

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the**

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Monday 19 February 2018 at 10 am

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors:**

B Newton (Chair)  
F Earl

**Allotment Reps:**

John Eaton, Sunnyside  
John Fisher, Butts Meadow  
Diana Reay, Dellfield  
Jenny Sippings, Sunnyside  
Keely Siddiqui Charlick, Sunnyside Rural Trust

**Officers:**

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

**OPENING MATTERS**

**AMT 01/18 Apologies for Absence**

These had been received from Cllr S Bateman.

It was noted that Lin Phillips had stood down as Vice Chair of the Sunnyside Allotment Society and would therefore no longer be attending.

**AMT 02/18 Minutes of the previous Meeting**

- i. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 November 2017

These were approved as a correct record and were duly signed as such by the Chair.

- ii. Update on actions from the last meeting where not covered elsewhere on the agenda:

AMT 36/17 ii - Income and Expenditure re water at Dellfield: Good news was noted in that Affinity have refunded £2,008.39 "leakage allowance". The bad news is that there is another leak at Butts Meadow. The water is turned off at present and repairs are being arranged.

**AMT 03/18 Chairman's Communications**

None.

**AMT 04/18 Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

**FINANCE MATTERS**

**AMT 05/18 Income and Expenditure Report**

- (i) The allotment income and expenditure report at 31 January 2018 was considered. It was noted that the cost of the Butts Meadow water leak repair already referred to had still be finalised which would be an additional cost in the current financial year. Turning to the next financial year it was noted that £7,000 had been budgeted for projects previously discussed including the deer fencing at Sunnyside New. The final position on Allotment Reserves would be reported after the end of the financial year. The Committee requested that the reserves figure be provided at each meeting. Allotment rents would be reviewed in the new financial year.

**Action: Finance and Allotment Officer/Town Clerk**

- (ii) Rent collection 2017 – to discuss one outstanding invoice and difficulty contacting the tenant (Butts Meadow).

It was agreed that all possible steps had been taken to contact the tenant and that the tenancy was therefore terminated.

**Action: Finance and Allotment Officer/John Fisher**

**ALLOTMENT SITE MATTERS**

(The Colony system papers were circulated to allotment reps.)

**AMT 06/18** To consider, as appropriate, allotment and plot inspection reports on:

- (i) Dellfield

Diana Reay advised that she had had difficulty contacting one person on the waiting list and one had been taken off the list. She was also trying to find a suitable ¼ size plot for another person. There were two plot vacancies.

The recent thefts had highlighted the need to have up to date contact details for tenants. 11 sheds had had doors forced and 5 others had been opened. The damage caused by forcing the doors would in many cases be expensive to repair. Security measures were discussed including battery operated infra-red detectors. It was

noted that some household insurance policies do cover theft from allotments.

(ii) Sunnyside Old and Sunnyside New

John Eaton updated members on recent incidents with **dog walkers** failing to keep their pets on leads. The result was that one allotment holder had had to contact the police. The Town Council had put up appropriate warning signs together with an open letter from the Town Clerk to dog walkers seeking their support and co-operation. It would be regrettable if those allotment sites that did not include a public right of way had to be closed to members of the public

Keely Siddiqui Charlick (KSC) undertook to see if improvements to the SRT gate and fencing on Sunnyside New that might be made to restrict such access.

**Action: Keely Siddiqui Charlick**

JE referred to the Sunnyside Rural Trust **defibrillator** (see AMT 07/18 below) and also reported that recently SRT had very kindly allowed the allotment society working group to use a power supply from their offices which had been a great help. A horticulturalist had given a talk on pruning techniques which had been very well received. He was also investigating the cost of improving the **drainage** at the junction of B Road; a civil engineering contact had suggested the use of ballast and gulleys which could then be seeded over. JE would contact the Town Clerk regarding costs, which he anticipated would be relatively modest.

**Action: John Eaton/Town Clerk**

An allotment holder had offered the possibility of making A4 acrylic **signage** for use on the allotments. These could address the issues of dog walking and plot numbering. The Town Clerk would draft some wording regarding dog walking and forward it to JE to discuss further with the allotment holder.

**Action: John Eaton/Town Clerk**

Sunnyside Church had received extremely high quotes from contractors to have their hedge reduced, between the allotments and the church yard. As a result, a church working group would be tackling it and they had been offered plot 44 on which to burn the arisings, in a controlled manner.

In conclusion he advised that no inspections had taken place and that he would be allocating plots to those on the waiting list in the course of the next few weeks.

The Committee agreed that the balance between vacancies and waiting lists was satisfactory at present and there was therefore no need to advertise vacancies.

(iii) Butts Mead

John Fisher reported that he similarly would be making plot offers during the course of the next few weeks. It was agreed that a plot holder who had moved recently should be allowed to retain his plot

### **AMT 07/18 Sunnyside Rural Trust**

Verbal update on activities as appropriate (to include defibrillator information).

KSC reported that the Trust would be happy for its defibrillator to be installed permanently in the Sunnyside Church car park, as long as the Allotment Society and the church paid for the cost of the metal case. The Town Clerk suggested that SRT might be able to obtain a small grant from the Town Council towards the cost of the casing and said she would forward the appropriate forms. In the meantime, the defibrillator was available from SRT offices between 8 am – 4 pm on Mondays to Fridays. SRT staff were trained in its use.

**Action: Keely Siddiqui Charlick/Sunnyside Allotment Society/Town Clerk**

### **AMT 08/18 Butterflies**

- (i) Following the T & E Committee meeting on 29 January, to review allotment site initiatives to attract butterflies

It was confirmed that the Allotment holders were the “unsung heroes” of the butterfly cause. Sunnyside has a Butterfly and Bee Garden and the sites themselves, especially Sunnyside and Butts Meadow, extend the area’s wildlife corridor into the centre of Town.

- (ii) To consider any other ways in which the AMT could support “Butterflies for Berkhamsted”

KSC said she would be happy to advise at other sites (eg St Peter’s Church Yard) and already had a meeting arranged with the Town Clerk and Town Warden to look at other planting sites in the Town centre that might be used to introduce caterpillar and butterfly friendly plants.

It was agreed that Cllr Earl would introduce Sue Taylor to the Sunnyside allotment team to discuss and advise as necessary.

**Action: Cllr Earl**

*An extract from the T & E Committee minutes 29 January 2018 is set out below:*

**TE 07/18 Butterflies for Berkhamsted, a Living Landscape**

- (i) *The Chair suspended standing orders so that the Committee might receive a short presentation by Sue Taylor, a local wildlife conservation expert, about an initiative to improve butterfly habitats in Berkhamsted*

*Ms Taylor advised that she was a member of a number of conservation groups and that she was currently advising the Hospice of St Francis about how to improve their site as a habitat for butterflies. Butterflies are an indicator species as to the health of the environment and are important pollinators. Recent research showed butterfly numbers to be in serious decline and she had a number of proposals for improving the situation in Berkhamsted, despite the growing demand for housing. These include asking DBC to be more selective about the way they mow and trim areas in the Town. For example, vision splays and pathways could be close mown leaving margins and other areas to flower and seed like a meadow. Such areas would also act as valuable green corridors. Secondly, she would like to start a dialogue with the Town Council on the areas that it controls directly (in essence are the four allotment sites). Thirdly, “wildlife hotspots” could be identified throughout the Town. Finally, she encouraged a commitment to the retention of existing habitats including protection at the planning stage. Such habitats include ancient hedgerows, copses and sunken lanes. Endorsement by local residents was essential and her work already had the support of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust who followed the practices outlined at many of their sites.*

*Thanking Ms Taylor for her presentation the Chair reinstated standing orders.*

- (ii) *In the light of Ms Taylor’s presentation and proposals, to consider what practical assistance the Town Council might offer.*

*It was **agreed** that the Town Council would be happy to make the appropriate introductions within Dacorum Borough Council’s Clean, Safe and Green Team via the Strategic Planning and Environment Committee. The Town Clerk would contact Ms Taylor to discuss the allotment sites.*

**AMT 09/18 Allotment Maintenance Work and Projects**

Budget 2018/19 – See AMT 05/18 above.

**AMT 10/18 Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 24 April 2018.

**AMT 11/18** The meeting closed at 11.22 am.

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