

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Special Full Council

Tuesday 13 February 2024

Decision Report

Request for Abatement of Allotment Rents

Recommendation

Council RESOLVE to implement no changes to the policy of collecting allotment rents, for the period April to October 2024.

Ward

Not Ward Specific

Risk Management

There is an income budget for allotment rents, which offsets the expenditure required to both administer and maintain allotment sites. There is also the issue of the 2 Associations that we have administering sites on our behalf and the revenue the Council give to them for carrying out this role. This revenue is based upon 25% of income collected. The Council are responsible for the overall review of any rents or charges.

Objective

To promote the environmental, social and economical wellbeing of the town and its community by having facilities and events to the benefit of residents and visitors. Allotments are such a facility.

Report

A meeting took place in December 2023 with some tenants from the Tenth Avenue site to discuss a few issues, and Officers have discussed/dealt with these in due course. One of the issues however requires a decision from Council, as it would require a major policy change. This surrounds the collection of income from Allotment rents.

At this meeting the tenants requested that because of the financial climate, Blyth Town Council, do not collect the six-month rent that will be charged in April 2024, prior to the annual charge now being levied in October. This request/abatement if approved, would have to be given to all tenants on all sites across Blyth.

The net income budget for 2024/25 for this 6-month period would be a reduction of some £25k, which is made up of £21k income abatement and a payment of £4k to the 2 associations in lieu of lost commission to contribute towards site management costs.

The income received from plot holders offsets both the revenue and capital expenditure required to administer and maintain allotment sites.

If such an abatement was approved, then the Council should consider other income streams, such as Events, where they may wish to review.

Malcolm Wilkinson

30 January 2024