

Minutes of The Allotments Committee held on

Tuesday 8th June 2021 7.30 pm at The Rackliff Centre

Members Present:

Cllr D Smith (Chairman), Cllr E Ellicott (Vice-Chair), Cllr B Edwards, Cllr D Funnell and Miss S French (Committee Member)

Officer Present:

Mr K Watson

Members of the Public:

One

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chair

Resolved to elect Cllr Smith as Chairman and resolved to elect Cllr Ellicott as Vice-Chair

1. Enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting
No-one present intended to film, photograph and/or record the meeting.

2. To receive and approve apologies for absence
Officer Mrs S Denne and Committee Member Mr L Banks.

3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests
Cllrs Smith, Ellicott and Committee Member Miss French declared Personal and Prejudicial Interests as they are all existing plot holders.

4. Declarations of Lobbying
None.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2021
These were agreed, and it was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman signed them as a true record

5.1 Matters outstanding from these minutes (not listed as separate agenda items):
None.

5.2 Matters outstanding from previous minutes:
None.

6. Open session for questions from the public:
There were no questions raised.

7. Ponds and insurance liability
Following a request from a plot holder at Wickham Gardens allotments to increase the size of an existing pond Officer Watson confirmed plot holders remain liable for their plots and this includes ponds. General advice from the Parish Council insurers is ponds should be enclosed and covered in view of Health and Safety concerns e.g. drowning, water stagnation, etc.

Permission was subsequently granted to the plot holder on the basis of the information provided by Officer Watson.

8. Removal of play equipment at Wickham Gardens allotments

Cllr Smith was pleased to confirm the large equipment on both plots have been removed and the residual smaller play equipment was not deemed to require any further action.

9. Results of May inspection

Cllrs Smith and Edwards were disappointed to report 18 plots at Southwood Road allotments were in poor state and/or uncultivated. Cllr Ellicott and Committee Member French reported similar findings for 3 plots at Wickham Gardens allotments. Officers Watson and Denne will issue warnings to all the relevant plot holders and advise follow up inspections will be completed to ensure remedial actions have been effective.

10. Waiting List

Officer Watson confirmed we still have a healthy Waiting List of 21 residents. 7 residents have been offered vacant plots of which 4 already taken up the offer and 1 is due to confirm this week. The remaining 2 residents are being chased for a decision.

11. Problem of displaying plot numbers

Cllrs Smith, Ellicott, Edwards and Committee Member French advised numerous plot numbers are missing, sited so that it is impossible to read them and the allotment plot maps are out of date which causes issues when completing inspections. It was resolved that a working party formed of Committee Members will be established to consider the best way to resolve the issues, including whether the Parish Council should purchase plot numbers for all sites. An initial meeting of the working party is scheduled for Wednesday 7th July 2021.

12. Summer BBQ and Allotments Competition Prize Giving Saturday 24th July 2021 at Southwood Road allotments

It was resolved the BBQ will now be Sunday 18th July starting at 2pm at Southwood Road allotments.

- i. It was resolved Cllrs Smith and Edwards will judge the Southwood Road and Southwood Road Extension allotments, Cllr Ellicott and Committee Member French will judge Wickham Gardens allotments.
- ii. It was resolved Mr P Goldsmith, existing plot holder at Southwood Road, will host the BBQ.
- iii. It was resolved there will be 3 competitions at each site with prizes awarded for 1st and 2nd places for Best plot per site and Best children's plot per site and 1st place only for Best Scarecrow. Each prize winner to receive a certificate and vouchers from The Venture Rusthall as follows:
 - Best plot winners £20; runners up £10
 - Best children's plot winner £10; runners up £5
 - Best scarecrow winners £5
- iv. Officer Watson will arrange for a promotional article to be included within the July issue of Rusthall Life and a further article with pictures of the winners in a future edition. Officers Denne and Watson are to contact all plot holders with full details of the BBQ and asking attendees to bring their own food, utensils and chairs. Officer Watson is to investigate whether the Parish Council still owns a gazebo and whether the local Scouts possess an oil drum BBQ they could lend us for the day.

13. Chair's Report

Cllr Smith thanked the Rusthall Community Larder for their donation of sun flower packets which are available for all plot holders upon demand. Cllr Smith thanked Officer Watson and our tree surgeons, The Living Forest, for their prompt action in resolving the fallen tree at Wickham Gardens allotments on Monday 7th June 2021. Cllr Smith requested the working party consider new signage at our allotment sites, including a new one at Wickham Gardens in view of the specific times we allow mowing, strimming, etc.

14. Clerk's Report

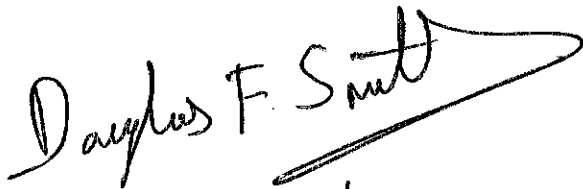
- i. Officer Watson is investigating with Castle Water if our allotments could benefit from agricultural rates as they are cheaper than business use rates.
- ii. Officer Watson provided background on the availability of security marking kits provided earlier this year by The Rotary Club of Tunbridge Wells. Cllr Smith noted that following the installation of the new fencing at our allotment sites earlier this year the amount of crime and anti-social behaviour had dramatically reduced. It was resolved the kits would be held in abeyance for the time being.

15. Diary Dates

The Tunbridge Wells in Bloom 2021 competition will be judged during July with the Awards Presentation for "Best" categories announced in September.

Date of Next Meeting – Monday 20th September 2021, 8pm start.

The meeting closed at 9pm



..... Chairman
Dated 20th September 2021