

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Monday 17 October 2016 at 10 am

PRESENT:

Councillors: A Armytage, in the Chair
F Earl

Allotment

Representatives: John Eaton, Sunnyside
John Fisher, Butts Meadow
Lin Phillips, Sunnyside
Diana Reay, Dellfield
Keeley Siddiqui Charlick, Sunnyside Rural Trust

Officers: Janet Mason, Town Clerk
John Bushby, Town Warden

2 members of the public were present.

OPENING MATTERS

AMT 24/16 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr B Newton and Mrs C Jerram.

AMT 25/16 Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2016 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

- (i) AMT 13/16 – Proposed Projects: Following the 11 July 2016 meeting it had been agreed by e-mail that the Town Clerk would visit each site and discuss projects for the 2016/17 budget with the appropriate allotment representatives. These meetings had taken place during the week commencing 3 October 2016. (AMT 29/16 below refers.)
- (ii) AMT 17 /16 (ii) – Strimming: Frank Coopers had carried out the work requested.
- (iii) AMT 17/16 (iii) Butts Meadow gap in boundary: The Town Warden will investigate further once the vegetation has died down.

- (iv) AMT 19/16 – DCLG Allotment Disposal Guidance: The information had been circulated to allotment representatives.
- (v) AMT 20/16 – Weed Suppressant Matting: The supply previously stored in the Town Council garage had been utilised at Sunnyside Old and further supplies had been purchased at an extremely reasonable price.

AMT 26/16 Chairman's Communications

None.

AMT 27/16 Public Participation

At this stage of the meeting no members of the public were present. During the course of the meeting two residents did arrive. However, they did not wish to speak when invited to by the Chairman.

FINANCE MATTERS

AMT 28/16 Income and Expenditure Report

Allotment income and expenditure and reserves to 30 September 2016 were received and noted (attached).

AMT 29/16 Budget Preparation 2017/18

Review of possible projects to be costed following visits to allotment representatives during week commencing 3 October 2016: The Town Clerk thanked representatives for their time in showing her around their sites the previous week and explaining the work that might be considered for inclusion in the budget. A list of such work had been circulated with the agenda. She would obtain budget figures and was of the view that some of the smaller maintenance items might be undertaken in the current year. The various projects were discussed. Deer fencing prices would be obtained but it was acknowledged that the cost benefit would be difficult to justify. She would report back by e-mail and use the figures obtained in Town Council budget preparation and discussion.

ALLOTMENT MATTERS

AMT 30/16 To consider, as appropriate, allotment and plot inspection reports on:

- (i) *Dellfield:* Diana Reay reported that there were some badly attended plots and a more detailed report of any action required would be made once it was known which plot holders had paid their rental invoices. The waiting list had not increased with a residue of 8 people who would like an allotment. Referring to the meeting the previous week, Diana would support the installation of covers on water tanks at Dellfield. She was also endeavoring to contact a plot holder about rusty corrugated iron adjacent to the public main path.

Finally, Keeley would be interested in acquiring the old shed for use by Sunnyside Rural Trust.

Action Diana/Keeley.

(ii) *Sunnyside Old:* The Town Clerk apologised for the fact that the allotment report for SSO had not yet been produced because of a Colony system computer glitch. The Finance Officer would forward this to John Eaton once she had resolved the problem with MCPC. John reported that there were a handful of vacancies, some people on the waiting list and others wanting to swap plots. As Diana had indicated, it was a fluid time of year. Most other issues had been captured on the maintenance and project list referred to in AMT 29/16. A proactive tenant had recently undertaken some clearing work and regular working parties continued to tackle a variety of tasks. Water consumption was as expected and meter readings were regularly passed to the Town Warden.

(iii) *Sunnyside New:* Lin Phillips reported a very similar situation at Sunnyside New. In addition, she had brought along an information pack called "Berkhamsted Allotments Information" which she lent to the Town Clerk.

(iv) *Butts Meadow:* John Fisher had previously circulated his report which he summarised. There is a long waiting list of 15; the longest since July 2014. There are a couple of vacant plots and he anticipated that others might become vacant during the current invoicing and renewal cycle.

(v) *Sunnyside Rural Trust:* Keeley reported that all was going well at the Trust although the discovery of a six foot potted cannabis plant concealed in the hazel coppice had caused a bit of a stir. The police had taken the plant away to be destroyed.

AMT 31/16 Water charges

To discuss the current method of charging and consider other options: The Town Clerk reported that the administration associated with the various methods of charging for water combined with discussions with tenants about whether they should be charged for each plot when they had more than one seemed, in her view, administratively burdensome. She wondered what the AMT members' views were on the matter. During discussions the rules were discussed and it was clarified that if a tenant is a multiple plot holder and has paid to use a hose the payment has to be made for each plot held. Concern was expressed about hose users subsidising those who used watering cans. The Town Clerk found the discussion helpful and said she would phone round other Councils to see how they charged for water. She would report back at a future meeting.

Action Town Clerk

AMT 32/16 Allotment Constitution and Berkhamsted Town Council Allotment Strategy

Copies of these documents had been circulated with the agenda for future reference. Some members had been aware of the documents but others had not. It was agreed that members would read the documents which would then be reviewed at a future meeting. In the meantime, if anyone had any particular points to raise they should let the Town Clerk know. John Fisher provided a further document that would be of use entitled "Berkhamsted Town Council's Policy on Joint Allotment Tenancies". A copy is attached to these minutes. The Town Clerk will review this document and consider whether/how it might be incorporated into the rules. (NB After the meeting the Town Clerk looked back in the records and this document was approved at the 26 April 2010 meeting of the Full Council.)

Action AMT/Town Clerk

AMT 33/16 Allotment Risk Management

1. *To receive a verbal update by the Town Clerk following initial discussions with the Town Council's insurers:* The Town Clerk had found the visits to allotment sites the week before very helpful in beginning to identify possible risks for inclusion in the revised Town Council risk assessment document she was preparing. This would cover all aspects of the Council's various activities. She had also met last week with the Council's insurers who had undertaken to provide her with standard sheets relating to allotments for review and adaption. Allotment reps were happy to discuss any further matters with her as necessary.

Action Town Clerk

2. *Allotment holder public liability cover:* Of particular interest was tenants' public liability insurance. Each plot holder is responsible for their own plot and it is sensible to have insurance. Many household insurance policies provide such cover so it would be worth reps drawing people's attention to this fact. John Eaton confirmed that at Sunnyside the cover provided through membership of the Allotment Association was only for events such as open days.

Action Allotment Representatives

AMT 34/16 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 20 February 2017

AMT 35/16 Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 11.25 am.

Signed.....

Date.....

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL'S POLICY ON JOINT ALLOTMENT TENANCIES

Introduction:

Joint tenancies provide continuity and security of tenancy when the tenant:

- dies,
- moves outside of parish.
- becomes too ill to work the plot themselves
- wants to share the work involved in cultivating their plot

Suggested policy:

The existing tenant will be referred to as the principal tenant.

Only one other named individual can be added to an existing tenancy at any given time.

Any potential joint tenant *must* reside within the parish of Berkhamsted. Subject to this condition the following persons are eligible:

Proposed joint tenant's relationship to existing tenant	When the proposed joint tenant is able to become an official joint tenant	Proof of relationship
Spouse	Immediately	Proof of address
Partner (defined as those permanently living with the tenant)	Immediately	Proof of address
Parent	Immediately	Proof of address
Sibling (brother or sister)	Immediately	Proof of address
Child (over 18)	Immediately	Proof of address
Boyfriend/girlfriend	After helping to work the plot for a minimum of one year	Proof of address plus Site Representative's e-mail confirmation that they have worked the plot for this period
Friend	After helping to work the plot for a minimum of one year	Proof of address plus Site Representative's e-mail confirmation that they have worked the plot for this period

If their request is approved the joint tenant must add their details to the tenancy agreement and sign the agreement.

One person on the joint tenancy must be nominated to give and receive all communications between Council (which includes representatives of the Council) and tenant, whether in person, by letter, phone or e-mail, etc. This nominated person will be liable for the payment of all allotment charges due. However the joint tenant becomes

liable should the Council for any reason be unable to make contact or obtain payment from the nominated individual.

To encourage continuity of tenancy in the event that the original tenant (the principal tenant) relinquishes their tenancy through death or movement outside the parish the remaining joint tenant becomes the principal tenant. This policy statement then applies to this new tenant. This principle applies in perpetuity.