

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Monday 5 November 2018 at 10 am

PRESENT:

Councillor Barbara Newton (Chair)

Allotment Reps John Eaton, Sunnyside
John Fisher, Butts Meadow
Geoff Halls, Sunnyside
Diana Reay, Dellfield

Keely Siddiqui Charlick (Sunnyside Rural Trust)

OPENING MATTERS

AMT 35/18 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Elaine Collins, Cllr Freda Earl, John Bushby, Town Warden, Christine Jerram, Finance Officer, Janet Mason, Town Clerk.

AMT 36/18 Minutes of the previous meeting

(i) To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 August 2018

The minutes were approved subject to correction of the date of the next meeting, which was shown as Tuesday 6 November.

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

John Eaton pointed out that the defibrillator was now functional. Keely Charlick said that the defibrillator was now linked to the ambulance service and she offered a familiarisation session at the SAS AGM. This would not be training as such but instruction on how to open the box.

AMT 37/18 Chairman's Communications

None

AMT 38/18 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

FINANCE MATTERS

AMT 39/18

Income and expenditure report

(i) To consider the allotment income and expenditure at 30 September 2018 (attached)

There was some discussion as to the relevance of the project amount at this stage of the financial year.

John Fisher was pleased that not many people seemed to have defaulted. Diana Reay asked that the allotment reps should be provided with a list of those who had paid/ not paid/resigned a.s.a.p.

ALLOTMENT MATTERS

Colony system papers were not circulated at the meeting owing to the absence of the Finance Officer. It was agreed that they should be forwarded to the reps as soon as possible.

AMT 40/18

To consider, as appropriate, allotment and plot inspection reports and other current matters at:

(i) Dellfield (DR)

Diana reported that there were 4 vacancies and 4 people on the waiting list. There had been some queries about the size of some plots. She was going to remeasure some plots using Google maps as the current site map seems to be inaccurate. It was discussed whether plot size could be added to the Colony data. Diana also reported at least one plot which could not be let, as it had been left to revert to a wildlife area. Keely offered manpower to clear any plot for £50.

(ii) Sunnyside Old and Sunnyside New (JE)

John reported that there were 2 and a half plot vacancies on SSO and 3 on SSN plus one being transferred. There is quite a long waiting list and John suggested that it would be wise to contact people on the waiting list fairly regularly to make sure they still wanted a plot. He has also had problems with contact details not being correct. There seems to be a problem with communication in that people who apply online for a plot do not know if their application has been received.

(iii) Butts Meadow (JF)

Someone has cut hedges and trees bordering the site and this has allowed more light onto certain plots. 19 loads of manure have been delivered. The reinforced roadway withstood the repeated visits of the manure tractor. There are 3 half plots and one full sized plot vacant and 7 people on the waiting list. The sign saying No Dumping has disappeared and John requested that the Town Warden produce another and laminate it.

AMT 41/18**Sunnyside Rural Trust**

- (i) Verbal update on activities as appropriate

Ian Petch is now the site manager.

Contact ian@sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk

- (ii) Possible improvements to the SRT gate and fencing at SSN as discussed to restrict access as discussed on 19 February and deferred from the 24 April and 7 August meetings.

Keely pointed out that nothing will deter the dog walkers and that if the gate is locked they will climb over it and damage it. It was suggested that the gate should be repaired with a closing spring.

AMT 42/18**Weed suppressant matting**

To consider whether non-biodegradable matting should be banned from allotment plots, given the maintenance problems caused by various materials currently in situ

It was agreed that the wording of the tenancy agreement should make it clear that plot holders should not use carpet or other non-biodegradable matting on their plots.

Keely pointed out that SRT bulk buys a range of biodegradable matting which they could offer at a good price.

AMT 43/18**Update on deer fencing project following site visit with third contractor on 26-10-18** (attended by John Eaton, Jenny Sippings, John Bushby and Janet Mason)

It emerged that there is a possibility that there are muntjac deer living on the site and therefore fencing would effectively fence them in rather than out. The general opinion was that the expenditure on deer fencing could not therefore be justified. Keely pointed out that Ashridge were about to do a massive cull.

AMT 44/18**Allotment inspections and warning letters**

To consider (i) should inspections dates be published in advance on notice boards and (ii) should a notice be placed on notice boards about the opportunity to raise reasons why a plot has not been tended with either the allotment representative or the Town Clerk e.g. for reasons of ill health, family circumstances.

John Eaton pointed out that a tenant should be required to cultivate the whole plot and that this should perhaps be mentioned on renewal of the tenancy. It was suggested that the dates of AMT meetings should be publicised. It was felt that the current system of inspections and warning letters was sufficiently robust except in very exceptional circumstances when no system would have been able to cope.

AMT 45/18

Plot Numbers

To consider how to encourage plot owners to install signs containing their plot number.

It was pointed out that the labelling of plots is one of the terms of the tenancy agreement. Keely Charlick offered Sunnyside Rural Trust's expertise in creating plot signs from sustainable materials if required.

AMT 46/18

New member of Town Council Staff

It was noted that a new Deputy Town Clerk, Mrs Joanna Harley, had been appointed and would start work on Tuesday 27 November 2018.

AMT 47/18

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 8 January 2019

AMT 48/18

Meeting closed 11.20am.

Signed.....

Date.....