

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE CARNEGIE, CAGE LANE, THURSDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2021, STARTING AT 10.00 AM.

Councillors:

B J Canham, D M Crawford (Vice Chair), C Harvey, J Hollis (Chair), B Tullett

Officers in attendance:

Alan Yorke Deputy Town Clerk, Carl Higgins Allotment 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 reported that the water pressure at Icknield Way was very poor. The Allotment Officer will investigate.
- A member of the Thetford Garden Club reported on the annual competition for the best kept allotment funded by Thetford Town Council. He reported there have been changes with half and quarter plots. The Rules and Regulations will have to be changed. He was pleased to report that there have been 72 new allotment holders since 2019.
- There followed a discussion on renumbering all the allotment plots and it was agreed to carry this exercise out in January 2022.

MINUTES

290/21	<u>DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u> None.
291/21	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies were received from Councillor D Hodgkinson.
292/21	<u>MINUTES</u> RESOLVED: The minutes of the Allotments Committee meeting held on 17th June 2021 which were received by Council on 30th June 2021, as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.
293/21	<u>ALLOTMENT OFFICER'S REPORT</u> The Allotment Officer reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has help on the Allotments which is an increase in capacity – net gain of 2 working days • He has been clearing and prepping of vacant plots on the Mundford Road Site. • Plot inspections were carried out on Mundford Road and Bury Road. • A response has been received from The Mundford Road Allotment Club and an outlined maintenance plan has been submitted on bee keeping. • There were two big fires on Mundford Road where the fire brigade attended. Neither of these fires were reported to the Council.
294/21	<u>HEALTH & SAFETY</u> The Allotment Officer reported he had arranged for the removal of asbestos sheeting from a shed which had been there for 20 years on vacant plot BU21. The Allotments Health and Safety Officer reported he had inspected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icknield Way.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bury Road, • London Road. • Mundford Road – he was impressed with this site. Plot 71 had dangerous spikes – The Allotment Officer will speak to the allotment holder to have them removed. • Bury Road.
295/21	<p><u>ALLOCATION OF PLOTS AND WAITING LISTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of <u>49</u> waiting list applicants. • <u>38</u> of these will have priority over existing tenants. • <u>11</u> existing tenants who have expressed interest in obtaining a further plot this is subject to their existing plot meeting the required standard. • <u>20</u> waiting list applicants have been contacted since 17/06/2021 (the date of the last committee meeting). Resulting in <u>9</u> applicants taking up the offer. • <u>13</u> vacant plots. • <u>8</u> vacant plots under offer (21 in total).
296/21	<p><u>FEEDBACK ON MEETING WITH BRANDON ALLOTMENTS</u></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk reported on feedback on the visit to and meeting with the Brandon Allotments Association (BAA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting was held on 21 July 2021. • The BAA are totally independent from the Brandon Town Council. No engagement at either the governance or operational level • The BAA have been operational for 3 years and had secured additional funding by way of grants and donations of £13,000. They had used these funds to further improve the site and add a toilet funded by the Lottery Fund. <p>This visit had provided insight into alternative ways of funding allotments from a Council perspective. Councillors noted this report.</p>
297/21	<p><u>MEETING WITH BURY ROAD ASSOCIATION (BRA) ON POSSIBLE NEW OPERATING MODEL</u></p> <p>The Chair, Allotment Officer and Deputy TC met with the BRA on 12 August 2021 to explore various alternative operating models. There has been subsequent confirmation that the BRA would like to explore this further in principle and within the limits of their own capacity.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Council stated it is up to this Committee to decide on whether to pursue alternative models and to discuss the various operating models that have been explored.</p> <p>After a discussion Councillor B Canham proposed and C Harvey seconded: RESOLVED: That the Allotment Committee take this process forward with the Bury Road Association to explore new operating models.</p>
298/21	<p><u>ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES</u></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk asked Councillors to consider and discuss how best to reintroduce Committee engagements with the Allotment Associations and Representatives. There followed a discussion and D Crawford proposed and C Harvey seconded: RESOLVED: The Councillors will have two site visits a year in May and September. The Committee will invite Representatives and Allotments holders to informal meetings in between the official Allotment Committee meetings.</p>
299/21	<p><u>UPDATE ON PROJECTS</u></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk asked Councillors to receive an update and discuss the status of the following projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating of Allotment Handbook Guide – The Officer will source an editor. • Updating of the consolidated rule book – This will be discussed in a workshop with allotment holders.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed to review the basis of charging tenants between 1 July and 10 October of each year – in principle approval to charge allotment fees for the period 1 July to 9 October of the following year (allotment fees are non-refundable)
300/21	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> None.
301/21	<u>COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE</u> None.
302/21	<u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</u> None.
303/21	<u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u> To consider resolving that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for any remaining items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.
304/21	<u>TO CONSIDER INDIVIDUAL TENANT ISSUES</u> No issues were discussed.

Chairman.