



# CHILTON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting of Chilton Town Council Allotment**  
held at Hutton House, Chilton, County Durham, on  
Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 10.30am

**Chairman:** *Councillor S.Sutherland*

**Present:** *E. Bruce, P. Malpas, S. Reece, V. Collinson*

**Members of the public:** 3 members of the public present

## **ALL1.5/24. APOLOGIES**

None received

## **ALL2.5/24 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

## **ALL3.5/24 MEMBER DISPENSATION**

None.

## **ALL4.5/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The following issues were raised by tenant:-

- a. Request to keep bees on allotment
- b. Fly tipping
- c. Rats were briefly discussed and it was noted that the Council are looking at this. However, it is not detailed as an agenda item.

## **ALL5.5/24 MINUTES OF 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024 MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed and recorded as a true record. Proposed to accept Cllr Sutherland, seconded Cllr Malpas

## **ALL6.5/24 REPORT ON ALLOTMENT ISSUES**

1. Members and attendees were informed that rent was outstanding for 22 allotments (17 tenants). Letters had been sent at the beginning of May 2024.
2. Eight plots had been offered to new tenants. Nine new plots had become available and would be allocated as soon as possible. Members felt it was important that the newly returned allotments are allocated as soon as possible. It was agreed to arrange allocation meetings within 2 weeks.

### **ALL7.5/24 2024 TENANCY RENEWAL**

Discussed in previous item

### **ALL8.5/24 FENCING WEST CHILTON TERRACE**

Following the motion passed in the April 2024 meeting to install 6ft fences on parts of West Chilton Terrace allotment site. Discussion took place regarding which areas would be completed first.

Although it was noted that a tenant had expressed a request to not have the fencing, some Members of the committee felt this was not appropriate and that all allotments in the designated area should have new fencing. Two proposals / options were discussed, which need to be taken to Full Council for a decision:

1. WCT106 to WCT108 and on the opposite side of the track, WCT134 to WCT124.
2. WCT106 to WCT118 (not including the side tracks, which it was felt should be gated).

New quotes would be required for these options to take to the next Full Council meeting.

### **ALL9.5/24 REPAIRS WEST CHILTON TERRACE**

A number of repairs were required on the West Chilton Terrace site that had previously been approved, but were delayed until the new financial year:

- a) Site border fencing facing onto the bypass need to be reinforced and made stable (opposite WCT145/146)
- b) Site border fencing on the opposite side of the bypass to be reinforced and made stable (behind WCT130/131).
- c) Fencing on allotment WCT198 (approx.) facing Dene Bridge Row – covered in ivy and leaning towards the main road
- d) Provide a gate for new tenant in WCT221

Members agreed these pieces of work should go ahead.

### **ALL10.5/24 INSPECTION / HANDYMAN**

Members discussed some of the tasks that could be required by this role. It was highlighted that the person could be used in other areas, not just the allotments. The different options for the role, whether it would be employing a member of staff or including in a contract. Members were mindful that a number of areas needed to be looked at before it can be taken forward and that other committees and working groups should be informed. It was agreed to pass this information to the HR Committee who were looking at a staffing review and also to the Environmental Contract Working Party.

### **ALL11.5/24 WATER POLICY 2024/25**

It was agreed following the annual consultation event that a review of the water policy was required. Members were informed of the current known situation regarding our official stand pipes and the unofficial taps that, over the years, have been put onto individual allotments. It was felt that this should be mapped so that we have a clearer understanding of where taps are.

It was also raised there are a number of issues with access to the water taps, especially on West Chilton Terrace site. We are aware that people not connected with the allotments have been using the water. As part of the review, the security and access arrangements of stop taps should be looked at.

### **ALL12.5/24 PLAYGROUND INSPECTION REPORT**

The latest inspection report from Durham County Council was for April 2024. One item was highlighted as HIGH risk and 3 as MEDIUM risk. From this report, it showed that the HIGH risk item has been repaired by Durham County Council, one of the MEDIUM risk items had been repaired by Chilton Town Council and one MEDIUM risk item was in progress. There was only one of the MEDIUM risk items outstanding and is reported that Durham County Council attempted to replace a screw in the skate park but was unsuccessful. This was to be monitored.

Issues of graffiti had also been raised, especially by the Junior Council. **Action:** to request that our Contractor is tasked with clearing this as soon as possible.

### **ALL13.5/24 FLY TIPPING**

A number of areas around the town were highlighted as being regular fly tipping sites. Cllr Sutherland was aware of these and reports any that he finds to Durham County Council. It was felt important that any fly tipping reports received should be posted on our social media and report any costs incurred by the Town Council.

### **ALL14.5/24 LITTER / DOG BINS**

Members were informed that the Find and Fix Team from Durham County Council had been commissioned to carry out a number of tasks in Chilton over the coming months, part of this included the installation of the litter bins currently in the back compound. It is understood that three bins could not be installed as they were out of the specified area of the commissioned work. It is expected this work will take place towards the summer.

### **ALL15.5/24 DRONE**

The drone photographs had been undertaken twice a year for the last couple of years and Members felt that a review of this aspect should be undertaken. A Drone Policy should be established and brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

### **ALL16.5/24 BEES**

Members discussed the pros and cons of bee keeping and noted the environmental benefits. However, due to a previous refusal to allow bees on the allotments, Members felt this decision should be taken by Full Council. The Members attending the Allotment Committee were supportive of the request and would be taking this view to Full Council in June 2024. It was noted that a framework and policy should be produced to take to Full Council in June 2024.

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Cllr. S.Sutherland proposed to exclude, due to the nature of business to be transacted, both press and public. This was agreed.

### **ALL 17.5/24 ALLOTMENT REPORT**

WCT211 – awaiting letter of complaint regarding fees.

Tenant on PT67 requested to add a joint tenant. Following discussion of the circumstances this was felt to be appropriate and was approved.

Nine tenants did not renew their tenancy for 2024/2025.

### **ALL 18.5/24 SMALL CLAIMS COURT UPDATE**

WCT211 (previous tenant) – no response received. **Action:** Advise Full Council to move to Small Claims

WCT140/141 – following meeting in April 2024, tenant has requested the bill be halved and he is willing to commence paying £10 per month from May 2024, with a view to clearing the full amount in due course. As at the date of this meeting, no payment had been made. **Action:** advise Full Council, no decision to be made on reducing the amount until payments have been commenced.

WCT121 – no response to any communications. **Action:** Advise Full Council to move to Small Claims

### **ALL19.5/24 ASBESTOS**

Members were informed there was an allotment on PT that had evidence of asbestos. This is an empty plot but it has been noted that people are crossing the allotment and children have been seen playing on an abandoned trampoline. **Action:** to arrange for this to be removed as a matter of urgency due to health and safety issues.

### **ALL20.5/24 NOTICE TO QUIT EXTENSION**

Members were advised the tenant given the Notice to Quit (ending 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024) had requested a 3 month extension to clear the site. Following discussion members felt it would be appropriate to give an extension to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and advise the tenant to contact the Council if more time is needed. **Action:** to write to tenant with this information.

### **ALL21.5/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – MONDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024 AT 10.30AM**

Signed: -

Mayor of Chilton  
11<sup>th</sup> June 2024