



Minutes of a meeting of the Gift of A. Burrow for Allotments Sub-Committee held on Thursday 15 August 2019 at 6.00pm at the Town Hall

Present: Councillors: Janet Johns (Chair), Mel Davey, Lloyd Knight & Ian Morton
Also Present: 2 no. Tiverton Road Allotment (non-Association) plot holders (Richard & Deborah Thorne)
Clerk: Maria Weston (Deputy Town Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES:** Received and accepted from Cllr. Andrews (unwell)

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT:** None.

NOTE: Cllr. Knight informed the Chair that he would need to leave the meeting at 6:20pm.

3. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: To receive questions from members of the public present at the meeting.**

Mr. & Mrs. Thorne informed members that whilst they did not have a question they had an interest in relation to Agenda item 8 – Allotment Rent. It was agreed they would be able to speak on this item at the appropriate stage of the meeting.

4. **MINUTES:** To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 July 2019.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2019 are approved and accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr. Davey Seconded: Cllr. Johns Vote: 3 no. in favour 1 no. abstention (as not present at the meeting)

5. **CULLOMPTON ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION:** To consider any matters that the Allotment Association wish to bring to the attention of the Trustees.

No members of the Association were present, however the Clerk advised Members that the Association had communicated (that in relation to Agenda item 8 – Allotment Rent) they would be concerned if the Council chooses to raise plot rents two years running.

6. **ALLOTMENT POLICY & SITE SECURITY: To receive update on the position with the new Allotment Policy and site security.**

The Clerk advised members that feedback (suggestions/comments) on the draft Allotment Policy for the Gift of A. Burrows (Burrows Field/Tiverton Rd) site had now been received from both Cullompton Allotment Association and Mr. & Mrs. Thorne (Non-Association plot holders);

The Clerk and Administrative Assistant were now in a position to progress finalising the policy document, incorporating appropriate amendments/additions/revisions as supplied.

NOTE: The Committee felt it would be of benefit for a Committee member to assist with finalising the Allotment Policy (prior to this being supplied to the Community Wellbeing Committee for their consideration and approval). It was agreed that Cllr. Johns would undertake this task. Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Johns to confirm the scheduled date to review the policy – If Cllr. Johns is unable to attend on this date then Clerk to contact Cllr. Knight who should be able to attend.

In terms of site security, the Clerk has arranged for an external contractor to assess the Burrows Field gates and to provide an estimate for any repairs that are necessary. The Contractor has also been asked to review the security of the site locks (key & code) and to make any recommendations.

7. FINANCES: To receive report detailing financial position. Noted.

NOTE: The Clerk highlighted the fact that the current balance in the Charity's account is fairly minimal at £ 227.17 and so this would need to be taken into account when determining any spend on items such as site security.

Cllr. Morton asked if were correct that there were no Debtors and the Clerk confirmed that yes, there were currently no Debtors

8. ALLOTMENT RENT: To agree the Allotment rents for 2020-21.

The Clerk informed members that:

- The current Allotment fees for the Burrows Field site are:

Full plot	£35.00
Half plot	£20.00
2 no. Half plots	£35.00

- Invoices are due to be sent out to plot holders in September;
- Plot holders must be given a year's notice of any change to their Allotment fees.

An in-depth discussion ensued about the Allotment plot charges, the arrangements for collecting the monies and why new plot holders were offered a year's free rental if their plot was in a bad condition.

The Clerk advised the current position:

- The Council, as sole trustees for the Gift of A. Burrows Charity, invoice both Association (Cullompton Allotment Association) and non-Association tenants for their Allotment rents.
- The Council collects the Cullompton Allotment Association subscription fees (currently £7.00) with the Administrative Assistant and Finance Officer involved in this (as they generate the invoices, make any changes to these where necessary e.g. amend invoices if a plot holder decides they do not wish to remain an Association member and pay fees to the Association). Discussion ensued and the question raised of why the Council was collecting monies on behalf of the Association. The Clerk advised that it was her understanding, that historically, the Association had collected their own fees but that approximately 2 no. years ago, the Trustees has agreed that the Council would do so. Members asked if the Association were charged an administration fee for this service, the Clerk said they were not. The Committee would like to discuss this matter further and the Clerk is to add this as an Agenda item for the next meeting.

- A year's free plot is offered to new tenants if their plot is in a 'bad' condition as the Council does not have maintenance staff available to undertake any clearance/tidy plots nor the funds available in the Trustees bank account to pay external contractors.

Discussion continued about setting the 2020-21 Allotment fees but it was agreed that as Members did not have a comprehensive breakdown of exactly what costs were associated with the running of the Allotment site e.g. water costs, the Committee could not make a decision on whether the current rates should be changed (increased). It was therefore agreed that the fees would remain as they are at present -

RESOLVED: That the Gift of A. Burrows (Burrows Field/Tiverton Road) Allotment site rental costs for 2020-21 will be:

Full plot	£35.00
Half plot	£20.00
2 no. Half plots	£35.00

Proposed: Cllr. Johns Seconded: Cllr. Morton Vote: All in favour

NOTE:

1. In the Summer of 2020 when the Trustees will consider Allotment plot rents for 2021-22, the Committee must have available, details of all expenses e.g. water costs for the site, administration costs associated with running the site, in order to make an informed decision as to what fees plot holders should be charged;
2. Regular water meter readings should be taken for the Allotment site and this task should be added to the Allotment Inspection Checklist.

9. **ALLOTMENT RENT INVOICES:** To approve sending Allotment rental invoices out via E-mail (where possible)

RESOLVED: The Committee are happy for the Council, as Trustees for the Gift of A. Burrows (Burrows Field/Tiverton Road) Allotment site, to send Allotment plot rental invoices out to tenants via E-mail, where possible.

Proposed: Cllr. Johns Seconded: Cllr. Davey Vote: All in favour

10. **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** Agreed as Thursday 19th September 2019 at 6:00pm at the Town Hall.

With no further business, the Chair thanked attendees and closed the meeting @ 6:50pm

It is certified these Minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Signed:

Name:

Date:/...../.....