



Chard Town Council

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP

Tel: 01460 239567 www.chard.gov.uk

Mayor Cllr Garry Shortland Town Clerk Gareth Hughes

Minutes of the Annual Allotment Holders meeting held on Monday 18th September 2023 in the Auditorium at 5:30 pm

Present:

Councillors: N. Watson (Chair)

In Attendance:

Kevin Dyer (KD) – Operations Manager

Gail Chadwick (GC) – RFO & Grants Officer

There were No. 16 members of the public present and No. 0 members of the press present

The meeting started at 5.30 pm

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Mike Lee.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes from the last AGM meeting held on 23rd October 2019 were confirmed.

The minutes from the Allotment Forum held on Wednesday 26 April 2023 were discussed and confirmed.

3. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

The following matters arising where outstanding issues were previously raised were discussed:

- Water Tanks - On-going issues with vandalism and filling of tanks. KD confirmed he would investigate use of standpipes, including costings and work through solutions with the Committee. It was recognised that if this solution is implemented, hosepipes will need to be banned and the standpipe fitted with a tap that will prevent a hosepipe being attached.
- Locks – Still working ok since the last replacement
- Fences & Hedges – KD acknowledged that a plan needs to be implemented regarding Fence/Hedge management that will ensure maintenance on a rolling basis.

- Sheds & Greenhouses – It was confirmed that an allotment holder can have one of either a shed or a greenhouse but not both. There is a supplemental form which contains the additional conditions relating to these structures that needs to be completed in advance by the allotment holder to obtain permission from the Council.
- Car Park extension – KD confirmed he would get prices for the work and revert at the next meeting.
- Budget Report – GC provided an updated budget report for the current financial year as agreed at the last forum meeting. She also confirmed that the lease charge payable for the land has now been split between two cost centres (Allotments and Amenities) on a 70/30 split as in the past reflecting the joint use of the land covered by the lease. There was a question regarding the water bill as no charge has been made this year. GC agreed to investigate.
- Allotment Association organised a site clean-up during the summer and the Amenities Team removed the rubbish. This will become a regular feature and KD confirmed the Amenities Team would continue to remove the rubbish.
- Bee Hives – some allotment holders have asked about keeping bees. This would contravene the clauses in the current lease and all those present voted unanimously to ensure no Bee Hives would be permitted.
- Dead Ash Trees – KD confirmed that the Council would include the tress on the allotment in the tree survey and act on the recommendations of the Arborist.

4. Report on Allotment Data 2022-2023

There are 181 manager plots – 164 full size and 17 half size.

2023 -7 vacant plots

2022 – 13 vacant plots

Currently 96.13% occupancy

Allotment inspection took place on 7 June 2023 following which letters were sent to 24 allotment holders. The next inspection is due end of October.

Number of plots terminated – 1 Oct 22 to 17 Sep 23 – 22; 1 Oct 21 to 30 Sep 22 – 22

New Allotment Holders – 1 Oct 22 to 17 Sep 23 – 19; 1 Oct 21 to 30 Sep 22 – 16

Waiting Lists – 14 applicants on waiting list and 13 current allotment tenancy holders would like another plot.

5. Rent for 2024-2025

The last rent increase was for the financial year 2017-18. Based on inflation in the intervening years and predicted inflation for this year, the fees will be rising to the following levels with effect from 1 October 2024:

Full Plot - £31

Half Plot - £16.95

Licence Fee per plot - £25

6. Any other business

Plot numbering – It was agreed that the numbering for the plots needs to be changed and members (Emma, Graham & Bob) have agreed to support the Operations Manager to achieve this.

Timescales for termination – members requested that the timescales re shortened for termination to assist with reducing the waiting list. KD agreed to look into this.

Workplan for hedges – A request was made to include a newsletter with this year's bills regarding the workplan for the hedges as well as notification of up and coming changes and reminder regarding no parking on the track. NW agreed to obtain a translation of the newsletter into Portuguese and Polish.

Wasp's Nest – There is a wasp's nest near plot 91 which members asked to be removed without using Rentokil.

Anti-Social Behaviour – members agreed to report to CTC regarding anti-social behavior and will report such to CTC who will send letters to the relevant allotment holders. It was agreed that the existing tenancy agreement needs to be changed with regard to anti-social behaviour.

Compost Toilet – members asked if the Council could look into the provision of a compost toilet.

The chair thanked members and officers for attending. There being no further business the Meeting finished at 18.48