

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE, HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 7TH DECEMBER 2011, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, STARTING AT 10 A.M.

Present:

Councillors:
Mrs S J Armes
T J Lamb
D Crawford
M G Spencer (Chair)

In attendance: Representatives of the Thetford Garden & Allotment Club,
Mundford Road Allotments Association and other allotment holders.

418/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S J Armes declared a personal interest as a member of the Thetford Garden and Allotment Club.

419/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from Councillor Quadling.

420/11 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 14th September 2011, as received by the Council at its meeting on 27th September 2011 under minute 242/11(d), be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Chairman.

421/11 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED BELOW

a) The Town Clerk recommended (via the Finance Manager) that monies due from the Sweyn Close development could, in part, be considered as providing the funds required for the implementation of capital projects included within the six recommendations made in previous meetings subject to Full Council approval.

b) Allotment Representatives. Although no formal appointments had been made the following were recommended for each site:

Icknield Way: Yvonne Rout (present at meeting)
Bury Road: Kate Coghlan (present at meeting)
Mundford Road: Ron Ambridge (present at meeting)
London Road: tbc
Magdalen Street: Karen Emma White (recommended)

c) Bonfires on Guy Fawkes Night. The Finance Manager had contacted the Council's insurers to clarify the position and the insurers replied that if allotment holders hold a bonfire it "will be at their own risk, the town

Council will have no legal liability for this, and therefore will not be insured”.

- d) Work carried out by allotment holders on Council Land. The Finance Manager had also sought clarity on this issue and the insurance company had responded thus: “If you want to allow these allotment holders to clear the land and perform other routine tasks in a community spirit, then you will have to class them as official volunteers. This means the Town council must take on full responsibility as if they were Town Council employees – i.e. do risk assessments, make sure everyone is properly trained and equipped (including issuing PPE where appropriate), check their equipment is safe and in good working order- effectively take on the health and safety burden. If you do not want to classify them as volunteers the insurance company will not pick up any liability”. It was however considered reasonable for allotment holders to strim pathways (not public) between allotments and keep areas immediately in front of allotments in good order.

422/11 SITE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

- a) RESOLVED that the Allotment Holders Fund for 2011-12 (£900 approx) be used to finance the clearing on the previously earmarked area on Mundford Road allotments to provide extra allotments. As the labour for this task could be provided by the Works Team any amount remaining should be used for Magdalen Road fencing.
- b) RESOLVED that the contribution received from Network Rail for use of part of Mundford Road allotments during repair work to the Railway Bridge (£1,200) be used for site improvements at Mundford Road particularly the public roadways.

423/11 BOUNDARIES

RESOLVED that the current Tenancy Agreement be amended rules are amended thus:

Clause 5.2 “The Tenant must relinquish their plot on moving outside the Thetford Town boundary except if they are relocating to the following parishes: Croxton, Kilverstone and Brettenham. The council will in these circumstances, at its discretion, allow a tenant to retain their plot if there have been no recorded breaches of their tenancy agreement.”

424/11 ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW

The Finance Committee recommended that the Allotment Committee review its charges.

Some members of the Allotment Clubs present expressed their dissatisfaction with the £5 levy charged to all allotment holders for the “Allotment Fund”. While those members present were reminded that the “Allotment Fund” was introduced at their request and had been discussed at meetings before its introduction it was decided to not continue to levy it in future years.

RESOLVED to remove the £5 levy from allotment charges and instead raise all allotment fees by 20% (rounded upwards to nearest 50p) to cover the

VAT charge that the Council now have to declare. This will result in an overall decrease in fees.

425/11 DATE OF NEXT INSPECTION AND MEETING

The next inspection would be Tuesday 13th March followed by a Committee meeting on Wednesday 14th March 2012 at 10.00am.

Chairman