

**MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF THE
TRING TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MARKET HOUSE, TRING
ON MONDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2009 at 7.46 p.m.**

- Present:**
- Councillors: Mrs R. L. Ransley (in the Chair)
W. D. Berdinner
Mrs M.V. Booth
Mrs P. J. Hearn (ex officio)
M. J. James
- Co-opted: Greta Brown (The Chiltern Society)
Barbara Kazer (Tring Environmental Forum)
Mary Lynn Moxon (Tring Allotments Association)
Rupert Wallis (Tring Allotments Association)
- Also present:**
- Councillors: J. S. Allan
Mrs D. M. Rance
- Mrs S. Johnson, Clerk of the Council
C. J. Jones, Town Warden
No members of the public

15154. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harris, and John Savage.

15155. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

15156. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Allotments & Environment Committee meeting held on 15th June 2009 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

15157. **MATTERS OF REPORT FROM THE MINUTES**

Barbara Kazer thanked the Committee for its card and good wishes towards her and her husband's recovery from their car accident.

Arising from Minute 15025, John Savage and Brian & Barbara Kazer had confirmed their willingness to serve as co-opted committee members for 2009/10.

Arising from Minute 15029, Barbara Kazer was still researching information on 'dry' hanging baskets for the Miswell Lane area. Also arising from Minute 15029, the DBC Clean & Green team had confirmed its willingness to empty an additional litter bin in Chapel Meadow; and the bin had now been installed.

15158. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

15159. **MEMORIAL GARDEN FLOWER BEDS**

- (i) The five flower beds had been planted to the Council's satisfaction, but on-going maintenance was now needed. The herb garden planted by Tring in Transition Food Group had reached maturity and an invitation had gone out in the Gazette for the public to pick them.
- (ii) The Committee considered two quotations to maintain the flower beds during the winter period. The Committee decided to accept that from the Sunnyside Trust at a cost of £90 per day for labour (any plants extra) as it was felt that the Trust provided a valuable social service.

15160. **POND CLOSE PLAY AREA**

Various works had been carried out since the last meeting of the Committee. The quotation for resurfacing had been brought within budget (£3,599 against a budget of £4,000) and the work carried out in August. The Clerk had twice tried to elicit prior clearance for the work from HM Revenue & Customs, but no reply had been forthcoming. She assumed therefore that there was no objection to the work and obtaining VAT reimbursement. Following the work, another surface had been vandalised, which necessitated the purchase of a repair kit to the value of £108.

Mary Lynn Moxon arrived at 7.58 p.m.

The gate had needed repair, but the cost of repairing was only marginally smaller than the cost of a new, up-to-standard gate. Therefore, with the Chairman's agreement, a new gate had been supplied and installed at a cost of £930. The Committee approved all this expenditure.

Greta Brown arrived at 8 p.m.

15161. **TRING TOWN COUNCIL PLAY AREAS – SAFETY INSPECTION REPORT**

The Committee received and noted the report on the Council's play areas for 2009 from Play Safety Ltd. All but one item for attention had been identified as low/medium risk. The one item in the skateboard park identified as medium/high risk was being attended to. All other items identified in the report were the subject of on-going maintenance.

15162. **PLAYBUILDER PLAY AREAS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Herts County Council had secured a grant from central government to fund play opportunities throughout the county in 2009/10 and 2010/11. DBC had been awarded £104,620 of capital funding and £4,187 of revenue funding split over the two years to develop two new children's playgrounds in the borough, provisionally identified as Randalls Park in Highfield, Hemel Hempstead, and Miswell Lane in Tring. The latter had been identified after informal consultation with the Town Council during the summer. DBC was now seeking from TTC formal ratification of that choice. The Committee discussed the desirability of further equipping Miswell Lane, which already had a ballpark; and of upgrading Mortimer Hill (land owned by Tring Charities, play equipment by DBC). Councillors felt that Miswell Lane was more attractive to, and used by, a wider age range, but Mortimer Hill was in greater need of refurbishment. However the backing for the Mortimer Hill refurbishment was coming from a group who wished to provide facilities for the very young, whereas the Playbuilder money was earmarked for the 8-13 age group. The Committee was unable to reach a consensus on which play area to back, and agreed instead to carry out more research and bring the item back to the Planning Committee to be held on 12th October 2009 for a firm decision. Meanwhile the Clerk was asked to put the question in the press; and write to Tring School and the three Tring primary schools to ascertain which option they preferred.

15163. **DUCKMORE LANE ALLOTMENTS**

The Clerk's Assistant and the Town Warden had been monitoring the condition of the allotment gardens at both Duckmore Lane and Bulbourne, and letters had been sent to those whose plots did not come up to the standard required. New 'no dogs' signs had been erected at DL by the Warden, but one had been removed already. The DL car park and plot 54 had been strimmed. The current grass-cutting contractor was holding his price for 2009, but he had given notice that a price increase would have to be proposed for 2010. The waiting list stood at 35, but no-one had been waiting for more than 13 months. It was hoped to clear the ten people waiting since 2008 within the next couple of months as current users did not renew or downsized.

15164. **ALLOTMENTS RENT REVIEW**

There was discussion concerning how the allotment sites ought to be funded. It was noted that income did not quite cover expenditure in 2008/09, and that more investment in infrastructure would be needed in the near future. The Council's current fees were thought to be very modest.

15164. **ALLOTMENTS RENT REVIEW/Contd.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the annual rent for plots at both Duckmore Lane and Bulbourne allotment sites from 1st October 2010 be £3 per pole (£30 per average plot), with £2.50 per pole (£25.00 per average plot) for those over 60 years of age or who held a Dacorum Card. The allotment holders would be informed of the new rates by 1st October 2009.

A letter had been received from a current plot holder who had moved out of the parish and into Buckinghamshire. The Clerk had, in accordance with recent practice, given the plot holder one year's notice to quit, against which they were appealing. The Clerk proposed and the Committee agreed that it should have the opportunity to review all its current policies on who should have the opportunity to hold a plot, and to this end the Clerk would place an item on the agenda for 11th January 2010.

15165. **ALLOTMENT REGENERATION INITIATIVE GRANT**

Rupert Wallis had reviewed the information concerning the Allotment Regeneration Initiative, but had since found the scheme had been put into abeyance. The Town Warden and the Clerk's Assistant had drawn up a list of expenditure necessary to bring 12 half plots into use at the side of the current DL site, and the likely cost was about £20,000. The Committee felt this was not good value for money and therefore decided to abandon that particular idea. The Committee asked Buildings & Assets Committee to consider whether it could release any land for the provision of extra plots; and meanwhile the Allotments Association would ask its membership what it felt about the Bulbourne site; and whether as a general rule quarter plots were acceptable.

Councillor Mrs Rance left at 9.03 p.m.

15166. **PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP (P3)**

- (i) The options for three new kissing gates on F56 identified for 2009/10 had been unaffordable for £1,000; but the DBC Rights of Way Officer had agreed to complete the work in exchange for the Council's contribution. The Council was pleased to agree.
- (ii) Proposals to resurface parts of F12 & 15 would be covered by capital funds supplied by HCC. The Committee asked the Clerk to write thanking the relevant HCC Portfolio Holder.
- (iii) The Committee **RESOLVED** that the 2010/11 money, at the DBC Rights of Way Officer's suggestion, should be put towards surface works in the Stubbings Wood SSSI to F 27, 36, 74 & 75.

15167. **BUDGET 2010/11**

The following projects were suggested for inclusion in the Budget for 2010/11:

- (i) Work to the Skateboard Park, as identified in the Safety Inspection Report.
- (ii) Creating more allotment plots, possibly at Bulbourne.
- (iii) Updating and upgrading signage at all the Council's leisure facilities.

15168. **REPORTS FROM CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

Greta Brown reported she continued to walk the Town's footpaths, which were in fairly good condition. The Committee thanked her for this.

Mary Lynn Moxon requested on behalf of the Tring in Transition Food Group that it be allowed to take on another of the Memorial Garden's flower beds as an additional herb garden. The Committee agreed wholeheartedly; and the Clerk would agree this with DBC's Estates Department. The Group could choose which bed it took on. Ms Moxon also reported that the Allotments Association would be taking a stall at the forthcoming Tring Eco Fair, selling produce and encouraging take-up of plots.

Councillor Allan reported that DBC had £2m. to devote to various projects, which would be channelled through local organisations. Various fora had put forward plans, but the current financial situation had meant the plans had to be reworked. Dacorum Environmental Forum had put forward a flagship scheme, and the outcome of the bid would be known in January 2010.

Barbara Kazer reported on the TEF's project to plant wild flowers outside the Temperance Hall, as part of its refurbishment. If the growth was successful, the same could be done in the Memorial Garden.

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15168. **REPORTS FROM CO-OPTED MEMBERS/Contd.**

The Town Warden reported that the town was not being cleaned early morning one day per week as the DBC Tring Green & Clean Team's machine was being sent to Berkhamsted to help out there. It was particularly noticeable if the withdrawal happened on a Monday morning, as the town had then not been cleaned since the Friday. The Clerk said she would discuss the situation with the officer responsible at Dacorum.

15169. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The following brochures/papers were available for perusal in the Clerk's office:

- (i) Chilterns Conservation Board: 2008/09 Annual Review and News of the Woods 2008/09
- (ii) Hertfordshire County Council – Towards Better Transport on Hertfordshire – Annual Progress Report 2008/09
- (iii) The Chiltern Society: Chiltern News September 2009
- (iv) The CTC Trust: Cycle Digest, issue no. 59
- (v) Chilterns Woodlands Project – News of the Woods

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

Chairman