

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Monday 27 January 2020 at 10 am

Councillors: G Stevens, Chair
P de Hoest
N Woolner

Allotment Reps: John Eaton, Sunnyside
Jenny Sippings, Sunnyside
John Fisher, Butts Meadow

Keely Siddiqui Charlick, Sunnyside Rural Trust

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

OPENING MATTERS

AMT 01/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Geoff Halls and Diana Reay.

AMT 02/20 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 October 2019 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

AMT 03/20 Chairman's Communications

Letter from allotment plot holder at Sunnyside Old dated 24 October 2019 about nuisance caused by dogs at the site.

This was discussed. It is an ongoing, intermittent problem mainly affecting Sunnyside Old because of the right of way and through route nature of the site. JM had prepared a poster to address the problem but it had been sent back for improvement! She will nonetheless finalise the version she circulated, for putting on the gates. The Allotment Society should also keep the problem under review.
Action SAS/JM

AMT 04/20 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

FINANCE MATTERS

AMT 05/20 Income and Expenditure Report

- (i) To **consider** the allotment income and expenditure at 31 December 2019

JM went through the accounts line by line. She advised that the software costs for the first 6 months of 2020-21 previously posted in 2019-20 had been moved to the correct year (AMT 34/19 (i) previous meeting refers).

- (ii) It was **noted** that at 31 December 2019 Allotment Reserves stood at £15,016.

- (iii) Contribution from Home Grown Timber, Network Rail contractors

The contribution will be £300 per day worked plus £1,000 towards allotment funds. The work is taking longer to complete than first envisaged.

- (iv) Update on non-payers following debt chasing by Deputy Town Clerk (JH)

After the last meeting the allotment reps had either visited the council office or corresponded with JM by e-mail to reconcile respective records. JH had subsequently chased up all late rents with some success and the remaining non-payers would now receive termination letters. It was **agreed** that allotment reps would be advised of additional vacancies arising from this exercise in a week or so.

Action JH/JM

- (v) Water keys cost and update

The current supply of water keys, for which plot holders using hoses pay £10 per key, had run out and replacement keys were over £10 for the size needed. Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the practice whereby the Town Council office sells keys is too cumbersome and time consuming. With immediate effect the arrangements will be amended so that those who apply for a hose water supply will then obtain their own key at their own expense. JS will send a link for a useful multi-headed key which people may wish to purchase. The allotment forms will also have to be amended.

Action JS/JM

ALLOTMENT MATTERS

(Colony papers had been circulated to reps before the meeting)

AMT 06/20 To consider, as appropriate, allotment and plot inspection reports and other current matters at:

- (i) Dellfield

No report as DR was not in attendance. No one else was aware of any Dellfield issues.

(ii) Sunnyside Old and Sunnyside New. (JE/JS)

The Sunnyside new gate post is broken and needs replacing. JB had approached one contractor who had declined the work. Frank Coopers or SRT will be asked to have a look. **Action JB**

The wood chip pile has reduced significantly, so thank were passed to SRT.

At the recent SAS AGM use of herbicides had been discussed and it had been agreed not to have an outright ban at this stage but to encourage a reduction in usage. Bonfires had also been discussed and, although opinions on having bonfires varied, it was **agreed** that these should be kept to a minimum and they should be well controlled and contained. They should also be at a high temperature to ensure rapid burning with minimum smoke. The possibility of a communal bonfire plot had also been agreed as a possible way forward.

Householders with gates that give access to the site (mainly Meadway/Millfield): This trend was discussed; it could cause problems, particularly if a right of way could be established. It was **agreed** that Town Council staff should look at how many gates there are and then JM should write to residents advising that they have no automatic right to access the site. **Action JB/JM**

(iii) Butts Meadow (JF)

The licence from DBC for the farmer to cross Butts Meadow to make his deliveries to the site had, at last, been granted following numerous requests from JF and JM.

One plot holder's shed had been subject to vandalism accompanied by deposits of litter and empty beer cans. JF would continue to monitor to see if there was a pattern on timings. In the meantime JM had a meeting that afternoon with the new police sergeant, Damian Hewitt, and would raise the incidents with him. **Action JM/JF**

(iv) Sunnyside Rural Trust (KSC).

KSC had nothing to report back at this stage.

AMT 07/20 Tree works by Arborcare at Butts Meadow and Sunnyside week commencing 3 February 2020

- (i) It was **noted** that the tree work at Butts Meadow was subject to a TCA planning application (Trees in Conservation Area). This was discussed at Town Planning and no objections were raised. DBC's Trees and Woodland officer at DBC has no objections (Formal permission was granted a few

days after this AMT meeting.) Arborcare staff have a key to access Butts Meadow.

- (ii) It was agreed that detailed timings would be forwarded to JE and JF later in the week once Arborcare had prepared their work timetable. JB will visit the sites regularly to check on the work. **Action JM/JB**

AMT 08/20 Improvements to roads at Sunnyside Old

- (i) Agripower visited the site on 10 December 2019 and had met with allotment reps, JM and JB. The quote had been received and was discussed;
- (ii) It was **agreed** that further quotes should be sought from Frank Coopers and AN Other (Cllr de Hoest suggested a third contractor who will be contacted.) **Action JM**

AMT 09/20 Box Moor Trust

Update on contact made regarding Butts Meadow following last meeting (JM)

Hopefully visits to analyse the grasses and wild flowers on plots 19 & 20 will be arranged for early spring, once the growth can be examined. JM also has contacts with Bucks Rare Plants. Once an assessment of the plots has been made then AMT will be able to decide whether to let the plots or keep them as meadow land. A combination of both options might also be considered.

Action JM/AMT

AMT 10/20 Close of meeting (next meeting is 27 April 2020)

The meeting closed at 11.07 am.

Signed.....

Date.....