

MINUTES of the Meeting of the ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE
 held on
Tuesday 25th July 2023 at 7.03pm
 at
The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich, Essex, CO12 3DS

Present:	Councillors Calver, Fay, Morrison, Powell, Richardson, D Smith and Wade
In the Chair:	Councillor Todd
Clerk:	Mrs Marie Snell
Also present:	Site Representatives Agnieszka Chudy, Robert Bayford, and Joan Feaviour. No members of the public

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:

None

A015/23	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Davidson and Fowler Site Representative Ben Chamberlain and Peter Day.
A016/23	<u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST</u> None
A017/23	<u>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Allotments meeting held on 13 th June 2023 (previously circulated) were APPROVED by the committee and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
A018/23	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u> None
A019/23	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</u> None
A020/23	<u>VACANT PLOTS/WAITING LIST/NOTICES TO QUIT</u> The Clerk advised members of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 people on the waiting list (most are waiting for specific sites or plots) • 1 vacant plot – due to be taken on this week. • 3 NTQs issued since the last meeting.
A021/23	<u>SITE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS</u> <p>Abdy Avenue – Joan has advised Andy for the reminder to keep pathways clear and this is something that will be reminded to plot holders within the annual newsletter.</p> <p>King Georges Avenue – Agnes met with Andy during the inspections of last week and addressed issues with some plots within the site, full plots not being used to their full potential and the clerk is acting upon the inspection information provided by Estate Supervisor. Cllr Calver asked if plot holders of full plots are offered to relinquish half of the plot to enable further works and relieve pressure. Clerk will action during correspondence with relevant plot holders.</p>

	<p>Long Meadows – Rob mentioned the notice board which has fallen, Estate Supervisor has taken away and will repair. New plot holders have been welcomed onto the site and are keen to work their plots.</p>														
A022/23	<p><u>BUDGET UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Assistant Clerk briefed members on the current financial position of the allotments budget:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Allotments Maintenance Budget</td> <td>£2550.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vacant plots budget (if applicable)</td> <td>£300.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grounds Maintenance Outgoings</td> <td>£204.95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total income to date</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tenant rate and Water rates</td> <td>£227.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black plastic ground cover</td> <td>£99.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Budget Remaining</td> <td>£2311.00</td> </tr> </table>	Allotments Maintenance Budget	£2550.00	Vacant plots budget (if applicable)	£300.00	Grounds Maintenance Outgoings	£204.95	Total income to date		Tenant rate and Water rates	£227.12	Black plastic ground cover	£99.00	Budget Remaining	£2311.00
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A023/23	<p><u>BOATSWAINS CALL INCIDENT</u></p> <p>Members were updated on the recent incident at the Boatswains Call site involving a fire on a plot. The fire brigade did not provide a report and informed the plot holder that this would be something that HTC would need to enquire to investigate further as it is an isolated incident. The clerk informed the meeting that some efforts have been made to clear the plot following the incident and that the restoration of the plot is ongoing.</p>														
A024/23	<p><u>DEMENTIA FRIENDLY ALLOTMENT PLOT</u></p> <p>Members were informed of Cllr. Todd's concept following a recent Dementia Friendly meeting of offering local community members the access to a specifically appropriate allotment plot in association with being a Dementia Friendly council. Members were informed of CVST's work with volunteers who are assisted on the Long Meadows site and were asked to consider if a plot became available somewhere, could this be offered to members of the community who suffer with dementia. Cllrs Powell and Richardson offered that this would be a good idea and agreed this would be a positive step for the council. Cllr Calver asked if HTC implement the policy for the Town Clerk to adopt in consultation with the Chair and Assistant Clerk. Joan Feaviour offered the stance that a team would be suitable to proceed, and Robert Bayford asked if CVST has been contacted as to how they manage such a volunteer run allotment plot. Clerk offered the query to members of future management and who will, from HTC will regularly maintain such an allotment plot for this intended purpose. RESOLVED to agree in principle, subject to the relevant understanding of future management of a suitable plot on a suitable site.</p>														
A025/23	<p><u>REQUEST FOR POND</u></p> <p>Sizing, depth and safety measures for the proposed pond at BC32a confirmed to the committee. Members agreed the plot request is reasonable.</p> <p>RESOLVED to grant permission for the pond to be put in following the dimensions and safety measures explained by plot holder.</p>														
A026/23	<p><u>ELECTRONIC INVOICING</u></p> <p>Clerk gave update regarding the obtainment of email addresses for most plot holders with a view to sending invoices electronically rather than postal. Cllr Morrison offered that this would be a good idea and a positive use of office resources. Joan Feaviour offered some technical advice on how to print to PDF rather than print entirely to save on paper which the clerk will look into for ease of invoice distribution. Cllr Calver</p>														

	<p>asked if there is a future concept to improve the IT system of the allotments committee which is to be explored as an ongoing project.</p> <p>RESOLVED to allow for the clerk to implement electronic invoicing where possible.</p>
A027/23	<p><u>MATTERS RECEIVED IN THE POST, TO BE REPORTED OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></p> <p>Cllr Todd raised query asked by the clerk regarding how HTC recharges vacating tenants if the Estate Supervisor clears the plot(s) without contracting an external company. Cllr Wade offered that the cost of such clearance should be a punitive cost and act as a deterrent for future tenants. Cllr Calver offered the charge should be the charge of cost per hour with a minimum amount charged. Cllr Morrison queried that though this is possibly feasible, whether it is a good use of council time and of the Estate Supervisor.</p> <p>Cllr Calver expressed a stance that HTC has the right to contract external company to carry out the clearance or this could be dealt with internally. If the Estate Supervisor is unable to clear for various reasons the right is held with HTC to employ external contractor.</p> <p>This was discussed to be an agenda item on the next Finance & General Purposes Committee to address the Estate Supervisor's duties and his role of employment with HTC which Clerk will action.</p>
A028/23	<p><u>TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The next meeting of the Allotments Committee is Tuesday 31st October 2023 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich.</p>

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45pm

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: