

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY, 11 JUNE 2012 AT 7.30PM IN THE CASTLE, HERTFORD**

PRESENT: The Mayor, Cllr Miss J Sartin, in the chair at the start of the meeting

Councillors P Boyle, Mrs B Haddock, Mrs B Mansfield, M McCormick, P Ruffles, R Willis and N Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Miss I Sigmac  
Ms N Villa, Town Clerk  
Ms T Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager  
Mudlarks Community Allotment Group  
7 Members of North Road Plotolders Group  
1 member of the public

**48. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor M McCormick was elected Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year. The Chairman then took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The Chairman thanked members for their continued support and said he was looking forward to seeing what the committee could achieve over the next 12 months.

**49. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Councillor P Ruffles was elected Vice Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year.

**50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors D Poole (Deputy Mayoral Engagement) and R Radford (Holiday)

**51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr P Ruffles	Personal	Agenda Item 8(e) Land at Sele Rd	Advisory Director Groundwork (East Herts appt)
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**52. THE MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2012 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chairman was authorised to sign same.

**53. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

### Allotment Rules and Regulations

A thorough revision of the Allotment Rules and Regulations was underway which would incorporate useful rules from neighbouring authorities. The revised draft would be referred to the next meeting for discussion and adoption.

### Fruit Cage

It was noted that the tenant of plot 67a at Cromwell Road Allotments had applied to erect a large fruit cage on his nearby plot. A decision had been postponed pending the revision of the Rules and Regulations. Given the delay in the adoption of these, the Committee expressed its satisfaction with the erection of the fruit cage which was smaller than that approved on plot 67a and which would not cover the entire plot.

### Water Conservation on Allotment Sites

The Chairman requested that an item be included on the agenda for the next meeting to consider methods of water conservation and harvesting and other possible environmental enhancements at allotment sites.

## **54. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

## **55. ALLOTMENTS – STATISTICS AND MAINTENANCE**

The Committee received a report detailing the latest statistics for the Town Council's allotment sites, and also maintenance work on the sites.

It was requested that a short exercise be carried out to ascertain the profile of allotment holders, i.e. length of tenancy, age, where they live in relation to the site and how many plots/poles they rent.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The allotment statistics and maintenance details be received and noted.

## **56. ALLOTMENTS – MUDLARKS COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT**

The Committee received a report from Mudlarks regarding the recent activities of the project.

The Committee was encouraged by the positive impact the award of the Contract Gardening was having on the Mudlarks' team of gardeners.

### St Leonards Garden

The Civic Society had requested that its donation towards the provision of the Kissing Gate at St Leonard's be recognised in some way, possibly

by a plaque on the gate. The Clerk was asked to investigate the Civic Society's contribution towards the Kissing Gate.

It was **RESOLVED** that

The Committee notes the report.

**57. ALLOTMENTS – MUDLARKS LEASE**

A copy of the proposed Mudlarks Lease, which would run for five years from the date of signature had previously been circulated.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Clerk be authorised to sign and issue the Lease.

**58. DEVOLVED MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT, NORTH ROAD ALLOTMENTS**

A copy of proposed new Devolved Management Agreement for North Road Allotments, which would run for two years from 1 January 2012 had previously been circulated.

The Committee expressed its pleasure that the new Agreement had come to fruition. The Committee thanked all those who had been involved in devolved management at the site and the new North Road Committee for their work in ensuring devolved management of the allotments was reinstated at North Road.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Clerk be authorised to sign and issue the Agreement.

**59. LAND AT SELE ROAD**

The Committee received a proposed design for the land at Sele Road, which had been drawn up by Groundwork, following consultation with both local residents and interested parties in the wider community.

The costs involved in the bespoke design which had been submitted amounted to £40,000. The Clerk made it clear to the Committee that whatever the cost of the project, the Council had still only committed £3,000 to the project, with the balance being met by grant funding. It was also made clear that the Council could 'cherry pick' the components of the project which it felt were most important to the vision the Council had, thus reducing the costs significantly.

During the discussion it was noted that the residents in the immediate locality were generally not in favour of a community gardening scheme on the site, and preferred the idea of just 2 or 3 standard allotments. A letter had also been sent to the Chairman by a neighbour reiterating this

view. Residents concerns surrounded security of the site and parking issues.

Given the view of the immediate neighbours a view was proffered that it may be preferable for the Council to revert to the original intention for the use of land, which was a small standard allotment site. The Chairman stated that the project would not be a community garden similar to St Leonard's Garden, but an allotment gardening project, meaning that the site would be locked and secure when not in use and that any parking needs could be met by using the Sele Road Allotment car park nearby.

The Committee agreed to consider items within the design which were most important to the overall vision and the following were suggested:

2/3 interestingly shaped plots with raised bed  
Removal of hardstanding and metal sheds  
Reinforcement of the surrounding hedge for security purposes  
Removal of polytunnels.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Delegated authority be given to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman to progress the scheme and feedback information to the Committee.

#### **60. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS - STATISTICS FOR BURIALS AND INTERMENT OF ASHES**

The Committee received a report outlining the recent burials and interment of ashes statistics at the Cemetery and details of the maintenance work programme.

The Committee wished to pass on its appreciation to the grounds staff for their continued work in keeping the cemetery maintained to a high standard.

It was noted that a report would be available for the next meeting outlining the estimated amount of burial land remaining at the Cemetery. This would also include details of current practices or possible changes in legislation which could allow for re-burials on existing unmarked graves which had no ownership or where the exclusive rights of burial had expired.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report on the statistics for burials and interment of ashes and details of the maintenance work programme be noted.

#### **61. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS –DESIGN OF THE NEW GARDEN OF REST AT BLOCK J**

The Committee received a report outlining proposals for commencing a small amount development work on Block J, to provide new ashes space when the current area is full in approximately 18 months time. Proposals included marking out of the site and the installation of a small path at the top of the Block. Decisions were requested regarding possible finishes for the path and the width required. The Committee agreed that 1.5 metres would be preferable, to allow for wheelchair access and it was requested that a further report be forwarded to the next meeting outlining prices for the various surfaces, along with a cost benefit analysis

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee receive a report at the next meeting outlining details of surfaces and prices for consideration.

## **62. DOG BIN INSTALLATION AT HOLY TRINITY AND ALL SAINTS CHURCHYARDS**

The Committee had received a report outlining a proposal to install dog bins in both Holy Trinity and All Saints Churchyards at a cost of £174 plus £12.08 per month for weekly emptying.

The footpaths through the Churchyards were regularly used by dog walkers and as a result dog fouling was sometimes left in the Churchyard. Where owners do pick up after their dogs, there is nowhere to dispose of it and therefore bags are often left at the entrance of Holy Trinity Churchyard.

The Committee was reluctant to commit future Councils to ongoing expenditure for emptying costs and noted there were litter bins in the Churchyards and dogs bins on the highway just outside of All Saints. It was felt that the irresponsible owners needed to be cautioned by the dog wardens and issued with fixed penalty notices.

The Committee was also reluctant to install dog bins in the Churchyards from an aesthetic point of view and considered that 'clear up after your dog' notices should be erected pointing out the locations of the bins. The situation should be monitored over the next six months.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The situation regarding dog fouling in All Saints and Holy Trinity Churchyards be monitored over the next six months and that suitable signage be erected directing dog owners to the litter and dog bins in the vicinity.

## **63. SUB COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEES**

The Youth Council would be holding a rounders event to commemorate the Olympics on Friday 6 July 2012, Youth Councillors, Councillors and

Officers will be playing in a team against members of the International Police Association who would be visiting for the torch relay the following day.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the date of the rounders event.

**64. FINANCE - END OF YEAR 2011/12 AND BUDGET ROLLOVER REQUEST.**

The Committee received a report detailing the end of year income and expenditure for the Community Services Committee to 31 March 2012.

The Committee was pleased to note that a saving of £40,000 was achieved against budget and the Committee's gratitude was extended to the Officers for their work on the careful monitoring of the budget income and expenditure for Community Services.

The following budgets were under spent as the works were delayed or ongoing and the completion of the projects would require the unspent balance to be rolled forward into the existing budget provision for 2012/13:

5030 Allotment Site Improvements £2,150 required to be rolled forward to allow for the ongoing preparation of the new land at Sele Road. The Committee considered that in order to contribute further to the development of the site at Sele Road, if required, that the whole of the budget variance be rolled forward, being an additional £683.

5250 CCY Trees £7,840 required to be rolled forward to allow for the pollarding work recommended for Holy Trinity Churchyard.

5346 Cemetery Garden of Rest (Block J) £3,997 required to be rolled forward to allow for the ongoing preparation of Block J as a new Garden of Rest.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee notes the income and expenditure to 31 March 2012.
- b) The Committee **recommends** to the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee that the unspent budgets identified above be added to the current budget provision for 2012/13.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.