BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 10th NOVEMBER 2025

PRESENT:	Cllr. P. Woodall (Chair) (until Min. 29); Cllrs: K. Batley, D. Dawes (from Min. 25), Miss. C. Needs, M. Stanley (from Min. 27), Mrs. J. Warr, P. Wells and M. White
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs. I. Cross (Allotments & In Bloom Officer) Mr. C. Penfold (Tenant Representative) Mrs. L. Russell (Tenants Representative)

The Meeting opened at 5.30pm

18. WELCOME BY CHAIR

The Chair welcomed those present and read the Council's Opening Statement with particular attention drawn to the evacuation procedure in the event of the fire alarm sounding.

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND THEIR APPROVAL, SUBJECT TO MEETING THE AGREED CRITERIA

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. P. Ralph. The Clerk recommended that the reason given was acceptable. This absence was **APPROVED** by Members.

There were no apologies received from Cllr. R. Nash, and this absence could not, therefore, be approved.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair addressed those Members present to ask if they wished to confirm any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable and/or Ordinary Interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda.

As noted on the Agenda, Members and Officers should make their declaration by stating:

a) the item they have the Interest in
b) whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable or Ordinary Interest
c) the nature of the Interest

d) if it is an Ordinary Interest whether they intend to temporarily leave the meeting for the discussion and vote
e) if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Registrable Interest, they must temporarily leave the meeting for the discussion and vote.

They then need to re-declare their Interest and the nature of the Interest at the commencement of the item or when the Interest becomes apparent. They should request that it be recorded in the Minutes that they will leave the meeting and will neither take part in discussion, nor vote on the item.

As per the Agenda, it is each Member's own responsibility to notify the Monitoring Officer of all Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable or Ordinary Interests notifiable under the Council's Code of Conduct, not already recorded on their Register of Interests Form, within 28 days.

The Chair reminded Members to declare their Interests as any arise or again at the relative point in the meeting if they have already.

There were no declarations of Interest at this time

21. RATIFICATION OF AND WELCOME TO THE CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE AS VOTED ON BY ALLOTMENT HOLDERS AT THE AGM DATED 27th OCTOBER 2025

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

Members **RATIFIED** the chosen Representatives and **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Environmental and Leisure Committee, the co-option of Mr. Paul Goodchild and Mr. Colin Penfold (Original Site) and Mrs. Louise Russell and Mr. Phil Fortin (Re-Established Site) as Tenant Representatives for the 2025-2026 allotments year.

22. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th AUGUST 2025

The Chair advised that a Member had requested an amendment to Minute 16 of the draft Minutes, of the meeting held on 18th August 2025, which read as:

"The Councillor was unable to provide examples of suitable alternatives."

It was proposed that this be re-worded as follows: -

"The Councillor provided examples of other suitable alternatives."

With the Sub-Committee agreeing that the proposed amendment be made, they subsequently **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2025 as an accurate record, and these were signed by the Chair.

23. CLERK'S REPORT

23.1 18th August 2025 – Min. 9 To note the arrangements for future Health & Safety Inspections at the Allotments

The Sub-Committee Clerk reminded Members that at the previous meeting it had been noted that the next Health & Safety Inspection would be conducted in November on a Tuesday (anytime), Wednesday or Thursday (am only). Cllr. Batley had confirmed his availability to attend but the Sub-Committee Clerk was seeking the support of another Member to help on Wednesday 12th November at 10.00am. Cllr. Mrs. Warr advised that she would try to attend.

23.2 18th August 2025 – Min. 11 Reports from Co-Opted Allotment Holders, including report on plot conditions

At the previous meeting a Tenant Representative raised their concerns regarding the alleyways being overgrown with nettles, brambles and bindweed. It was suggested that at the next Liaison Meeting with Arun District Council (ADC), they be reminded of their responsibility to keep the alleyways clear.

Feedback from the Liaison Meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive of ADC, when they last met on the 9th September 2025, advised that the responsibility for overgrowth clearance was unclear. The Housing Officer for the area has been tasked to make enquiries about the current contractor responsible for the area. GIS mapping shows that the 2 alleyways in question surround Council-owned properties. There is a possibility that this could fall into a responsibility of West Sussex County Council.

More information may become available at the next Liaison Meeting on 2nd December 2025.

23.3 Following a query raised at the previous meeting concerning Plots 10a and 10b, the Sub-Committee Clerk advised that 10a was now vacant and would be re-allocated.

24. RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE AND RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

A Member stated they felt the cost to remove the decomposing fox was expensive and queried whether the fox might have been buried, though they did further acknowledge that to do so might risk other foxes digging it up. A brief discussion was had concerning Town Force and whether they might be able to assist but those present were advised that pest control was not part of their service offering.

The Sub-Committee Clerk explained that they had contacted three pest control companies, two of whom said they did not undertake this type of work. As the fox was deteriorating, the Clerk felt they should not leave it longer than necessary on the allotments and subsequently asked the remaining company to undertake the work.

The following costs were **RATIFIED** by the Sub-Committee: -

- Purchase of All-weather Combi Padlock - £76.63 including VAT (charged to the Gravits Lane Maintenance Budget)
- Removal of decomposing fox - £65.00 excluding VAT (charged to the Gravits Lane Maintenance Budget)
- Engraving of Shields for annual Allotment Awards - £47.50 excluding VAT (charged to the Allotments Competition Budget)
- 15 Allotments 1st/2nd/3rd Planter Shaped Signs - £166.50 including VAT (funded from Earmarked Reserves)

Sub-Committee Members **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** the approval of the above expenditure to the Environmental and Leisure Committee.

Cllr. Dawes arrived to the Meeting

25. ANNUAL REVIEW OF RENTAL CHARGES

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

The Sub-Committee Clerk read out information relating to current inflation rates and the predicted forecast for inflation by Q4 2026. In addition, they detailed the current rental per square meter for Bognor Regis Allotment Tenants and shared details of other town/parish council allotment arrangements by way of providing some comparisons.

Members sought further information concerning current running costs of the allotment sites, including water and the services of Town Force, which was not available for this meeting.

After some discussion, Members felt that they had insufficient information to make a fair and reasonable decision at this time. As it was necessary to agree any changes to the rental charges before the end of the Financial Year, it was **AGREED** to call an Extraordinary Allotments Sub-Committee Meeting on 5th January 2026 at 5.30pm to further discuss this matter. The Sub-Committee Clerk agreed to provide additional information in relation to running costs, including the services of Town Force, at this time.

26. REPORT ON LETTINGS

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

27. REPORTS FROM CO-OPTED ALLOTMENT HOLDERS, INCLUDING REPORT ON PLOT CONDITIONS

A Tenant Representative said foxes were hugely problematic on the allotments. A Member enquired whether the issues with foxes was new. The Tenant Representatives advised the foxes were rampant and very destructive. It was also noted that foxes were being fed eggs, but Tenant Representatives suspected this might be nearby residents, or foxes delving in to rubbish, that may be left outside the local Co-Op.

Cllr. Stanley arrived to the Meeting

28. TO FURTHER CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF TWO NOTICEBOARDS FOR THE ALLOTMENT SITES, DEFERRED FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING – MIN. 14 REFERS

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

Some Members expressed their concern at the prices shared in the report, believing that the low cost of the noticeboards quoted reflected a potentially poor quality that would not be robust enough to withstand the elements, therefore failing to be value for money. It was suggested that noticeboards in the region of £150 each may be more suitable, and it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would provide quotes for more expensive noticeboards with a report brought back to a future meeting.

Additionally, it was **AGREED** that the Sub-Committee Clerk would speak with the Town Force Manager to enquire whether it may be feasible for Town Force to make a noticeboard.

Whilst it was felt that attracting sponsorship for the noticeboards was preferred, it was **AGREED** that further consideration of this should be **DEFERRED** until a future meeting.

Members **AGREED** that Tenants may swap plots, whether that be to upsize or downsize, when suitable plots become available, in liaison with the Allotments and In Bloom Officer, and further **AGREED** that this may be undertaken at any time of year. If this arrangement were to become an administrative burden, Members advised that they would be willing to review this.

Cllr. Woodall left the Meeting, therefore, the Vice-Chair, Cllr. Batley, took the Chair

29. TO CONSIDER ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE BAN ON HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES, AS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING HELD ON 18th AUGUST 2025 – MIN. 16 REFERS

Members agreed that a statement could be read from Chichester Beekeeping Association Committee, expressing their concern that the Committee's current policy on the use of herbicides and pesticides at the allotments may be amended.

A Tenant Representative advised that whilst they chose not to do any spraying others on the allotment preferred to spray, though often for very specific reasons. The Committee Clerk stated that at the Allotments AGM a Tenant had expressed a preference for using herbicides and pesticides but when spraying with extreme caution to avoid contaminating other plots.

Members **AGREED** that each Allotment Tenant should be written to, asking them to vote on the matter, with a decision on any amendments to the ban on herbicides and pesticides **DEFERRED** to a future meeting.

Cllr. Wells left the Meeting

30. TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE ALLOTMENTS INFORMATION LEAFLET FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL REVIEW – MIN. 12 REFERS

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report, and the copy of the current Allotments Information leaflet attached, was **NOTED**.

All Members **AGREED** to the proposed revisions and further **AGREED** that the leaflet could be distributed, but the clause referring to herbicides and pesticides should remain unchanged until such time the matter could be re-visited at a future meeting. It was further **AGREED** that, with the their agreement, details of West Sussex Wildlife Protection Trust be included as a reference for injured animals.

Cllr. Wells returned to the Meeting

31. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS RAISED BY THE TENANTS AT THE AGM ON 27th OCTOBER 2025 THAT ARE NOT SEPARATE AGENDA ITEMS

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

There was a discussion around the number of plots that some Tenants held, with the most currently being 5. It was explained by a Tenant Representative that there were legacy reasons for this, as the plots sizes were smaller when the Tenants in question were subsequently offered multiple plots. They illustrated this by saying that the number of plots these individuals held were equal to another Tenant Representative who only had one large plot. In relation to Tenants with multiple plots, and where there was concern that these plots were not being maintained, Members unanimously **AGREED** that adequate protocols existed and therefore it was unnecessary to apply a limit to the number of plots any individual Tenant might have.

The impact of the foxes on site was also discussed and Members unanimously **AGREED** that, prior to paying for any advice, the Sub-Committee Clerk should speak with West Sussex Wildlife Protection Trust to see if they were able to provide any advice on fox management.

32. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

The Meeting closed at 6.40pm