

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the **GROUNDS AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil on **Monday 8 March 2010**

(7:00pm – 8.45pm)

Present:

Alan Smith (Chairman)
J Vincent Chainey
Pete Goodman
Steve Hawker
Jon Trevett (co-opted non-voting)

Also Present:

Alan Tawse – Town Clerk
Sarah Hunt – Assistant Town Clerk
Steven Barnes – Play and Youth Facilities Officer – SSSDC
Rich Davy – Streetscene Co-ordinator - SSSDC

Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

7/212 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 January, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7/213 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

7/214 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

J Vincent Chainey declared a personal interest in any discussion regarding Rustywell Allotments by virtue of his tenancy of an allotment plot on this site.

7/215 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

7/216 **PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE UPDATE**

The Play and Youth Facilities Officer updated the meeting (agenda item 6 refers). He was hopeful that ground works would be finished at Yew Tree

Park by 1 April. Shortly thereafter, there would be a 'soft' opening, when most of the equipment would be ready for use. This would be followed by a formal opening on Saturday 22 May, starting at 10.30 a.m. The Assistant Town Clerk was working with Steve, Rob Parr and the Steering Group to organise a programme for the day.

The date for the initial consultation for Monks Dale Play area had been set for 31 March 2010. It would take place in the Dining Room at Preston School from 3.00 p.m. until 6.30 p.m., to enable adults and children to attend and put forward their views. Flyers would be widely circulated prior to the event.

Steve observed that the sign at Kingston View play area is continually being vandalised. He said he would consider replacing the existing sign with a more substantial sign, should further damage occur.

RESOLVED

that the matters be noted.

7/217 ALLOTMENT MAINTENANCE WORK

The Streetscene Co-ordinator, advised that there was little to report with regards to maintenance during this quarter. Due to the colder than usual winter weather, the grass had hardly grown, and it was agreed to postpone the March grass cut until April, thereby saving on a month's maintenance charge.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that the March grass cut be cancelled.

7/218 HEDGING WORK AT SUNNINGDALE ALLOTMENTS

The Assistant Town Clerk updated Members on the progress of this project (Agenda Item 7 refers) and advised that work had recommenced on Monday 8 March. It was hoped that the hedge cutting work would be completed by 12 March and that the team would shortly thereafter plant maple whips and hawthorn as well as erect the chestnut fencing to give the hedging the best opportunity to re-establish itself.

RESOLVED

that the matter be noted.

7/219 HILLCREST ALLOTMENTS WATER REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Town Clerk (Agenda item 8 refers). She advised that work on site had commenced on 3 March and had finished on 5 March, with minimal disruption to the site.

RESOLVED

that the matter be noted.

7/220 **ALLOTMENT LETTINGS**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (agenda item 9 refers).

Members noted that the number of plots currently provided in Yeovil Town was well in excess of the number advocated by the Government and by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) and that the number of persons on the waiting list was well below the average figure identified in a national survey undertaken last year.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the potential opportunities which large scale housing developments provided for securing additional leisure provision – including allotments – through planning gain, although it was recognised that many identified development sites were outside the Town Council's administrative area.

Attention was drawn to ways by which some parishes had secured additional provision within their own administrative areas by entering into short-term agreements with local private landowners to provide allotment plots for local parishioners.

Reference was also made to the Town Council's current allotment lettings policy, which it was suggested be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring of the current waiting list.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that the Town Clerk provide a further breakdown of the current waiting list to the next meeting to help the Committee review the present allotment lettings policy and to consider whether there is a case for the policy to be amended.

7/221 **ALLOTMENT TENANTS WORKING GROUP**

Members considered the Minutes dated 1 February 2010 and 1 March 2010 (Agenda item 10 refers).

Rustywell Allotments

The Assistant Town Clerk advised Jon Trevett that she had investigated the cost of removing the tree stump with the Countryside Officer, who confirmed that the District Council would not be prepared to pay a large sum to provide only one additional parking space. The Tenant Representative had been informed accordingly.

The Assistant Town Clerk said she would investigate the ownership of the outbuildings on the south-west corner of the site.

Public Liability Insurance

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council's current insurers were not prepared to insure individuals on a collective policy and that allotment users needed to take out their own cover.

On a positive note, he had written to Jon Trevett with the contact details for a company, (endorsed by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG), which specialised in collective allotment insurance.

It was agreed that the best way to communicate with all allotment holders on this matter was via the summer edition of Greenfingers. However, the Town Clerk emphasised that the Town Council would not wish to be seen to endorse any specific insurance company and that this would need to be made clear in the newsletter.

Allotment Maintenance

Members discussed a template document produced by a Tenant Representative, for tenants to give feedback to the Allotment Maintenance Team. The Streetscene Co-ordinator said he would welcome feedback, but in order for it to be effective, it would need to be done quickly. There would be little value in reviewing a feedback form some weeks after the event. The Chairman felt that the form needed further development, as he felt it was currently too detailed. The key information to be included was: a) date work carried out, b) description of work carried out, c) comment and d) monitored by.

Composting

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had posted the presentation by the Somerset Waste Action Programme on the Town Council website, although he appreciated that some allotment holders may not have access to the Internet. He encouraged Jon Trevett to promote the computing facilities at the libraries in King George Street and at Sunningdale in the next Working Group minutes.

The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that she had circulated a letter to all Tenant Representatives informing them that 'honey pot' composters in two different sizes were on sale at significant discount at Brimsmore Garden Centre. There was no further discount available for bulk orders.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the matters be noted; and
- (ii) that Jon Trevett submit an article for the summer edition of Greenfingers, to include details of the insurance company recommended by the Allotment Working Group.

The Committee considered the report of the Finance Administrator (Agenda item 11 refers).

RESOLVED

that the Financial Statement for December 2009 and January 2010 be noted.

Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

Chairman

SH/23/03/10