

Report of the Allotment Sub Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 7.30 pm on **Monday 22nd June 2009**, 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

151/09 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Martin, the Grounds Manager and the Deputy Grounds Manager.

152/09 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interests.

153/09 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present

154/09 Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on 23rd February 2009 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr T Miller and seconded by Cllr K Ronaldson with the following amendments:

Item 599/08, Second line of the first bullet point, the word 'make' to be inserted to read "Mrs Reeve asked that following the earlier discussion about the preparation of new plots at Vicarage Lane, would it be possible to make an arrangement with the new plot holders to allow them to prepare the plots themselves". It was also noted that Item number 600/08 had not been used.

155/09 To receive an update report on matters raised by the Allotment Representatives at the February meeting

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

- Initial quotes had been obtained for the hire and purchase of a rotary tiller that would be fixed to the rear of a tractor, to prepare the additional plots at the Vicarage Lane site. The quotes will be placed on an agenda for consideration at the next Allotments Sub Committee meeting on 27th July 2009.
- Following reports of non-cultivation at the previous meeting, letters were sent to plots 15 and 49 at Vicarage Lane. Plot 49 is now being cultivated and plot 15 is being re-let. Following a report of piles of wood on plot 78, a letter has been sent to the tenant.
- Following a request at the previous meeting a poster is now displayed on the Towerfield allotment notice board giving details of the non-emergency

Police telephone number. Also, details of the Community Action Group survey taking place in the Meadgate area and local Police Beat Surgeries were included in the April edition of the Allotments Newsletter.

- Following reports of non-cultivation at the previous meeting, plots 10 and 37 at the Towerfield site are now being cultivated. The tenant of Plot 43, which was also reported as uncultivated at the last meeting has been in contact with the Parish Council office following the receipt of a letter relating to the plot's condition. Due to personal circumstances the tenant has agreed to keep the weeds on the plot to a minimum until they can cultivate it again properly. However, at a recent inspection it was noted that the plot is still very overgrown and another letter has now been sent to the tenant.
- Following the decision to re-plate the allotment competition cups discussed under item 602/08 at the meeting on 23rd February 2009, the cups have now been received back. Cleaning instructions and a polishing cloth will now be issued with the cups.
- Cllr K Ronaldson asked whether the tenancy agreement permitted livestock to be kept on the allotments and it was also asked whether Bees would be considered under this category. The Clerk advised that the keeping of livestock of any kind was not permitted on either site and that Bees would also be considered as livestock.
- Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson asked whether the Great Baddow Horticultural Society have informed the office of when this years Allotment Competition judging would be taking place. No correspondence had been received and the matter will be chased.

156/09 Report of the Towerfield Allotment Representative

Mr Hull reported on the following items:

- Mr Hull informed the meeting that he wished to discuss matters relating to padlocks and boundary fencing at the Towerfield site, but that he would raise these under the agenda item.
- Mr Hull asked whether an article could be included in the next Allotments Newsletter reminding allotment holders about their responsibilities in relation to the mowing of pathways on the Towerfield site. Mr Hull advised the meeting that plot holders sometimes cut the paths but the grass on the edges of the allotment plots are not trimmed and are allowed to go to seed. The matter will be looked into further and the Clerk will speak to the Grounds Manager to establish which areas of the site the Grounds staff mows.
- Mr Hull reported that plot 43 is very overgrown. The Administrative Assistant advised that as detailed in the report that had been circulated before the meeting, the matter was in hand and a further letter had been sent to the tenant relating to the plots current state.
- Mr Hull reported that plot 36, which is no longer let due to its location, is also very overgrown. The Grounds staff will be told to trim this area as soon as possible.
- Mr Hull informed the meeting that the Vicarage Lane allotment site notice board currently displays a poster from the Police detailing the emergency and Crimestoppers telephone numbers. He asked that a copy be put up at

the Towerfield site in addition to the current notice detailing the Police's non-emergency telephone number. Mr Hull also asked whether a key for the Towerfield notice board had been given to the Great Baddow Horticultural Society, as their notices are being displayed on the board. The Clerk advised that although the Horticultural Society has a key to the notice board at Vicarage Lane, she was not aware that a key had been given for the Towerfield notice board. The matter will be investigated.

157/09 Report of the Vicarage Lane Allotment Representative

Mrs Reeve reported on the following items:

- Mrs Reeve reported that some allotment holders who bring dogs onto the allotment site allow them to run around either loose or on very long leads. In addition to this, non-allotment holders sometimes walk their dogs on the site on very long leads. Mrs Reeve asked whether notices could be erected telling people to keep their dogs on short leads. The Clerk advised that this would be very difficult to enforce. An article will be included in the next Allotments newsletter reminding tenants that all dogs must be kept on a suitable lead at all times, so not to cause a nuisance to other tenants.

Cllr Mrs J Sosin left the meeting at 8.03pm.

- Mrs Reeve asked if the Parish Council would again consider the possibility of providing half sized allotments. The Clerk advised that it was agreed not to progress this idea previously for a number of reasons, including the increased administrative work involved and the potential problems caused by splitting up existing plots. It was also noted that only plots in certain locations would be suitable to split. The matter will be placed on a future agenda to be reviewed by the Committee.

Cllr Mrs J Sosin returned to the meeting at 8.07pm.

- Mrs Reeve identified plots 78, 117, 15 and 17 as uncultivated. The Administrative Assistant advised that the tenants of plots 15 and 17 have been contacted about non-cultivation, and the tenant of plot 78 has been sent a letter about piles of wood on the plot. Plot 117 will be checked at the next inspection.

Cllr Mrs J Sosin left the meeting at 8.10pm and re-entered the meeting at 8.11pm.

158/09 Allotment Holder's Meeting arranged by Essex Police

A report compiled by the Clerk, was circulated prior to the meeting relating to a letter from Essex Police recommending that a conventional padlock be fitted to the gate. In addition to this, a report compiled by the Administrative Assistant about the meeting organised by the Police on the 26th May 2009 was also circulated.

Mr Hull told the meeting that despite notification being sent to all allotment holders, only three tenants attended the meeting. Mr Hull advised that the

main concerns raised at the meeting related to the unlocked front gate and that access is being gained via the fence next to plot 36. Mr Hull also told the meeting that it had been suggested that Pyrocantha bushes should be planted in front of this fence to help prevent access.

It was proposed by Cllr T Miller and seconded by Cllr C Shaw to accept the recommendation outlined in the report produced by the Clerk, which proposed that a consultation is undertaken with all the allotment holders on the Towerfield site. Options relating to varying degrees of security along with potential costs will be outlined in the consultation so that the Council can gain a better picture of the current situation and which security options the tenants consider appropriate. A draft of the questionnaire will be considered at the next meeting on 27th July 2009. The Clerk will liase with the Grounds Manager about repairing the fence near plot 36 and the possibility of planting Pyrocantha in this area.

159/09 Matters for information

- Mr Hull reported that a family of five foxes has been seen on the Towerfield allotment site.

160/09 The next meeting will take place on 27th July 2009.

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

161/09 Leases on Towerfield and other allotment sites in the parish

The Clerk advised the meeting that copies of the leases had been received. However, as the Clerk has recently been on annual leave she had not been able to study the documents in depth, but had identified some initial queries relating to the terms of the leases. The matter will be placed on the next committee agenda for further consideration on 27th July 2009.

162/09 Additional Allotments

The Clerk advised that a meeting to assess the suitability of the new site had been arranged, but was cancelled due to the recent rail strike. The meeting has now been rescheduled for Monday 29th June.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.39 pm

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