

## 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 9 March 2009**

(7:00pm – 8.40pm)

### **Present:**

Alan Smith - Chairman  
Philip Chandler  
Pete Goodman  
John Grana  
Dave Greene  
John Hann  
Steve Hawker  
Simon Hester  
Jon Trevett - Co-opted Non Voting

### **Also Present:**

Tom Parsley - South Ward Member  
Alan Tawse - Town Clerk  
Sally Bing - Assistant Town Clerk  
Steve Barnes - Play and Youth Facilities Officer, SSDC

### **Public Comment**

Mrs Smith addressed the Committee explaining that she was in attendance regarding Agenda item 9 as she and her husband had applied to keep chickens on their allotment plot. She informed the Committee that they were available to answer any questions which may arise.

### 7/143 **MINUTES**

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

### 7/144 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

### 7/145 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 7/146 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

#### **7/147 PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES UPDATE**

The Committee considered the verbal update from the Play and Youth Facilities Officer who explained that weekly inspections had been completed and gave details about repair and painting of play equipment.

#### **RESOLVED**

that the matters be noted.

#### **7/148 YEW TREE PARK REFURBISHMENT UPDATE**

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

Steve Barnes distributed to the Committee copies of the detailed drawing of Yew Tree Park Play Area refurbishment and explained each area of the play area and proposed item of equipment in detail.

With regard to fencing, it was explained that the fencing on the border of the site facing Lysander Road, which was the responsibility of the District Council, was to be dealt with as a separate issue. The Committee was aware that fencing immediately around the edge of the play area site was not proposed, however, a Cornish hedge segregating the play site from the access road to the north of the site and earth mounds at the Eastern boundary of the site were proposed to create boundary markings in the locations where an obvious boundary did not already exist.

Discussion took place regarding the tendering process and it was agreed that once the tenders were opened and considered by the District Council, they would be referred to the Town Clerk in consultation with Members for consideration by the Town Council.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that support be given to the detailed drawings of Yew Tree Park Play Area Refurbishment presented to the Committee;
- (3) that it be agreed that the detailed design of the Yew Tree Park Play Area Refurbishment go forward to the tender stage; and
- (4) that following opening of the tenders by the District Council, they be referred to the Town Council for consideration by the Town Clerk, in consultation with Members.

#### **7/149 LETTING OF PLOTS TO EVICTED TENANTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 7 refers).

Jon Trevett explained that he had received limited feedback from other tenants and felt that it would be preferable to look at the complete letting

process. However, he accepted that a policy to deal with requests of this nature was required.

The Town Clerk responded summarising the eligibility criteria set out in the Chief Provisions of Rules With Respect to Allotment Gardens document. For the benefit of the Committee, the Town Clerk also clarified the formal appeals process that had been adopted by the Town Council.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matters be noted; and
- (2) that the following policy be adopted in respect of evicted tenants seeking a further tenancy:-

*'Tenants who are evicted from an allotment plot cannot be granted a further tenancy until a year has elapsed from the effective date of their eviction.'*

*Any evicted person applying to be included on a waiting list in respect of any of the Town Council's allotment sites may be added to the waiting list on the strict understanding that if they reach the top of the list before the year expires, the plot will be offered to the next person on the list instead.'*

## **7/150 ROTOVATION OF ALLOTMENT PLOTS TAKEN UP BY NEW TENANTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Town Clerk (Agenda item 8 refers).

Jon Trevett explained that the Allotment Tenants Working Group supported the idea that spraying and rotovation of allotment plots take place in time for new tenants to take up the plot. He explained that he was aware of tenants who had relinquished their plot at an early stage when they had taken on a vacant plot difficult to clear.

Discussion took place regarding the advantages of clearing all plots prior to them being taken up by new tenants and the Town Clerk explained the financial implication based on the number of new tenants over the past two years.

He stated that if every new tenant requested spraying and rotovation, the potential cost to the Council would be £1,985 (not £2,220 as stated in the report). He further added that funding was not available in any budget and would need to be referred to Policy, Resources and Finance Committee for funding in 2009/10. The Town Clerk explained that this scheme had been initially devised as an incentive to attract new tenants and consideration needed to be given as to whether the incentive was still required given the waiting lists for all allotment sites.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matters be noted; and

- (2) that the existing incentive scheme remain: that spraying and rotovation of an allotment plot taken up by a new tenant be offered at the subsidised rate of £20 per plot; and
- (3) that in the event that demand for this incentive scheme exceeds demand by ten new tenants in any given financial year, the matter be referred back to the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee for further consideration.

#### 7/151 **REQUEST TO KEEP CHICKENS ON AN ALLOTMENT PLOT**

The Committee considered the report by the Assistant Town Clerk (Agenda item 9 refers).

The Assistant Town Clerk further explained that tenants keeping chickens on an allotment plot could be requested to register with DEFRA and the Animal Health Department at County Council to ensure that information relevant to keeping chickens be passed on to the tenants by those agencies.

Committee Members felt that the number of chickens kept on an allotment site should be restricted to 10 and that in the future consideration should be given to limiting the number of plots on each site given permission to keep chickens.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the application be noted;
- (2) that the application to keep no more than 10 chickens on the allotment plot let to Mr and Mrs Smith be granted subject to conditions set out by the Assistant Town Clerk including:
  - (a) no cockerels;
  - (b) the chicken house and run not to exceed  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the allotment plot;
  - (c) the chicken wire be inserted sufficiently beneath the ground to prevent foxes and other vermin from digging underneath to obtain access to the chickens;
  - (d) that all surplus food be cleared to avoid attracting vermin;
  - (e) that the chicken house and run be cleaned at regular intervals; and
  - (f) that the tenants register that they are keepers of chickens with DEFRA and Animal Health at County Council.
- (3) that any further requests to keep chickens on an allotment plot be referred to Grounds and General Maintenance Committee for consideration.

#### 7/152 **DISPOSAL OF WASTE/GREEN WASTE FROM ALLOTMENT SITES**

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

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that no change be made to the existing arrangements for the removal of and disposal of waste/green waste from allotment sites.

7/153 **ELECTION OF TENANT REPRESENTATIVES**

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

**RESOLVED**

that the matter be noted.

7/154 **FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 JANUARY 2009**

The Committee considered the Financial Statement for the period 1 December 2008 to 31 January 2009 (Agenda item 12 refers).

**RESOLVED**

that the Financial Statement for December 2008 and January 2009 be noted.

**Public Comment**

There were no comments from members of the public.

Chairman

SB/JW  
01/04/09