

Petersfield Town Council

Allotment Holders Meeting
19:00hrs

8 September 2009

Sheet Village Hall

Present:

21 x Allotment Holders

Town Council Representatives:

Cllr Clive Shore (Chairman of Grounds Committee)

Cllr Bill Organ (Member of Grounds Committee)

Mrs Sue McMorrان (Deputy Town Clerk)

Mr Peter Jones (Maintenance Contracts Officer)

Mrs Fiona Mort (Administration Assistant)

Apologies:

Mr E Gorvin (Plotholder)

Mrs K Higgs (Plotholder)

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and introduced himself.

- **Extension to allotments – Mill Lane, Sheet**

Various questions were raised at the meeting, they are as follows:

Mr Apark – Not a plotholder at present but on the waiting list. He asked how far The Council were in the extension process. The Chairman informed all present that the proposal was put to the July Grounds Committee and that this would be discussed again at October Grounds Committee. There were various concerns including Health and Safety, access and the possible traffic problems. He informed all present that a traffic survey should be undertaken. The Town Clerk was investigating access from Farnham road with Hampshire County Council. He assured all present that The Town Council was not against the extension of the allotments.

Sharon Coleman – Informed everyone present that she was a resident of Mill Lane and that she was against the access via Mill Lane and access should definitely be via Farnham Road. She mentioned that the traffic survey would not be ideal and that the residents and The Council should all work together on this issue. She mentioned that more plots would increase the density of traffic.

Clive Mullins – Not a plotholder at present but on the waiting list. He asked how many plots were proposed for the new site. He was informed that approximately 50 plots were proposed and these would be 10 rods each.

Paul Farley – Asked whether The Council had received any objections from The Mill Lane residents for Farnham road access. He also mentioned that The Council should be aware that the community land at The Water Meadows was not suitable for growing as it floods in winter. The Chairman mentioned that he had no discussions with The Greening Campaign on this issue.

Cllr Bill Organ - Asked whether the proposed 10 rod plots could be 5 rods which would mean more people would get a plot. This issue was discussed and it was felt that everyone had different needs. A mixture of sizes would be most appropriate.

Annette Picton - Asked that assuming Farnham road access was okay, would there be funding available and how long would the process take? The Chairman assured her that funding was available eg developers contributions and that he was not sure at this stage how long the process would take but should be within a year.

Jane Leigh-Breese – Asked how long the land had been designated for allotments. The Chairman informed her that it was since 1880. Various ploholders asked why there was a sudden demand for the land in July this year. The Chairman explained that it was the first time the proposal had been put forward by The Allotment Association. He could not speak for the previous Council as he had only served for 2 years.

Mr Bruce – Asked why there was only a problem with the waiting list at the moment when it had been an ongoing problem for years. The Chairman explained that certain priorities are set every year and that the extension of the allotments, although not one of the priorities for the year would be dealt with as much as he could while he was Chairman of Grounds committee this year. Various ploholders also asked about the legal implications for extending the allotments. The Town Clerk is currently looking into this and it will be reported at the October Grounds committee.

David Petche – Asked what the Allotment Association could do to help with extending the allotments

The Chairman gave the following answers:

- Consultation with The Mill Lane residents. David Petche mentioned that this has been proposed
- Allotment Association to prepare and present separate plans for taking over the management of the allotments both at Sheet and Tilmore
- Clarity over the Greening Campaign issues and their involvement. Paul Farley mentioned that he had already had meetings with The Greening Campaign

David Petche also asked whether the Allotment Association could help with the consultation process with Hampshire County Council. Sue McMorrان mentioned that The Town Clerk had already contacted Hampshire County Council and was awaiting answers from them. The Allotment Association asked whether they could write to Hampshire County Council to speed up the process. Officers at The Town Council would provide The Allotment Association with the contact name at Hampshire County Council.

Clr Bill Organ – Informed all ploholders to make sure that the County Councillor in their area is aware of their needs and to write to both The Town Clerk and their area County Councillor.

- **Sizing of plots & waiting list**

Janet Ranson - Informed all present that she had her name on the waiting list for a bigger plot and she was told that she couldn't have a bigger plot as the waiting list was very long. She asked whether there was a process in place for this? The Chairman informed her that the process to go from a smaller plot to a bigger plot would be discussed at the October grounds meeting.

She also mentioned that there were lots of neglected plots at Sheet and enquired as to the process of terminating plots. Sue McMorran informed all present that the process for termination was 2 letters and then the third letter was a termination letter.

Alison Bruce asked whether The Council automatically reduced the size of plots to people on the waiting list if a large plot was available. Sue McMorran informed all present that if there were 2 people on the waiting list that wanted small plots a large plot could be split.

Paul Farley asked whether The Allotment Association would be able to have access to people on the waiting list. Sue McMorran informed him that this was not possible due to data protection. Paul Farley asked whether The Town Council could write to everyone on the waiting list and give them The Allotment Association details. It was agreed that Officers at The Town Council would action this.

- **Trees at Tilmore**

David Petche had several queries from ploholders at Tilmore about the overhanging conifer trees between Hangers Way and the footpath. Peter Jones (Maintenance Contracts Officer) asked whether the trees were on allotment land our outside of the boundary. David Petche was not sure about the exact location. Peter Jones would be looking into this matter.

- **Grass cutting**

Tim Dilks enquired about the grass cutting and thought that the number of cuts per year was excessive. The Chairman informed all present that the Ground Maintenance Contract was at the tender process stage and that grass cutting would be included in the new contract. The new contract would be focusing on the length of the grass rather than the number of cuts and The Council would be setting the standards. Tim Dilks asked how we would check that this was done. Peter Jones informed him that he would be monitoring the contract.

- **Termination of plots**

Tim Dilks asked how many plots had been terminated in the last 12 months. Fiona Mort did not know exactly how many had been terminated but gave an approximate number of 6 or 7.

- **Insurance**

Annette Picton asked whether it was possible for people to get together at the allotments and to perform specific tasks that need to be done on the allotments, eg repairs or building of certain things. Peter Jones – Health and Safety Officer advised that this was a difficult subject because of the problem with insurance and Health and Safety. The Town Council had their own insurance and this did not extend to ploholders undertaking big projects because if anything went wrong The Town Council would be liable. Some projects could be undertaken but these issues would need to be discussed with Peter Jones prior to any work being carried out.

The meeting closed at 20:10

** The following amendments were made at The Grounds Committee meeting held on Thursday 17 September 2009 at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield

Page 1 "Cllr Bill Organ - Asked whether the proposed 10 rod plots could be 5 rods, as new allotments at Liss are, which would mean more people.....

Page 2 " Cllr Bill Organ – Informed all plot holders to make sure that the Councillor in their area is aware of their needs and to write to both the Town Clerk and their area Councillor.