

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the**

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Tuesday 7 August 2018 at 10 am

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors:** Barbara Newton (Chair)  
Freda Earl

**Allotment Reps:** John Eaton, Sunnyside  
John Fisher, Butts Meadow  
Diana Reay, Dellfield  
Jenny Sippings, Sunnyside

**Officers:** John Bushby, Town Warden  
Christine Jerram, Finance and Allotments Officer  
Janet Mason, Town Clerk

**OPENING MATTERS**

**AMT 22/18 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Elaine Collins; Geoff Halls (Sunnyside) and Keely Siddiqui Charlick (Sunnyside Rural Trust).

**AMT 23/18 Minutes of the previous Meeting**

- (i) To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 April 2018

The minutes were approved as a correct record and were signed by Cllr Newton.

- (ii) To review action arising from the previous meeting not covered on the agenda

AMT 17/18 (i) – The leak at Dellfield had been repaired;

AMT 17/18 (ii) – Dog Notices – Town Warden had put up appropriate signs;

AMT 17/18 (ii) – Cost of drainage work B Road Sunnyside – final costings awaited. To be progressed; **Action JE**

AMT 17/18 (ii) – Notices/logos – will be reviewed once Town Council staffing levels settle;

**Action Town Council**

AMT 18/18 (i) – Sunnyside Rural Trust defibrillator – In Keely's absence Janet reported that the Town Council's F & P Committee had approved a grant of £1,060.08 to the Trust to allow it to buy an outdoor cabinet for the defibrillator allowing access for allotment holders and others. Last time Janet had spoken to Keely the cabinet had been installed and she was waiting for it to be registered with the ambulance service. Janet would find out if this had yet occurred. Additionally, AMT members asked if a familiarisation session could be held for those interested. It was agreed that although the device was intended for use without the need for training, a short presentation on how it works would boost people's confidence in the event that it had to be deployed.

**Action Janet/Keely**

**AMT 24/18 Chairman's Communications**

None.

**AMT 25/18 Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

**FINANCE MATTERS**

**AMT 26/18 Income and Expenditure Report**

- (i) To consider the allotment income and expenditure at 30 June 2018

The report had been circulated with the agenda and was discussed. It was noted that the allotment reserves stood at £14,404. The proportion of allotment holders holding water licences was considered. At Butts Meadows JF said about 2/3 of plot holders paid for use of a licence; DR reported that at Dellfield 16 out of 52 paid for a licence; at Sunnyside it was around a 1/3.

It was noted for information that the Sunnyside Rural Trust lease was due for renewal in 2019 and this would be discussed between the Town Council and the Board of Trustees.

It was also noted that preparation of GDPR policies were nearing completion and that Janet had a further meeting scheduled with the Town Council's consultant later in the month.

## ALLOTMENT MATTERS

Colony system papers were circulated at the meeting

**AMT 27/18** To consider, as appropriate, allotment and plot inspection reports and other current matters at:

(i) Dellfield

DR gave an update and had already discussed a further water leak with the Town Warden caused by a faulty washer and that this would be attended to soon. She was pleased to note that the warning notices about problem dogs and their walkers had been put up. She would be e-mailing some holders of untidy plots but if there was no response she would ask for first warning letters to be sent. In conclusion she reported that currently there were 5 people on the waiting list and four vacancies.

(ii) Sunnyside Old and Sunnyside New.

JE reminded the group that the Sunnyside open day would be on Sunday 12 August 2018. He advised there were some water related niggles in that the ball cocks were prone to failure. JS asked for the details of the plumber that the Town Council was using at present and JM undertook to pass these to her. **Action Town Clerk**  
Water consumption was higher than normal at Sunnyside which he said was to be expected given the recent weather. Some further warning letters had recently been sent out by CJ and he reminded the Town Council that when notices were reviewed as mentioned above (AMT 28/18 (ii)) they should include a logo and name and also be laminated. In conclusion, JB undertook to have a look at a possible issue with netting at Grantham Mews entrance.

**Action Town Warden**

(iii) Butts Meadow

JF reported that he had 6 people on the waiting list and no vacancies at present although one plot holder may terminate in September. The plot holder mentioned last time required a letter. He listed other plots where the plot holder should also receive a letter as appropriate. **Action Allotment Officer**

He had received no feedback from the researcher from the University of Hertfordshire who had installed hedgehog detector boxes at the site. Janet said she would give her a call and see what the findings had been. **Action Town Clerk**

- (iv) To discuss recent allotment applications from Northchurch residents.

It was noted that the Town Council officers quite frequently receive enquiries from Northchurch residents about renting allotment plots in Berkhamsted. These are referred on to Northchurch Parish Council or appropriate authority if from other locations outside Berkhamsted. It was confirmed by all that this is the correct procedure to be followed.

**Action all**

### **AMT 28/18 Sunnyside Rural Trust**

In Keely's absence all items to be referred to next meeting.

- (i) Verbal update on activities as appropriate
- (ii) Possible improvements to the SRT gate and fencing at Sunnyside New as discussed to restrict access as discussed on 19 February and deferred from the 24 April meeting.

### **AMT 29/18 Allotment Rental and Other Charges**

To consider current charges and to make a recommendation for discussion and decision at the Full Council as to whether there should be any increase this autumn.

Sunnyside reps were of the view that an increase was not merited in view of the current budget figures and level of reserves. The possibility of combining water and land rent into one charge was mooted by JF. There was a discussion as to whether those paying for a hose licence were subsidising others. It was noted that the vast majority of allotment authorities in the area (as per CJ's research last year) do not separate out the two charges but have a combined figure which saves on admin costs (such costs are not currently allocated against allotment expenditure). JS reminded members that the separate charges had been established in the early 2000s and said it would be interesting to research the rationale used at that time. The possibility of combining the two charges in a figure that represented a reduced water charge and an increased land rent proportion of the total was also put forward by DR. JF thought such options might lead to a modest overall increase. It was noted that Sunnyside reps were not in favour.

In conclusion, it was **agreed** that more time was needed to research past changes, analyse historic water consumption figures and put forward future options for combining charges for discussion.

**Action Allotment Officer**

It was **agreed** that the above course of action would be reported to the Town Council at its 20 August meeting with a recommendation that for the coming allotment year (starting on 29 September 2018) rent and charges should remain unchanged. **Action Town Clerk**

**AMT 30/18 Water conservation/possible drought**

No drought has been declared. However, in general water usage had gone down recently reflecting responsible usage by allotment holders.

**AMT 31/18 Review of projects budgeted for in the current year** and in particular to consider whether the deer fencing should be installed round the whole site at SSN in view of recent deer activity.

The projects budgeted for in the current year were reviewed (deer fencing Sunnyside New; water supply extension at Sunnyside and tree work). Cllr Earl tabled a handful of beetroot which was all that remained of a potholder's crops following a visitation by deer. It was confirmed that the deer were more numerous and were now venturing down the full extent of Ivy House Lane. The initial proposal had been to fence one side of the allotment plot but this would now seem to be pointless. The costs of fencing in the whole plot were discussed based on two quotes received so far. The Town Council reps were of the view that the money could be available from sums budgeted in the current year with some coming from reserves as discussed. A third quote would also be obtained.

It was therefore **agreed** that the proposal to fence the entire site should be put to the Town Council at its 20 August meeting. **Action Town Clerk**

**AMT 32/18 Plastic Free Berko Campaign**

The campaigns had been discussed at T & E on 11 June. It was noted that the group leader is a Sunnyside Allotment tenant and the campaign objectives were discussed in the context of action that could be taken at the Allotment Sites. It was noted that at the forthcoming Sunnyside open day plants on sale would be in containers made from old newspapers.

The problem of successful plastic recycling was discussed and reference made to the lack of compostable containers provided by suppliers in retail and other outlets.

**AMT 33/18 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 6 November 2018.

**AMT 34/18 The meeting closed at 11.30 am.**

Signed..... Date.....