

Report of the Allotment Sub Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 7.00 pm on **Monday 22nd February 2010**, in Committee Room 1 at the Parish Hall, Great Baddow. Cllr T Miller chaired the meeting.

Present: Cllrs T Miller, Mrs D Ronaldson, K Ronaldson, Mrs V Sadowsky, A Sosin, Mrs J Sosin and Mrs C Shaw.

In Attendance: The Clerk of the Council
 The Administrative Assistant
 Vicarage Lane Allotment Site Representative Mrs A Reeve
 Towerfield Allotment Site Representative Mr T Hull

658/09 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Martin, B Heelis and the Deputy Grounds Manager.

659/09 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interests.

660/09 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

661/09 Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on 28th September 2009 were signed as a true record, proposed by Cllr T Miller and seconded by Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson with the following amendments: Item 362/09, fourth bullet point, the word 'Lane' to be inserted between 'Vicarage' and 'would'; Item 367/09, eighth line, the word 'unanimously' to be deleted.

Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky entered the meeting at 7.14 pm

662/09 To receive an update report on matters raised by the Allotment Representatives at the July meeting

A report prepared by the Administrative Assistant had been circulated before the meeting. The following items were discussed:

- Plots 133, 135 and 137 are vacant at the Vicarage Lane site. Plot 17 at the Vicarage Lane site has very recently been let.
- The current waiting list over the two sites stands at 60.
- Following Mrs Reeve's reports of non-cultivation at the last meeting, plot 116 has now been re-let and plot 78 will continue to be monitored.
- Following Mr Hull's reports of non-cultivation at the last meeting, plots 4, 5, 6, 20 and 23 will continue to be monitored and plot 43 has recently been re-let.
- Posters have now been displayed at both allotment sites detailing emergency contact telephone numbers for the Police.
- Since the last meeting of the Allotments Sub Committee, the Grounds staff have prepared eight new half plots at the Vicarage Lane site, of which four have been let. The remaining plots are being offered to those at the top of the Vicarage Lane waiting list.
- A newsletter was sent out to all allotment holders last week.

663/09 Report of the Towerfield Allotment Representative

Mr Hull reported on the following items:

- Mr Hull reported that he had recently met the Grounds Manager at the Towerfield allotment site. The Grounds Manager was in the process of planting *Pyrocantha* bushes around the boundary of the site, and it was agreed that the bushes would be planted in specific locations to help prevent unauthorised access onto the site via the boundary fencing.
- Mr Hull reported that he had also met on site with the Administrative Assistant and together they inspected the plots that had previously been identified for monitoring.
- Mr Hull reported the plots 3, 7 and 45 had recently been re-let. The previous tenants had left these plots in very good condition and he hoped that the plots would continue to be cultivated to the same standard.
- Mr Hull told the meeting that plot 43 has recently been re-let and that the tenant had been informed that any non-compostable matter should be stockpiled for collection by the Grounds Staff. Mr Hull asked whether the Grounds staff could rotovate this plot, as it is in particularly poor condition. The Clerk advised the meeting that the Grounds staff do not rotovate allotment plots as they are too busy with other duties and this would set a precedent, leading inevitably to numerous tenants asking for their plots to be rotovated.
- Mr Hull told the meeting that he had noticed that the register of allotment holders contains a field detailing which tenants have sheds on their plots, but it is largely blank. The Administrative Assistant advised that the office was aware of the matter but to date, had not had the time to update the system. Mr Hull advised that the following plots have sheds: 14, 17, 19, 20, 31, 40, 42, 44, 50, 51, 52 and 53.

664/09 Report of the Vicarage Lane Allotment Representative

Mrs Reeve reported on the following items:

- Mrs Reeve told the meeting that the allotment site was particularly wet at the moment.
- Mrs Reeve reported to the meeting that a shed has gone missing from plot 54 at the Vicarage Lane site. The Administrative Assistant informed the meeting that the office was aware of this and had advised the tenant to report the matter to the Police.
- Mrs Reeve asked whether plot 17 had been re-let as a half plot. It was confirmed that this was the case.

665/09 Towerfield Security Questionnaire

The committee was reminded that a decision had been made at the previous meeting not to reinstate the lock on the Towerfield allotment gate but instead to plant *Pyrocantha* around the boundary and to maintain the existing fencing. Mr Hull informed the meeting that the planting has taken place and the boundary fence is being maintained.

666/09 Tenancy Agreement

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting outlining reports that had been received by the office about tenants using siphoning equipment to pump water from the butts at the Vicarage Lane site. It was proposed by Cllr T Miller, seconded by Cllr Mrs C Shaw to amend condition 4.22 of the

current tenancy agreement to read: "In order to conserve the limited water supply and in the interests of ALL tenants, the attaching or placing of hoses, pumps, siphoning equipment or any other equipment of this nature to the allotment water taps or in the water butts is forbidden."

667/09 Matters for information

There were no matters for information.

668/09 The next meeting will take place on 28th June 2010.

Mrs Reeve asked whether the February meeting of the Allotments Sub Committee could be rescheduled to either March or April, as there is very little happening on the sites at this time. It was also suggested that the June and July meetings are too close together. The Clerk advised that the dates had already been published for this year but the matter will be considered when the 2011 dates are presented to the Council. The Clerk also advised that it would be difficult to rearrange these meetings as the Parish Council already has a very busy meetings schedule.

It was resolved under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to close the meeting to the public and press for the following item.

669/09 Leases on Towerfield and other allotment sites in the parish

The Clerk reported to the meeting that a licence agreement between the Parish Council and Chelmer Housing Partnership had been issued and agreed at the Council meeting on 8th February 2010, to grant the Parish Council a right of access across Brookbank. The Clerk also reported that lease agreements had now been received from Chelmsford Borough Council for Towerfield and three other sites in the Parish. These documents will be referred to the Parish Council's solicitor.

670/09 Additional Allotments

The Clerk reported to the meeting that since October 2009, no further correspondence had been received from the landowner and that the matter would be chased.

The Clerk also reported that enquiries had been made to the Essex Association of Local Councils to clarify whether a newly established site would be classed as a statutory allotment but so far the query has not been resolved. Although the Clerk has already done so, she will ask the EALC again for the matter to be referred to the National Association of Local Councils.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.56 pm

Signed.....Chairman.....Date