

MINUTES Of an Allotment Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 12th August 2013 at First Floor Crown Chambers, Melksham at 8.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Richard Wood (Chair); Cllrs. Rolf Brindle; Pat Nicol and Steve Petty

Apologies: Cllr. John Glover and Adam Nardell

- 188/13 **Declarations of Interest:** None received
- 189/13 **Allotments – General Report:** All allotments were now let. There was no Waiting List at present.
- 190/13 **Minutes of the last Allotment Committee Meeting 10th June:** These Minutes were noted.
- 191/13 Arising from Min.58/13 **Lettings to town residents:** The Clerk reported that she had asked the Town Council if they let allotment plots to Melksham Without residents and at present they had six “historical” tenants from Melksham Without.
- 192/13 Arising from Min. 59/13 **Soil Conditioner Compost:** It was reported that all 60 bags of compost awarded by Hills had now been delivered by the Caretaker to allotment tenants; 1 bag per plot.
- 193/13 Arising from Min. Min. 60/13 **Communal Storage Area:** So far there had been just six responses. All were in favour of being part of a local Berryfield Allotment Group. Additional comments were as follows:
- (i) When selecting an area for a stall in the car park, please avoid using the area in front of the plot for the disabled tenant as he had to be able to park next to his plot.
 - (ii) A plant and seed swop was an excellent idea. A best kept allotment competition would help to stimulate local interest – Teresa commented that tenants could already enter such a competition via the Melksham in Bloom Competition
 - (iii) The one big problem was that, as both sites used the car park, this could end up not having enough parking with tenants having to use the road.
 - (iv) The Allotment Gate was being left opened at night by Berryfield Tenants who had no reason to close the gate and this was leading to theft of machinery – Mary reported that one tenant had had a mower stolen and lost some redcurrants.
 - (v) As a new allotment owner I would find this useful to share knowledge and exchange excess plants, seedlings and produce. A contact network would be good for reporting problems and asking for help.
- It was felt the response was disappointing and there was discussion as to what should be done. The Chair, offered, in view of the postage costs to send another letter, to hand-deliver a letter to seek further responses and ask tenants what they felt would be a good way forward.

Recommended: 1. The Council send a second letter to tenants, asking for their views.
2. The Council reply to the person who had requested the Group to let her know the response so far was a little disappointing.

194/13 **Rules re livestock – response from tenant:** The Allotment Committee noted a complaint from a tenant in response to a letter from the Clerk requiring that he follow the rules regarding no cockerels and the correct amount of chickens or vacate his plot. The Clerk reported that there had been an issue with the tenant trying to stop another tenant from bringing a vehicle on the track to deliver a shed. The tenant had also sought to prevent the Caretaker from cutting the track and access to the field owned by the Council. It was noted that the tenant recently registered an access right over the track. The Council had held access rights to the allotments and their land for many years. It was also noted that the tenant had now removed cockerels and reduced the number of chickens in compliance with the Council's request.

Recommended: The Council reply to thank the tenant for reducing the amount of livestock in line with Allotment Rules and to explain the Council had access rights to the end of the track, to reach their land. Tenants too should not be obstructed on the rare occasions they had to use a vehicle on the track to deliver a large item.

195/13 **Request for sign – no children without adults:** A local Community Police Officer had requested a sign in view of reports of children causing problems and vandalism at the allotments. Following discussion it was agreed not to erect a sign.

196/13 **Request for another trough at Briansfield Allotments:** Letter received from a Briansfield tenant to request a second trough on the opposite side of the allotments, so that tenants with plots there did not have so far to walk. The tenant reported that others would be willing to dig the trench to cut the costs of installation. It was noted that another water supply may be required.

There was discussion re the use of hosepipes at Berryfield which was putting up the cost of water rates. For Briansfield, the cost for 6 months' rates was £57.09 whereas at Berryfield the cost for six months' rates was £132.81. It was felt that if higher consumption continued at Berryfield, then rents may need to be increased there. For the present it was agreed to warn tenants in a letter of Council concerns re higher water consumption at Berryfield.

Recommended: 1. The Council reply to the tenant to indicate support in principle for another trough, subject to this being not too costly. 2. The Council find out the cost to install a 2nd trough.

197/13 **Community Orchard – report:** The Finance Officer reported that at least 5 apple trees had been ordered for the community orchard to be planted at Briansfield, and these would be delivered in the Autumn.

Meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

Chairman, 9th September 2013