

Minutes of Allotment Committee Meeting held in The Rackliff Centre Rusthall on 20th June 2016 at 8:00pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr Benoy, Cllr Edwards, Cllr Moore, Cllr Punyer and Mr Dand.

OFFICER PRESENT: Mrs S Denne – Clerk

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Yes

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: RESOLVED to elect Cllr Richard Benoy as Chairman of the Allotment Committee.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN: RESOLVED to elect Cllr Barry Edwards as Vice-Chairman of the Allotment Committee.

1. **Enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting** - None
2. **Apologies for Absence** – None
3. **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Benoy, Cllr Punyer and Mr Dand have allotment plots.
4. Minutes of the Allotment Meeting held on the 15th March 2016 were agreed.
5. **Confirm dates of future meetings for year** – Following meetings to be held on Monday 19th September, 19th December and 20th March 2017 at 8pm. *Clerk to put on website and notice boards.*
6. **Skips** – It was agreed that that there would be no more skips in the immediate future. This was partly due to the misuse of the skips by some allotment holders, overfilling with rubbish thought to have been bought onto the allotment site and disposing of tyres. It was felt that all historical rubbish should now have been disposed of and therefore any further rubbish is the responsibility of the plot holder. The Clerk wrote to a plot holder reminding them that rubbish that had not come from the plot should not be put into the skip. Unfortunately due to the lack of and confusing plot numbering the letter was sent to the wrong plot holder. The cost of the overfill and the tyres came to £100.
7. **Hedging for boundaries** – The Clerk suggested that hedging could be considered as a barrier rather than fencing, along Southwood Road and Wickham Gardens. Bare root hedges can be planted in the autumn. She felt that it would be cost effective in the long run, be a better deterrent against vandals and good for the wildlife. *Clerk to obtain costs and report back to the Committee.* Councillors agreed that they would volunteer to help with the planting. *Cllr Benoy to speak to Ridge View School about their boundary and gate.*
8. **Clerk's Report** - The Clerk informed the members that having carried out the inspections, it was noted by herself and Cllrs Moore and Edwards that some plot holders were not adhering to their tenancy agreement regarding numbering of plots. *The Clerk will carry out a further inspection and write to all allotment holders who either do not have a number or have a number that is not visible.* If plot holders fail to respond to the letter, the Clerk suggested that the Parish Council have a plot number made and charge the plot holder. Cllr Edwards also suggested that plot holders have a number at each end of their plot as it is difficult, sometimes, to see where one plot starts and another one finishes.

9. Chairman's Report – Cllr Benoy informed the members that plot holders needed to also be reminded about no glass in greenhouses. If glass needs to be replaced or a new greenhouse is to be erected, only plastic is to be used. He also said that he had to remind a plot holder of when a bonfire could be lit. He requested that the *Clerk sends an email to all plot holders to remind them of numbering, bonfires and greenhouses. Also to put a reminder on the noticeboard of each site.* It was also agreed that the summer BBQ would be held at the Rackliff Centre on the 13th August from 1pm. Cllr Benoy requested that should a plot holder have any questions, concerns or complaints, that they contacted the Clerk. *Her contact details are on the website and he requested she also puts them in the email and on the notice boards.* He would like to dissuade people from approaching Cllrs, Mr Dand and the Clerk, when they are at the allotments working on their own plots.

10. Open session for questions from the public:

a) Latch to middle gate, Southwood Rd is broken and hedge growing over gate – *Cllrs Benoy and Punyer to investigate.*

b) Complaint about overgrown plots – Clerk informed them that letters had been sent and that she would ask contractor to trim all vacant plots again. *Clerk also to obtain prices for ground covering.*

c) Committee asked who to contact if trees and hedges become overgrown again in Southwood Park that overhang allotment plot. Advised to contact Clerk, who will contact Parks and Gardens at TWBC.

d) A complaint about dog mess on paths and plots – *Clerk will add to email, reminding plot holders of their tenancy agreement.*

e) Complaint that plot holder has put their water butt on a public path at the Southwood Road allotments. Cllr Benoy to speak to plot holder concerned

f) Plot holder enquired about brambles at the Southwood Road extension – the Committee felt that hiring a man with a digger and a skip would be cost prohibitive. Cllr Benoy suggested that the allotment holders trim & crop the blackberries and inform the clerk when the brambles start to spread and need cutting back. Then allotment committee would then consider instructing the grass contractor to dig out the spreading roots.

The meeting closed at 21.05