

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**Termination of Allotment Tenancy - Review**

1. There is no duty on the Council to provide allotments for people who live out of the parish. However, as Members are aware, there is a substantial waiting list of local people wanting allotments. Some of those people frequently complain that existing allotment holders are not cultivating their allotments and have indicated that those tenancies should be terminated.
2. Over the past few years, the results of the Allotment Competition have been used by officers as one of the criteria to guide them on renewal or termination of tenancies. In a number of cases where officers believe the allotment is simply too big, the tenant has been offered the tenancy of half a plot with the remainder being let to the next person on the waiting list. This arrangement has worked well and most tenants have been relieved at the Council's willingness to implement a personalised arrangement and have co-operated fully with the Council and with the person taking over the remainder of the plot. This is particularly important since the part given up often has to be ploughed. A number of changes have been made to allotment tenancies this year on the basis outlined above.
3. One allotment holder at Upper Kingston, who lives in an adjoining parish, was given notice under these arrangements. Initially she sought retention of the whole plot and further time to sort out the problems. It appears she had been abroad for a significant period of the year and it was for this reason that her plot had become neglected and covered in weeds.
4. Eventually she accepted the half plot arrangement. Regrettably, however, her part clearance of the half retained provided for the weeds to be thrown on the half to be re-let. Despite being asked to move this rubbish, additional weeds were moved onto the plot. The tenant did attempt to burn them, along with some full black sacks, but did not remove them, even after notice from the Council or respond to correspondence indicating how she proposed to deal with the matter. The pile of weeds on the rear of the half plot meant that this plot could not be used by the new tenant until it had been ploughed by the Council. As a result of her non-response, the tenant was given Notice of Termination of the whole plot and the front half was also re-let, subject to ploughing.
5. It was only after this Notice was served by Recorded Delivery that the tenant responded. She indicated that she was due to go into hospital and it was largely for this reason that she had not kept the plot under control. She had simply forgotten to respond to the Council's previous letters.
6. She is now seeking to appeal to the Committee to allow her to retain tenancy of the front half of the plot.
7. In 2005 the tenant scored 25 out of 100 in the Allotment Competition and was therefore advised that she needed to improve the condition of the plot. The following year she achieved 63 out of 100 but this year only 11 out of 100.
8. It seems to the officers that whilst the tenant does wish to keep the allotment she has not maintained it in a good condition. Her failure to cultivate the allotment properly is depriving residents on the waiting list and her disregard for the allotment rules have increased the Council's costs which are met by Ringwood residents. The approximate cost of having a plot ploughed is £50.
9. Your officers therefore believe that this allotment holder's Licence should not be renewed, but, notwithstanding the fact that she is not a resident of the parish, her name could be left on the waiting list for a half plot from September 2008.