

OPEN SESSION: There were six members of the public present.

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

Held on 3rd June 2009 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr B H Terry (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr D R Cole
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr G J O'Reilly
Cllr A C Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator
Jessica Osborne-Lax, Student Advisor
Maisie Jenkinson, Student Advisor

OS/5097 APOLOGIES

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Chambers and Cllr Urwin.

OS/5098 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

OS/5100 – Upper Kingston Allotment Fencing and Gate Locking: Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as she lives close by and her daughter is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman made a statement and answered questions but left the room without taking part in the debate or decisions made.

OS/5099 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED: That, subject to deletion of Cllr Urwin from those shown as present in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2009, that the minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 13th May 2009, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

As there were members of the public wishing to speak regarding Agenda Item 6, Upper Kingston Allotment Fencing and Gate Locking, the Chairman brought this item forward.

OS/5100 UPPER KINGSTON ALLOTMENT FENCING AND GATE LOCKING

OS/5100 – Upper Kingston Allotment Fencing and Gate Locking: Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as she lives close by and her daughter is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman made a statement and answered questions but left the room without taking part in the debate or decisions made.

Members received a verbal report from the Town Clerk on discussions and letters regarding fencing and gate locking. A survey of allotment holders and a site visit had been undertaken to obtain feedback on these issues.

With regard to fencing, it was considered that to be effective 8 ft fencing would be required which would be prohibitively expensive and impractical. The alternative would be for the Town Council to provide spiky shrubs such as blackthorn for allotment holders to plant. One small area under trees would need to be fenced as this sort of planting would not be feasible there. Allotment holders consulted were in support of this proposal. It was agreed that the stile should be retained for retrieval of stray balls by the Football Club, but that a notice should be put in place to make it clear this was its only purpose.

With regard to gate locking, there had been strong feelings both for and against locking of the gate, with a small majority of those who responded to the survey in favour of it being left unlocked, and locked 'at the end of the day' by the last person out. There was a lengthy discussion involving the five allotment holders present on the pros and cons of the gate being left locked or unlocked. The health and safety reason for having the gate unlocked – so that emergency services had easy access – was countered by the fact that ambulances carry bolt cutting equipment, the gate can be easily climbed, and additional keys can be obtained for individual use in case of an emergency. The site is too isolated for there to be a key holder near by. The arguments to keep the gate locking regulation in place included the security issue, which particularly affects those allotment plots near the gate, the risk of travellers obtaining access, and problems of people parking illegally there, particularly when going to the football field. In addition, it was concluded that without the strict rule that the gate be locked on entry and exit, it was highly likely it would simply be left open.

The Chairman concluded that although both sides have good reasons, the existing good practice of locking the gate is vital for future security of the site. All Members were in favour of the regulation on gate locking remaining in place.

Cllr Wiseman returned to the meeting. On hearing the outcome, she requested that the wording on the sign requiring tenants to lock the gate be toned down. The Town Clerk agreed to review this, but stressed that it was essential this regulation is strictly enforced.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That spiky shrubs, such as blackthorn, be provided for allotment holders to plant along the boundaries of the allotment at Upper Kingston in the autumn;
- 2) That a small area under trees identified by the Town Clerk, which is unsuitable for shrub planting, be fenced as appropriate;
- 3) That the stile be retained and that a notice be erected to indicate its purpose is solely for access for the retrieval of lost balls; and
- 4) That the regulation requiring allotment holders to lock the gate as they enter and leave the allotment site be retained.

ACTION Terry Simpson / Christine Smith

OS/5101

DOGS AT THE CEMETERY

There is currently a 'No Dogs' sign at the Cemetery, although Regulation 30 states dogs on a leash are allowed. Members considered whether to amend Regulation 30 to state that no dogs are allowed or to uphold it and amend the 'No Dogs' sign.

RESOLVED: That the 'No Dogs' sign be amended to read 'Please keep your dog on a leash'

ACTION Christine Smith

**OS/5102
POLY TUNNEL AT ALLOTMENT**

Members considered a verbal request from a tenant at Upper Kingston, who had been given approval in April (*OS/5077 refers*) for a 12 ft x 8 ft poly tunnel, for permission to erect a 15 ft x 8 ft poly tunnel, as he had been unable to acquire the 12 ft x 8 ft size. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had seen poly tunnels in situ and the size was now considered acceptable.

RESOLVED: That permission be given for retention of the poly tunnels erected on the Upper Kingston allotments.

ACTION Christine Smith

**OS/5103
SECURITY AT THE CEMETERY**

Following the break in at the Cemetery, (*OS/5092 13.05.09 refers*) Members considered the costs and feasibility of:

- a) A secure container at the Cemetery to replace the garage
- b) Steel reinforcements to the office and second garage.

The Town Clerk had been unable to obtain any advice from the District Council Planning Department and proposed that a secure container could be installed as a 'temporary' structure for two years without consent. It was suggested that the garage be retained as it would provide useful space for a workshop. The container would be 8 ft x 20 ft and cost between £1,100 and £1,500. It would be sited between the cemetery wall and garage, to avoid disturbing graves, and screened with shrubs. The steel reinforcements for the office posed more problems, as this may be a listed building. This could cost around £300. Further research was necessary as to whether it would be better to reinforce the second garage (at a cost of around £1,000) or to replace it with a small secure container.

RECOMMENDED: That the Policy & Finance Committee be asked to approve a supplementary estimate of £2,000, to be met from reserves, for a secure container and other security measures, to be confirmed, at the Cemetery.

ACTION Terry Simpson

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.55 pm.

Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.

RECEIVED & ADOPTED
24th June 2009

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN