

## **Report of Allotment Liaison Committee, held 5th June 2025**

### **1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

In accordance with Standing Orders, **it was AGREED** to appoint Cllr John Tully as Chair.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Jobson, with Annie Hart attending in his place for North Seaton Colliery Allotments.

### **3. ADOPTION OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**It was AGREED** to adopt the Code of Conduct for volunteers for all volunteers working with or on behalf of the Council, including allotment site representatives.

### **4. ADOPTION OF DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY POLICY**

**It was AGREED** that the Allotment Liaison Group adopts the Council's Data Protection and Privacy Policy as the governing framework for all Group data handling activities.

### **5. ADOPTION OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

**It was AGREED** that the Allotment Associations and Site Representatives adopt the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy as the governing framework for all Group activities to comply with equality legislation and demonstrate commitment to equality principles.

It was raised by a representative of Woodhorn Allotments that actions should go further than the policy and seek greater representation of diversity on allotments. It was also raised that inclusion in respect of access was very costly and not always possible. Sarah spoke about the Council's obligations with respect to Public Sector Equality Duty and acknowledged that we could go further, and also in respect of accessibility that measures had to be incorporated into costs and this was difficult, but some plots with raised beds could be positive.

### **6. ADOPTION OF SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**It was AGREED** to adopt the Council's Safeguarding Policy as the governing framework for all Group activities.

### **7. ADOPTION OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

**It was AGREED** to adopt the Council's Whistleblowing Policy as the governing framework for all Group activities.

### **8. ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW FOR DIRECTLY MANAGED SITES**

To receive the report on proposed rent increases for directly managed allotment sites and gather feedback from site representatives.

Following discussion and a healthy debate the Chair sought a consensus of opinion on the following:

- An increase in annual rent from £31 to £35 per plot per year for directly managed sites (Hirst East End, Woodhorn Road, and North Seaton Colliery), to be implemented from next due rent period, with 6 months' notice.
- Ground rent for self-managed sites would remain at £10 per plot, and Nursery Park would continue at £65 per plot.

Following further discussion the Chair noted consensus would be better achieved with the additional agreement that rents on managed sites be frozen for 3 years, tying in with the Council term.

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**It was AGREED** to recommend to the Council's FGS Committee, where the formal decision would be taken the consensus above, and that rents should be frozen for three years, therefore 2026-2029. There were dissenting opinions expressed about rising costs for the upkeep of allotments, which wouldn't be frozen, and that this would make budgeting for allotments more difficult.

During discussions it was also noted that those plot holders with alternative agreements to allotment tenancies, as they have animals outside of allotment rules, sought additional security. These agreements offered security for 5 years only as the plots are legally designated as allotments, but being used outside of those terms. It was acknowledged that the reasons for this were fully understood, but requested that if greater security could be agreed, this would be appreciated. There was a discussion about the pros and cons of divesting this as allotment land, in favour of grazing or alternatives for pigeons, versus the protection of it as allotment land. **It was AGREED** to revisit the 5-year agreement, and to work with plot holders on a solution that protected the land and their leisure pursuits.

### **9. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

October 2025 – to discuss capital costs – date to be agreed.

There was a discussion about more frequent meetings of the liaison committee. Sarah reminded the meeting that the terms of reference included that additional meetings could be called if something needed to be agreed, and this would be supported with an agenda.

It was acknowledged by Allotment Committees that Alan Bunker as Allotment Officer was the first point of contact, and it was expected that most queries and concerns, outside of rents and capital spending, could be progressed via Alan.

END OF MEETING

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