

Petersfield Town Council

Allotment Holders Meeting
19:00hrs

3 September 2008

Sheet Village Hall

Present:

26 x Allotment Holders

Town Council Representatives:

Cllr Mrs H Ayer (Chairman of Grounds Committee)

Mrs Sue McMorrان (Deputy Town Clerk)

Mrs Fiona Mort (Administration Officer)

Apologies:

Mr A debeger (Plot holder)

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and introduced herself.

She explained that a letter had been received from The Allotment Association and that the points raised in the letter would be answered as follows:

- **Demand for allotments** – This was an ongoing issue. The Council are aware of the situation but the Chairman reported that this process was not a straightforward one. Highways would need to be consulted and it was not just a matter of obtaining the land itself. Other groups within the town were also involved and would like to see community gardens in place for the future. Plot holders were also concerned about the traffic. Hilary Ayer reported that there was an access study planned for Petersfield next year and that the Allotment Association should write to The Town Council with their concerns regarding traffic problems, with their suggestions of a one-way system.
- **Poorly maintained plots** – Hilary Ayer reported that in the past inspections were not done as often as they should have been. Sue McMorrان and Fiona Mort took on the inspection of the allotments in June this year and have been doing inspections on a monthly basis since then. Plots will be inspected from March to October and about 2 inspections done over the winter months. Following more regular inspections more plots have been terminated, 5 at Sheet and 2 at Tilmore.

Mr David Petche enquired about the policy and standard for inspections of the plots. Sue McMorrان advised that the plots do not need to be weed free but have to be cultivated. She also advised that after an inspection if a plot was not satisfactory the plot holder received a letter and the plot was checked again the following month and terminated if still in an unsatisfactory state. The general consensus amongst plot holders was that inspections should be more strict. This was noted by Officers.

- **Waiting lists & splitting of plots** - Splitting of plots will be referred to the Grounds Committee for a policy to be discussed and put in place. Plots are recycled as soon as possible but can take time as some needed to be sprayed and rotovated if taken on in a bad condition. Plot holders were concerned at the length of the waiting lists and thought that splitting of plots would be a good idea to bring the waiting list down and give new plot holders more opportunity. Mentoring advice was given to all new plot holders in the form of a pack to help them get started and gave various other information about allotments.

Hilary Ayer advised that plot holders are encouraged to pass their concerns to the Allotment Association as well as the Town Council. The waiting list will be kept open at all times.

- **Repairs by members of The Allotment Association** – Sue McMorran to investigate and report back to Kathy Higgs.
- **Personal knowledge of plot holders** - Due to the Data Protection Act, officers at The Town Council were not able to give out personal details of plot holders. Sue McMorran will ascertain if information of plot numbers only of new tenants could be given to the Allotment Association. The Town Council do appreciate any information given to them about plot holders circumstances from The Allotment Association.
- **Rental and maintenance of areas around** - There is a new Grounds Maintenance Contract coming into effect in January 2010, these matters will be discussed and put forward for this new contract. Members of The Allotment Association were still concerned about the number of grass cuts per year being excessive and would like this to be looked at in the short term. Sue McMorran advised that more regular inspections were undertaken of the allotments and areas of maintenance could be picked up during these inspections. Plot holders are encouraged to email Officers at The Town Council to advise them of any maintenance problems.

General:

- Several plot holders were concerned about the overhanging trees at the bottom of the hill at Tilmore allotments. A letter was received from Mr debegeer of plot 8 at Sheet concerned about the evergreen trees on the bank of Mill Lane. The trees are very overgrown and they block out the sunlight which makes a section of his plot unsuitable for cultivation. These matters will be dealt with in the near future.
- The question was raised about the policy for livestock due to the increase of rats. The Town Council has a policy for livestock in place and the general consensus was that chickens do not attract rats. There were no chickens on Tilmore allotments but they also have the problem with rats. The Pest control company that The Town Council uses has checked the allotment sites and said that the chickens do not cause the rats to appear.
- One of the plot holders thanked the Council for the stones on the paths at Tilmore, this has made a big difference.

The Chairman ended the meeting by saying that she would like to see any concerns put forward to The Town Council or forwarded to The Allotment Association for them to pass on to The Town Council and that any notes from the Allotment Association meetings be emailed to Sue McMorran to be forwarded to the Grounds Committee for their information.

The meeting closed at 20:03