

GAINSBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the Allotments Sub-Committee held at Richmond House,
Richmond Park, Gainsborough on Tuesday 18th March 2014 at 6.30pm

Present: Councillor John Butler (Chairman)

Councillor Kenneth Woolley
Mrs Ann Cowan
Mr Frank Holmes (Foxby Hill)
Mr Simon Nicholson (Spital Hill)
Mr Dick Parkin (Love Lane)

In Attendance: Matthew Gleadell (Clerk)
Sean Alcock (Operations Manager)

Also in Attendance: 1 member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND REASONS GIVEN

Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Richy Doran
Councillor Vaughan Hughes

RESOLVED to recommend to Community Services committee that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 AND TO RECEIVE ANY APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None received.

3. MINUTES

i. Minutes of Allotment Sub-Committee meeting held on Wednesday 31 July 2013 (Paper A)

There being insufficient members present to approve the minutes it was resolved as follow:

RESOLVED to defer the approval of the minutes until the next meeting of the Allotments Sub Committee.

4. ALLOTMENT TENANCY AGREEMENT AND THE GUIDE TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS (Papers B&C)

The Clerk explained the background to the Papers being a proposed new form of tenancy Agreement with associated guide. The Clerk explained that he understood that a new appropriate agreement had been requested some time ago but had been overlooked by ex officers of the Council.

The Clerk explained that Michelle Nicholson (wife of Spital Hill Allotment secretary) had been massively helpful to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk in putting the documents together and the Clerk thanked Michelle for her extremely kind assistance.

Ann Cowan queried 2 points in relation to the Agreement which were answered by Michelle Nicholson. Ann was satisfied with the response.

The Clerk explained in response to concern from Ann Cowan that the Council needs a document which sets out clearly the basis on which Allotment holders should use their plots and that it will be helpful in dealing with Allotment holders who simply do not follow the rule and is not intended to be used against genuine Allotment holders.

Discussion was held around the most appropriate means of Consulting with plot holders on the proposed Agreement. It was noted that there would need to be a 12 month notice period for existing plot holders before the Agreement takes effect but could be used for new Plot Holders as soon as the final form is agreed following Consultation.

The Clerk explained that as there was insufficient members present it would not be possible for the meeting to resolve to accept the document before going to Consultation and it would therefore need to be sent to the Community Services Committee as a recommendation for approval.

Simon Nicholson expressed his deep upset and concern at the absence of a number of Councillors. He stated that the allotment secretaries turn up to every meeting and felt it pointless in having meetings if they are unable to agree anything. Simon described the situation as a shambles and a farce.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE that the draft Agreement and Guide to Terms and Conditions be used as a starting point for consultation with plot holders.

5. LOVE LANE ALLOTMENT SECRETARY

The Clerk explained that Dick Parkin is the current secretary but had been appointed on the basis of a trial period only and that the Sub Committee needed to consider if the appointment be made permanent.

Frank Holmes expressed some serious concern and began to make some serious allegations against Dick Parkin.

Councillor Butler in the chair stated that he would not accept Frank Holmes talking in the way that he was and explained that the Clerk and he would hold a separate meeting with Frank to listen to his concerns followed by a meeting with Dick to give him opportunity to respond.

Simon Nicholson explained that the matter should not come back to the Allotments Sub Committee and should be dealt with by the Council and not involve the Allotment Secretaries.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE that they deal with the concerns and issues that may be raised regarding the appointment of the Love Lane allotment secretary and is no longer dealt with by the Allotment Sub-Committee.

6. NORTH WARREN ALLOTMENT SECRETARY

The Clerk explained that the Council itself is currently acting as Allotment Secretary and that in view of the current problems facing the site that it would be unfair to give the job to a plot holder until the site issues had been addressed. The meeting agreed with this sentiment.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE that the North Warren secretary position continue to be undertaken by the Council until the problems facing the site are resolved.

7. ASBESTOS ON ALLOTMENT SITES

The Chair enquired with each Secretary as to the extent of any asbestos on the respective sites.

Discussion ensued around the most appropriate methods for disposing of the asbestos.

Simon Nicholson was entirely opposed to untrained individuals being encouraged to clear asbestos contrary to advice that is available on the internet regarding the removal of asbestos.

The Clerk explained that Sean Alcock was already investigating possible clearance options and the associated costs.

As the matter was already under investigation by the Officers no further resolution was deemed necessary and the discussion simply noted.

8. 2015 / 2016 RENT REVIEW

The Clerk explained that the management and finance committee has asked the Allotment committee to consider the position in respect of rent increases.

There having been a recent significant increase the committee was of the opinion that no increase is necessary at this time.

It was noted that plot holders wish to see more from the Council in terms of Services provided particularly in response to increase in rents.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND TO MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE that no notice of an increase in rent should be applied this year.

9. ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF ALLOTMENT SECRETARIES

There being no nominations for alternative secretaries the Committee resolved as follows.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE that the allotment secretaries on Spital Hill (Simon Nicholson), Foxby Hill (Frank Holmes) and Old Showfields (Ann Cowan) remain unchanged.

10. SHOWFIELD ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT MATTERS ARISING

Ann Cowan enquired about a new notice board. It was confirmed by the Clerk that a new one has been purchased and will be erected in the near future.

Ann Cowan expressed concerns about some plans she had heard about regarding the development of the Cedars building.

Ann Cowan also highlighted some concerns regarding some trees in Richmond Park which overhang the Allotment.

11. FOXBY HILL ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT MATTERS ARISING

Frank Holmes reported no problems.

12. SPITAL HILL ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT MATTERS ARISING

Simon Nicholson reported to particular concerns.

13. LOVE LANE ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT MATTERS ARISING

Dick Parkin reported no particular concerns but thanked the Council for their assistance in dealing with the blocked drains.

14. NORTH WARREN ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk referred to ongoing problems on the site which are in the process of trying to be addressed but it was noted that it may take a few years to get the site back in order.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Chairman