



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 18th AUGUST 2025

PRESENT:

Cllrs: K. Batley, D. Dawes, Mrs. J. Warr, P. Wells,
M. White and P. Woodall

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. I. Cross (Allotments & In Bloom Officer)
Mrs. J. Davis (Deputy Clerk)
Mr. P. Goodchild (Tenant Representative)
Mr. C. Penfold (Tenant Representative)
Mrs. L. Russell (Tenants Representative)

The Meeting opened at 6.30pm

1. TO APPOINT A NEW CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

Having been Chair of the Sub-Committee for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year, Cllr. Woodall opened the meeting by stating the need to formally elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair for the Sub-Committee. Following a vote, it was **AGREED** that Cllr. Woodall would continue as Chair and Cllr. Batley would be Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2025 - 2026.

2. 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.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. R. Nash, Miss. C. Needs and P. Ralph. The Clerk recommended that the reasons given were acceptable. These absences were **APPROVED** by Members.

There were no apologies received from Cllr. M. Stanley, and these could not therefore be approved.

4. 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

5. TO RATIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF MR. P. FORTIN AS A CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE AS NOMINATED, VIA EMAIL, AFTER THE AGM DATED 24th OCTOBER 2024

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

Members **RATIFIED** the chosen Representative and **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Environmental and Leisure Committee, the co-option of Mr. Phil Fortin (Re-Established Site) as Tenant Representative for the 2024-2025 allotments year and that this be recommended to council for approval.

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4th NOVEMBER 2024

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2024 as an accurate record, and these were the signed by the Chair.

7. **CLERK'S REPORT**

7.1 **17th June 2024 – Min. 15 Arrangements for the judging of the Annual Awards**

The Sub-Committee Clerk said she had circulated an email to Councillors requesting volunteers to judge the allotments. Whilst Cllr. Batley had initially come forward, a change in personal circumstances meant he had been unable to complete the judging. Cllr. Batley confirmed he was still willing to judge. The Sub-Committee Clerk said she would circulate a further email and asked the Councillors to respond. Cllr. Mrs. Warr said she would be willing to assist.

Cllr. Batley said the judging sheets he had previously received did not contain all the information required, resulting in a significant number of plots missing from the paperwork. The Sub-Committee Clerk said she would review the material and email updated sheets to both Cllrs. Batley and Mrs. Warr so they might complete the judging.

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

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

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

- Shingle for pathway reinstatement - £15.00 (charged to the Gravits Lane Maintenance Budget).

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

9. **REPORT ON THE ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY INSPECTION HELD ON 6th MAY 2025, SITE VISIT CONDUCTED ON 23rd JULY 2025, AND TO NOTE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUTURE HEALTH & SAFETY INSPECTIONS AT THE ALLOTMENTS – MIN. 35 REFERS**

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report was **NOTED**, along with the requirement of the next Health & Safety inspection to be carried out in November.

10. **REPORT ON LETTINGS**

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

In reference to the significant number of fruit trees on a few plots resembling 'orchards', as referred to in the report, a Tenant Representative stated that these historically had been permitted, but this was not the situation for any new plots. A comment was made that current allotment guidelines stated only fruit trees are permitted to be grown. A Member observed that the situation became problematic when the roots of these fruit trees spread.

The Vice-Chair said during his last visit with the previous Sub-Committee Clerk he had observed 4 new fir trees. Further discussion was had regarding the impact of fir trees and whether existing firs might be re-planted into pots. This was not considered an option due to their potential growth and height. A Councillor queried whether it would be worth asking local schools if they might like a fir tree which might then be used as a living Christmas tree.

The treehouse referred to in the report had, it was believed, been in situ for at least 5 years. A Member asked what other allotment users thought of the treehouse, to which a Representative said some were concerned, others were not. A fellow Representative stated that the number of buildings in general on plots was increasing whether that were greenhouses or polytunnels. Those present were reminded that during an earlier meeting it was agreed that 70% of the plot must be for growing. It was observed that anyone wishing to put a structure on their allotment needs permission and this provision already existed within the Allotment Information Leaflet.

It was suggested that it might be helpful to distribute a census to tenants asking them to confirm what they had on their individual plots, for example any structures, trees. In addition, it would also be helpful to have photos of each plot and for tenants to be reminded of the permissions they needed to have concerning structures and play equipment.

It was **AGREED** by all Members that orchard trees, and other trees that produce edible produce such as Olive and Bay trees could be grown on allotment plots, however the growing of fir trees is not permitted.

It was further **AGREED** by all Members that existing treehouses were a legacy issue and therefore it was not appropriate to ask tenants to dismantle them, however, as highlighted in the Allotment Information Leaflet (Clause 23) such equipment was no longer permitted from June 2024.

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

A Tenant Representative said 4 plots on the Gravits Lane site due for re-letting would need strimming.

It was also highlighted that foxes on the site continued to present a problem, and the alleyways were overgrown with nettles, brambles and bindweed, which the foxes tended to hide in. It was noted that Arun District Council was responsible for this land, but they had not cleared it. Comment was made concerning the problems with rubbish left by residents in the same alley ways. It was recognised that ideally, Arun District Council should clear their land particularly as the fire service would need access in the event of a fire. It was understood that the previous Sub-Committee Clerk had written to Arun District Council on this matter, however there was uncertainty as to whether any response had been received. It was **AGREED** the Sub-Committee Clerk would establish whether a letter had been sent to Arun District Council and if so, what the outcome might be.

Reference was made to an overgrowing tree in a private garden adjacent to plot 109 and that in the path by Hawthorn Road seeds were starting to grow in the alleyway. These needed to be removed before they became too big. A Member suggested that the Clerk should contact Dan Cox from Arun District Council, and that ADC's responsibility for clearing the alleyway be raised at the next Liaison Meeting.

The Representative continued to report that there had been issues with people going on to other people's plots and picking produce.

Comment was made regarding the hedge that divides the two sites and Members were reminded that at a previous meeting they had agreed that the hedge should be higher, although this appeared not to have been minuted. With Town Force continuing to keep the hedge cut low, it was felt if the hedge were higher it would act as a wind break, and it was understood that the Town Force Team had the tools to be able to maintain a higher hedge. A tenant had recommended that the hedge should be allowed to grow for 2-3 years then 'laid'.

All Members **AGREED** that the hedge should be allowed to grow, with the sides being maintained and weeded, with a decision as to whether the hedge should be cut taken at each Sub-Committee Meeting.

A query was raised around plots 10a and 10b which needed weeding with the Clerk advising these would be investigated.

In closing, reference was made to the new panel fencing which had recently replaced the previous 5 bar gate. Its longevity was questioned, and it was felt that due to its weight it was hazardous. Additionally, it could not be locked as access was required to the sub-station.

12. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ALLOTMENTS INFORMATION LEAFLET

The Sub-Committee Clerk's report, and the Allotment Information Leaflet attached, was **NOTED**.

It was stated that the existing Clause 3 encompasses 'treehouses', as large play equipment. A suggestion was made that it would be helpful to illustrate the point by stating what might constitute large play equipment by using the following words: "such as" and "but not limited to".

There was discussion about children on the allotment sites with concerns raised in relation to them running around, particularly when there were greenhouses present.

With existing guidelines stating that children should remain in their respective tenants' plots, it was suggested that the signage on site should be re-visited with a reminder that parents were responsible for their child's safety when on site.

A Member sought clarification concerning the use of netting on the allotment

sites as this could cause problems for hedgehogs. Generally, it was felt that there had been a downturn in the number of hedgehogs, with them about to appear on the 'red list', and there were few instances reported of hedgehogs getting caught in netting.

It was suggested contact be made with Brent Lodge and Sussex Wildlife inviting them to conduct site visits and provide advice on foxes and hedgehogs etc. It was proposed and Members **AGREED** that the emergency contact numbers of both Brent Lodge and Sussex Wildlife be added to the Allotment Leaflets.

All Members **AGREED** the changes to the name of the Sub-Committee Clerk and date. It was further **AGREED** that Clause 3 of the Allotment Information Leaflet be expanded to include the words "such as" and "but not limited to", and that Clause 4 be amended to include trees that produce edible produce such as Olive and Bay trees also be permitted.

13. TO NOTE DATE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ON MONDAY 27th OCTOBER 2025 AND TO CONSIDER ARRANGEMENTS

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

All Members **AGREED** the proposed date and time for the Annual Meeting of Allotment Holders as being 27th October 2025 at 7.00pm.

Members also **AGREED** to the provision of refreshments and **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** a budget of up to £50.00 for light refreshments to be provided at the event, to be funded from the Competition Budget.

14. TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF TWO NOTICEBOARDS FOR THE ALLOTMENT SITES, AS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING HELD ON 4th NOVEMBER 2024 – MINS. 31.2 AND 31.5 REFER

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

Whilst the previous Sub-Committee Clerk had provided quotations for notice boards at the November meeting, it was unclear as to what size these boards were. All Members **AGREED** to **DEFER** any decision on this agenda item, allowing for further research to be undertaken to identify larger boards, that might be either free standing or attached to the shelter or fencing, with a report to be brought back to the November meeting.

It was also **AGREED** that any discussion regarding the potential of swapping plots be **DEFERRED** until such time the provision of notice boards is decided.

15. UPDATE ON FENCING OF THE ELECTRICITY SUBSTATION ACCESS AREA, FUNDED BY THE SAFER ARUN PARTNERSHIP – MIN. 33 REFERS

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

A Member asked the Tenant Representatives whether they felt the

installation of the new fencing at the entrance to the Bognor Regis Town Council Allotments represented an improvement. It was noted there was no rubbish at present, which was felt to be an improvement on the previous situation.

Cllr. Wells left the Meeting

16. TO CONSIDER ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE BAN ON HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES, AS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING HELD ON 4th NOVEMBER 2024 – MIN. 39 REFERS

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

A Councillor said they had become aware of some research showing that the use of phosphate pellets was not as good as first thought. The view now held seemed to suggest worms absorbed the iron, subsequently causing them a problem. The Councillor was asked whether they had any alternative suggestions as they felt they had tried many different methods with little success and felt tenants should be able to use something on their plots. The Councillor was unable to provide examples of suitable alternatives.

Cllr. Wells returned to the Meeting

A Tenant Representative observed that the inability to use herbicides had contributed to the problem with overgrown alleyways mentioned earlier in the meeting.

It was recognised that the use of herbicides and pesticides was a controversial topic, but comment was made that farmers had to use something to maintain their crops and produce something to eat. Additionally, it was noted that it would be disheartening for tenants to try and grow crops for them only to be ruined, therefore it was considered appropriate for tenants to be able to use something albeit in moderation, such as household weedkillers.

It was **AGREED** the Sub-Committee Clerk would do further research in relation to what neighbouring councils permit by way of the use of herbicides and pesticides on their allotments, and that suggested wording for the Town Council Allotment Information Leaflet would be presented to Members at the next meeting for their consideration. It was noted that any agreed changes to the use of herbicides and pesticides would need to be reflected in the Tenancy Agreement.

17. CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee **NOTED** receipt of correspondence as detailed in the list previously circulated.

The Meeting closed at 7.43pm