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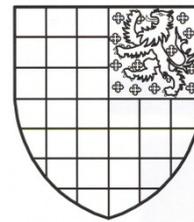
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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Allotments Working Party** held in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes** on **Thursday 30 June 2022** at **11.00am**

Present: Cllrs M Bird, R Burrows, J Lamb, I Makepeace, Dr W Maples and S Sains

In attendance: Town Clerk, Town Ranger and Customer Services Officer

1. Election of Chair:

Cllr Burrows was elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2022 to 2023 municipal year.

2. Apologies: were received from Councillors Catlin and Clarke who were unwell.

3. Member's Declarations of Interest: Cllr Dr Maples declared an interest in that she is a Council allotment tenant.

4. Minutes: The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. Allotment Show:

5.1 The Town Clerk (TC) informed the meeting of feedback received following Allotment Working Parties (AWP) held in January and February this year and the Allotment Symposium which was also held in February. It had been suggested at the symposium that the Allotment Show rules be reviewed as they were archaic. As the show was only two months away TC suggested that minor changes be trialled this year which could be reviewed next year following feedback from the show.

5.2 The Customer Services Officer (CSO) apprised the committee of the origin of the Allotment Show. It was first held in 2006, hosted by the then Mayor, Councillor Milner and was a Mayoral event. The current schedule had been created by the Mayor's Secretary and had changed slightly over the years. The show had become a Council event in 2010 and had grown significantly.

5.3 The Ranger reported that tenants had requested the show was held earlier in September when the produce from the allotments was at its best. The Ranger went on to explain that the show had always been held on the third Sunday in September because of conflicting dates. Due to a cancellation, The Allotment show can now be held on the first Sunday in September.

5.4 The current format of the show is staging from 9 to 11am, judging from 11am to 2pm and a reception from 2 to 4pm. With the availability of both large rooms, it was suggested that between 11am and 12.30pm an "Allotment Question Time" be hosted where new or novice tenants could ask questions and get advice from more experienced allotment tenants with a Councillor from the Allotment Working Party (AWP) in the Chair. A seed swap stall could be in place as well as representatives from Wildflower Lewes.

5.5 A question was raised regarding Allotment Site Representatives and that they could be involved with the question time. However, to date, only two applications had been received for the role, but this would be promoted again when the allotment show information was sent to tenants.

5.6 Another idea was to have a glut food swap, a glut recipe book and to have a caterer working with allotment tenants on glut food ideas to provide food at the show. Officers would explore this idea but given the imminent date of the show this may have to be

trialled next year.

- 5.7** The meeting then discussed feedback from tenants and councillors about the principal of the allotment show and the rules being archaic. It was noted that the show should not be about having perfectly formed fruit and vegetables when the idea of an allotment was to grow food for eating and that the Town Council's aim is to encourage eco-friendly practices on Council-owned Allotments.
- 5.8** The show rules were then considered. The meeting noted that currently the criterion for judgement is not provided to allotment tenants. Officers would ask the judges if this was available electronically. It was agreed that officers would explore obtaining a reference copy of the RHS Horticultural Show Handbook to be kept at the Town Hall. Councillor Burrows offered to draw up a summarising document from this.
- 5.9** The meeting then discussed the schedule of classes, and the following amendments and additions were made:

Amended classes

- Class 6 – change four to three carrots with approval from external judge that this can be done within RHS judging rules.
- Class 8 – change four to three parsnips with approval from external judge that this can be done within RHS judging rules.
- Class 12 – omit “coloured” so the class will become ‘four potatoes.’
- Class 16 - the word “box or similar container” be added so the class will become ‘a trug or box or similar container of mixed vegetables, at least four types.’
- Class 17 – the word “box or similar container” be added so the class will become ‘a trug or box or similar container of mixed fruit (which may include nuts) at least four types.’

Additional classes

- Organic trug or box or similar container of vegetables (two items to be judged by taste)
- Organic trug or box or similar container of fruit (two items to be judged by taste)
- Organic Heritage variety trug or box or similar container (vegetables and/or fruit) (two to be judged by taste)
- Best tasting organic tomato
- Best tasting organic runner bean
- Best tasting organic carrot
- A vase of culinary herbs, three varieties
- Novices – a point of pride class – first time entrants to the show

All the above additional classes will be judged by members of the Allotment Working Party together with all the novelty classes on the existing schedule.

- One squash
- Any fruit not in schedule
- Three sweet peppers (any colour)
- Six chilli peppers

- 5.10** The Ranger then added that as part of this year's show it was proposed to invite tenants to take part in the National Butterfly Count which is held from 16 July to 8 August. Tenants could be directed to their website to download a chart and record for a fifteen-minute period the number of butterflies on their plot. Their count is then submitted to the Butterfly Trust if they wish to take part in the national event, and to the Council where a prize would be presented at the allotment show for the highest count.
- 5.11** At previous allotment shows the Ranger has judged the best kept plot. This year tenants could be sent a ballot paper asking them to vote for first and second best kept plot at their own allotment site. The Ranger would visit and take photos of the best plots at each site

and display these at the allotment show where the prize would be awarded.

5.12 The meeting then discussed how many classes each tenant could enter and whether there should be a set limit for fairness and to try to encourage more entrants to the show. It was agreed that five classes would be free to enter with a charge for each class after that. Charges for other shows in the town be investigated by officers when setting a charge.

6. It was **resolved** that:

- 1) Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to finalise the format of this year's allotment show to include hosting the Allotment Question Time and Community Stalls.
- 2) The Common Cause Glut swap be promoted to allotment tenants.
- 3) One member of the Allotment Working Party sits on the Allotment Question Time panel.
- 4) Officers contact the external judges to request an electronic version of the judging criteria.
- 5) Officers explore obtaining a reference copy of the RHS Horticultural Show Handbook for reference at the Town Hall.
- 6) The schedule of classes be amended as set out at 5.9 above.
- 7) A butterfly count award be introduced to coincide with the national count.
- 8) Ballot papers be sent to tenants in order for them to vote for the first and second best kept plots at their own allotment site.
- 9) Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to investigate entry fee and class charges from other gardening shows held in Lewes.
- 10) Numbers attending the Allotment Question Time in 2022 be monitored with a view to having an outside caterer to provide lunches at the 2023 show enabling the town hall to remain open all day to allotment tenants

The meeting ended at 12.33pm

Signed.....

Date.....