

Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 18 October 2021

Agenda Item 9.2

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP AND CONFIRMED DATE OF THE RESCHEDULED ALLOTMENT CONFERENCE

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Allotment Working group was initially set up early 2021 to review a number of issues surrounding the Allotment Tenant Agreement and fees and charges.
- 1.2 Over the summer of 2021, the working group was reconvened to fully review the feedback received in response to new proposals in fees and charges set to come into place from 1 April 2022.

EL.49.05.21 Members noted the report and **RESOLVED to:**

- (i) re-establish the allotment working group at the next meeting of Environment & Leisure Committee on 14 June 2021, and;
- (ii) look at the issues and comments raised specifically about fees and charges and to explore options for allotment land in the future.

- 1.3 Uckfield Town Council is fully aware and apologises that the proposed changes put forward by letter to tenants on 1 April 2021, were quite a change from the small annual increases that tenants were used to. A full review of the allotment pricing and management structure had not been undertaken since 2011/12 and not only had it come as quite a shock, but the way in which the Town Council communicated such changes to tenants, could have been improved.

2.0 Undertaking a thorough review

- 2.1 The proposed changes would have been quite a shock for tenants and a number of queries were raised, which required the working group to review once again in detail, the aims of any increase in fees and charges and to fully understand the complexities of the allotment sites and the way in which allotment land is allocated and handled.
- 2.2 Staff and council members have been working hard over the summer months to address and fully understand the various issues and concerns raised by some allotment tenants. This has created an opportunity for councillors and staff to fully understand the figures, the way in which the allotment sites are managed and to listen to tenants, with the intention of moving forward in the coming months and years to a place of improved communication and understanding between both tenants and the landlord (the Town Council).
- 2.3 The working group have recently met with representatives of the Allotment Association to discuss their work and the proposals that are set to be presented at the Allotment Conference in November.

3.0 Allotment Conference

- 3.1 Allotment holders are invited to the Allotment Conference which will be held on Wednesday 10 November 2021 at 7pm (along with Q&As) in the Weald Hall.
- 3.2 The recommendations of the Allotment Working Group will then be presented to Environment & Leisure Committee on 15 November 2021.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the report.