

Report of the Allotment Sub Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 7.30 pm on **Monday 5th October 2015**, in Committee Room 1 at the Parish Hall, Great Baddow. Cllr Mrs S Young chaired the meeting.

Present: Cllrs Mrs S Young, K Ronaldson, T Miller, Mrs J Sosin, A Sosin, K Liley, Mrs C Shaw, Cllr Mrs M Miller, who had substituted Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky

In Attendance: The Clerk of the Council
 The Administrative Assistant
 The Grounds Manager
 The Deputy Grounds Manager
 Vicarage Lane Allotment Site Representative Mr M Harris
 Towerfield Site Representative Mr T Hull

368/15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Fuller, Mrs D Ronaldson and Mrs V Sadowsky, who had substituted Cllr Mrs M Miller.

369/15 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Registerable Non Pecuniary Interests.

370/15 Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on 29th June 2015 were presented and proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs C Shaw. They were then signed as a true record.

371/15 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

372/15 To receive an update report on matters raised by the Allotment Representatives on 29th June 2015

A report prepared by the Administrative Assistant had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following items were noted:

- There are currently 5 vacant plots on the Vicarage Lane site and 9 on the Towerfield site.
- Both sites are experiencing a lot of movement at present, although it is hoped that things will settle down once the tenancy renewal period ends.
- There are 8 people on the Vicarage Lane waiting list.
- Since writing the report, 2 people have applied to go on to the Towerfield waiting list. Therefore it is hoped that some of the vacant plots will soon be tenanted.

Following a recent site visit, the Administrative Assistant recommended that the renewal of tenancies on plots VL105, VL106, VL126 and T15 be refused. The Allotment Sub Committee were in agreement with the recommendation.

Update on issues raised by the Towerfield Allotment Representative on 29th June 2015

Further to Mr Hull's concerns regarding foxes entering the allotment site, the Clerk advised that she had spoken with the Chelmsford City Council Environmental Health Officer who advised that there had been no change to the advice previously issued.

Update on issues raised on the Vicarage Lane site on 29th June 2015

Following Mr Harris's request for contact details of local PCSO's, a wallet sized contact card had been created and printed, and will be sent to all allotment tenants in due course.

373/15 Report of the Towerfield Allotment Representative

1. Mr Hull raised concerns about allotment numbers 10, 11 and 37. The Administrative Assistant said that letters had been written to the tenants of plots 10 and 37 and that plot 11 will be checked.
2. Mr Hull raised concerns about the number of vacant plots on the Towerfield site. The Clerk advised that the lease with the City Council states that the site must be 80% tenanted and that the situation is being monitored. The Chairman requested that the percentage of allotments tenanted should be given to the subcommittee and the Clerk said that this further information will be given to the next meeting.
3. Mr Hull made a request to the Grounds Manager for the grass paths at the Towerfield site to be cut once the weather is dry enough.
4. Following the recent vacation of plot 33, Mr Hull requested that the boundaries be checked and realigned to ensure that none of the plot had been lost.

374/15 Vicarage Lane Allotment Site

1. Mr Harris expressed concerns about the lack of security on the Vicarage Lane site and asked whether it would be possible to provide a lock for the gate. The Clerk advised that this had been tried previously but had proved unsuccessful. The Clerk reminded those present that a newsletter had been sent to all tenants requesting that the gate be closed after use. A further reminder letter is to be sent. Following some discussion, it was agreed that a notice would be placed on the allotment gate to remind tenants to close it when entering and leaving the site.
2. Mr Harris told the meeting that allotment tenants are still having materials and produce stolen. Tenants are encouraged to report theft to the police and cards have been circulated to tenants with the contact information on them. Unfortunately, whilst the cards were being printed the PCSO's mobile telephones were withdrawn by the police. The Clerk said that the cards would be re-printed with the correct information, in time to be sent out with the next newsletter.
3. Mr Harris raised concerns about a tenant who appeared to be having difficulty clearing her plot. The Clerk requested that Mr Harris refer any tenants requiring assistance to the office.
4. Mr Harris reported that he was pleased to see an influx of new tenants taking up plots on the site.

The Chairman gave thanks to both allotment representatives.

375/15 Allotment Competition

The winners of the Best Kept Allotment competition 2015 are:

Vicarage Lane

1st – Mr E King

2nd – Mr R Robb

3rd – Mr L Haldane

Half Plot – Mr Rayner

Towerfield

1st – Mr T Hull

2nd – Mr A Hills

3rd – Mr R Kilvington

The Chairman gave thanks to this year's allotment judges Eddie Cole and Ted Dyer, and to Cllrs T Miller and A Sosin. The Chairman also congratulated all the winners of the Best Kept Allotment competition and in particular Mr T Hull for winning first prize on the Towerfield site.

376/15 Budget

Review of Budget Spending for 2015/2016

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. There were no concerns about spending to date, with the exception of 4131 (TF Water Rates), where there had been a slight increase.

To consider the first draft budget for 2016/2017

A draft budget had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following comments were made.

- The Clerk advised that there had been a slight decrease to budget item 4125 (VL Water Rates).
- Budget 4139 (Allotment Competition) had been increased due to rising costs.
- Budget 4140 (Skip Hire) had also been increased to take into account the need to hire three skips in the coming year.

It was agreed that the budget should be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

377/15 Matters for information

There were no matters for information.

378/15 Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 7th December 2015 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.05 pm

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