

RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 16th August 2016 at 9.30am at
THE PAVILION, KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD,
BULL LANE, RAYLEIGH

PRESENT

Councillors: D Sperring, Mrs M Spencer, C Lumley, E Dray, J Lawmon and C Stanley

Allotment Representatives: Mr F Bartlett – Lower Wyburns
Mr A Wilson – Grove Road
Mr S Skinner – Kenilworth Gardens
Mrs S Howell – Sweyne Park

In attendance: Mrs P Allard – Committee Clerk
Miss K Gaiger – Committee Clerk
1 Member of Public

1. ELECTION OF SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Mrs M Spencer proposed and Cllr E Dray seconded that Cllr D Sperring be chairman of the Allotments sub-committee for the ensuing municipal year.

RESOLVED that Cllr D Sperring is the Chairman of the Allotments sub-committee for the ensuing municipal year.

2. ELECTION OF SUB-COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN

Members agreed not to elect a Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED not to elect a Vice-Chairman

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs D Sperring and C Stanley declared a non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to Rochford District Council by virtue of being members of that Council.

Cllr Mrs M Spencer declared an interest in Anglia in Bloom as she is a judge.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted and agreed the Terms of Reference for the Allotments Sub Committee. (annex attached)

RECOMMENDED that this information is noted

5. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr A Gregory from Kenilworth Garden Allotment Association was present and spoke on minute no. 11 (d).

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Mrs C Callis and Site Representative, Mr R Dray gave their apologies.

7. SUBSTITUTES

There were no substitutes

8. MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENT SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS held on 23rd February 2016. To receive and sign the minutes as a correct record. (copy attached)

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes

9. SITE REPRESENTATIVES

All current representatives agreed to continue for another year. Members encouraged site representatives to liaise with each other and discuss matters in common.

RECOMMENDED that the above information be noted.

10. GROVE ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE

i) Site Representative's Report

Members received a verbal report from the site representative and there were no issues regarding health and safety.

ii) Uncultivated Plots

Members noted that a site inspection had been carried out and there were 3 ½ uncultivated plots. Approach ways and vacant plots have all been strimmed.

iii) Waiting List

Members noted that there were 2 ½ plots vacant and that there was one person on the waiting list.

iv) Perimeter Fence

Members were informed that there had been several incidents of vandalism to the perimeter fence. Members agreed that a full replacement fence was not within budget this year and opted to replace three damaged panels with 2.4m high palisade fencing at a cost of £820.00. Members were informed that the barbed wire present would be removed immediately. A member suggested that the large tree adjacent to the fence could be pruned back of its branches and painted with anti-climb to deter access. The Chairman of the Committee stated that he would discuss the possibility with the District Council.

v) Shed

Members were informed that the shed has been treated with paint.

vi) Fly Tipping

Members were informed that recent fly tipping at Grove Road would not be tolerated and the tipping on this occasion would be cleared by the Town Council. The site representative was told to be vigilant and inform all tenants to be aware of anyone suspicious.

RECOMMENDED that a) replace three panels of perimeter fence at a cost of £820 b) the committee chairman contact the District Council regards pruning and painting the adjacent tree to deter climbing and the c) the rest of the information be noted.

11 KENILWORTH GARDENS ALLOTMENT SITE

a) Site Representative's Report

Members received a verbal report from the site representative and there were no issues regarding health and safety but did raise issues regarding uncultivated plots which had been noted by the Town Council on their inspection.

b) Uncultivated Plots

Members noted that a site inspection had been carried out and letters had been sent to 4 tenants regarding the condition of their plots.

c) Waiting List

Members noted that all plots are allocated and at present there are 4 on the waiting list.

d) Kenilworth Gardens Allotment Association

Members received a verbal report from Mr Gregory, Kenilworth Gardens Allotment Association regarding the proposed delivery drop off area. A site visit had been conducted by the Sub-committee chairman and committee clerk. It was noted that the proposed access gate would need to be relocated to the corner opposite the scout hut due to the driveway of the adjacent property. A groundworks quote had been received of £2,000.00 to create access, install hardstanding and lower the manhole cover at this point.

The Committee Chairman advised members that the Town Council was not against the proposal, however the Kenilworth Gardens Allotment Association would have to apply for grant funding. The Town Council may be able to provide a contribution towards the project if funding was successful. A member asked how much the Allotment budget was for the municipal year and the committee noted the amount. Cllr C Lumley would liaise with the Site Representative and the Association to assist with grant application process.

The Association was reminded that they would have to consult with the neighbouring properties and the District Council regarding planning permission and were to keep the Town Council informed of all developments.

It was suggested that some companies could deliver directly onto the site, over the fence, or install a removable panel and therefore the drop off area could be an unnecessary expense.

The Committee Chairman informed members that if the drop off area was installed all deliveries would need to be moved to the required plot on the same day to avoid

stockpiling of goods. If the Town Council received reports of the area becoming untidy with supplies the use would be terminated.

e) Boundary Fence

Members noted that a property in Langdon Road no longer has a rear boundary fence in place. The Town Council received advice from its solicitor who advised that it would be difficult for the Town Council to enforce the neighbour to erect a rear fence. It is hoped that once the building work had been carried out at this property a fence would be installed by the owner. The Town Council will monitor the situation.

Members noted that a tenant had reported to the Town Council office that a small number of crops and tools have been taken from their plot. There is no evidence that entry has been gained via the property in Langdon Road. All tenants should be reminded that they must remove valuable tools from site or lock them away securely and not to take crops from other plots without prior permission.

RECOMMENDED that a) Kenilworth Gardens Allotment Association to apply for grant funding for the proposed delivery drop off area and to keep the Town Council informed of developments b) The Town Council to monitor the installation of a boundary fence from the property in Langdon Road and c) the rest of the information be noted.

12. LOWER WYBURNS ALLOTMENT SITE

i) Site Representative's Report

Members noted that Mr R Dray and Mr F Bartlett have agreed to take on the role of Site Representatives for Lower Wyburns allotments. Members received a verbal report from the site representative and there were no issues regarding health and safety.

ii) Uncultivated Plots

Members noted that a site inspection had been carried out and there are 5 uncultivated plots. Letters have been sent to relevant tenants.

iii) Waiting List

Members were informed that there were no people on the waiting list.

iv) Manure

Members noted that for the last six months manure has been dropped by the farmer on the last Sunday of the month and the tenants are clearing the manure on the same day as delivery.

v) Mares tail

Members noted that further to minute no 30 (vii) of the Allotment sub committee meeting held on 23rd February 2016, the District Council has been contracted to treat the marestail with three more applications and that to date one application has been applied. Members were informed that the mares tail is spreading to an adjacent plot from the woodland and it was agreed to liaise with the tenant and the District Council to treat the plot, and also to apply extra applications to mares tail growing through the rear fenced from the woodland.

vi) Perimeter fence

Members were informed that following a recent site inspection it was noted that tenants were storing their garden tools etc against the perimeter fence and that a letter has been sent to the tenants asking for immediate removal. The Site Representative was asked to check clearance and report back to the Town Council.

RECOMMENDED that a) the town council liaise with tenant and the District Council to treat affected allotment plot, b) request an extra application of spraying of chemicals on a section of mares tail pushing through the rear fence from the woodland c) the site representative to check that tools have been removed from the perimeter fence and report back to the Town Council and d) the rest of the information be noted.

13. SWEYNE PARK ALLOTMENT SITE

a) Site Representative's Report

Members received a verbal report from the site representative and there were no issues regarding health and safety but did raise issues regarding uncultivated plots which had been noted by the Town Council on their inspection.

b) Uncultivated Plots

Members noted that a site inspection had been carried out and letters had been sent to 7 tenants regarding the condition of their plots.

c) Waiting List

Members noted that there are currently 3 on the waiting list.

d) Approach Way and Car Park

Further to minute no 31 vi) of the Allotment Sub Committee meeting held on 23rd February 2016 members received a quote of £1,500.00 to dig out and lay a new ground surface on the approach way to the site and agreed to continue with the contractor filling in potholes as necessary.

RECOMMENDED that the above information be noted.

14. GENERAL MAINTENANCE

Members noted that there were no maintenance problems at any of the sites and were informed that it had been suggested that any committee councillors that live near sites should have a key for emergency entry and regular inspections. After discussion it was decided that the site representatives and committee clerks would continue with their regular inspections and if a committee councillor wished to have a key to visit a site, they were to liaise with the office. It was requested that the committee clerks inform the committee members and site representatives when an inspection is scheduled.

Site representatives were reminded again that uncultivated plots, vandalism, fly tipping and any other problems must be reported to the Town Council immediately.

RECOMMENDED that a) the committee clerks inform the committee members and site representatives when an inspection is scheduled and b) the rest of the above information be noted.

15 WATER USE

Members noted that the water at each site is turned off from the end of October to the end of March due to possible leaks and received a table of water bills to date.

RECOMMENDED that the above information be noted

16 TREES

Members received a quote of £225.00 to conduct a tree survey at three sites (Sweyne Park, Kenilworth Gardens and Grove Road) and agreed to accept.

RECOMMENDED to accept a quote for £225.00 to conduct a tree survey at all three sites (Sweyne Park, Kenilworth Gardens and Grove Road)

17 RAYLEIGH IN BLOOM – ALLOTMENTS COMPETITION 2016

Members noted that the Anglia in Bloom Judges visited Rayleigh on 5th July 2016 and were shown the town's floral and horticultural achievements. The results of the campaign will be known on 6th September 2016. Site representatives confirmed that the Allotment Competition results had been displayed on the site noticeboards.

RECOMMENDED that the above information be noted.

18 SHEDS/PATHWAYS/FENCING

Site representatives provided a verbal report regarding the condition of sheds, pathways and fencing. It was agreed to monitor the cracks in the floor at the shed at Sweyne Park Allotment site.

RECOMMENDED that the above information be noted.

19 GLASS ON ALLOTMENTS

Further to minute no. 188.2 of the Environment Committee meeting held on 7th March 2016 (attached), members noted that most tenants have modified their cold frames to house safety glass and that there were still some greenhouses remaining on sites with glass in. A member suggested that a sign should be put up on each site noticeboard to remind tenants that a removal charge would be implemented if a glass green house has not been removed or changed to safety standards by December 2016. All agreed.

RECOMMENDED that a) a sign is put on site noticeboards to remind tenants that a charge to remove an existing glass greenhouse would be implemented if it remained past December 2016 b) the rest of the information be noted.

20 FLY TIPPING/RELINQUISHED PLOTS

Members were informed that Essex County Council will be changing rules and regulations as far as Waste Disposal is concerned later this year and land, like Allotments, could be targeted. Members were told that it was imperative to remain vigilant within their own sites. A member suggested that a combination lock could be

put on the outer gate at Lower Wyburns allotment site, as fly tipping has occurred there before and the Woodland is also vulnerable, however this could be more of a prevention to RHS shop users and should be considered in more detail.

Members noted that the current policy for new tenants is to pay a £25 plot deposit and that the tenants are informed when they sign the agreement that, if they do not leave the plot tidy they will lose their deposit.

Members were informed that established tenants, i.e. over five to six years have not paid a deposit and therefore could leave their plot in a poor cultivated state and it would be left to the Town Council to pay a contractor to remove all rubbish on the plot before it is let out to the next tenant. Members agreed that all tenants that have not paid a deposit for their plot and key will have a charge fee included on their Annual Rent for 2017, members further agreed that tenants renting two plots, would have to pay a deposit per plot.

RECOMMEND that a) tenants that have not paid a deposit for their plot and key will have a charge fee included on their Annual Rent for 2017 and b) the rest of the information be noted.

21 ALLOTMENT PLOT VACANCY

Members noted that waiting lists have reduced at all sites and agreed to advertise on the Town Council Website and Rayleigh Review to create an interest to residents. Another option was to offer vacant plots to schools or charities, who may wish to use the areas, for a fixed term of 1 year in case demand from residents increases.

RECOMMENDED that a) to advertise vacancies on Town Council Website and Rayleigh Review and b) the rest of the information be noted.

22 TENANCY AGREEMENT

Members agreed that there were no changes to the Tenancy Agreement, however representatives and members were asked to let the office know if anything else needed adding. Site representatives received a copy of a site plan for their allotment and it was agreed that a number only plan was put up on each noticeboard .

RECOMMENDED a) that a number only site plan is put on each allotment noticeboard and b) the rest of the information be noted.

23 DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED Members agreed that the date for the next meeting of the Allotment Sub Committee would be later in the year.

The meeting closed at 10.58am

Chairman

Signature..... Date

