

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Tuesday 22 August 2017 at 3 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: B Newton (Chair)
F Earl

Allotment Reps: John Eaton, Sunnyside
John Fisher, Butts Meadow
Lin Phillips, Sunnyside
Diana Reay, Dellfield
Keely Siddiqui Charlick, Sunnyside Rural Trust

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

OPENING MATTERS

AMT 25/17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Christine Jerram, Finance and Allotment Officer.

AMT 26/17 Minutes of the previous Meeting

- i. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 May 2017
The minutes 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.
None.

AMT 27/17 Chairman's Communications

None.

AMT 28/17 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

FINANCE MATTERS

AMT 29/17 Income and Expenditure Report

The allotment income and expenditure report at 30 June 2017 which had been circulated with the agenda was reviewed and discussed. Janet explained that budget expenditure code 7300 was overspent because of additional work at Butts Meadow and a disputed amount for water tank valve replacements at all sites. The water bill for Dellfield had just been received and was in the region of £1,700. The reason for this had been investigated by Christine and it was clear that the meter had not been read by Affinity for some time. There is not a leak at the site and investigations continue. It could be that the bill is now taking account of the leak that occurred nearly 18 months ago or that billing has, as indicated by John Fisher's analysis, been inaccurate for some time because of the lack of readings and this is a "catch up" bill. The Town Warden will from now on keep a fortnightly record of all water meter readings on a spread sheet available to staff at the Town Council so that bills can be compared to readings and challenged by the Finance Officer. It was confirmed that Sunnyside Allotment Society also keeps a record of its water meter readings.

AMT 30/17 Allotment Rental and Other Charges

It was **RESOLVED** that a recommendation should be made to the Town Council that there should be no increase in rental or water charges in September for the coming year.

Action Town Clerk

ALLOTMENT MATTERS

(Colony system reports were circulated)

AMT 31/17 To consider, as appropriate, allotment and plot inspection reports on:

- (i) Dellfield – Diana Reay reported that there were 9 people on the waiting list and three vacancies. On the issue of water, she asked if it would be possible to have one of the yellow keys to turn off the mains water when required. John B undertook to provide her with a key.

Action Town Warden

Referring to the buried asbestos water tank Janet reported back on discussions about its removal with the Watford based specialist company. Their price assumed that the item would be bagged before removal which in itself presented further problems. Her proposal that the area we fenced off with a plastic barrier together with a warning sign was agreed.

Action Town Clerk

(ii) Sunnyside Old and New

John Eaton anticipated that the issuing of invoices in September would lead to a temporary peak in people terminating their tenancies. He hoped to accommodate some of those on the waiting list over the course of the next three or four weeks.

It was confirmed that the new notice board had been constructed and installed by John Goffey of the Sunnyside Allotment Society; this had been funded by one of the Grantham Mews residents whose tree had damaged the old notice board. The AMT's thanks to Mr Goffey were recorded.

There had also been a recent water leak at Sunnyside, possibly caused by too many connections and extensions on the tank that is used to take water to the lower plots. Mr Goffey had fixed this problem. It was suggested that a smaller water extension project than that quoted for last year might be considered to resolve some of these problems.

Action Town Clerk/John Eaton

In response to a query about feedback following the issue of a warning letter, Janet confirmed that she copies the allotment rep in on any follow up e-mails as appropriate.

There had been reports of dumping from Grantham Mews. John E will investigate further and advise Janet of any "further and better particulars".

Action John Eaton

(iii) Butts Meadow

John Fisher confirmed there were 6 people on the waiting list. It was agreed that the plot whose tenant had sadly died could now be re-let.

A warning letter was required for one plot as advised.

(iv) Sunnyside Rural Trust

Keely had no issues to report.

(v) General – bonfires

Janet reported that she had had an e-mail complaint, albeit from an anonymous complainant, about smoke from a bonfire at Butts Meadow. Allotment reps confirmed that plot holders were advised to

burn only dry items and in consideration of the time of day and weather conditions. Such advice was in newsletters and on notice boards.

AMT 32/17 Allotment Maintenance Work and Projects

(i) Deer fencing update Sunnyside New

Janet and John E had met with representatives of Farm and County Fencing in July to discuss deer fencing options. Initial quotes for two options had been received that would need some refining before finalising but give a useful indication of the prices. These were discussed.

Keely agreed to investigate other options, for example, obtaining the materials locally and looking at the cost of SSRT doing the work. Janet undertook to copy the measurements and photos to Keely (with Farm and Country's pricings redacted) to assist in this work. Keely will report back to the 6 November meeting when the budget for 2017/18 will be discussed in greater detail.

Action Keely Siddiqui Charlick/Town Clerk

The consensus was that the main deer culprits emanated from the Ashridge Estate. Enquiries will be made of Town Council contacts on the management committee regarding deer management.

Action Town Clerk

(ii) Budget 2018/19 preparation

Members will give consideration to other possible work/projects for discussion on 6 November.

Action All

AMT 33/17 Colony training for Town Council staff and councillor 21 and 22 August – update.

Cllr Newton reported on the training which had taken place the previous day and that morning. She, Janet, John B and Christine had attended. Although the system had some glitches that needed to be sorted out it seemed liveable with. Iqudu and the Colony team were working together to sort out mail merge, e-mail and invoice template problems. Cllr Newton had also liked the allotment inspections reporting aspect which might be of help to representatives. Janet will ask for a training version of the system to be installed in the Council Chamber so reps might be able to have a look at this function at the next meeting.

Action Town Clerk

AMT 34/17 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 6 November 2017 at 10 am

Signed.....

Date.....