

## **YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the **GROUND AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil on **Monday 12 January 2009**

(7:00pm – 8.05pm)

### **Present:**

Alan Smith - Chairman  
Philip Chandler  
John Grana  
Dave Greene  
John Hann  
Steve Hawker  
Simon Hester  
Jon Trevett (Co-opted Non-voting)

### **Also Present:**

Alan Tawse – Town Clerk  
Steve Barnes – Play Area and Youth Facilities Officer (SSDC)  
Richard Davy – Streetscene Co-ordinator (SSDC)  
PC Amanda Mehrlich – Avon and Somerset Constabulary  
PCOS Catherine Helyar – Avon and Somerset Constabulary

### **Public Comment**

There were no comments from members of the public.

#### 7/130 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 November 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 7/131 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Dave Gooding, Pete Goodman and Wes Read.

#### 7/132 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 7/133 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

#### 7/134 **PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES UPDATE**

The Committee considered the verbal report of the Play and Youth Facilities Officer, who explained that repairs and inspections continued and detailed some of the specific works that have recently been carried out at St John's Road, Monksdale, Grass Royal and Westfield play areas.

#### **RESOLVED**

that the matters be noted.

#### 7/135 **YEW TREE PARK PLAY AREA**

The Committee considered the report of the Play and Youth Facilities Officer (Agenda item 6 refers).

In response to query, he explained how the steering group, which had been established to advise on the delivery of the Project, had sought financial contributions from a number of local organisations – including the Well Being of the Yeovil Community Association, which had allocated £5,000 to the purchase and installation of a “buddy swing”.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the report be noted and the progress being made in relation to the Regeneration of Yew Tree Park Play Area Project be noted; and
- (2) that the detailed drawing of the concept design, which will be brought to the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee in March, be awaited.

#### 7/136 **ALLOTMENT MAINTENANCE WORK**

The Committee considered the table of allotment maintenance works undertaken to date in 2008/09 and the proposed work plan for 2009/10 prepared by the Streetscene Co-ordinator (Agenda item 7 refers).

In response to query, the Streetscene Co-ordinator explained that the relatively large number of hours spent by operatives during September at the Monksdale site was attributed to a hedge-cutting exercise, which was carried out on an annual basis.

The Town Clerk indicated that discussions had taken place with representatives of the Allotment Tenants Working Group with a view to putting in place adequate allotment maintenance arrangements for the areas that did not form the let plots at the Goar Knapp and Milford Dip sites – in accordance with a decision of the Town Council. He added that these discussions were in addition to the periodic meetings that took place with representatives of allotment tenants regarding the specification of maintenance works carried out on other allotment sites by the Town Council's contractors.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the absence of strimming and mowing work in June from the proposed work plan and, whilst it

was accepted that during prolonged periods of dry weather there might not be a need to undertake such work, it was felt that it would be preferable for the total number of planned works to be increased from 7 to 8 per annum (to include June) with a proviso that the overall number be reduced, as necessary, during a prolonged dry spell.

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that the proposed allotment maintenance work programme for 2009/10 be approved subject to the addition of strimming and mowing work during June, thereby increasing the total frequency of strimming and mowing operations from 7 to 8 per annum; and
- (3) that no reduction be made in the agreed frequency of planned maintenance work without the Town Clerk's prior approval.

### 7/137 **ALLOTMENT SECURITY**

The Chairman extended a welcome to PC Amanda Mehrlich and PCSO Catherine Helyar who had kindly agreed to attend the meeting to give advice and answer questions on the general security of allotments, sheds and equipment and related matters.

A copy of an information leaflet published by the Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership – in conjunction with Avon and Somerset Constabulary – was circulated at the meeting. The leaflet gave useful tips on how to prevent the theft of tools and gardening equipment from sheds, and contacts for reporting any suspected crime.

Details of a number of recent incidents on allotment sites in the Town were outlined at the meeting.

The Town Clerk indicated that, whilst crimes on allotment sites were relatively rare it was important that tenants reported every incident to the Police and to the Town Council – to ensure that the full extent of the situation was known. He added that contact details for reporting crime had been included in the allotment tenants newsletter, which was published by the Council, and that he would be happy to continue doing so in future publications and to post the leaflet circulated at the meeting on the Town Council's website.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the difficulties in securing some allotment sites owing to established rights of way and present fencing arrangements.

The Chairman thanked Amanda and Catherine for their interesting and informative presentation.

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted; and

- (2) that the Town Clerk's intention to continue including articles in future editions of the allotment tenants newsletter about ways of preventing and reporting crime, and to post information on the Town Council's website about the subject, be supported.

7/138 **ALLOTMENT TENANTS WORKING GROUP**

A copy of the notes of the meeting of the Allotment Tenants Working Group which was held on 8 December 2008, were circulated at the meeting.

Jon Trevett took the opportunity to remind the Committee of the proposal by the Allotment Tenants Working Group to form an Allotment Tenants Association and he confirmed that arrangements had been made for an open meeting of all allotment tenants to be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 11 February 2009 at Monmouth Hall, and that all members were welcome to attend.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, as requested by the Committee, he had arranged for information about the meeting to be circulated to all allotment tenants along with the latest newsletter.

Jon added that, amongst other things, the Allotment Tenants Working Group was hoping that the new Association would be in a position to negotiate discounts with local horticultural outlets for the purchase of gardening tools and seeds.

**RESOLVED**

that the matter be noted.

7/139 **NON-CORPORATE ALLOTMENT MAINTENANCE BUDGET BIDS**

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Town Clerk (Agenda item 10 refers).

The Town Clerk indicated that, since the publication of the Agenda he had received an additional request from the tenant representative of the Monksdale allotment site who had requested the allocation of funds (£149) to meet the cost of hiring a standard skip.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the method by which the Town Council currently procured the hire of skips and it was suggested that discussions take place with Somerset Waste Partnership to establish whether a cheaper and equally effective method could be introduced to collect waste from allotment sites.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that approval be given to the four requests set out in the report and the above outlined additional request, and the overall costs of £812 be met

from the remaining balance of the 2008/09 Non-Corporate Allotment Maintenance budget; and

- (3) that the Assistant Town Clerk investigate the above-outlined suggestion regarding the possibility of adopting an alternative method of collecting waste from allotment sites, and report her findings to a future meeting.

#### 7/140 **ROTOVATION OF ALLOTMENT PLOTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Town Clerk (Agenda item 11 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the possibility of the Council offering to rotovate all newly let allotment plots free of charge – as a way of attracting prospective tenants and encouraging those who decided to take up a tenancy to make an immediate start in growing produce.

The Town Clerk indicated that, in view of the financial and other implications of adopting such a policy, the costs and practicalities would need to be investigated and reported back to the next meeting in order that members could consider the matter further and make a decision.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that the above outlined suggestion be investigated by the officers and their findings and conclusions be reported back to the next meeting.

#### 7/141 **ANNUAL SOMERSET PLAY FORUM CONFERENCE 2009**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that Philip Chandler, Dave Greene and Alan Smith be nominated to attend the above Conference, at an overall cost of £60 plus travelling expenses.

#### 7/142 **FINANCIAL STATEMENT - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2008**

The Committee considered the report of the Finance Administrator (Agenda item 13 refers).

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Financial Statement for the above months be noted.

Chairman