

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

Present:

The Mayor – Councillor B J Canham

Councillors:

C P R Burnett

D M Crawford

Mrs J Hollis

Officers in attendance:

Ros Barnett

Deputy Town Clerk

Carl Higgins

Allotments Officer

Chris Crimmen

Committee Secretary

The meeting was preceded by a 15-minute Open Forum, starting at 11.30 a.m. when members of the public and representatives of the press were invited to address the Committee.

Open Forum

- An allotment holder asked for a map of the allotments – The Deputy Town Clerk will investigate availability.
- There are lots of thefts on the allotments – fruit, vegetables and chickens.
- On the London Road allotments there have been lots of fly-tipping.
- Gates are still being left unlocked by allotment holders driving out without shutting and locking gates.

MINUTES

202/19 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MAYORAL YEAR 2019/20

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Hollis be elected Chairman of the Allotment Committee for the Mayoral year 2019/20.

RESOLVED: That Councillor C Harvey be elected Vice Chairman of the Allotment Committee for the Mayoral year 2019/20.

203/19 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

204/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor C Harvey.

205/19 MINUTES

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

206/19 ACTION POINTS

Councillors reported on the Annual Allotment Competition at the London Road.

207/19 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Committee confirmed that Councillor C Harvey will serve another year as the Allotment Committee H&S Officer.

INFORMAL ALLOTMENT MEETING

The Deputy Town Clerk reported back on the informal allotment meeting and explained that there is clear evidence that where allotment holders are involved in the management, they are better run and cost less to the local authority and local taxpayers. She shared with the meeting the 'Growing in the Community' management models which area listed below

- dependence – neither plot holders nor associations play any practical part in site management, beyond exchange of information, perhaps through a site representative;
- participation – plot holders informally accept responsibility for minor maintenance works, and some mechanism may exist (such as an allotments forum) for the views of plot holders or site representatives to be canvassed on capital expenditure and repairs;
- delegation – a properly constituted allotment association accepts formal responsibility for a range of duties under licence from the local authority, under financial arrangements that release a proportion of rental income for this purpose. For example, the association may arrange tenancies, collect rents and carry out regular maintenance duties, but leave the local authority to carry out repairs, pay for overheads.

After a discussion Councillor B Canham proposed and Councillor D Crawford seconded:

RESOLVED: The representatives and councillors agreed that Thetford are at a dependence stage and would like to develop a participation model in the short term and possibly a delegation model in the long term

Councillors agreed the following steps towards the participation model and Councillor C Burnett proposed and Councillor B Canham seconded:

RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council formally recognises the nominated representatives for the following sites:

- Mundford Rd - Alan Beard, Alex McCourt, Glen Williams
- Bury Rd Allotments - Colin Farrell and Peter Vale
- London Rd, Icknield Way and Magdalen - Stan Wells, Yvonne Rout, Brian Farrell

Following a discussion on future training Councillor B Canham proposed and Councillor D Crawford seconded:

RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council develops a site representative contract, training programme and role description in partnership with the allotment representatives. Every year the role and contract will be reviewed with allotment holders to take into account further delegation of responsibilities as the partnership develops. Training to include:-

- Health and safety
- First Aid
- Leadership, best practice, consultation

Following a discussion on funding Councillor C Burnett proposed and Councillor D Crawford seconded:

RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council works with allotment holders to apply for external funding for storage, equipment. Brian Farrell and Glen Williams agreed to work with the Deputy Town Clerk on writing up a bid.

- 209/19 TENANCY AGREEMENT REVIEW
 Councillors thanked allotment holders for their feedback on the tenancy agreement. Many of the changes were agreed by the Allotment Committee however the request to leave the water on over winter was put on hold as the council had already made a change to the watering regulations and it was decided to monitor the impact of this change first before adding another.
 A discussion was had about the phrase living within a mile of the boundary and the Deputy Clerk explained that this was not a legal requirement and could be changed. It was agreed that priority on the waiting list would be given to residents of the parish. If, however there was unallocated allotments and no waiting list, applications from a mile outside the boundary could be considered but fees would be doubled. This rule would not be retrospectively applied. It was then agreed to do a final consultation with Allotment holders in August.
RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council accepts the feedback from the allotment holders on the tenancy agreement with the above exceptions.
- 210/19 WAITING LIST - VACANT PLOTS
 The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the waiting list has been reduced to 9 and that these were new to the waiting list. Councillor B Canham reported that the two plots in the name of Keystone/Mans Sheds are no longer used and will be handed back to the Council.
- 211/19 ALLOTMENT INSPECTIONS AND LETTERS
 These have now been agreed with the traffic light systems showing the current condition of the plot each year after the annual inspections. Councillors will be doing their annual walk round and inspections on Friday 26th of July and allotment holders are welcome to attend.
- 212/19 BUDGET
 This was deferred until the next meeting.
- 213/19 CORRESPONDENCE & COMPLAINTS
 Councillors noted the following:
 14.6.2019 Vandalism at Mundford Road
 18.6.2019 Complaint from the healthy living centre about the rats coming over from the allotments
 30.6.2019 – Complaint about smoke at Munford Rd Allotments
- 214/19 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
 None.
- 215/19 COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE
 None

Chairman.