

EXCERPT FROM:

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Held on 2nd December 2009 at 7.00pm

**OS/5155
ALLOTMENTS**

Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5155 Allotments, as a close relative is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman made a statement and left the room whilst the item was discussed, taking no part in the debate or decision made.

Following reports of an increase in vermin at Long Lane, Members considered the need for pest control contractors at all the Council's allotments and the need to review charges to allotment holders towards costs.

Seven allotment holders attended the meeting to make representations about the problems of rodents and rabbits at the Long Lane Allotments. Considerable damage was being done to crops but the major concern was the public health issue with regard to the increase in rats. After some debate, it was agreed that professional contractors should be appointed to deal with the problem, and that this would be an ongoing cost. The Town Clerk was already in consultation with Environmental Health officers; the costs were not yet available but could well be high. He stressed both land owners and tenants were responsible for pest control. The allotment holders present were unwilling to contribute towards the costs of pest control. However, the rent received from allotments did not meet the Council's existing running costs by a considerable margin; additional costs would require further subsidy from the Town Council.

It was noted that, as a leaseholder, the Football Club would be solely responsible for pest control on their site. The Town Clerk confirmed that all allotment holders would be informed of the situation.

RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- 1) That, subject to further investigation into costs, immediate action be taken to appoint pest control contractors for the Long Lane Allotment;
- 2) That under the review of fees and charges for 2010/11 (*Annex A Appendix C attached*) consideration be given to increasing allotment rent to help defray pest control costs and that this review be deferred until the next Committee Meeting.

ACTION 1) Terry Simpson 2) Martin Townsend / Claire Perrens
--