



ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Allotments Committee **Surgery**

Time and date

6.30pm on Thursday 2 December 2021

Place

The Lights, Andover

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)

Allotment Wardens Present:

Mr G Black – Vigo Road
Mr D Bolland – Admirals Way
Mr Ted Reynolds – The Drove
Mr Tim Stockwell – Old Winton Road
Ms Marie Simmonds – Barlows Lane

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.

The Vice Chairman gave his apologies for not being able to carry out personal allotment site visits, due to personal circumstances.

The Admirals Way Warden:

We still have a lot of rubbish that needs removing. The shed by number 12 is falling apart and needs to be taken down.

The Vigo Road Warden:

There are 4 spare allotments, possibility of 5 later. Non cultivated plots, there are 2 that need a letter. Rubbish still on plot 27B and it's been going on for the last 8 months. Also, there's the hole in the fence, near plots 47A and 47B.

The Drove Warden:

Two points I'd like to raise.

At the last Town Council Committee meeting, it was more than apparent that the theme was the saving of money and how to recoup savings from past agreements. It was suggested that the tenancy agreement is looked at as not being updated for some time. This will incur costs which are not necessary under the current conditions, as the current ones are not being adhered to. It would be a considerable waste of money and time in updating them.

We have a shed, where the tenant has vacated the plot and has not the time to come and clear the rubbish. Yet, sympathy has reigned and he has been given more time. That's a quarter of the year gone and he has no intention of doing anything, so why haven't the rules been implemented.

My second point is the Warden's report is not mentioned in the Allotment Offices' report. Would it be of interest of how many reports have been received between meetings and what action is taken as a guide. Numbers of reports received during that period and what actions have been taken. i.e., non-cultivation, termination and tenancy agreement non-compliant. I feel the wardens are part of the Allotment structure and the reports should be acted upon.

Vice Chairman's Response:

During this Committee meeting I will be asking that the Rules & Regulations go onto the Committee Work Programme, for it to be updated. Hopefully that will answer some of your questions at a later date.

Councillor L Gregori:

A very good point has been raised about management information. One of the problems with allotments is that we don't seem to get a lot of management information. The issue of non-cultivated plots, it creates a problem for those people who are cultivating their plots. It also causes a problem for the Council as we have a waiting list for plots.

Vice Chairman's Response:

Non cultivation will be under the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreements and we can update that at the time we review it.

The Old Winton Road Warden:

I have two questions:

Has the Council considered having the toilets available for only part of the year, i.e., March to October?

Have the Officers of the Town Council had training for the running of allotments?

The website for the Andover Town Council, is not very informative for plot holders or anybody wanting to take out a plot.

Vice Chairman's Response:

I recommend we look at Salisbury Council's website as its very informative.

Vigo Road Tenant:

If you're suggesting a newsletter, for growing tips etc why don't you ask the plot holders from various sites.

Vice chairman's Response:

Maybe we could add newsletter consideration at the end of the meeting as well.

The Barlows Lane Warden:

We used to have a newsletter with the previous Allotment officers. They were very good but realistically they were time consuming, as I know the Allotment Officers were very busy.

I would like to know what is happening with the contractor? Apparently, we are on the list down at Barlows Lane, to have some vacant plots that badly need attention, plots 23, 24, 72a, 83b. We also have plot 58 but the contractor couldn't find it. If he had my contact number, I could have told him exactly where it was. I think there is an issue with getting the contractors to visit the sites.

Vice Chairman's Response:

Now that we have those plot numbers, we can try to arrange for someone in the next few months to visit those plots and see what can happen. I'm happy to visit them myself also.

The Vice Chairman closed the surgery at 6.46pm.



ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Allotments Committee

Time and date

6.47pm on Thursday 2 December 2021

Place

The Lights, Andover

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 Minutes)

Allotment Wardens Present:

Mr G Black – Vigo Road
Mr D Bolland – Admirals Way
Mr Ted Reynolds – The Drove
Mr Tim Stockwell – Old Winton Road
Ms Marie Simmonds – Barlows Lane

Members of the Public: Unknown

AC 042/12/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillor K Hughes.

AC 043/12/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest in relation to any item on the agenda.

AC 044/12/21 MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor S Waue that the Minutes of the Allotment Committee Meeting held on Thursday 4 November 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 4 November 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AC 045/12/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Member of Public 1:

I read a lot about how allotments and how they are only for around 500 residents, even some Councillors make this very negative remark. No wonder residents complain about money being spent with such an attitude coming out of the Andover Town Council. How about the Andover Town Council put in a more positive spin on the allotments? They could use the line "The allotments we provide are a great resource of the town. They support over 500 families, providing fresh fruit and veg along with improving mental health and lowering the impact of climate change."

Councillor S Waue:

There are a couple of questions from someone outside the Parish who have family inside the Parish.

1. Will more warden involvement in obtaining quotes be a possibility? I read this on page 14 and it may be frustrating for allotment holders, as we had the fence issue in June 2021 and the contractor could not find it.
2. It's encouraging that we are going to invite tenders on the website. Will the allotment holders be told about this so they can perhaps encourage trades people to come along and help shimmy things along?

Vice Chairman's response:

Thank you. I think it is on the agenda tonight where we will be discussing about putting something on the front page of the website, asking people to put their names forward for quotes for work. We will be advertising the work we need, so hopefully we can get people to do some of that work that way.

AC 046/12/21 UPDATE ON OX DROVE ALLOTMENTS

Members noted the Ox Drove Allotment site was ready for allocation of plots and that Councillor N Long had volunteered to show the potential allotment holder plot, until a warden can be found.

AC 047/12/21 UPDATE ON PICKET TWENTY ALLOTMENTS

Members noted that handover of the Picket Twenty Allotment site was due to complete in or around the end of February 2022.

AC 048/12/21 UPDATE ON AUGUSTA PARK ALLOTMENTS

Members noted that Officers and Members had attended the site on 16 November 2021. The site had been cleared. It had been confirmed that the access path down the middle of the plot will be 2 meters wide. Another meeting would be scheduled to see the plots marked out.

AC 049/12/21 UPDATE ON ALLOTMENT PLOT UPTAKE

Members noted the updated report on the allocation of allotment plots and the waiting lists. It was suggested that going forward the number of eviction notices and non-cultivation letters be reported based on per site. It was also noted that the waiting time on the waiting lists had reduced significantly and that plots that have become vacant this year are being rented out to people that have only been on the waiting list in the

same year or since the end of 2020. The Vice Chairman expressed his thanks to the Allotment Officer for producing the report.

AC 050/12/21 UPDATE ON WARDENS' MEETINGS

Members discussed the proposed Wardens Terms of Reference that was drawn up at the last Warden meeting.

An amendment to point 6 was made to include a caveat with the wording "where possible."

A suggestion was made that the honorarium of £50 paid to the wardens on an annual basis, should be increased.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor N Long that the honorarium of £50 paid to the wardens on an annual basis, be increased to £60 per annum.

A vote was taken:

FOR – 5, AGAINST – 1, ABSTENTIONS – 0

RESOLVED: That the honorarium of £50 paid to the wardens on an annual basis, be increased to £60 per annum.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by B Long that the Terms of Reference for Allotment Wardens, subject to the amendments being made, be accepted.

A vote was taken:

FOR – 5, AGAINST - 1, ABSTENTIONS - 0

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference for Allotment Wardens, subject to the amendments being made, be accepted.

AC 051/12/21 RULES AND REGULATIONS (POLY TUNNELS)

Members considered some suggested wording for the Rules and Regulations regarding polytunnels.

An amendment to the last paragraph of section 3.6 Buildings was suggested, to read as, "In the event of exceptional weather conditions tenants are expected to make sure that any buildings on their plots are made secure. They should not be constructed using hazardous material (e.g. asbestos)."

A member of the public requested to ask a question.

It was proposed by Councillor N Long and seconded by Councillor S Waue that the Standing Orders be suspended.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the Standing Orders be suspended.

The Member of public asked the Members of the Allotment Committee, how did they propose to police the Rules & Regulations on polytunnels, as there were many different ways of fixing them to the ground. What will the Town Council accept?

The Vice Chairman advised that sensible precautions would need to be taken, particularly when securing the polytunnel into the ground. Most polytunnels come with legs that would be dug into the ground, the plastic would be dug into a trench and you have stool pins which go over the bars to hold them down.

Vigo Road Warden advised that summer would be the best time of the year to erect a polytunnel, due to the ability to stretch and pull them with the sun's heat on them.

It was proposed by Councillor N Long and seconded by Councillor S Waue that Standing Orders be reinstated.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Standing Orders be reinstated.

Members agreed that the key factor was ensuring that tenants understood exactly what they were liable for.

A suggestion was made to send the updated Rules and Regulations for polytunnels out to the allotment holders. Officers advised that to minimise costs, a notice could be put on the noticeboard and an email could be sent out for clarification purposes, pointing the reader to the Town Council website.

It was proposed by Councillor B Long and seconded by Councillor L Gregori that the Rules and Regulations for the polytunnels subject to the amendments being made, be accepted and approved.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the Rules and Regulations for the polytunnels subject to the amendments being made, be accepted and approved.

AC 052/12/21 ALLOTMENT PRICE INCREASE 2023

Members considered increasing the allotment rental for the invoice year 2023, which would be included in the budget for 2023-2024. Members were also reminded that the Town Council was legally required to give 1 years notice of price increases from the annual invoice date.

A point was raised that the current Allotment Rules and Regulations state only 28 days' notice was required. The Vice Chairman asked the Proper Officer to clarify this point. The Proper Officer clarified that the Allotments Act of 1922 stated that as the landlord, the Town Council can give notice to quit at 12 months. The law also states that the tenant has to agree the increase in the price. If they have to agree that, they have to be given the opportunity to end their tenancy and the Town Council would have to agree a new tenancy with them. If it stated that that tenancy was for a year, then that meant the Town Council would have to give the tenant a years' notice.

A suggestion was made of a 10% increase, taking into consideration inflation and contractor costs. Members were also reminded of other factors that could influence the increase percentage, which included less toilet facilities, reduction in grass cutting frequency and pest control. Members were reminded that the allotment tenants must be consulted with prior to any increase in tenancy fees. It was agreed that Officers would initiate a consultation process.

It was proposed by Councillor N Long and seconded by Councillor R Hughes that to delegate Officers to construct a process for managing allotment rent increases moving forward.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That to delegate Officers to construct a process for managing allotment rent increases moving forward.

Members continued the discussion of the percentage of allotment price increase. It was commented that in 11 years there had been a 26% increase in prices overall and that a 10% increase could be considered as a starting point.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor R Hughes that as placeholder for the 3-year Budgets, an annual increase of 10% on the allotments be put in from invoice year 2023 onwards.

A vote was taken:

FOR – 5, AGAINST - 1 , ABSTENTIONS - 0

RESOLVED: That as placeholder for the 3-year Budgets, an annual increase of 10% on the allotments be put in from invoice year 2023 onwards.

AC 053/12/21 PADLOCKS FOR EACH SITE WITH SEPARATE KEYS

It was noted that the agenda incorrectly showed costings to replace the combination locks on all the Allotment sites. It should have included the 3 new Allotment sites only. It was felt this item required revisiting.

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor S Waue that Officers look at the specifications for the 3 padlocks for the new sites with full costings and include time management and present a report at a future Allotment Committee meeting.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Officers look at the specifications for the 3 padlocks for the new sites with full costings and include time management and present a report at a future Allotment Committee meeting.

AC 054/12/21 ALLOTMENT OFFICERS REPORT

Members noted the Officers' report.

Councillor L Gregori gave his thanks to the Officers for the report.

AC 055/12/21 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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

- To review the tenancy of non-Andover residents
- Allotment Rules and Regulations
- Best Kept Allotment Competition
- Bee Keeping Policy - Tenants response
- Toilets Survey
- Rent Increase proposal update
- Pest Controller

AC 056/12/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next Allotment Committee meeting would take place on **Thursday 3 February 2022, at The Lights, Andover, starting at 6.30pm.**

AC 057/12/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor B Long and seconded by Councillor R Hughes that the Members of the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting at Agenda Items 17 & 18 due to the confidential nature of the Items regarding contractual information and Confidential Staffing matters, Ref Section 11 of LG & HA 1989.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the Members of the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting at Agenda Items 17 & 18 due to the confidential nature of the Items regarding contractual information and Confidential Staffing matters, Ref Section 11 of LG & HA 1989.

CONFIDENTIAL

AC 058/12/21 CONTRACTORS

Andover Town Website 'Contracts section':

It was proposed by Councillor B Long and seconded by Councillor D Coole that the quote of £255 + VAT to create a section on the front page of the Andover Town Council website and social media to publicise work needed and to invite quotes, be accepted. A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the quote of £255 + VAT to create a section on the front page of the Andover Town Council website and social media to publicise work needed and to invite quotes, be accepted.

Pest Control:

It was proposed by Councillor B long and seconded by Councillor N Long that Officers continue investigating potential new Pest Controllers and to ensure reports are being received from the current Pest Controller.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Officers continue investigating potential new Pest Controllers and to ensure reports are being received from the current Pest Controller.

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor S Waue that Standing Orders be suspended.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Standing Orders be suspended.

Work Schedule:

It was requested that it be minuted that Officers did approach several maintenance contractors for quotes for the required works.

It was proposed by Councillor S Waue and seconded by Councillor B Long that under delegated authority, Officers proceed with the works schedule.

A vote was taken which was unanimous.

RESOLVED: That under delegated authority, Officers proceed with the works schedule.

AC 059/12/21 STAFFING MATTERS

Members received a verbal update on Staffing matters.

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

Chairman

Date