

Report of the Allotment Sub Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 7.30 pm on **Monday 19th December 2016**, 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 D Ronaldson, A Sosin, K Liley, Mrs C Shaw and Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky

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

560/16 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Fuller and Mrs J Sosin. Cllr Mrs S Young gave a warm welcome to Mrs Dixon, to her first meeting in her new role of Grounds Supervisor and Compliance Officer.

561/16 Declarations of Interests

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

562/16 Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on 26th September 2016 were presented and proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson. They were then signed as a true record.

563/16 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

Cllr T Miller entered the meeting at 7.34pm

564/16 To receive an update report on matters raised by the Allotment Representatives on 26th September 2016

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

Since the last meeting, Spencer Doherty from the Scout Group has notified the Parish Council that a parking restriction notice has been placed at Brookbank, on the wall adjacent to the Towerfield site. Mr Doherty gave his thanks to the Committee for its support and has reported that access is much better.

There are currently 9 vacant plots on the Vicarage Lane site and 10 on the Towerfield site.

There are 2 people on the allotment waiting list, one on each site. Offer letters have recently been sent out to both applicants.

Update on issues raised by the Towerfield Allotment Representative on 26th September 2016

1. Further to Mr Hull's comments about the lack of maintenance on the Towerfield site, the Grounds Supervisor has spoken with the Clerk and requested that 4 Seasons are asked to carry out works at the site.



2. Following Mr Hull's concerns about parking in the area, the Administrative Assistant was pleased to report that a parking restriction sign has now been erected by CHP on the wall adjacent to the Towerfield site.

Update on the issues raised by the Vicarage Lane Allotment Representative on 26th September 2016

1. Following the comments made by Mr Harris about the opportunity of free wood chip, an appointment was made for Mr Harris to speak to the Clerk, which took place on 28th October 2016.

565/16 Report of the Towerfield Allotment Representative

1. Mr Hull gave his thanks to the Council for cutting the paths and noted that it is the first time they have been cut properly for a long time.
2. Mr Hull raised concerns about the path alignment, which had only become apparent since the path edges had been cut. The Clerk said that she and the Grounds Supervisor will investigate this matter in the New Year.
3. Plots 1 and 37 were reported as being in a bad state and it was agreed that 4 Seasons should be asked to cut back these plots. Cllr A Sosin expressed his concerns about what can be done generally about untenanted plots and the Clerk said that this is something that will be investigated but that in the past, these plots have been treated with weed killer. Mr Harris said that he did not think that the contractor holds a spraying certificate. The Clerk told the meeting that the contractor has recently obtained a spraying certificate and that a copy has been sent to the office.
4. The matter of building material being left on Plot 12 was raised and the Grounds Supervisor said that she has written to the tenant.
5. The matter of the number signs on the plot was raised and it was agreed that the numbers are now totally unreadable. Mr Hull requested that they be re-marked and the Clerk and Grounds Supervisor said that they will investigate whether this will be suitable.
6. Boundary maintenance was raised by Mr Hull, who asked if the contractor could be asked to undertake the work on the western boundary. The Clerk said that the Council's staff had been asked to do this some time ago but that obviously, the work had not taken place. Cllr A Sosin raised the matter of nesting birds and the Clerk confirmed that no work to trees, bushes or any other vegetation is carried out by the Council's staff or contractors during the bird nesting season, unless for emergency/Health & Safety reasons.

566/16 Vicarage Lane Allotment Site

1. Mr Harris reported various plots are not being properly cultivated and do not appear to be tenanted. The Grounds Supervisor confirmed that two of these plots are tenanted and letters have been sent to the tenants. A letter will also be sent to a tenant who is planting hedging around his plots.
2. Mr Harris reported that the tenant of Plot 98 has not moved his boundary and the Clerk and Grounds Supervisor said that this will be followed up.
3. It was reported that hedging at the front of the site is being cleared and that this may be the contractor that is carrying out the work.
4. It was reported that the contractor has done a good job of clearing the untenanted plots and thanks were given. However, as on the Towerfield site, the number signs on the plots are now largely unreadable. This will be investigated at the same time as the signs on the Towerfield site.
5. Mr Harris reported that more people seem to be shutting the gate but that a new sign is required, as the old one was broken and had to be removed.



6. Mr Harris also reported to the meeting that the site suffers a lot of problems with Muntjac deer.

567/16 Bees

The Clerk had circulated a draft policy about the keeping of bees on the allotment sites. This had been requested following the Council's decision to allow the keeping of bees. The Clerk told the meeting that the draft policy is a fairly standard policy and is similar to the policies of many other principal authorities. Cllr K Liley said that he thought that the policy was very onerous. The draft policy was discussed and the following points were raised:

- Paragraph 27 was queried and it was agreed that even though a person may hold a beekeeping qualification, they could still be inexperienced and this paragraph was to cover such situations.
- Only existing allotment tenants should be allowed to keep bees on the site.
- The tenants should have held their tenancy for at least one year and should show that they have kept the allotment cultivated and in good condition.
- The meeting agreed that the decision to allow beekeeping should only apply to the Vicarage Lane site.

After discussion, it was agreed that before any other action is taken, the Clerk should approach the local Bee Keeping Association to seek their advice about the suitability of the sites to house bee hives.

568/16 Matters for information

There were no matters for information.

569/16 Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 27th March 2017 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.09 pm

Signed.....*A E Sai*.....Chairman.....*9/12 January 2017*.....Date