



# Yeovil Town Council

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The Meeting... **Grounds and General Maintenance Committee**

The Time... **7.00pm**

The Date... **Monday 9 March 2009**

The Place... **Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil**

If you need this information in large print, Braille, audio or another language, please ring 01935 382424



*Alan Tawse*

Alan Tawse  
Town Clerk

03 March 2009

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Please contact Sally Bing at the Town House for more information about this meeting

**Grounds and General Maintenance Committee**

To: All Members of the Grounds and General  
Maintenance Committee

Philip Chandler (Ex-officio)

Dave Gooding

Pete Goodman

John Grana

Dave Greene (Vice Chairman)

John Hann

Steve Hawker

Simon Hester

Wes Read (Ex-officio)

Alan Smith (Chairman)

Jon Trevett (co-opted non-voting)

## **A G E N D A**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT (15 Minutes)**

1. **MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2009.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **CORRESPONDENCE**

5. **PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES UPDATE**

To consider an oral report from the Play and Youth Facilities Officer on the maintenance and improvement of sites managed by the Town Council.

6. **YEW TREE PARK REFURBISHMENT UPDATE**

To consider a report from the Play and Youth Facilities Officer at pages 3 to 4 on Yew Tree Park regeneration.

7. **LETTING OF PLOTS TO EVICTED TENANTS**

To consider the report by the Town Clerk attached at page 5.

8. **ROTOVATION OF ALLOTMENT PLOTS TAKEN UP BY NEW TENANTS**

To consider the report by the Assistant Town Clerk attached at page 6.

9. **REQUEST TO KEEP CHICKENS ON AN ALLOTMENT PLOT**

To consider the report by the Assistant Town Clerk attached at pages 7 and 8.

10. **DISPOSAL OF WASTE/GREEN WASTE FROM ALLOTMENT SITES**

To consider the report by the Assistant Town Clerk attached at page 9.

11. **ELECTION OF TENANT REPRESENTATIVES**

To consider the report by the Assistant Town Clerk attached at page 10.

12. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 JANUARY 2009**

To consider the Financial Statement for the period 1 December 2008 to 31 January 2009. See attached Financial Statement at pages 11 to 18.

## **6. REGENERATION OF YEW TREE PARK PLAY AREA**

### **Purpose of the Report**

To update Yeovil Town Council, Grounds and General Committee on the progress being made to regenerate the Yew Tree Park Play Area.

### **Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that:

1. Members agree that the Yew Tree Park Play Area detailed design be supported and go forward to tender stage.

### **Background**

As part of the programme of play area improvements outlined at Policy, Resources and Finance Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006, Yew Tree Park Play Area is due to be improved during 2008/9.

At Grounds and General Committee on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007 committee agreed for a steering group to be set up by Steve Barnes that included representatives from South Somerset District Council, Yeovil Town Council and local members of the community. The committee also resolved to agree the outline project plan included in the committee report.

The aim of the steering group was to consult with local residents and progress towards the regeneration of the play area.

In line with the project plan funding bids were submitted during 2007 and in March 2008 SSDC Full Council Resolved to allocate £80,000 to match fund Yeovil Town Council's development of the Yew Tree Park Play Area.

On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 Yeovil Town Council's Full Committee resolved to allocate £80,000 to match fund SSDC and achieve the £165,000 budget.

The Well Being of the Yeovil Community Association has allocated £5,000 to the purchase and installation of a Buddy Swing.

The Project Brief was produced followed by the Design Brief.

Yew Tree Park Play area concept design was also produced by the design team.

Following Grounds and General Meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2008, Ward members met with Play and Youth Facilities Officers, Mr R Parr and Mr S Barnes and Town Clerk Mr A Tawse at Yew Tree Park to discuss proposed designs, project brief, and public consultation in more detail. Following this meeting Ward members expressed their support of the project, and the Town Council has since made a commitment to funding their share of the planned budget.

### **Report**

Detailed drawing of Yew Tree Park play area refurbishment have now been produced by South Somerset District Council in house design team.

The drawings will be presented to Yeovil Town Council Grounds and General Committee at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

If members agree to the design going forward to tender stage SSDC design team should be in a position to go out to tender in early April 2009.

Yew Tree Park Steering Group discussed the design on Weds 25<sup>th</sup> of February and unanimously agreed to recommend the design moves forward to Yeovil Town Council Grounds and General Committee for approval.

### **Financial Implications**

Yeovil Town Council has allocated £80,000 to the refurbishment of Yew Tree Park Play Area.

South Somerset District Council has allocated £80,000 also to the refurbishment of Yew Tree Park Play Area.

The Well Being of the Yeovil Community Association has allocated £5,000 to the purchase and installation of a Buddy Swing.

Total secured budget for the project is £165,000.

The steering group is still applying to other possible funders if we are successful with other applications I will inform all interested parties.

Yeovil Town Council and South Somerset District Council continue to work in partnership to move this project forward.

### **Other Implications**

None

### **Background Papers**

**Yeovil Town Council Grounds and General Committee - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
30<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
9<sup>th</sup> July 2008  
3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2008**

**South Somerset District Council – Area South – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

*Stephen Barnes, Play and Youth Facilities Officer  
(01935) 462408*

## **7. LETTING OF PLOTS TO EVICTED TENANTS**

The tenancy agreement drawn up between the Town Council and each allotment tenant provides for the plot holder to be evicted from the plot in certain circumstances eg for failure to pay rent and for breach of the rules relating to the use and cultivation of the plot.

Eviction is a last resort, and only exercised after considerable dialogue with the tenant involved; where there are no extenuating circumstances and when all other options have been exhausted. A formal appeals process has been adopted, and all tenants who are served with a Notice to Quit are advised of their right of appeal against eviction.

Recently, a number of previously evicted tenants have applied to be granted a further tenancy and, in accordance with the present letting policy, have been added to the waiting list pending a plot becoming vacant.

Whilst the present 100% occupancy situation effectively means that there will inevitably be an interval between a tenancy being terminated and a new tenancy being granted, it is conceivable that under the current policy an evicted tenant could immediately apply and be granted a further tenancy.

The Committee may consider that the present situation potentially undermines the eviction process and that a minimum period of time should elapse before an evicted tenant may be granted a new tenancy.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the matter.

*(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)*

## **8. ROTOVATION OF ALLOTMENT PLOTS FOR NEW TENANTS**

At the last meeting of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee, Members discussed the current incentives to encourage new allotment tenants to take up plots:

*“The Town Council currently offers rotoovation of allotment plots at a subsidised rate to new allotment tenants as both an incentive to take on a plot and to help them initially get started as soon as possible.*

*The new tenant is charged £20, although the cost to the Town Council is usually in the region of £45. (Any existing tenant requesting the service is charged the full amount).*

*An alternative incentive, if the plot being let requires a lot of work initially to remove weeds and clear the ground, would be to discount the first 2 or 3 months from the cost of the annual allotment rent. If the cost of allotment rent for a year is £30, for example, this would effectively reduce the income to the Council by up £7.50.*

*It is worth noting that waiting lists currently exist on all 11 allotment sites.”*

The Assistant Town Clerk was asked to provide further information regarding the financial implications of offering rotoovation of allotment plots free of charge to encourage new tenants to make an immediate start on the growing process.

From a practical point of view, the current provider of the spraying and rotoovation service carried out the rotoovation requests on a monthly basis. This may mean that a tenant will be waiting a few weeks before spraying and then, approximately two weeks later, rotoovation takes place. In the winter, rotoovation is delayed due to hard ground conditions.

The financial implications to the Town Council of adopting this proposed variation in the level of subsidy would equate to £20 per request up to the current number of requests received each year, (approximately 7) and the full subsidy of £45 per request for those additional new tenants over and above this number (estimated to be 41) who may make use of the service.

These figures are based on the number of new tenants taking up plots over the last two years which has been, on average 48, per year. Consequently, if all new tenants accepted the offer of free spray and rotoovation of the newly acquired plot, this could potentially cost the Town Council an additional £2,020 per year.

There may be some scope within the 2009/10 Corporate Allotment Maintenance budget to meet the additional costs involved. However, at this point in time it is difficult to predict whether there will be an underspend in this budget and, if so, the level of saving that could be used to offset the additional subsidy costs.

In the past when vacant plots were available, the Town Council has used this budget to spray and rotoovate unlet plots as a way of encouraging take-up on sites such as Newtown.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider reviewing the current incentive to encourage new allotment tenants to take up plots bearing in mind the costs involved, the current full occupancy and waiting list for allotment plots on all 11 allotment sites.

*(Alan Tawse - Town Clerk – 01935 382424)*

## **9. REQUEST TO KEEP CHICKENS ON AN ALLOTMENT PLOT**

A request has been received by an existing allotment tenant to keep chickens on an allotment plot at Sunningdale allotment site.

The applicant has explained that 5 ft posts and chicken wire fencing would be installed on approximately a quarter of the plot to accommodate the chickens in a secure area. The chicken wire would be inserted beneath the ground to prevent foxes from digging underneath to obtain access to the chickens, and the applicant has given assurances that all surplus food would be cleared to avoid attracting vermin.

The Environmental Health Officer (SSDC) has been consulted on the application and has raised no objection to chickens, but advises a restriction against cockerels due to the potential noise.

The Allotment Tenancy Agreement includes the following clauses relevant to consideration of the application:

The Tenant hereby agrees with the Council as follows:-

- (g) not without the prior consent in writing of the Council to erect any building on the allotment garden which must be no larger than 8ft x 6ft AND in regard to any building for which consent has been granted to erect the same in accordance with plans or specifications (and of materials specified therein) submitted to the Council by the Tenant;
- (l) not normally to keep any animals or livestock without the prior consent in writing from the Town Council

Conditions of the "Sheds, Greenhouses and Polytunnels on Allotment Plots" agreement (attached) may also be relevant.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the request and if minded to grant permission, consider adopting a policy on the permission of keeping chickens on allotment plots and the inclusion of any relevant conditions.

*(Sally Bing, Assistant Town Clerk – 01935 382424)*



**YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL**  
**SHEDS, GREENHOUSES AND POLYTUNNELS**  
**ON ALLOTMENT PLOTS**

The following terms and conditions apply if you wish to place a shed, greenhouse, or polytunnel on your allotment plot:-

- (i) only one shed and one greenhouse or polytunnel to be erected per plot.
- (ii) any shed, greenhouse and/or polytunnel to be without a concrete base.
- (iii) no shed or greenhouse to exceed 8ft x 6ft in ground dimensions; no polytunnel to exceed one third of each allotment plot without express consent of the Council.
- (iv) any shed, greenhouse and/or polytunnel to be of sound construction and to be properly maintained at all times. *(The Town Council encourages the use of polycarbonate sheeting instead of glass in greenhouses as, unlike glass, it will not shatter).*
- (v) any polytunnel should be sited a safe distance from pathways and be sufficiently secured to the ground.
- (vi) the allotment holder to be responsible for ascertaining whether planning permission is required and for obtaining such permission, if so.
- (vi) the allotment holder to be responsible for removing the shed, greenhouse and/or polytunnel from the site and restoring the ground to a fit state for cultivation upon his/her vacation of the plot .
- (vii) that Yeovil Town Council may insist on the immediate removal of any structure on an allotment plot deemed by a Town Council Officer to be unsafe.
- (viii) the allotment holder indicating his/her understanding that the Yeovil Town Council accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage which might be caused to the shed, greenhouse and/or polytunnel or the contents thereof by others.
- (ix) that the above conditions be adhered to whether the allotment tenant erected the structure, or by agreement, inherited the structure from the previous allotment tenant.

I have read and understand the above terms and conditions and I agree to abide by them.

Signature of Allotment Holder .....

Date .....

Allotment Site .....

Plot No. ....

*(Please sign both copies of the agreement, retain one copy for your records and return one copy to Yeovil Town Council.)*

## **10. DISPOSAL OF WASTE/GREEN WASTE FROM ALLOTMENT SITES**

Following a request at the last meeting of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee, the Assistant Town Clerk was asked to investigate the possibility of the collection of waste from allotment sites by Somerset Waste Partnership.

The collection of waste from sites by SSDC via the green kerbside “wheelie” style bins had already been investigated, with unfortunately, a negative response. Further investigation revealed that the situation had not changed and green kerbside waste collection still is not available to those requesting the service (residents who have already been allocated green bins are still having their waste collected). Even if the bins are made available to residents in the future, it is unlikely that Somerset Waste Partnership would allocate them to allotment sites.

Therefore, an alternative waste collection provider was contacted and quotes requested for skips to remove green waste only from allotment sites, with assurances that the waste would be taken for green waste recycling. The quotes received were calculated at £115 for haulage with an additional charge of £34 per tonne. Even at a quantity of 2 tonnes, this would exceed the cost of hiring skips from our current provider.

The current waste collection provider has confirmed that the waste collected via skips from our allotment sites is sorted, with soil, hardcore, metal and plastic extracted and recycled, and green waste recycled at Dimmer recycling centre during the summer months. As the majority of the skips for allotment plots are hired during the summer months, most of the waste collected is recycled without a requirement to sort the waste prior to collection.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider and note the information.

*(Sally Bing, Assistant Town Clerk – 01935 382424)*

## **11. ELECTION OF TENANT REPRESENTATIVES**

At a meeting of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee in January 2005, it was agreed that the election of Tenant Representatives be held every four years. The last elections took place in February 2005, so the nomination papers for the election of Tenant Representatives will be sent out with the next edition of the Town Council allotment newsletter, Greenfingers, planned in July 2009.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the matter.

*(Sally Bing, Assistant Town Clerk – 01935 382424)*