

**BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the**

**ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM**

Held by 'Zoom' video conferencing on

Monday 6 July 2020 at 10 am

**Councillors:** P de Hoest - Chair

**Allotment Reps:** John Eaton, Sunnyside  
John Fisher, Butts Meadow  
Geoffrey Halls, Sunnyside  
Diana Reay, Dellfield  
Keely Siddiqui Charlick, Sunnyside Rural Trust

**Officers:** John Bushby, Town Warden  
Tony Noakes, Town Clerk

Janet Mason also attended.

**OPENING MATTERS**

**AMT 11/20 Election** of Chair for this meeting only

Cllr P de Hoest was elected as Chair for the meeting. D Reay proposed and J Eaton seconded the election.

**AMT 12/20 Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr's G Stevens and N Woolner.

**AMT 13/20 Minutes of the previous Meeting**

**Previous Minutes Actions – 27 January 2020**

Reference	Action	Complete	Outstanding - Responsibility
03/20	SSO - Dog Nuisance Sign on gates	Yes	
05/20	BTC will no longer sell water keys – tenants to purchase their own	Yes	
06/20 (ii)	Replace Gate Post at SSN	Yes	
06/20 (ii)	Meadway/Millfield residents' access to SSO – write to addresses to inform them, no automatic right of access		Yes - TN
06/20 (iii)	Inform police about vandalism to sheds on BM	Yes	
07/20	Arborcare work on SSO & BM	Yes	
08/20	Road improvements at SSO		Yes - TN

09/20	Box Moor Trust – visit BM to analyse grasses and wild flowers		Yes - TN
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The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 January 2020 were approved as a correct record and will be signed accordingly.

#### **AMT 14/20 Chairman’s Communications**

Emails and various telephone conversations had been received about theft and/or damage to produce on SSO.

J Eaton informed the meeting that the incidents had been the theft of some tools from a shed and a number of lettuces from a plot. The 3 or 4 lettuces taken, had been cut off, so it was unlikely to be animal damage. D Reay mentioned that there had been, what appeared to be a systematic breaking in of a number of sheds and the theft of items. The tenants had been told to inform the police. J Bushby would raise the matters directly with Sgt Hewitt. It was also agreed that the police should be asked if they could send us a notice for displaying across the Allotment estate.

**Action JB**

#### **AMT 15/20 Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

#### **FINANCE MATTERS**

#### **AMT 16/20 Income and Expenditure Report**

J Mason had forwarded to all members of the AMT the 2019/20 I&E and year to 31-05-21 for 2020-21 for Allotments. The highlights were:

- (i) The overall surplus (excess of income over expenditure) for 2019/20 was £3253. This included the one-off income received from the Network Rail contractor for access rights at SSO. Includes most of tree work access costs - £2,800 in 19-20. The final £900 was in this year 20-21.
- (ii) The Allotment reserve as at 1 April 2020 was £19269 (**restated since meeting**)
- (iii) Contribution from Home Grown Timber, Network Rail contractors  
  
A further contribution of £900 was received for access rights to SSO in April 2020. This income is in addition to the Allotment reserve at (ii). This income stream will not be repeated and therefore should not be budgeted.
- (iv) The main area of one-off expenditure during the year was tree work at BM & SSO. A new gatepost at SSN and a new notice board for BM have been installed this year.
- (v) The grounds maintenance cost was £4043 for the year 2019-20. This was for tree work and rubbish clearance at SSN (old bark chippings and bind weed).

- (vi) Maintenance contract costs, mainly Frank Coopers were £2,553.31 for the year 19-20.
- (vii) The current projected positive (surplus) variance for 2020/21 is £2280.

A discussion took place about the level of reserves and it was agreed that proposals on investing approximately half of the current reserves (to benefit the allotment estate/operations) should be brought forward to the next meeting (5 October 2020).

**Additional comments, post meeting** - Proposals should contribute to an improvement of the estate (eg improving access ways or the tea hut etc), or contribute to an improvement in the aesthetics (eg smarter gates or some landscaping) or contribute positively to the natural environment (eg 'green corridors' that encourage wildlife diversity).

**Action – Allotment Representatives/TN**

### **ALLOTMENT MATTERS**

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

**AMT 17/20** To consider, as appropriate, allotment and plot inspection reports and other current matters at:

- Dellfield – DR gave an update as follows:
  - New tap on first water tank on site has been replaced
  - The items stolen (mentioned at item 14/20) included an old strimmer, new shear cutters and an air rifle.
  - Four sheds were broken into, forced entry.
  - All tenants affected, were told to report the incident individually to the police.
  
- Sunnyside Old and Sunnyside New. (JE/JS)
  - The tea hut requires updating – details of what's required and a proposal is required for the next meeting.
  - There continues to be damage from deer incursion on to the estate. A discussion took place about the challenges to reduce/mitigate the damage caused by Deer. Ideas and possible solutions were required for the next AMT meeting.
  - There has been no progress on the road/entrance upgrade at the SSO/Grantham Mews end. **Action JE/TN**
  
- Butts Meadow (JF)
  - 24 on the waiting list.
  - 2 plots have been redesignated as nature/wildlife sites.
  - A gate post to the estate is rotting.
  - The delay in issuing a license for access rights to drop off manure (annual event) was up to 3 months. A decision was made that the application to DBC would be made as early as possible. **Action JF/TN**
  
- Sunnyside Rural Trust (KSC).

- Details of residents on waiting lists could be sent to KSC for volunteering. This would give the applicants an introduction to allotment work in readiness for tenancy later (**TN to investigate if the data can be transferred in this way.**)
- SRT has introduced Horticultural therapy sessions, free to volunteers
- SRT can clear unkempt sites in readiness for letting. The fees will be agreed once the scale of clearance is understood.
- Floor matting for plots can be purchased from SRT.

**AMT 18/20 Allotment Rental Costs for 2020/21**

AMT agreed unanimously that there should be no increases for plot rental or water charges for 2020/21. This would be recommended to Full Council on the 20 July 2020. **Action – TN**

**AMT 19/20 Warning Letter Policy for poor upkeep of plots or non-payment during Covid-19 crisis**

AMT agreed to reinstate, with immediate effect, the agreed process for the management of allotment plots. Consideration, will as always, continue to be given to the individual circumstances of allotment tenants. Allotment representatives needed to inform JM/TN when allowances were required. TC will reissue the formal process to Allotment representatives. **Action – JM/TN**

**AMT 20/20 Close of meeting (next meeting is 5 October 2020)**

The meeting closed at 11.34 am.

Signed.....

Date.....

**Minutes Actions – 6 July 2020**

Reference	Action	Complete	Outstanding - Responsibility
06/20 (ii)	Meadway/Millfield residents' access to SSO – write to addresses to inform them, no automatic right of access.		Yes - TN
08/20	Road improvements at SSO.		Yes - TN
09/20	Box Moor Trust – visit BM to analyse grasses and wild flowers.		Yes - TN
14/20	Inform police about thefts and damage from SSO & DF. Request		Yes-JB

	police notices, to be displayed on the estate.		
16/20	Bring forward allotment investment proposals to the next meeting (up to a total expenditure of £8000).		Yes- Allotment representatives/TN
17/20	Deer Incursion reduction ideas for next meeting.		Yes- Allotment representatives/JB/TN
17/20	Can waiting list personal data be transferred to SRT for volunteering.		Yes - TN
17/20	Road entrance upgrade SSO/Grantham Mews.		Yes – JE/TN
17/20	Rotting Gate Post at BM – investigate and renew.		Yes -TB/TN
17/20	Reconcile the waiting lists between the Colony database and the Allotment representatives.		Yes - TN
18/20	Rental charges for 2020/21 – recommend no change, approval at Full Council 20 July 2020.		Yes - TN
19/20	Reinstate plot management process to deal with poor upkeep of plots or non-payment.		Yes – JM/TN