

MINUTES of the Allotment Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 30th March 2015 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 8.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Richard Wood (Chair), Rolf Brindle, Paul Carter, Pat Nicol, Steve Petty.

Apologies: Cllrs. John Glover (Vice Chair).

Housekeeping: The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

458/14 **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest.

459/14 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present.

460/14 **Minutes of the last Allotment Meeting, 12th May 2014:** The Council noted the minutes from the last allotment meeting.

461/14 **Issues Raised from report prepared by Officer following SLCC Training:** The Assistant Parish Officer had attended SLCC Allotment Training on 12th March, 2015. The trainer was Karen Kenny, President of the National Allotment Society, who had discussed issues of best practice with regard to the running of allotments and tenancy agreements. The Council discussed the points raised from the training.

Recommended:

- 1. The Council to investigate registering the allotments as local green space and a community asset.*
- 2. The Council to investigate whether land that was farmed can be registered as an asset.*
- 3. Add the following conditions to the tenancy agreement: a) "The Council is not responsible for loss by accident, fire, theft or damage from the allotment"; b) "All Fires must be attended at all times and be fully extinguished before leaving the site"; c) "Any sightings of rats must be reported to the Council for professional removal, tenants MUST NOT put down any rat poison anywhere on the allotments"; d) "Any new non-resident tenant may only take out a one year tenancy, that will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the allotment waiting list"; e) The amended tenancy agreement to be sent out with rent renewal letters.*
- 4. Health & Safety poster, allotment plot layout and tenancy rules & agreement to be on display at all times. Parish Officers to investigate a temporary solution, with funding for a display board in the 2016 budget to be considered.*

462/14 **Clarification of Livestock Issues Raised from report prepared by Officer following SLCC Training:** The Council noted that the information from the SLCC training clarified a tenant's query with regard to the keeping of cockerels. As per the Allotment Act 1950 cockerels are not permitted. The law states "hens" and as such these are female birds and therefore cockerels as male birds are not permitted. "Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in any lease or tenancy or in any covenant, contract or undertaking relating to the use to be made of any land, it shall be lawful for the occupier of any land to keep, otherwise than by way of trade or business, hens or rabbits in any place on the land and to erect or place and maintain such buildings or

*structures on the land as are reasonably necessary for that purpose: Provided that nothing in this subsection shall authorise any hens or rabbits to be kept in such a place or in such a manner as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance or affect the operation of any enactment” (Allotment Act, 1950). The Parish Council tenancy agreement uses the word “hens”. The Council noted that the National Allotment Society permitted the keeping of bees on allotments, however any allotment holder wanting to keep a hive MUST be a member of the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA), and have their own insurance. Additionally the hive needs to be fenced with a fence high enough to ensure that the bees’ flight path is above head height. **Recommended:** 1. The Council write to the tenant that queried the Parish Council’s rules with regard to the keeping of cockerels to inform them that they are not permitted. 2. Should a tenant formally request to keep bees that the Council consider that request as it arises.*

463/14 **Water Trough Installation:** The Assistant Parish Officer reported that she had received e-mail correspondence from the contractor stating that they were waiting for the better weather before installing new water troughs as their equipment would churn up the access paths if the weather and ground conditions were too wet.

464/14 **RHS “Its your Neighbourhood” competition 2015:** The Council noted that both Berryfield and Briansfield Allotments had been entered into the RHS “Its your Neighbourhood” competition. Judging will take place between Wednesday 1st July 2015 and Friday 31st July 2015.

Meeting closed at 9.19pm

Chairman, 27th April, 2015