

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES: of the Committee Meeting held on 12 October 2009

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C Broomfield (Chairman), A Akbar, T Field, Mrs F Harrison and Mrs S Lines
P Ayling and F Spanton (Rustington Horticultural Association)

21/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jones (Holiday) and Warren (Personal Commitment). These apologies were accepted by the Committee.

22/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

There were no Declarations of Interest recorded by Members.

23/09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

24/09 SITE INSPECTIONS

The Clerk advised the Committee that a Site Inspection of all three sites had taken place on 15 September 2009, at which Councillors Akbar, Mrs Broomfield, Jones, Mrs Harrison and Warren, Mrs Collins (Administrative Officer) and Mr Spanton (Rustington Horticultural Association) had been in attendance.

She reported that during the inspection, those present had made the following observations and, accordingly, the agreed actions had been progressed:-

Conbar Avenue

Plot 17A - "First Warning" Letter

The Committee NOTED this information.

Councillor Akbar referred to the recent Site Inspection and expressed his concern at the amount of produce that was left to go to waste on certain plots. He suggested that it would be a good idea if tenants could offer such surplus produce to other tenants or charitable groups that might be able to make good use of it.

Following a further discussion, the Committee agreed that whilst there was no action that could be taken at the present time in this regard, wherever possible, tenants should be encouraged to utilise all produce from their plots, whether for themselves or by donation to other individuals or charitable groups.

25/09 VACANT PLOTS - CURRENT POSITION

The Clerk reported that whilst there was one vacant plot available at Conbar Avenue, it was currently under offer to a prospective tenant. She said that there continued to be an extensive waiting list for all three Sites.

The Committee NOTED this information.

26/09

WAITING LIST POLICY

The Clerk reminded the Committee that for many years, the Council's Policy in respect of the letting of vacant plots had been that Rustington residents should have priority, but that discretion should be used in cases where persons from outside of the Parish had been on the waiting list for a long period of time.

She said that with the increasing number of people on the Council's waiting list, which currently stood at 47 Rustington residents and 30 non-Rustington residents, it was important that the Council's Policy for the future was clarified and approved by the full Council.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee RECOMMENDED that:-

- (a) The Council's Policy in respect of the allocation of vacant plots should remain unchanged, with Rustington residents being given priority in all cases
- (b) A letter should be sent to all non-Rustington residents on the waiting list, advising them of the Council's Policy in respect of the allocation of vacant plots and, whilst inviting them to remain on the list, emphasising the length of the waiting list and the fact that the wait for an allotment plot in Rustington could be very extensive
- (c) In view of the current extensive waiting list, the Council should, for the foreseeable future, no longer accept non-Rustington residents on the waiting list.

27/09

CONBAR AVENUE - DUMPING AND LITTERING

The Clerk referred to recent problems that had occurred at the Conbar Avenue Allotment Site, resulting from members of the local community depositing the remains of perishable foodstuffs on the grassed area in the vicinity of the eastern entrance of the Site, for the purpose of feeding foxes.

She said that representations had also been received from Allotment tenants expressing concern in this regard, and a letter had been sent to one of the perpetrators, asking them to refrain from this practice. The Police and the Environmental Health Department at the District Council had also been informed, and had both made approaches to the aforementioned individual.

Subsequent to this, a puppy had become seriously ill, after it had allegedly eaten some chicken bones which had been covered with rat poison. This incident was still being investigated by the Police, with the assistance of the Environmental Health Department.

She said that signage had now been erected, stating that the dumping or littering of any kind (including foodstuffs) was prohibited at the Site, and the original perpetrator had recently made contact with the Council to advise that she was no longer depositing perishable foodstuffs on the site. The Clerk confirmed that there had been no more reports of fox feeding at the Site, and it was hoped that these incidents had now ceased. However, the situation would be being monitored closely by the Council's Grounds and Administrative Personnel.

The Committee NOTED this information.

28/09

POOR STANDARD OF CULTIVATION OF PLOTS

Mr Ayling expressed his concern at the poor standard of cultivation of certain plots. He referred particularly to Plot Numbers 6 and 12 at the Worthing Road Site.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to closely monitor the situation in respect of the two aforementioned plots, during all future Site Inspections, and implement appropriate action if and where necessary.

29/09

PROBLEMS WITH RABBITS AND OVERGROWN VEGETATION - PENFOLD LANE

Mr Spanton advised the Committee that problems were being experienced at the Penfold Lane Site, as a result of rabbits being able to easily access the Site from underneath the new entrance gate. He asked if it would be

possible for wire netting to be placed along the bottom of the gate in an attempt to deter the rabbits. The Clerk said that she would arrange for the required works to be carried out in the near future.

Mr Spanton also referred to the Lane itself and said that the vegetation along both sides was in need of cutting back. The Clerk said that she would ask the Youth Offending Team to undertake some clearance works along the Lane, in an attempt to alleviate the problems being faced by tenants accessing the Site in motor vehicles.

30/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the next Meeting was scheduled for 7 December 2009, but that the next Site Inspection would be held on 11 November 2009.

Chairman: **Date:**

During the Public Question Time held prior to the Meeting, the following matter was raised:-

- (a) Position in respect of car parking - Worthing Road Site - Mr D Stubbings
(Tenant - Plot Number 7)