

Petersfield Town Council

Allotment Holders Meeting

24 October 2011

Rose Room 19:00hrs

Present:

Cllr Julie Dickinson (Acting Chairman, Member of Grounds Committee)
Cllr Bill Organ (Member of Grounds Committee)
Cllr Lesley Farrow (Member of Grounds Committee)
Mrs Sue McMorran (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mr Peter Jones (Maintenance Contracts Officer)
Mrs Fiona Mort (Administration Assistant)
20 x Allotment Holders

Apologies:

Ms P Gray (Plotholder)
Mr B Hart (Plotholder)
Mr P Cotton (Plotholder)

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and introduced herself. She also asked how many people were represented from each site. There were equal numbers from each site.

- **Land for additional allotments**

Mr Bradford mentioned that his neighbour had received a letter from The Town Council about land that would be available for future allotments. Sue McMorran informed him that it had nothing to do with The Town Council and that these allotments would be private and would be situated at Waterworks Lane in Sheet. The Allotment Association had asked The Town Council to write to everyone on the allotment waiting list to inform them. Names had been forwarded to David Petche. These would be private allotments. Tim Dilks of The Allotment Association mentioned that these allotments would be used for private plots as well as a community orchard. Meetings regarding these allotments are ongoing with the Adhurst Estate who would be the landlords.

- **Waiting Lists**

The Chairman read out the numbers for the waiting lists at present. Sheet 34 and Tilmore 35. She also mentioned that 11 plots had been terminated since January 2011. The Deputy Town Clerk mentioned that quite a few plots had been split.

- **Security of tenure for Sheet allotments**

Mr Bruce asked what the current position was regarding Sheet plotholders living in Petersfield and The responsibility of The Town Council to them if Sheet Parish Council was to be formed. The Deputy Town Clerk informed him that at present The Town Council had no further information on this matter and that an extraordinary meeting of The Town Council would be held on 31st October to discuss matters further and that anyone was welcome to attend. At present there is no formal policy until matters have been discussed. The Deputy Town Clerk informed everyone present that it was not in the interest of The Town Council to get rid of people and that under

allotment law you are able to have allotments outside your Parish boundary. The final decision following the consultations would be decided by East Hampshire District Council. Mr Jones informed everyone present that The Town Council had spent a lot of time looking for land in Petersfield but that there was very little land available. This was an ongoing process.

- **Deer Proof Fencing**

Tim Dilks asked whether the budget for next year included deer proof fencing as there was an ongoing problem with deer at Tilmore allotments. The Deputy Town Clerk informed him that this was a budget item for the present year and that budgets were being discussed at present. Tim Dilks informed her that the far end track by the gate was the worse area. Peter Jones had asked The Allotment Association for suggestions for the budget for the forthcoming year and that they had put several suggestions forward including deer proof fencing and that this was a priority item. Bill Organ asked about the option for partial fencing of certain areas. Mr Mike Owen mentioned that there were several gaps in the hedgerow where deer had got through. John Deavin asked whether the intention would be to have heavy duty fencing or whether hedging would be better. This would depend on the availability of funds in the budget. Peter Jones asked that if anyone had suggestions to get in contact with him. Tim Dilks mentioned that the deer proof fencing installed at Sheet allotments in the past was really good.

- **Grass cutting contract and roads**

Mrs Davis asked what the contract covered regarding grass cutting and roads at the allotments. Mr Jones informed her that as most plotters are aware there were several ruts in the paths at the allotments and that access for vehicles was particularly difficult, especially the delivery of scalping that has happened in the past. He was aware of the access problems and also mentioned that he had arranged for the ruts to be scraped but this did not prove to be successful as shortly after the job had been done it had rained heavily. This was an ongoing budget item.

The grass cutting contract at present specifies that only the main pathways are cut. Mr Jones mentioned that due to the new contractors that there had been several issues regarding grass cutting but that the problems had now been resolved. Mr Bruce mentioned that a lot of plotters did not know what areas they had to cut. The Deputy Town Clerk mentioned that all grass and paths around their allotments had to be cut. Mr Jones showed all present a map of the areas at Sheet and Tilmore that were cut by the contractors. A map of these areas would be displayed on the noticeboards so that plotters were aware. If anyone had questions regarding this they should contact Mr Jones.

- **Raised beds on plots**

Mr Deavin asked whether plotters were allowed to have raised beds made from wood on their allotment plots. The Deputy Town Clerk informed him that there were no restrictions regarding raised beds on the allotments and that as long as plotters met the required cultivation standards they would be okay. If the plotter decided to give their plot up in the future then it would be their responsibility to remove these structures.

- **Overhanging trees on boundary**

Heather Bird asked about the overhanging trees on the East boundary of Tilmore allotments. She mentioned that there were a lot of diseased trees and trees overhanging her plot from Tilmore Road. Peter Jones mentioned that it was difficult to determine the ownership of the trees but that Hampshire County Council owned the trees along Tilmore road and Dark Hollow. The Town Council was only responsible for trees within our boundary and that if there were any dangerous trees that they would be removed. There is very little money in the budget for tree work for the forthcoming year.

Mr Elleker mentioned that he had a Rowan tree on his plot that had been there for several years, since he had taken the plot on and this was very overgrown and took a lot of light away from his plot. Mr Jones mentioned that there were no restrictions if plottolders wanted to remove trees themselves. The Deputy Town Clerk mentioned that there were no TPO's on any of the trees at the allotments.

- **Swop Shop**

David Barton mentioned that the swop shop at Tilmore had become more of a dumping ground than a place for goods to be left for plottolders to make use of. He asked that people do not use this as a dumping ground and that notification of this be put in The Allotment Association newsletter.

- **Pest control policy**

Helen Smith asked whether The Town Council had a specific policy regarding pest control. She had taken advice from a Pest Control company when she has lots of rats on her plot to try and control the problem. Mr Jones informed her that there was no specific policy regarding pest control and that plottolders were able to get rid of rats themselves if needed. He also mentioned that traps had been given to The Allotment Association in the past. Mr Bruce mentioned that these traps were still in use. Julie Dickinson asked whether plottolders were issued with guidelines concerning pest control. The Deputy Town Clerk informed her that there were no specific guidelines issued but that if plottolders had any problems that they should contact The Town Council.

- **General**

Julie Dickinson mentioned that she had recently accompanied Sue McMorran and Fiona Mort on an allotment inspection and she was very impressed with the allotment plots at both Sheet and Tilmore.

Sue McMorran asked that all plottolders number their plots as it is a requirement of their Tenancy Agreement and that it made inspections a lot easier. She also asked all plottolders to keep the paths in and around their allotments strimmed.

The meeting closed at 20.00 pm