

PORTFOLIO:

ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
RAY BLOXHAM**

ALLOTMENT TENANTS' AGM

It gives me pleasure to report on a very successful first General Meeting on 4 February. An estimated 200 people met at the Ex Servicemen's Club for this first event. A fuller version of the Allotment Officers' report is available on the Council's website. Phil Gray, the Green Spaces Manager, chaired the meeting with assistance from the Allotment Officer. There were a number of discussions which ranged from proposed charges for 2010/11, allotment expenditure for 2009/10 to maintenance work required at certain sites

There were discussions with regard to self management and plot holders' participation. Waiting lists were also discussed. A number of events were highlighted – National Allotments Week 2010, between 9 and 15 August. This is run by the National Allotment Garden Trust to promote allotments. Tennants and associations are being asked to open their sites to the public and arrange visits for school groups. Love Parks Week is 24 July to 1 August. Carlisle will be taking part in this national event, encouraging local people to use their parks and green spaces in creating events throughout the week. There will also be an allotment guided walk as part of this week and plans to hold cooking demonstrations on an allotment site.

The meeting also comprised of a gardeners' question time with a number of well known local celebrities. A number of questions were asked and allotment holders seemed to value this session.

At the end of the meeting there was an exit survey undertaken, a copy of which is appended to this report

I would like to pass on my thanks to all those who took part in the organisation of this event which I understand was well received and requests for one next year, should, I feel, be honoured.

GREEN SPACES TEAM

Play Area Developments

The Green Spaces Team have a number of developments, which include the following. There are other developments which are being processed, and are in various stages of development. I will report on these at a later date.

Harraby

The Harraby Community Centre play area project will be starting on 1st March with the start-up site meeting, and contractors will be on site from 8th March. The funding has been provided through the Playbuilder fund.

Moorville Drive

The contract has been awarded and the drainage works are now complete, so contractors will be on-site as soon as ground conditions allow – early in the new financial year. This project is entirely funded by developer contributions.

Longtown

New equipment is being procured for two existing sites in Longtown, to improve the play value without the need to develop new sites.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Sport & Recreation Section

- 2nd phase funding application has been submitted to Sport England in respect of the Sands Development. Waiting decision of potential £500k Free Swim Capital Modernisation Fund.
- Doorstep Walk Programme Pack now released. Total funding £10k, from Green Spaces Team, Forestry Commission, Cumbria Sport and PCT.
- Carlisle City Council is being held in high regard by other authorities and NHS regarding the current Walks Programme and good practice with partner organisations.
- The Sport & Recreation Section recently delivered a presentation at the Children's Trust Conference in Penrith highlighting the success of the SAFE projects in Carlisle.
- Funding has been secured through MENCAP to deliver sport & physical activity for people with learning or physical disabilities and their families.

- Our Volunteer programme has been successful in attracting 10 University students to assist with our programmes.
- The Sport & Recreation Section have been successful in attracting funding, £22k in total, to employ a Rugby League Community Coach. The Rugby Football League and the School Sport Partnership has commissioned the work over the next 3 years.

Councillor R D Bloxham
Environment & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder

Allotment Tenants General Meeting, 4th February 2010. Exit Survey

1. Are you: the allotment tenant? accompanying the tenant?

2. In future meetings would you like to have:
 Just a formal meeting to discuss allotment issues?
 A purely social evening?
 A mix of the two?

3. Would you like to have a seed swap at future meetings? Yes No

4. Was the venue appropriate? Yes No
 If you had any problems with it, please say what they are:

5. Did you enjoy having a bar available? Yes No

6. Did you learn anything new about allotments
 I learnt a lot
 I learnt some new things
 I didn't learn anything

7. Would you come again if it were to be repeated? Yes No

8. Is the timing right? Would you be more likely to come to a meeting like this in
 Winter
 Summer

Results

71 forms were filled in and returned. There was no record of how many attended the meeting though the RSVP response indicated that there would be 177. There were 85 responses on the sheet requesting email addresses.

The survey is not scientific or formal. It was designed to give an indication of preferences and act as a guide for future meetings.

Not all questions were answered on all sheets. Sometimes more than one alternative was selected. In this case both were recorded – consequently the figures do not always add up to 71.

1. 60 of those attending were allotment tenants.
13 were accompanying the tenant
2. Just a formal meeting - 12
A purely social evening – 0
A mix of the two – 56
3. Would you like a seed swap at future meetings?
Yes – 62
No - 4

One person said yes but felt that May was a more appropriate time when more people would have seeds and plants

4. Was the venue appropriate?
Yes – 64
No – 0

Only one person identified a problem – Parking

One person commented – Worked well for a first AGM

5. Did you enjoy having a bar available?
Yes – 58
No – 3
One person was “not bothered”
Another person said “yes but probably wouldn’t tomorrow ...”
Tea/coffee were requested by one person
6. Did you learn anything new?
A lot – 10
Some new things – 48
Nothing new – 4

One respondent specified learning 2 new things.

7. Would you come to another meeting
Yes – 66
No – 0
8. Would you come to a meeting in:
Winter – 48
Summer – 10
6 people said they would come to a meeting at either time
1 said they would attend a meeting at both times
3 people would like a meeting in spring – one person said we are too busy weeding in summer

Other comments

Thank you very much

Half an hour break too long.

If it is Council policy to move to self management of plots then rationalise, and provide larger plots conducive to setting up self management. It works, it's better, it's controlled and saves tax payer's money.

The following were circled as being suitable for content of future meetings: quiz, talk on a gardening topic, self management

Response to 8. re timing of meeting - Why not twice a year?

A more informed panel (GQT) would be more useful. On different gardening questions as I was not impressed by tonight's panel.

The GQT was particularly enjoyed and valued. Thought this would be appropriate for another meeting – if so it should include “topical tips” from the experts. It was also thought that less or no time should be given to opinionated people.

Suggestion for future meetings:

Hold a raffle where money is raised which could be donated to one of the community groups who use the allotments. Prizes (eg spade/fork, or vouchers ie something worth having) could be donated by local garden centres.