

*AEC 9/3/17*

## Annual Site Visit

16 February 2017 at 2.00pm

Present:

Bill Morrison (BM) – Allotment Association (Chairman)

Councillor R J Lees (RJ) – Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council

Martin Harding (MH) – Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council (ATC)

Site name:	No of plots:	No of unworked* plots identified:	Comments or observations
Craylands Lane	8	3 (38% of all plots on site)	BM raised issue with Association not being able to remove plot holders and hopes to use the renewal process.
New Burial Ground	31	13 (42% of all plots on site)	BM confirmed that association had taken efforts to clear back areas and improve access.  Problem with the access gate not closing properly for MH to take back to the office.
Keary Road	41	22 (54% of all plots on site)	Leaking water pipe at the bottom end of the site identified. BM agreed to look into as this as had just been covered over and left leaking.
Lewis Road	2	0 (0% of all plots on site)	Nothing identified.

Across all 4 sites the total number of unworked plots is 38 out of 82 plots. This equates to 46% of all plots currently being unworked.

\*The definition of unworked plots for the purpose of this report are any that appear to have not been touched during 2016-17, agreed by all parties.

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AEC 9/3/17

## Allotment Association Meeting

28 February 2017 at 2.00pm

### Present:

Bill Morrison (BM) – Allotment Association (Chairman)

Graham Blew (GB) – Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council (Clerk)

Martin Harding (MH) – Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council (ATC)

BM began by confirming that the association are planning to collect the rent this year but have issues internally with both understanding the role of the Association and its powers in relation to plot holders.

BM also confirmed that Gwen Prior (GP) the current Vice-Chairman is considering giving up her role and allotment.

GB returned BM back to both the agreement with the Town Council and individual agreements signed by plot holders to re-emphasize the obligations of both parties in relation to the plots.

MH asked for clarification of what BM meant in relation to collecting rent. During 2016-17 plot holders were still passing money through the Town Council as a form of dropbox style point for the Town Council to collate and pass onto the Association. MH asked whether the Association would be fully collecting the amounts themselves, including the initial amount in April and any new plot holder's mid-year. BM confirmed this was the case but could not confirm how. He indicated that he was happy for people to give him the money but stated that this was really down to the Associations Treasurer who he had not met.

MH expressed concerns over organisation and the letters process as the Town Council had recently received an email from the Associations secretary Alan Jobling asking for the new rent figures for 2017-18. MH confirmed that these had been provided to both BM and GP back at the start of February and would have expected letters to have been sent by now.

MH asked what the Associations plans were for dealing with unworked plots in 2017-18 as this issue had arisen during the site inspection undertaken with BM and Councillor R J Lees. BM confirmed that they have written to plot holders and given notice but stated that no one was listening to them about losing plots. GB asked whether letters had been sent terminating any person's plot, which BM confirmed had not. GB confirmed that this was the process. BM stated that previously they had provided photos to the Town Council regarding unworked plots. GB confirmed that the wording within the agreement with the Association stated that evidence was only in relation to appeals against plots. BM indicated that they would refuse to renew plots that had not been worked. Both GB and MH stated that this information if decided

would have to be included on the renewal letter which must be sent out shortly to allow notice to be given.

BM indicated that he was planning an Allotment Association committee meeting at the end of week commencing 6 March 2017 to discuss all these points with the other members. GB confirmed that the Town Council would be having a meeting of its Sub-Committee to discuss this and also the feedback from the site visits. MH re-iterated to BM that he needs to stress to his members that if the Association cannot manage the sites there is a risk that the allotments could be closed either in part or full. GB confirmed that maybe the Association needs to consider asking the Town Council to increase rent figures to deter timewasters from taking on plots. MH also added that the Association could just choose to increase its membership fees above the existing £5 as all plot holders have to be members of the Association to hold a plot.

BM confirmed that he will provide the Town Council with feedback from the Committee meeting held, including any changes in the Committee structure which can then be fed back to the Town Councils Sub-Committee for further discussion.

Meeting ended 2.25pm