

Report of the Allotment Sub Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 7.30 pm on **Monday 27th June 2016**, in Committee Room 1 at the Parish Hall, Great Baddow. Cllr Mrs S Young chaired the meeting.

Present: Cllrs Mrs S Young, Mrs D Ronaldson, Mrs C Shaw, Mrs J Sosin, K Ronaldson, A Sosin, K Liley, T Miller, J Fuller and Mrs M Miller substituting for Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky.

In Attendance: The Clerk of the Council
 The Administrative Assistant
 Mr S Doherty representing the 26th Chelmsford (Great Baddow) Scout Group
 1 member of the public
 Chelmsford City Councillor Mrs G Smith from 7.56 pm
 Mr M Whalley representing the Environmental Group from 7.56 pm

Before the meeting opened, the Chairman advised those present about the Recording and Use of Social Media at Council Meetings Policy.

172/16 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky, who had substituted Cllr Mrs M Miller and allotment representatives Mr T Hull and Mr M Harris.

173/16 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

174/16 Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on 29th March 2016 were presented and proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs C Shaw.

175/16 Public Question Time

There were 2 members of the public present, one of whom had come to discuss agenda item 8, Parking adjacent to the Towerfield Allotment Site.

With the consent of the meeting, the item was brought forward and discussed whilst members of the public were still present.

176/16 Parking adjacent to the Towerfield Allotment Site

The Clerk had circulated a report prior to the meeting recommending that the Parish Council accepts CHP's offer to extend the remit of the parking enforcement to Brookbank in order to keep the Council's right of access to the allotment site.

Following some discussion it was proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson that the Parish Council should accept CHP's offer. Cllr Mrs S Young requested that Mr T Hull be informed as soon as possible, with all allotment holders to be advised in the next newsletter. It was agreed that should the parking problem continue it would be reported to CHP.

177/16 **To receive an update report on matters raised by the Allotment Representatives on 29th March 2016**

A written report prepared by the Administrative Assistant had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that due to the lack of staff, maintenance on both allotment sites has been minimal. Some cutting of the grass paths had taken place but continues to be a problem.

1. Vacant Plots

There are currently 3 vacant plots on the Vicarage Lane site, they are numbers 85, 86 and 92.

There are 9 plots vacant on the Towerfield site. These are numbers 2, 5, 10, 18, 22, 29, 34, 37 and 53.

2. Waiting Lists

Vicarage Lane:	0
Towerfield:	0
Total:	0

The Administrative Assistant reported that both of the non-parishioners who had requested to take on an allotment, had been offered plots, but both had decided against taking one on.

3. Update on issues raised by the Towerfield Allotment Representative on 29th March 2016

1. Following Mr Hull's concerns about the use of weed killer on tenanted plots and a recommendation by the Clerk, an allotment newsletter was sent out advising all tenants that extreme care must be taken when using weed killer on the allotment site.
2. Further to Mr Hull's comments about the lack of grass cutting on the common paths, I can report that both allotment sites have now been cut.

4. Update on the issues raised by the Vicarage Lane Allotment Representative on 29th March 2016

1. Following Mr Harris's report about a corner plot having been extended, a letter was sent to the tenant requesting that the plot be returned to the original boundary line. All tenants on the site have also been advised that vehicles should not be parked anywhere on the site other than within defined parking areas.
2. Following Mr Harris's concerns about the non-cultivation of several plots, the tenant of plots 36 and 37 has been written to advising that full cultivation is required. Plot 85 is a vacant plot.

During the meeting it was suggested that perhaps an advertisement could be placed in the Great Baddow Times and on the notice boards advertising the vacant plots. The Administrative Assistant advised that due to the current condition of the plots, it could prove difficult to entice new tenants on to the site.

178/16 **Report of the Towerfield Allotment Representative**

Mr Hull had submitted a verbal report to the Administrative Assistant prior to the meeting.

1. Mr Hull expressed concern and frustration on behalf of the Towerfield tenants and himself, about the lack of maintenance on the site and asked whether the Council has a forward plan.
2. Mr Hull advised that the main areas of concern are the common paths, vacant plots and former plot T36.
3. Mr Hull requested that an item be included in the next newsletter to indicate what the Parish Council's future intentions are for the allotment sites.
4. Mr Hull expressed concern about how the allotments will be identified during the judging process, as many of the signs are no longer legible.
5. Mr Hull advised that he is in agreement with a parking restriction being imposed on the area adjacent to the site, in order that access may be maintained for staff and tenants.
6. Mr Hull reported that since the passing of the Grounds Manager, 3 months ago, the grass at the Towerfield site has been cut only twice. Mr Hull said that he is aware of the current parking difficulties staff were experiencing at the site, but suggested that perhaps the work van could be parked on the road and a lawnmower taken from the van and walked to the site.

179/16 Report of the Vicarage Lane Allotment Representative

No report had been submitted by Mr Harris.

180/16 Bees

The Clerk reported that a consultation letter had been sent out to all the allotment tenants on both sites. 56 allotment holders replied, which is approximately 1/3 of the total number of allotment tenants. All of those who replied were in favour of having bees on the allotment sites, although a number of people did express concerns about the siting of the hives and the strains of bees that should be allowed. After some discussion it was proposed by Cllr J Fuller and seconded by Cllr Mrs C Shaw that the keeping of bees should be allowed on the sites. The vote was unanimous. The Clerk was asked to draw up a draft policy for the September meeting, which is to include a condition relating to the allotment upkeep of any tenants who wish to keep bees.

7.56 pm Chelmsford City Councillor Mrs G Smith entered the meeting.

7.56 pm Mr M Whalley from the Galleywood Environmental Group

181/16 Matters for information

- Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson requested that plans of the allotment sites be emailed to those Councillors carrying out the judging for the Best Kept Allotment Competition 2016.

182/16 Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 26th September 2016 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.01 pm

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