



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY 11th NOVEMBER 2014

PRESENT: Cllrs. P. Dillon (Chairman), S. Reynolds and W. Toovey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. P. Carpenter, Mr. C. Penfold and Mrs. L. Russell (Tenants' Representatives)
Sheila Green (Allotment Committee Clerk)

The Meeting opened at 6.30pm

15. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed those present. Apologies had been received from Cllrs. J. Brooks and Mrs. J Warr and Tenant Representative Mrs. T. Griffiths.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and/or Ordinary interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda

Members and Officers should declare an interest by stating:-

- a) The item they have an interest in
- b) Whether it is an Ordinary interest and the nature of the interest
- c) Whether it is also a Disclosable Pecuniary interest

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.

In accordance with good practice, individual forms were available to those Councillors present in order that they could personally record their interests - both Disclosable Pecuniary and Ordinary. These forms should be returned to the Committee Clerk at the end of the meeting to enable all declarations of interest to be accurately recorded in the Minutes. Members were reminded that it is their responsibility to notify the Monitoring Officer of all Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, not already recorded on their Register of Interests Form, within 28 days.

17. RATIFICATION OF THE CO-OPTED MEMBERS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE AGM HELD ON 28th OCTOBER 2014 OF MR. P. CARPENTER, MRS. T. GRIFFITHS, MR. C. PENFOLD AND MRS. L. RUSSELL AS CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** ratification of the appointment of Mr. P. Carpenter, Mrs. T. Griffiths, Mr. C. Penfold and Mrs. L. Russell.

18. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17th JUNE 2014**

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th June 2014.

19. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES WHICH ARE NOT SEPARATE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no matters arising.

20. **CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS AT THE AGM HELD ON THE 28th OCTOBER 2014 INCLUDING PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE AND RENTS**

Public Liability Insurance: Concerns had been raised at the AGM regarding correspondence from the Town Council advising that each tenant should be in receipt of public liability insurance to cover any third party claim as a result of an accident on their plot should this arise. The Committee Clerk clarified the position as there had been some concern regarding the extent of the cover and its requirement. Whilst the Town Council does have third party public liability it is a requirement that plot holders carry their own public liability insurance to protect themselves from claims from other plot holders and the public should an injury be caused or sustained through their negligence: i.e. if a rake was left out and another plot holder stood on it and sustained an injury the owner of the rake could be deemed as liable. Most household insurance policies include this liability cover and tenants are advised to check their policies and confirm to the Committee Clerk in writing that cover is in place. The Co-opted Members confirmed that they were happy with this and would clarify the situation with other tenants.

Rents: There were a couple of issues raised regarding rents. The first was the disparity between the cost of plots in relation to the size and how the rents are calculated. The other was the percentage of the rent increase applied for 2014/15.

A Co-opted Member had supplied some statistics of plot sizes which highlighted the disparity of, size to charge ratio, between the original site and the re-established site. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that they were aware of this and had gradually been trying to bring the situation into line. The statistics given were in rods, which although is a standard way of measuring allotment plots, it is not a method that has been applied on the Gravits Lane allotments so could not really be used as a bench mark. The rental increase that had been applied for 2014/15 was £1.00 for small plots, £2.00 for medium and £3.00 for large. The Chairman referred to previous Minutes, Min. 8 11th June 2013, where discussion regarding rent increases had taken place and the Co-opted Members had felt that more expensive plots would encourage better husbandry. Also Min. 34 5th November 2013 where following discussion, the suggested increases had been **AGREED** to be fair by the Sub-Committee and the Tenant Representatives. It was also highlighted that the increase was the first to be applied since 2010. The Chairman also reported that the annual income generated from rents was approx. £1,600.00 and that expenditure to date was £3,500.00 with another 6 months to run. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the disparity in plot sizes and charges between the two sites and will investigate ways to rectify this however; any changes they may decide upon would not take effect until 2015/16. A Co-opted Member asked if there could be concessionary rates applied for this year for special circumstances and the Committee Clerk responded that this was not possible as a decision on the rents for 2014/15 had already been made.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to further discussion on how rent and plot sizes are calculated for 2015/16 and asked the Committee Clerk to make this an Agenda item for the June 2015 Sub-Committee Meeting.

21. **CONSIDERATION TO REPLACE/REPAIR SMALL WOODEN GATE ON ORIGINAL SITE**

The small wooden gate on the original site is completely rotten and beyond repair. Estimated replacement costs including materials, fitting & fixtures and labour totalled £131.25 + VAT. One of the Sub-Committee Members suggested an alternative option that may result in a saving. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the costs for replacement would be approved up to £131.25 + VAT and the Committee Clerk would liaise with the Sub-Committee Member.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** this expenditure should it be required.

22. **CONSIDERATION OF ALLOTMENT WATCH INITIATIVE BY SUSSEX POLICE**

The Committee Clerk reported that Sussex Police had launched a new Allotment Watch initiative following a spate of break-ins and reported suspicious behavior at allotments sites over the County. The idea is that when suspicious activity is reported it is immediately emailed to participating allotment holders who can then arrange for a presence on site which is effective in deterring criminal activity. The Committee Clerk asked the representatives to let her know which allotment members would be willing to participate and allow her to use their email address for this purpose.

23. **RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE £33.04 FOR REFRESHMENTS AT AGM HELD ON 28TH OCTOBER 2014**

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** this expenditure.

24. **CONSIDERATION OF HOW TO PROCEED WITH THE PRESENTATION OF THE SHARON STUBBINGS MEMORIAL ROSE BOWL**

The Sharon Stubbing Memorial Rose Bowl is awarded by Cllr. Mrs. J. Warr in memory of her daughter. As Cllr. Mrs. J. Warr was not in attendance it was **AGREED** to defer this item until the next meeting.

25. **HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT AT THE ALLOTMENTS**

The Chairman reported that the last Health & Safety Risk Assessment carried out at the allotments was much improved and there were very few incidents to address. Assessments would continue and he hoped that the improved situation would continue.

26. **REPORT ON LETTINGS**

The Committee Clerk reported that there were currently four vacant plots. Rents are still outstanding on another fourteen plots and final reminders had been sent. If payment is not forthcoming within the next few days, Notice to Quit letters would be issued.

27. **REPORTS FROM ALLOTMENT HOLDERS INCLUDING REPORT ON CONDITIONS OF PLOTS**

The Committee Clerk asked new representatives if they could report any plots that had been allowed to get into a poor condition or any areas of concern to the office. A Co-opted Member highlighted a couple of plots on the re-established site that needed attention and it was agreed that the Committee Clerk would arrange for letters to be sent.

28. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence has been received from a tenant with regard to the rental increases applied for 2014/15. Whilst some of the issues had been dealt with under agenda item 6 there were other points that would need to be addressed. An Extraordinary Meeting will be arranged after the Council has had time to investigate the allegations and challenges raised in the correspondence and the Committee Clerk will notify the Sub-Committee and Co-opted Members of the date in due course

The Meeting closed at 7.30pm