

Report of the Allotment Sub Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 7.30 pm on **Tuesday 29th March 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 V Sadowsky, Mrs J Sosin, K Ronaldson, A Sosin, K Liley, T Miller and J Fuller

In Attendance: Cllr Mrs M Miller
The Clerk of the Council
Towerfield Allotment Site Representative Mr T Hull
Vicarage Lane Allotment Site Representative Mr M Harris
2 members of the public from 7.45pm

Before the meeting opened, the Chairman told those present about the recent and unexpected death of the Grounds Manager, Peter Jeffrey. She said that the Council's thoughts were with Peter's family at this very sad time.

785/15 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

786/15 Declarations of Interests

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

787/15 Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on 7th December 2015 were presented and proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr K Liley.

7.32pm Cllr J Fuller entered the meeting

788/15 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

789/15 To receive an update report on matters raised by the Allotment Representatives on 7th December 2015

A written report prepared by the Administrative Assistant had been circulated prior to the meeting. Although not present at the meeting, the Administrative Assistant was thanked for the report.

Cllr Mrs S Young told the meeting that the prize giving for the Best Kept Allotment competition had once again been made at the Horticultural Society's social evening on 10th December 2015. This evening is sponsored by the Parish Council in recognition of the work done by the Allotment tenants on their plots. Several councillors had been in attendance.

The following items in the written report were noted:

Unfortunately due to the sad loss of the Grounds Manager, Peter Jeffrey and a continued shortage of staff, maintenance on both allotment sites remains suspended.

1. Vacant Plots

There are currently 5 full plots and 1 half plot vacant on the Vicarage Lane site.

There are 6 plots vacant on the Towerfield site.

2. Waiting Lists

Vicarage Lane:	0
Towerfield:	0
Total:	0

3. Update on issues raised by the Towerfield Allotment Representative on 7th December 2015

1. Further to Mr Hull's comments about the door on the Towerfield notice board. The board was inspected by a member of the Grounds staff and has been deemed as non-repairable. The board will be replaced in due course.
2. Following Mr Hull's concerns about the over spraying of plot 24, I am pleased to report that no further problems were noted on my recent inspection.
3. Following Mr Hull's report that plot 11 was looking very overgrown, I can now advise that plot 11 was re-let shortly after the December meeting.

4. Update on the issues raised by the Vicarage Lane Allotment Representative on 7th December 2015

All matters reported by Mr Harris were answered at the December meeting.

790/15 Report of the Towerfield Allotment Representative

1. Mr Hull noted with regard to the Administrative Assistant's inspections that the spraying on plot 24 is still visible. It was agreed that it is alright for allotment tenants to use weed killer on their own plots but that they must be extremely careful that this is not allowed to escape onto other plots or the common paths. The Clerk suggested that something could be put in the next newsletter about this and this was agreed.
2. Mr Hull reported that plot 43 had suffered the theft of a brand new wheelbarrow. It has been chained to a stake but the padlock had been cut and the chain stolen as well. This theft has been reported to the police.
3. Mr Hull also reported that the shed on plot 54 had been broken into but that nothing had been stolen.
4. Mr Hull said that the common paths on the site have not been cut yet. It was agreed that this is due to the recent loss of staff but that the Council is taking steps to rectify the situation as a matter of urgency. Both representatives will be informed as soon as possible of the decision made by the Council and what steps will be taken.

7.40pm Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky entered the meeting

791/15 Report of the Vicarage Lane Allotment Representative

1. Mr Harris advised that a plot holder has damaged a car on an extended fence on a corner plot. The extension consists of blocks and fencing and screws have been left projecting into the roadway, although these have now been covered with pipe lagging. The Clerk reminded the meeting that according to the Allotment Regulations, allotment tenants should not take their cars onto the site to park them but should leave them in the car parking area provided. Access onto the site is for loading and unloading only. It was agreed that something will be placed in the next newsletter, reminding tenants of this condition.

2. Mr Harris reported that there appears to be no cultivation on plots 36, 37 and 85. The Clerk said that the Administrative Assistant was probably already dealing with these matters but that she will check this.
3. Mr Harris said that he wanted to put up another sign about closing the gate. The Clerk told the meeting that there are already signs on both sides of the gate and that the gate is now being closed a lot of the time and it is probably only a few people who are still resistant to the instructions.
4. It was noted that conifer trimmings have been dumped in the car park and these will be cleared as soon as possible.
5. Mr Harris asked if there are any plans to re-site the water tanks when the allotment land is reclaimed for the cemetery. The Clerk said that currently there are no plans to do this as it would be very costly but that the Council could investigate the matter once the land has been taken back and while it is being prepared.

792/15 Best Kept Allotment Competition

It was agreed that the Council would like the Horticultural Society to provide two judges again this year. Cllrs Mrs S Young and Mrs D Ronaldson volunteered to be the Council judges, with Cllr A Sosin acting as a reserve in case either of them is unavailable. The Clerk will contact the Horticultural Society.

793/15 Tenancy Request

The Clerk had circulated a request from a non-parishioner to be allowed to rent an allotment plot. The Clerk advised the meeting that paragraph 2.4 of the Allotment Conditions and Regulations (adopted in July 2014 and reviewed in August 2015), states that new tenants must reside in the parishes of Great Baddow or Galleywood. The Clerk advised against allowing the request on the grounds that it will be administratively more difficult to administer and that the Council will appear to be inconsistent in its decision making. Also, the law relating to Allotments states that the provision of allotments by a parish council should be for persons resident in its area only.

There was much discussion on the matter with a general feeling that this should be allowed because it would be better to have a plot tenanted than not and that while there are vacancies, these should be filled. The possibility of putting riders on such tenancies was not seen as practical. Both the allotment representatives agreed that the plots will be better off being tenanted.

It was proposed by Cllr J Fuller and seconded by Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky that the Regulations should be amended to allow people outside the parish to be given allotment tenancies once the vacancies go beyond three. An amendment was proposed by Cllr A Sosin and seconded by Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky that addresses in the neighbouring central Chelmsford wards should be included. This amendment was accepted by the original proposer.

The Clerk reminded the meeting about her advice against allowing the request and a vote was taken which was 7 for, 1 against and 4 abstentions. The motion was passed.

794/15 Bees

Due to the recent staffing difficulties, the consultation on this matter had not taken place. The matter was deferred until the June 2016 meeting.

795/15 Matters for information

- Cllr Mrs J Sosin told those present that she had sent an e.mail to all councillors reminding them of the Village Conference on Thursday 14th March 2016.
- Mr T Hull told the meeting that leaf chippings have been deposited on the Council's vehicle parking area inside the Towerfield site. The Clerk said that a tenant had made an enquiry about the delivery of chippings and that they had been told that they could be delivered to the area but that they must be moved as soon as possible to the tenant's plot. The Clerk was not certain whether the enquiry had been made about the Towerfield site but that she will investigate the matter.

796/15 Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 27th June 2016 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.13 pm

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