



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

67 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1SP - Tel: 01702 716288
council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk www.essexinfo.net/leigh-on-sea

Chairman: Cllr. Pat Holden
Vice Chairman: Cllr. Carole Mulroney
Town Clerk: Paul Beckerson



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27th APRIL 2011 AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, 67 ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA

Present: Cllrs: Jean Roswell (Chairman), Jerry Holden, Elaine Crystall, Pat Holden, Paul Lawrence, Patsy Ryan, John Wren, plus Ron Bates, Martin Scott, John Longhurst and David Hammond.

In attendance: Vivien Choppen, Jason Ford, Alan & Barbara Ashdown, Gerald & Sheila Brazier

The meeting opened at 8.00pm

97. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed members and the public to the meeting, but expressed some harsh words about the attitude of members of the Manchester Drive Allotment Society over the past year. In particular she mentioned MDAS's lack of progress in getting planning permission for their containers, their reluctance to provide Leigh Town Council with a copy of their accounts to enable validation of rents received and how much had been retained for themselves and the adequacy of hygiene standards of their cafe. On a lighter note she thanked all members of her Committee for their help over the year and wished the next Chairman 'Good Luck'.

98. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Carole Mulroney

99. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllrs Jerry and Pat Holden and Paul Lawrence, each declared a personal interest as plot holders on the Manchester Drive site.

100. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of 23rd March 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

101. BEE HIVE – (Appendix 1 to the agenda)

The Committee tasked the Town Clerk:

- to obtain a copy of the annual renewal of insurance of both beekeepers on the allotments,
- to ensure that beekeepers had both personal and public liability insurance and
- to update the Council's Beekeeping Policy, as set out in Report 1505/TC.

The Chairman asked Cllrs Jerry Holden, Pat Holden and Paul Lawrence to form a Working Party to assess the requirements of bee keeping on the allotments *inter alia*, the optimum number of hives for the area, the adequacy of training undertaken by the current two bee keepers, the acceptability of a non-plot holder to have a hive on the site, and to feed their conclusions into the Council's Bee Keeping Policy.

102. LOCKABLE BOLLARDS FOR TRACKS

It was **RESOLVED** to purchase for £40 the 4 lockable bollards obtained by Cllr Paul Lawrence. It was left undecided who would hold the keys and who would set the times when

tracks are opened and closed. MDAS welcomed the Council's effort to try and protect the tracks in the poor weather.

103. COMMUNAL COMPOSTING BIN

Plot holders are abusing the use of the communal composting bin. Cllr Pat Holden asked MDAS to monitor and control it better. MDAS acknowledged that it was not working properly. Martin Scott said that he had put up notices and emailed tenants, but recognised that the bin was spilling over at times and the quality of the material put in it was not always appropriate. Cllr Pat Holden questioned whether it should continue. Martin Scott said that he would persevere to try and make it work better.

104. GROUND RENT FOR BUILDINGS

MDAS has at least 2 permanent buildings on the allotment site, housing the shop and the cafe. The land registry document of the site does not show or mention the buildings. The ownership of the Anglian Water Building remains uncertain and needs to be clarified. It was proposed that in principle the Town Council charge £100 per year for each of the 2 MDAS buildings. The vote was carried - 3 for, 2 against and 2 abstentions.

105. RENEWAL OF LICENSED LAND AT MARSHAL CLOSE – (Appendix 2 to the agenda)

Despite claims of the original objectors, Cllr P Holden reported that the area was being worked and in reasonable condition. Further there was no indication that the tenant had moved away. The Council has received no communication from the licensee about her future intentions regarding the land. No conclusions were reached regarding the legality of a lease verses a licence, but the Committee voted in favour of the tenant continuing with her licence if she wanted to and tasked the Town Clerk to communicate this to her prior to the date of renewal – 31 July 2011

106. WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SITE REPRESENTATIVES ON ITEMS NOT COVERED ABOVE

The content of the written reports were noted subject to the following additional comments.

- a) **Marshall Close** – No written report
- b) **Leigh Site** – (Appendix 3 to the agenda) John Longhurst reported that item 3 of his report should be deleted as the information provided has been found to be factually incorrect.
 - Although Ron Bates queried why MDAS had been allowed to deviate from the limited bonfire regime outlined in Report 1504/TC, the Committee agreed to proceed with the set days for bonfires, as recorded in MDAS's notice, namely 16/17 April, 24/25 September and 5/6 November.
 - The Committee deferred any decision on the loss of cultivable land through allowing cars to park on plots until the next Committee meeting.
- c) **Manchester Drive** – Martin Scott advised the Committee that MDAS had bought 130 metres of fencing at a cost of £2,000 for fencing the Randolph Close boundary. He said he would appreciate the Council providing the funds to erect the fencing, which he estimated would be of the order of £3,500. He reported that the fencing is stored safely, but needs to be installed as soon as possible, as the longer it is left the greater chance of something happening to it. The Committee concluded that it was reluctant to commit next year's Committee to this expenditure, and deferred the decision until the next meeting. The Committee tasked the Town Clerk to investigate whether Southend Borough Council would help meet the cost.
- d) **Orchard** – (Appendix 4 to the agenda) David Hammond reported that a MDAS plot holder who is training to run Forest Schools, has asked if a series of school visits to the allotments would be allowable, probably once a week, between May and July for parties of around six pre-school children (around 4 years old) from Our Lady of Lourdes School.

There would be full supervision by staff/parents. The Committee agreed this was a good idea and such requests should be encouraged

107. BUDGET – (Appendix 5 to the agenda)

Budget report 1885/Allot as at 31st March 2011 was noted. The minute clerk informed the Committee that the two insurance claim cheques had since been received. Martin Scott said he would chase any outstanding MDAS rents and would also follow up on the location of the MDAS 2011/12 tenancy agreements.

108. CORRESPONDENCE – (Appendix 6 to the agenda)

The letter from Ashburham Insurance Services Ltd was noted. The Committee tasked the Town Clerk to send a letter of thanks for the sponsorship of cockle shells for the use on the roads, if one had not already been sent.

Cllr Pat Holden proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Jean Rowswell for chairing this year's Allotments Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm