



## **BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Allotments Committee Meeting**

**held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bideford on**

**Thursday 1 February 2024 at 6.30 pm**

#### **PRESENT:**

East Ward	Councillor Mrs J Gubb Councillor J McKenzie
South Ward	Councillor Ms R Clarke Councillor S Inch (Chairman)
West Ward	Councillor T Inch
Tricks	Mr S Long
Pollyfield	Mr A Mitchell

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Mrs R Grant (Marland, Secretary)  
Mr R Grant (Marland, Tenant)  
Mrs N Wheeler (Handy Cross, Chairman)  
Ms L Stanford (Handy Cross, Secretary)  
3 x Members of the Public

#### 14. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None were received.

#### 15. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None were made.

#### 16. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

There was no public participation.

#### 17. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 September 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

## **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

Proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded and

**RESOLVED: That Standing Orders are suspended in order to allow members of the Marland Association and public members to address the Council.**

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0)

### 18. **MARLAND SITE**

#### a. Update.

Mrs Grant advised Members:

- A Working Party was formed and worked very well on boundary / tree works.
- The Association Members came together to celebrate Bonfire Night with toffee apples.
  - Similarly, the Tenants gathered for a Christmas Party.
- There are no vacant plots.

#### b. Lease Extension.

Mrs Grant explained to the Members that the Marland Association had secured National Lottery Funding of £36,753.

The funding will provide:

- Four beds that are suitable for a wheelchair user.
- Five beds that are suitable for people who find bending and/or kneeling down challenging.
- Paths that are wide and firm enough to accommodate even motorised mobility scooters and wheelchairs.
- Nine secure lockers where each of the bed holders can store their tools and gardening equipment.
- A communal shelter as somewhere to socialise and make a cup of tea or pot up plants, this shelter will have work benches at both wheelchair and standing height.
- Provide a water harvesting system that provides accessible access to water for watering plants, the communal shelter roof will serve as the water collection point as will the roof of the communal toilet.
- Practical completion and progressed will be recorded photographically throughout the building stages and throughout the first growing season (approximately 12-months).

Outcomes include:

- Improved inclusion and the associated health and wellbeing benefits.
- Improved relationships in the community and an environmental impact through growing food.

The Clerk advised that the Lottery Fund has leasehold requirements, where under their capital T&Cs, for capital grants of up to 100K are a lease for a term of at least five years (from practical completion of works), without break clauses (the ability for either party to end the lease).

He indicated that it was within the Committee's gift to extend the Lease agreement with the Association until September 2030. However, the break clause of six months reflects the clause the Council has with Devon County Council.

He confirmed that he had provided all the detail to "South West Norse," the department who manages the DCC estate and subsequently spoke to a surveyor who would liaise with his DCC masters.

He had also written to the Operations Manager at Westcroft to see if they were aware of any threat to Marland (in the next six years); he advised,

"I have checked with the local authority and as a school we are not aware that there is a threat of the above being exercised in the immediate term or medium term."

Councillor McKenzie indicated that it was a fantastic opportunity that will benefit the wider Bideford gardening community.

Proposed by Councillor J McKenzie, seconded and

**RESOLVED: That the Lease agreement be extended until September 2030 and the break clause amended subject to DCC conditions.**

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0)

19. **HANDY CROSS SITE**

Update.

Mrs Wheeler, Chairman, confirmed that the Handy Cross Accounts had been provided to the Office.

She advised Members:

- Sixty two plots are occupied.
  - Two half plots unoccupied.
  - There have been six recent tenancies.
- Health and Safety work has been carried out on the Container.
- There is a positive impetus that has seen the first site "walk round."
- The Association is looking forward to spring.
- Future activities on the Site will include morning coffee and afternoon tea.
  - An egg hunt, also.
  - There is a good community spirit on the Site.
- A newsletter has been published, and will be circulated:
  - Every two months during the off season.
  - Each month thereafter.
- The Working Party will operate four times a year, with tenants expected to

commit to at least one, with a view to keeping the Site tidy.

### **RETURN TO STANDING ORDERS**

Proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded and

**RESOLVED: That the Meeting return to Standing Orders.**

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0)

#### 20. **POLLYFIELD SITE**

Update.

Mr Mitchell confirmed the Site was ticking over (nicely).

- Letters from the Office, following a recent inspection, had resulted in a flurry of activity.
- There is one half plot ready to be let.
- Pollyfield Tenants are similarly looking forward to spring.

Mr Mitchell expressed concern and raised a point of order arising from the previous meeting where a member of public had been allowed to hold forth for a period that extended well beyond the three minutes ordinarily allotted to a speaker.

The Chairman explained that whilst a speaker is time restricted the Chairman of a meeting has the jurisdiction to allow flexibility during the fifteen minute public participation item.

#### 21. **TRICKS SITE**

Update.

Mr Long, Tricks, in contrast to the Pollyfield Tenants had not seen a lot of response to the letters requiring tenant / plot attention.

- There is one plot vacant.
  - Soon to be occupied.
- The Site is “running lovely.”
  - Everyone is contributing to the overall site.
  - Support from the Office is welcomed.
    - Liaison provides for letters / correspondence.

Mr Long led discussion advocating a firm approach to those absent /inactive tenants; it is important that plots are maintained.

The Chairman concurred highlighting that there are waiting lists with applicants / members of the Community looking to take up the gardening opportunity.

The Chairman, having established that there was no further business to discuss, thanked the Members for their attendance and concluded the Meeting at 6.55 pm. He added that he should like the Committee to convene more regularly.

Signature of Town Mayor:..... Date:.....

Signature of Chairman:..... Date:.....