

## To receive a report relating to Churchtown Allotment beehives and consider any actions and associated expenditure

### **Introduction**

There are currently three allotment holders at the Churchtown Farm Allotment site who keep beehives. The hives are not on allotment plots but an area of land between the plots and the boundary wall. Permission was given for bees to be kept on site at the Civic Amenities Committee held on 13 April 2011:

*Minute 7/11/12 (C)*

*Councillor Austin reported that a request had been received to keep bees on the site.*

*It was **RESOLVED** that this would be acceptable and that the Town Clerk would send a letter of agreement.*

Planning consent was given in 2018 for dwellings to be built in the area adjacent to the allotments. Building work has now commenced.

### **Context**

A complaint was received on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 by the owner of one of the building plots adjacent to the allotment. The complainant stated they have been in contact with the beehive owners over the past year to try and resolve the issue of the bees but the steps taken by the bee keepers have not worked. They state the bees are aggressive and family members have been stung. They requested the bees are relocated from the allotments as it is no longer suitable for them to be housed on a site near residential areas.

We are aware of two tenants keeping bees at the allotment, but it has come to light that there is now a third tenant keeping bees on site. The bees are kept in an area of land to the side of the allotments.

Service Delivery do not maintain the area of land due to the number of beehives located, health and safety, and insufficient PPE for staff whilst undertaking the work.

It has come to our attention that for some time now a beekeeper cuts the grass on Saltash TC land. This is an area of concern because the Town Council do not have a copy of their Public Liability, there is no Risk Assessment or, written agreement in place that they are maintaining the land effectively as a contractor for the Town Council. They are not covered under the Town Council insurance.

There is also concern the Town Council tree surveys could potentially not be carried out correctly due to lack of safe access to the tree area. We would hope that not to be the case but it is still of concern.

The hedge row is not maintained as well as it should be by Town Council, due to the safety of staff. We can't be for certain that the bees don't affect other allotment holders.

Each of the three bee keepers were contacted for their point of view and to ask about relocation of the hives.

Two stated that there was a Cornish hedge and wall in place which acted as a barrier to the bees flying into the residential area, this was removed by the house plot owner. This wall belonged to Saltash Town Council but has since been replaced by the house plot owner. To mitigate this the bee keepers also erected Heras fencing and shrubs to encourage the bees not to fly into this area, however, it is claimed this hasn't worked.

One of the bee keepers recognised that the vibrations and disruption caused by the building works will cause the bees to be aggressive and swarm. It is that time of year when Bees are beginning to become active and will be more active over the summer months. In addition, it was stated that there are too many hives currently on site, two hives are being relocated in April to a private location in the town.

Two of the beekeepers have struggled to find new locations for their hives, neighbours have objected to them being kept at their residential homes or on residential areas in Saltash. One beekeeper uses another piece of land and could relocate his hives there if necessary.

The British Beekeepers Association recommends that consideration is given to immediate neighbours when having bee hives. It states that a landowner can exercise their right under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 79 to reasonable enjoyment of his/her property.

*The Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 79 states that the following matters constitute "statutory nuisances" for the purposes of this part, that is to say –*

*Any animal kept in such a place or manner as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.*

## **Recommendation**

In light of the landscape area around Churchtown Farm Allotments changing from rural to more residential, health and safety of staff and other users, lack of important documents, it is recommended that the beekeepers are asked to remove all beehives from Churchtown Allotment with immediate effect.

Map and pictures as follows:





**END OF REPORT**