

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the Allotment and Environment Committee

Held on Monday 26th April 2021 4:30pm via Zoom

Present: - Cllrs. D Fleming (Chair), J Cullen (vice Chair) and J Blackburn.

In attendance: - Mrs Sarah Harris, Town Clerk.

AE24/2020 Apologies for absence – Apologies were received from Cllr S Zair.

AE25/2020 Declarations of interest – no declarations were made.

AE26/2020 Public Participation - there were no members of the public in attendance.

AE27/2020 Minutes of the last meeting. Were approved at the March 2020 full Council meeting.

AE28/2020 Allotments Work Plan updates

The Clerk took Members through the Work Plan and provided updates. Members were advised regarding fly tipping and damaged fencing at Woodhouse Close. An update on the condition of the former association container on the Woodhouse Close Site. An update was provided to say that the watermain repairs were underway for the West Mills, further updates would be provided once the works are complete.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

That DCC be tasked with removing the fly tipping, and replacing the section of fencing, along with a repair to the gate.

That the container be removed as promptly as possible before it became more of a danger.

An update was given on general waste management on sites, as the Allotment Rules and regulations state that tenants are responsible for waste removal on their plot. Skips have been provided to some sites in the past but this gives an inconsistent service to sites.

Moving forward members are asked to consider the adoption on a consistent approach across allotment sites therefore there are the following options were considered:

- Provide each site with one skip per year costing over £2000 per year.
- Provide no skips to any sites.
- Provide a skip to association sites however the association will be recharged for the cost of the skip.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council would provide skips to association sites however the association will be recharged for the cost of the skip.

An update was given on specialist waste removal, as whilst waste removal is the tenant responsibility. There are occasions where there are hazardous waste such as Asbestos on site. This may become apparent due to older structures being removed or damaged when new tenants take over etc.

Signed: -

Mayor
24 May 2021

One Allotment site has identified that there is asbestos waste to be removed from the site. .

RESOLVED: That Clerk seeks an quotes for removal and the Chair of the Committee and Chair of Finance would be consulted to agree which quote to be taken, and the waste then removed.

AE29/2020 Inspections & Rent Update including:

The Clerk updated Members that the allotment self inspections had been issued, and vacant plots were being identified, waiting lists were being updated to ensure that accurate records were kept. Vacant plots would be allocated based upon the waiting list.

RESOLVED That the report and update was noted and agree to receive a report on rents and inspections at a future meeting.

A report on Co-workers and named tenants was given. The position on one apparent but not named co-worker was explained and the situation surrounding the original tenant, and the change of circumstance which they were currently facing. This had highlighted to the clerk following an investigation that this co-worker may not be the only person in the same situation.

RESOLVED: That the co-worker in the highlighted situation taking on the tenancy of the plot based on extenuating circumstances and grandfather rights.
That a tenancy amnesty is held to ensure that all records are updated, and that all workers are registered.

AE30/2020 Proposed temp site support arrangement for Woodhouse Close

Members received a report from the Clerk regarding support temporary support arrangements offered from the Secretary of the Tindale Association to support tenants on the Woodhouse Close Site as an interim arrangement.

RESOLVED: That Members take the offer of the Secretary of the Tindale Site to provide some support in enabling better communication and site improvements at the site and report findings to this Committee.
That all association Secretaries be invited to attend meetings of this committee to improve communication and make service improvements.

AE31/2020 Request to Purchase plot at Toronto

Members were advised that a plot holder at Toronto has approached the Council regarding the potential purchase their plot. These are not usual allotments and form part of the domestic gardens, purchase has been allowed to happen in the past. The last time this was requested was 2013. The plot will need to be valued, and the tenant will be responsible for the cost of the valuation.

RESOLVED: That the Council would facilitate the valuation and providing the options to the tenant to purchase the plot. A further report would be brought to back to a future meeting.

AE32/2020 Rural Community Energy Fund Project Update

An update was given to inform Members that there were delays with the project and people getting back to the officers regarding energy usage etc.

RESOLVED That the update was noted and agree to receive a report on rents and inspections at a future meeting.

Signed: -

**Mayor
24 May 2021**