

HUGHENDEN PARISH COUNCIL
ALLOTMENT LIAISON SUBCOMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12th July 2017
At the Council Offices commencing at 8.00 pm

DRAFT

Present:	
<p>Cllr Hilda Stearn (Chairman)</p> <p>Mark Booth (Louches Lane)</p> <p>Bill Humphrey (Cryers Hill)</p> <p>Paul Cawte (Hughenden Valley)</p> <p>Les Saunders (Primrose Hill)</p> <p>Neil McMinn (Walter's Ash & Hughenden Community Support Trust)</p> <p>Jill Armshaw (Deputy Clerk)</p> <p>The meeting started at 8.00 pm</p>	
1	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Kelly Gilmour, Hugh McCarthy (Windmill Lane) & John Capel (Red Lion).</p> <p>Cllr Stearn introduced herself to members not present at the previous meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that Neil McMinn representative for Walters Ash Allotment is a Trustee of Hughenden Community Support Trust and has a dual role on the subcommittee.</p>
2	<p>Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>Members considered feedback received concerning the draft minutes of the previous meeting and agreed one amendment to item 8 Any Other Business.</p> <p>The draft minutes were amended as follows:</p> <p><i>'Report that drivers have difficulty safely turning from Burnham Road onto Coombe Lane'</i> was amended to read <i>'Report that pedestrians have difficulty safely crossing from Burnham Road into Coombe Lane'</i>.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>Members agreed that in accordance with Council policy, meetings be recorded to validate the minutes. The audio file will be deleted after the minutes are approved.</p> <p>It was agreed that draft minutes be posted on the Council's website and emailed to subcommittee members, allotment representatives and deputy representatives.</p> <p>It was agreed that minutes be a concise action orientated record of matters agreed rather than a record of discussion.</p>
3	<p>Matters arising</p>

	<p>Update re. boundary trees at Walters Ash Allotment</p> <p>Action</p> <p>It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk meet with representatives at Walters Ash Allotment and neighbours to investigate options to reduce shading of plots. (see item 9 Any Other Business – overhanging trees & recommendation)</p>
4	<p>Occupancy report</p> <p>At 12th July 2017, occupancy as follows:</p> <p>Cryers Hill 100%, Hughenden Valley 93%, Louches Lane 79%, North Dean 82%, Primrose Hill 82%, Red Lion 98%, Walter’s Ash 97%, Windmill Lane 98%, overall occupancy 91%.</p> <p>Total water usage at allotments amount to approximately £1,000 per annum. Usage is consistent with number of plots at each site and season.</p>
5	<p>Transfer of allotment land update</p> <p>The transfer of land from Hughenden Parish Council to Hughenden Community Support Trust is on hold until a ruling is received following a tribunal held on 19th June 2017 concerning an appeal made by a parishioner. The ruling is expected within 6 weeks of the date of the tribunal.</p>
6	<p>Annual allotment competition 1st – 5th August 2017</p> <p>Following feedback received at the last meeting, Cllr Stearn and the Deputy Clerk met with head competition judge Frank Parge to consider possible changes to the annual allotment competition.</p> <p>The following changes were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That judging criteria be emailed to all tenants and posted on notice boards • That there be a judging team consisting of Frank Parge and last year’s parish wide winners. The winner of best plot and his wife have agreed to be judges and as an independent judge the Clerk’s husband who is a keen allotment tenant in another parish has agreed to join the team of judges. • That all tenants are automatically opted into the competition unless they have requested that their plot be excluded from the competition. <p>Other matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that representatives bring to the attention of the office any issues concerning tenants who may be unwell and unable to work their plot and any tenants whose effort may deserve special recognition e.g. community effort/good practice etc. • The office hold email addresses for approximately 80% of tenants. Contact details are checked each year at rent renewal. • Invitation from Wycombe Sound community radio to feature the competition. Cllr Stearn to discuss with the Clerk how this opportunity may promote the role of allotments in healthy living and preservation of healthy green spaces. • Parish publications to feature articles re. benefits of allotments and vacancies. • Possible future sponsorship of competition/allotments. • There was discussion as to whether the competition be judged per plot or per tenant. The consensus view was that judging per tenant be the fairest approach. It was agreed to reconsider this matter next year.
7	<p>Management of vacant/unworked plots</p> <p>Members considered the difficulties experienced by new tenants trying to renovate overgrown plots. Recently, new tenants have complained that overgrown</p>

	<p>vegetation is growing through carpet embedded in the soil which is difficult to remove and costly in terms of disposal. Some plots are uneven with abandoned materials concealed in the overgrown vegetation. Members agreed that some plots rented by new tenants are virtually unworkable and that Council need to invest in improving the condition of plots so that they are maintained in a fit and proper state.</p> <p>The Deputy Clerk explained that to the best of her knowledge, there is no allotment management policy detailing how allotments are to be managed and maintained by Council and specifying what funds are available and process to be followed.</p> <p>It was suggested that allotment rent might be increased and funds invested to provide better maintenance. If vacant plots were better managed and maintained then the goal may be to ensure 100% occupancy, thus preventing vacant plots from falling into disrepair.</p> <p>The issue of how to raise awareness of the importance of allotments and the proper management and maintenance was discussed and various options explored.</p> <p>It was agreed that the requirement for a proper management policy needs to be highlighted as an important issue. The Deputy Clerk agreed to research examples of allotment management policies to present to the Services Committee.</p> <p>It was noted that there may be a risk of Cryers Hill Allotment being used as car parking for parents dropping off and picking up at Great Kingshill School. This matter to be investigated by the Deputy Clerk as part of the annual inspection and appropriate action taken in accordance with the Allotment Tenancy Agreement.</p> <p>Recommendation to Services Committee: That the Services Committee recommend an Allotment Management Policy to be resolved by Full Council to be effective before 1st March 2018. The Allotment Management Policy to include budget, processes and power delegated to the Clerk to fully and effectively implement the policy.</p>
8	<p>Consideration of allotment fees</p> <p>Members considered a report detailing analysis of allotment fees charged by other local councils. Tenants need to be given at least 12 months' notice of an increase in allotment fees. Members were reminded that Allotment Law needs to be observed and a concession offered to tenants in genuine need and unable to pay an increase in rent. It was agreed that to increase fees over a period would incur a significant increase in administrative costs and delay an increase in income. It was agreed that any change in fees by carefully explained to tenants and any issues pre-handled.</p> <p>There was discussion as to what may properly be defined as council allotment expenditure versus general maintenance for example are the cutting of hedges on council land included and administrative costs?</p> <p>Action: Cllr Stearn to write to the Clerk to find out what is included in the allotment expenditure budget in order to gain an accurate measure of the cost of allotments to Council.</p> <p>Recommendation to Services Committee: That allotment fees be increased from September 2018 to £50 for a whole plot and £30 for a half plot and notice be given to tenants in writing in September 2017. That the increase in fees be effectively communicated to tenants and</p>

	the changes be made in line with Allotment Law and delivered in conjunction with a proper Allotment Management Policy.
9	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Terms of Reference: Council has resolved new Terms of Reference. Members agreed to review the revised Terms of Reference and feedback any comments to the next meeting.</p> <p>Appointment of Representatives & Deputies: Members considered the appointment of Representatives and Deputies. It was agreed that the revised Terms of Reference may require an additional clause detailing the appointment of Deputies. It was also agreed that Members aim to fill all positions in order that each allotment garden may be represented by a Representative or a Deputy at each meeting. It was noted that currently there is no Representative or Deputy at North Dean Allotment and no Deputy at Primrose Hill, Louches Lane or Cryers Hill Allotments.</p> <p>Recommendation to Services Committee (addition to Terms of Reference): Tenants wishing to become Allotment Representative or Deputy must apply in writing to the Clerk who will hold an election if more than one candidate. Only tenants of that allotment garden may vote in the election.</p> <p>Overhanging trees: Report that trees are overhanging and shadowing Hughenden Valley Allotment. The trees below the allotment are the property of Hughenden Valley Village Hall, Little Burnham Wood is owned by the Council. Similar reports of overhanging trees were reported at Walters Ash, Cryers Hill and Primrose Hill Allotments.</p> <p>Recommendation to Services Committee: That action be taken as part of the proposed Allotment Management Policy or as part of a proper Tree Survey to assess the safety of overhanging trees and impact of trees causing significant overshadowing of allotment plots.</p> <p>Rabbits: Report of damage to plots caused by rabbits. Most practical solution is to erect temporary fencing around vulnerable plants.</p> <p>Bonfires & barbeques: The Allotment Tenancy Agreement states that bonfires are not permitted. Barbeques may be permitted, provided no inflammable materials are stored on the allotment plot in accordance with the Allotment Tenancy Agreement.</p>
10	<p>Date of next meetings</p> <p>Wednesday 13th September 2017 Wednesday 17th January 2018</p>
	The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

Signed by the Chairman:

Date: