when required to deal with issues raised by the plot holders via the wardens. Councillor Gregori asked if Red on the proposed traffic light system included all Health & Safety issues? This was clarified and these issues would be delegated to the Town Clerk and Officers to resolve. A point was raised of limited expenditure availability. Councillor Gregori referred to point F of the report and commented that the Town Council's legal responsibility regarding the fences was only for the inside of them. The outside falls under the remit of the Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council and landowners.

Councillor R Hughes reiterated the need to tie up what we want to do with funding that was available. Officers should be able to progress with required work without the need to approach Council each time. The budget would need to be increased sufficiently.

Councillor R Hughes proposed that point F should be removed from the schedule to allow further investigation into the ownership of fences and therefore avoiding possible litigation issues. It was also commented that the Churchill Way fence was always included in the Town Council maintenance schedule and remained unchanged, However, it was stated that there were other parts of the fencing owned by multiple landowners and therefore care would need to be taken.

Councillor N Long commented he would be happy to second the proposal with an amendment to include the cutting of saplings and ivy regardless of what side of the fence it was growing on, to save fences from being damaged.

Councillor Waue made a suggestion for an alternative proposal as; "The contractor is to trim and clear protrusions on the internal side of Andover Town Council owned fences. External protrusions to be dealt with on a case by case basis, dependent upon the location and landowner and the contracts already in existence.

Councillor R Hughes confirmed his acceptance of the changed proposal wording.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.



**RESOLVED: That the contractor is to trim and clear protrusions on the internal side of Andover Town Council owned fences. External protrusions to be dealt with on a case by case basis, dependent upon the location and landowner and the contracts already in existence.**

Councillor L Gregori requested an additional amendment to the text against the "Red" be changed to state "any major issue which is likely to cause further problems including Health and Safety."

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor B Long that the text against the "Red" be changed to state "any major issue which is likely to cause problems including Health and Safety."

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That the text against the "Red" be changed to state "any major issue which is likely to cause further problems including Health and Safety."**

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor B Long that the suggested Maintenance schedule, with the amendments, be approved.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That the suggested Maintenance schedule, with the amendments, be approved.**

#### **AC 009/09/21 UPDATE ON OX DROVE ALLOTMENTS**

Members noted that the Ox Drove Allotments had now been handed over to the Andover Town Council and that allocation of the plots had started.

It was commented that there was a considerable delay in the developer's solicitors signing the handover, which resulted in the delay of Andover Town Council taking ownership of the site. Subsequently, following a recent visit by Members of the Council, the allotment site had now been declared unfit for purpose. It was confirmed that the site had become overgrown with 5ft high weeds and skips had also been left there. Officers confirmed an email had been sent to the developer concerning the state of the site, the removal the skips and the lack of numbers on each plot and are currently awaiting a response.

#### **AC 010/09/21 UPDATE ON PICKET TWENTY ALLOTMENTS**

Members noted that Officers had visited the Picket Twenty Allotment site. A request for further water taps was made. The Developer had also confirmed that the boundary hedge with Harewood Park would be a mixed species hedge. A further visit will be undertaken in 8 weeks' time. It was also noted that the paths were currently being put in around the 27 plots on the site. Hard standing for sheds on each plot was also being put down. Consideration was also being given to the addition of more water taps.

(Cllr D Coole left at 7.25pm)

#### **AC 011/09/21 UPDATE ON ALLOTMENT PLOT UPTAKE**

Members noted an update report on the Allotment waiting lists and the allocation of plots. A suggestion was made not to include unsuitable plots in the total number of available plots on each site. This would give a clearer picture.

It was commented that the Town Council needed to be faster in the handover process of plots to new tenants. This would reduce the expense of using myplex which contractors use to cover empty plots. More consideration needed to be given to unusable plots, which could

be utilised for parking. It was agreed that the Warden Meetings would provide a helpful exchange in ideas and views going forward.

Officers confirmed that communication had been made with Taylor Wimpy regarding the potential Augusta Park Allotment site. Officers will be visiting the site in September with a view to agreeing with what had been done to date and what may also need to be done prior to the handover of the site.

Taylor Wimpy confirmed via email, that the following would be provided:

1. Fenced off boundary to allotment using weldmesh panel fencing with secure access gate.
2. Access into the allotment using reinforced cellular track.
3. Hedge planting to frontage of allotment and side (both external).
4. 1m wide grass path to periphery of the site (internal)
5. 4no. parking spaces on tarmac (macadam surface).
6. 2no. cycle stands
7. Metered water supply at the front of the site
8. Bunded sections to each allotment plot (10 plots in total)

A request was made to Minute that developers, Persimmons and David Wilson, had gone above and beyond in their allocation of allotment sites by providing compost bins, concrete bases for sheds, safe paths and water taps.

#### **AC 012/09/21 BEE KEEPING ON ALLOTMENT SITES**

(Cllr D Coole rejoined the meeting at 7.48pm)

Members reviewed an Andover Town Council beekeeping policy.

A member raised a question relating to what a "suitable distance" from any public road or path would be. It was stated that a minimum of 2 metres would be considered suitable. It was suggested that section 3a of the bee keeping policy be amended to include the required distance in brackets, for clarification.

It was proposed by Councillor K Hughes and seconded by Councillor Long that an insertion in brackets be made at section 3a, of the Andover Town Council Policy to read "Hives must be a suitable distance (2 metres) from any public road or path, or jointly use road or path within the allotment site."

It was suggested that 2 metres may not be sufficient and that 4 metres would be more appropriate. However, some Members felt that this could prove difficult to comply with on all allotment sites. A compromise was made to change the distance to 3 metres.

It was proposed by Councillor K Hughes and seconded by Councillor L Gregori that an insertion in brackets be made at section 3a, of the Andover Town Council Bee Keeping Policy to read "Hives must be a suitable distance (3 metres) from any public road or path, or jointly use road or path within the allotment site."

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That an insertion in brackets be made at section 3a, of the Andover Town Council Bee Keeping Policy to read "Hives must be a suitable distance (3 metres) from any public road or path, or jointly use road or path within the allotment site."**

Councillor R Hughes commented that this policy should be adopted and that it be managed by the Officers and reviewed in a year's time.

It was proposed by Councillor R Hughes and seconded by Councillor N Long that the updated Andover Town Council Bee-Keeping Policy, with the amendment, be approved. A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That the updated Andover Town Council Bee-Keeping Policy, with the amendment, be approved.**

#### **AC 013/09/21 PIG KEEPING ON ALLOTMENT SITES**

Members considered whether the current Rules and Regulations required updating following receipt of a request to allow an allotment holder to keep pigs on an Andover Allotment site.

It was agreed that an allotment plot was not suitable for the management and welfare of a pig. Reference was made to the Animal Welfare Act 2006, section 9, which confirmed this. It was proposed by Councillor R Hughes and seconded by Councillor L Gregori that the request to allow an allotment holder to keep pigs on an Andover Allotment site, be refused. A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That the request to allow an allotment holder to keep pigs on an Andover Allotment site, be refused.**

#### **AC 014/09/21 REQUESTS FOR FENCING**

Members considered two requests for fencing on Allotment plots.

It was commented that just reasons had been given in both cases concerning children safety on the allotment plots. It was suggested that permission was granted on the understanding that the plots must be cultivated and maintained in accordance with the Rules and Regulations. The fences must also be removed when the tenant agreements ended. This would be managed by the Officers.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor S Waue that permission be granted for the 2 allotment holders, to have fencing on their plots, provided the fencing is well maintained and removed upon giving up the tenancy of their respective plots. A vote was taken, 4 for, 2 against, 0 abstentions.

**RESOLVED: That permission be granted for the 2 allotment holders, to have fencing on their plots, provided the fencing is well maintained and removed upon giving up the tenancy of their respective plots.**

#### **AC 015/09/21 WARDENS MEETINGS**

Members noted that Wardens Meetings would be resumed and discussed dates.

The Drove had offered a venue for the Wardens' meetings to take place at. Allotment Officers will liaise with Warden M Cantillon.

#### **AC 016/09/21 FENCING REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENT**

Members noted that there were urgent fencing repairs and replacements on Old Winton Road, Churchill Way and Admirals Way Allotment sites. It was agreed that these works would be dealt with under the Maintenance Schedule. Quotations for the agreed works were being obtained and delegated authority had been given to the Officers to action the works up to a total of £400.00.

An emergency meeting would be called to discuss any costings over the delegated amount of £400.00.

**AC 017/09/21 ALLOTMENT OFFICERS REPORT**

Members noted the Officers' report.

Councillor Gregori gave his thanks to the Officers for the concise report and their hard work.

**AC 018/09/21 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members noted the Committee Work Programme.

No additional items were requested to be included.

It was requested that the next date of meeting was changed from October 2021 to November 2021.

**AC 019/09/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next Allotment Committee meeting would take place on **Thursday 4 November 2021**, in the Boardroom at **The Lights, Andover**, starting at **6.30pm**.

**AC 020/09/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor N Long that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting at Agenda Items 21 and 22, due to the confidential nature of the Item, namely contractual information and GDPR UK restrictions. A vote was taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED: That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting at Agenda Items 21 and 22, due to the confidential nature of the Item, namely contractual information and GDPR UK restrictions.**

The Chairman closed the meeting at **8.41pm**.

Chairman

Date