

RYE TOWN COUNCIL

RYE ALLOTMENTS FORUM

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Status

The Rye Allotments Forum is a working group of Rye Town Council, with no delegated authority.

Relevant property

The South Undercliff Allotments and the Love Lane Allotments (including any area occupied by the Rye Community Garden).

Both allotment sites are 'statutory'.

Purpose

The purpose of the Forum is to:

- Oversee – and keep under review - the general management and maintenance of the allotment sites.
- Consider, in a sincere and open manner, any relevant matters relating to the sites.
- Have regard to the needs of the freeholder (Rye Town Council), the allotment associations and their members, Rye Community Garden and its members, those neighbouring the sites – and the general public.
- To consider any complaints that the allotment association, or the Community Garden, have been unable to resolve – and to refer any complaints the Forum is unable to resolve to the Town Council.
- Identify expenditure requirements - particularly in respect of the maintenance of, and improvements to, the sites.
- *(By 30 November)* Recommend, to full Council, budget provisions for the financial year following.
- *(By 30 November)* To review – and recommend, to full Council – the annual allotment rents for the year following.

Membership

The Forum shall consist of up to five Members of the Council and:

Up to two representatives nominated by the Rye Allotments Association.

Up to two representatives nominated by the South Undercliff Allotments Group.

One representative nominated by the Rye Community Garden (substitute permitted at any time).

In the event that the allotment associations merge, the successor body shall ensure that its (four) nominated representatives are drawn from plot holders at both sites.

No Council Member shall represent the Council on the Forum if:

They – or their spouse/partner – has a plot tenancy agreement/licence at either site.

They – or their spouse/partner - works a plot, without being a named plot holder.

They – or their spouse/partner – is a member, or committee member - of the allotment association/s.

They – or their spouse/partner – is a member/trustee/officer/volunteer of the Rye Community Garden.

All Members of the Forum are expected to respect the need for confidentiality or discretion, as and when the need arises.

Meetings

Every year, following the Town Council's Committee Formation meeting (usually held in May), at its first meeting the Forum shall agree a Chair and Vice-Chair.

If neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair is present at a meeting, those present shall agree who should chair the meeting.

The Forum shall normally meet at least four times a year.

Meetings shall be attended by either the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk (or both) and other relevant members of staff as and when required.

Notes of meetings shall be taken by the Deputy Clerk (or Clerk in the absence of the Deputy).

Meetings will normally be held at the Town Hall, commencing 6.30pm.

Meetings shall not be open to the public (including Members of the Town Council who are not Forum members) unless all Members of the Forum have agreed to any attendance requests – or have agreed to invite individuals/organisations to a meeting for a specific reason.

Decision making

There shall be no formal voting. In the interest of re-building trust between all parties - and promoting a spirit of common endeavour – Forum members shall strive to reach agreement on the basis of consensus.

In the event that agreement cannot be reached on a matter that must be determined, that matter shall be referred to the full Council.

Finance

Having considered the Forum's budget recommendations, every year, as part of its budget setting process, the Town Council shall agree a revenue budget to cover the management and maintenance of the allotments sites.

Where applicable, this budget shall include a provision to pay a management fee to the allotment association/s.

Unless stipulated otherwise by the Council, the Clerk/Deputy Clerk only shall have delegated authority to commit any expenditure identified/recommended by the Forum.

With the exception of expenditure required urgently - for example, on health or safety grounds (up to £1,000 – in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations), any recommended expenditure which would exceed the revenue budget must be approved by the full Council.

Devolved Management

Within 3 months of its formation, the Forum shall recommend, to full Council, the level of delegated management authority to the allotments association/s – including the annual management fee/s.

After any management agreements have been in place for 12 months, the Forum shall recommend, to full Council, whether they should be renewed, amended, or terminated and replaced with some other form of 'local' management.

Rye Community Garden

The Forum shall recommend, to full Council, the terms of the Community Garden's annual licence to occupy land at the Love Lane site.

Review

These terms of reference shall be reviewed at least annually.

Any alterations proposed to these terms must be agreed by the full Council.