

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE,  
HELD ON THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, STARTING AT 10.00 A.M.

Present:

Councillors:

B Canham  
Mrs J Hollis (Chair)

C Harvey (Vice Chair)

Officers in attendance:

Ros Barnett  
Karen Robinson  
Chris Crimmen

Deputy Town Clerk  
Allotment Officer  
Committee Secretary

The meeting was preceded by a 15-minute Open Forum, starting at 10.00 a.m. when members of the public and representatives of the press were invited to address the Committee.

Open Forum

- An allotment holder reported a friend of his has been waiting for an allotment for some time and has heard nothing. The Chair stated that the allotments allocated have to be cleared before allocation.
- An allotment holder on the London Road site reported that rubbish is dumped on the site by outsiders.
- An allotment holder reported she had sent 3 emails over the past few weeks and had not received a reply. The Allotment Officer agreed to check that the dedicated email address is working correctly.

MINUTES

886/18 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS  
Councillor B Canham declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda number 893/18.

887/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE  
Carl Higgins

888/18 MINUTES  
**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the Committee's meeting, held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019, received by Full Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019, be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Chairman.

889/18 ACTION POINTS  
The Chair updated the committee on the last meeting action point:  
The Allotments Works Team and Officer made an extra effort to clear the waiting list and 9 residents on the waiting list were offered an allotment.

890/18 HEALTH & SAFETY  
The Vice Chair reported on Allotment Health and Safety issues:  
Mundford Road: The club house now has chicken wire on the decking.  
Bury Road: There is a fence needed where the hedge is to make this site more secure. The slope used by cars is too steep.  
London Road: This is a good site but the wall on the left hand side has lots of rubbish that needs to be cleared. An allotment had been planted

with low bamboo canes without protection on the top of the canes and these are dangerous.

Icknield Way: This site has suffered with vandalism but a new bolt has made this site more secure.

891/18

#### INFORMAL ALLOTMENT MEETING

The chair had reported that the feedback from the informal Allotment meeting has been positive from the Allotment Holders. The following 3 points were agreed:

- To promote good working relationship between the Allotment holders/Clubs and the Town Council.
- To ensure the Allotment holders/Clubs are involved in the review on the Allotment Rules and Regulations.
- To review the language of all correspondence sent out.

It was agreed to visit other Allotment sites in the area and two dates have been arranged:

Ipswich – 1<sup>st</sup> of May 10.30am

Norwich – 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1pm

892/18

#### TENANCY AGREEMENT REVIEW

The Deputy Town Clerk had tabled the National Association of Local Councils' template tenancy agreement for an allotment garden. She explained that this document contained the legal requirements for an Allotment. The current Thetford terms and conditions have deviated significantly from this document. It was agreed that the Town Council would adopt the National Agreement template and that any additional rules/guidance would be negotiated with the allotment holders and be an appendix to the main document. The revised terms and conditions need to be completed by for October 2019. It was agreed that an informal meeting of allotment holders and the Allotments Committee would be held at the end of May to produce the appendix document.

893/18

#### WAITING LIST - VACANT PLOTS

The Allotment Officer reported there were 51 vacant plots and that 9 residents had been offered an allotment. After a discussion it was agreed not to include 7 plots that for different reasons cannot be worked so there are 42 vacant plots. The Deputy Town Clerk had prepared a coloured leaflet that advertises the vacancies and a stall will be used on the market place to talk to interested residents after the elections.

894/18

#### ALLOTMENT INSPECTIONS AND LETTERS

Following the feedback from the informal meeting the Deputy Town Clerk had reviewed the inspection process and the wording of letters.

The revised inspection notice clearly states the purpose of the inspections, which is that 'Poorly maintained plots can have a negative impact on the neighbouring plots'. She tabled a series of letters with the initial letter, the annual inspection report, using a traffic light system:

- Red being action needed.
- Orange allotments will monitored.
- Green saying well done.

Councillors asked for an additional warning letter to be sent before we go to a final warning. The councillors also agreed to the proposed appeals process. As the inspection process has already begun the new inspection form and letters are being piloted. It was agreed that the inspection correspondence be taken to the informal meeting to be considered by allotment holders and to monitor the implementation.

895/18

**BUDGET**

The budget was noted and agreed and it was understood that there would be no top up in the 2019/20 budget and the committee must spend responsibly. It was agreed to create individual maintenance plans for each site.

896/18

**ALLOTMENT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY:**

After a discussion it was agreed to have one priority which is:

To work with the allotment holders to review all our practices, procedures and policies to produce an action plan to improve environmental sustainability for immediate implementation by August 2019.

897/18

**ALLOTMENT AGREEMENT**

This was covered in minute 892/18.

898/18

**CORRESPONDENCE & COMPLAINTS**

<b>Allotments 18/4/2019</b>			
<b>CORRESPONDENCE TO THE COUNCIL – TO BE NOTED AND CONSIDERED</b>			
1	25/2/2019	Munford Rd burgled. Allotment holder complained about side gates being left open	Cemetery Officer took report
2	12/3/2019	Report of break in at London Rd	Listed in Correspondence
3	18/3/2019	Councillor report of gate left open Bury Rd	Allotment Officer asked to investigate.
4	21/3/2019	Resident querying allotments and station car parking	Deputy Clerk responded with statement
5	23/3/2019	Councillor report of broken tap	Listed in Correspondence
6	10/4/2019	Request for Allotment agenda from press	Deputy Clerk responded with statement
7	15/4/2019	Request for additional gate at London Rd	Allotment Officer investigating.
8	17/4/2019	Report of break in at London Rd	Listed in Correspondence

**Allotment Officer Report**

- Carl has had to replace 15 taps over winter.
- Carl has been working on the clearance of London Rd particularly the removal of stumps.
- Poster and guidance to be displayed about recent burglaries

899/18

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

None.

900/18

**COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE**

None.

Chairman.