

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Environment Committee

21 September 2023

Decision Report 2

Allotment Rent Period

Recommendation

It is Recommended that the Committee RESOLVE to:

- 1. Change the Yearly Allotment Rent Period to the 1 October to 30 September with effect from 1 October 2024.**
- 2. Officers write to Allotment holders immediately giving 12 months' notice of the change.**
- 3. Offer a discount should the payment for the year commencing October 2024, be paid at the time of the previous period is due.**

Ward

All

Risk Management

Compliance with Allotment Tenancy conditions. The discount proposal could reduce Council income by some £400.

Objective

To further promote the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the town and its community. Any decision by a plot holder to relinquish their tenancy at the end of the payment period will allow Officers to allocate the plot to a new tenant, who then has more time to prepare for the next growing season.

Report

The rental period for an allotment commences on the 1 April and Officers issue the invoices towards the end of March. Each year we always have a number of tenants that decide they will not renew their tenancy.

Unfortunately, some do not inform us of this until we are well through the reminder process, as we again found this year.

By this time, Officers are meeting potential tenants at the start of June, which is not ideal, in terms of taking on a new allotment. More than often, substantial work will need to be undertaken to tidy up the plot, prior to any planting of seeds etc. and when earlier crops such as potato planting has already passed. On occasions this has also resulted in a discounted first year's rent for the new tenant, or the Council paying for the plot to be tidied.

This has happened in previous years and to give a new allotment holder a better opportunity, then an earlier allocation would be beneficial. This could be helped by the rental period starting in the October, when if a tenant decided not to continue, then their successor would have time over the autumn/winter months to have their plot ready prior to the start of the growing season, as advantages could be taken of turning over weeds/grasses for the weather to help with.

The financial impact on allotment holders during 2024/25 would be that they would pay 6 months rent in April and then 12 months rent in October. It may be worth considering offering a discount, on the yearly payment of 10%, if tenants wished to pay both at the same time. Although difficult to estimate, if 10% of the plot holders took advantage of this discount, then this would reduce the rents received by £400.

Should this recommendation be agreed then Officers will write to existing tenants informing them of the change with effect from 1 October 2024.

M Wilkinson
Deputy Town Clerk

10 July 2023