



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1SP - Tel: 01702 716288
council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk

Chairman: Cllr Carole Mulroney
Vice Chairman: Cllr Caroline Parker
Town Clerk: Paul Beckerson



QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given that an **Extraordinary** meeting of the **Allotments Committee** of the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council will take place on **Wednesday 19th December 2012 in Room 6, Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, at 8.00pm**, when it is hoped to transact the following business:

Agenda

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS
2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN
3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
4. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS
5. TO APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF 21st November 2012
6. BUDGET MOTION FROM Cllrs Richard Herbert and Mark Bromfield (Appendix 1)
7. TO RECONSIDER ALLOTMENT'S BUDGET FOR 2013/14 (Appendix 2)
8. CORRESPONDENCE

Paul Beckerson
Town Clerk
13th December 2012

Any member who is unable to attend the meeting should send their apologies before the meeting.

Motion by Cllr. Richard Herbert, Seconder Cllr Mark Bromfield:

1. That hedge-cutting and grass cutting be contracted out to a suitable contractor.
2. That the allotment holders be encouraged to carry out residual tasks via self-help and engage in the active management of the site.
3. That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council provides active support and supervision using the IWF.
4. That the attached budget spread sheet be adopted as the 2013/2014 allotment budget.
5. That future rents are adjusted to fully reflect any under or overspend on the allotment budget.

Report on proposal for future allotments maintenance

Value for money should always be the aim, taking a realistic view of what that value actually is, that is, a high value service provided in a cost effective way.

This proposal and budget is based on three principals

1. A reasonable degree of voluntary self-help and management by the allotment holders with support from LTC.
2. The IWF is utilised to provide site supervision and a reasonable amount of maintenance input.
3. Under or overspends on the budget are reflected in the subsequent rent review.

The consequence of these principals is that if the allotment holders provide a high level of self-help the budget is likely to be underspent and rent will reduce. If conversely the expected level of self-help is not forthcoming, the budget is likely to be overspent and the following years rent will rise.

In the past the cost of the allotments has been difficult to budget and supplementary sums have been taken from reserves to cover overspends on the budget. The cost of administering and running the allotments, currently some £23,000 plus is not covered by rental income which is only circa £12,000 pa. The difference, £11,000, is an effective subsidy for a relatively small group which is increasingly hard to justify against the added calls on the Town Council's limited resources in the face of Borough Council cutbacks.

At present the Allotments Committee has still to set a budget for 2013/2014.

Whilst the provision of allotments is a statutory duty for the Town Council, the provision of an unlimited and un-quantified subsidy is not.

To give the allotment holders a set annual subsidy, with the allotment holders paying the balance of the cost of running the allotments, gives both certainty to the council and an incentive to the allotment holders to assist in the economic running of the allotments whilst at the same time empowering them, through their societies, to improve the service which they enjoy.

A large amount of work at the allotments is already being carried out by allotment holders on a voluntary basis. The allotment societies have shown themselves willing to take on a greater managerial role. By allowing a greater degree of self-management and self-help the allotments can be run efficiently at a cost saving to the Council and allotment holders.

The proposal identifies a net **cost to LTC of £4,376** on a total **expenditure of £17,336**;

100 hours of IWF hours, has been included in the proposed budget to provide support for the allotment societies for such tasks as water system maintenance and site supervision.

The budget of £2,600 for a van is unwarranted, as clearly with a contracted-out grass cutting / bush cutting / hedge service, no bulky items would need to be transported that could not fit in a an average car boot.

With the IWF hours of 100 hours per year, compared to the 526.5 hours for the former allotments officer, clearly far less Town Clerk's time would be needed - it is assumed that the £2,100 "saving" to the allotment budget of the Town Clerk's time could still be made.

Training - much play has been given to the amount of training needed to undertake some of the task / functions much of this would be unnecessary with the bulk of the work contracted out or provided by self help.

A closer look at the time set against the baseline of previous proposals is ;

1. Fence repairs - 23 hours should be mostly self help
2. Track Maintenance - 48 hours should be mostly self help
3. Water Maintenance - 20.5 hours IWF
4. Rubbish Removal - 23.5 hours should be mostly self help

All of these tasks can easily be carried out by self-help and indeed much is already done. There are many other minor works which can easily be done by plot holders which are difficult and time consuming to be provided by LTC workforce.

Staff costs from the 2012/2013 budget for the allotments was £13,319 in total. This proposal will provide a higher level of service at lower cost. The "self-help" element from each allotment holder amounts to an average of circa 30mins work per holder per year.

Amended allotments budget 2013/14
13-12-12

Motion By Cllrs Richard Herbert & Mark Bromfield

Heading	B/F 2011/12	Income	Expenditure	Suggested Budget	Saving
Rents					
Manchester Drive		8,340			
Leigh		4,180			
Marshall Close		440			
MDAS Commission			690	690	0
Plot clearance			500	200	300
Rubbish clearance			650	150	500
Equipment			500	200	300
Water Rates			4,300	4300	0
Staff Costs			6,446	4346	2,100
Maintenance			1,000	1000	0
Miscellaneous			375	0	375
Training			1,000	400	600
Vehicle			2,600	1000	1,600
Hedge Cutting			950	950	0
Capital improvements*			2,500	2500	0
Grass Cutting			1,300	1300	0
Keys			0		0
Plot Letting MC				100	-100
Plot Letting LA			200	200	0
Totals		£12,960	£23,011	17336	5,675
Nett cost (exp - inc)		£10,051		£4,376	

Sheet 4

2nd draft of allotments budget 2013/14 21-11-12

Heading	B/F 2011/12	Income	Expenditure
Rents			
Manchester Drive		8,340	
Leigh		4,180	
Marshall Close		440	
MDAS Commission			690
Plot clearance			500
Rubbish clearance			650
Equipment			500
Water Rates			4,300
Staff Costs			6,446
Maintenance			1,000
Miscellaneous			375
Training			1,000
Vehicle			2,600
Hedge Cutting			950
Capital improvements*			2,500
Grass Cutting			1,300
Keys			0
Plot Letting LA			200
Totals		£12,960	£23,011
Nett cost (exp - inc)		£10,051	