

**MINUTES of the Allotment Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 8.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllrs. John Glover (Vice Chair), Rolf Brindle and Paul Carter.

**Apologies:** Cllrs. Richard Wood (Chair), Pat Nicol and Steve Petty.

212/15 **Appointment of Chair of Allotment Committee:** The Clerk invited nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Allotment Committee for 2015/16. **Resolved:** *The Committee resolved that Cllr. Carter be Chair and Cllr. Brindle be Vice Chair of the Allotment Committee for 2015/16.*

**Housekeeping:** Cllr. Carter welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

213/15 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Glover declared an interest as an allotment tenant.

214/15 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present, however, Cllr Glover asked to speak as an allotment tenant rather than a councillor. He requested that the Council write to the tenant of the plot adjacent to his own with regard to keeping his plot free from weeds as per rule 5a of the Tenancy Agreement. It was noted that this was an ongoing problem. **Recommended:** *The Council write to the Tenant asking for the weeds to be immediately removed as this request has been previously made.*

215/15 **Minutes of the last Allotment Meeting, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015:** The Council noted the minutes from the last allotment meeting.

216/15 **Amendments to the Tenancy Agreement:**

a) **Amendments to the Tenancy Agreement from Min.461/13)3:**

**Recommended:** The Council adopt the new wording to the Tenancy Agreement.

b) **Removal of Two Signature Witness Rule on the Tenancy**

**Agreement:** The Officers reported that the rule that a tenancy agreement needed two witness signatures was problematic and considered unnecessary as it delayed the process of re-letting or the signing of amended agreements. Most of the Tenancy Agreements were signed in front of the Officers, and if not the Witness signatures held little value as this did not take place in front of the Officers. **Recommended:** *The requirement for two witness signatures to be removed from the Tenancy Agreement.*

217/15 **Rent Increase for Allotment Year 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017:** The Committee noted that the rent for this coming year, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016, remained the same as last year at £20 for 5 perches. The Clerk reported that in the 2015/16 Budget, received income from the allotments for this year was £1,500 and expenditure was £1,655. Cllr. Glover stated that the allotments should break even and not be subsidised. It was

considered that a contingency should be included to be able to provide resources such as noticeboards as recommended by the RHS after recent visits. **Recommended:** 1. The Council increase the allotment rents for the year 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to £25 for 5 perches for residents. 2. Non-residents would continue to pay double the rent to residents. 3. The Council to write to Tenants when requesting rent for this allotment year to inform them that the rent will increase for the next allotment year, reminding them that the rent has not increased for this coming year and that the rental charges will be reviewed on an annual basis.

- 218/15 **Allotment Waiting List:** The Committee noted the current waiting list.
- 219/15 **Feedback from RHS Visits:** The Officers reported that comments from both the RHS judges from the “Its your Neighbourhood” competition and RHS Committee Members from the visit on the 24<sup>th</sup> June, were that there should be noticeboards not only for the Council to inform the allotment holders, but in order that they can inform each other about situations such as pest infestation of crops. The Officers had tried a short term solution by laminating statutory notices to attach to the Allotment gates, but these were unsightly and often removed. The Committee noted that Parish Noticeboards were costly and too large for the requirements of the allotments. **Recommended:** 1. To ask the Shed Project if they would consider making two small notice boards on legs, one for each Allotment Garden. 2. To seek quotes for materials to provide to the Shed Project should they be able to make them.
- 220/15 **Tenant Request for assistance in the removal of Moles from plots:** The Committee noted that a request had been received from a tenant requesting the Parish Council to assist in the removal of moles from their plot. The Tenant had made enquiries and found that Wiltshire Council would put down two traps and make two visits for a cost of £95. **Recommended:** The Council write to the Tenant expressing their sympathy for any damage done to her plot by the moles, but stating that moles were not vermin, and the Council could not justify the cost and have to consider if this request was made by all of the 72 plot holders. The Council however have no objection to the Tenant instructing Wiltshire Council to set traps at the Tenant’s cost.

*Agenda Item 12 was held in Committee in line with Standing Orders.*

- 221/15C **Access Track Update:** The Clerk updated the Committee on the situation with regard to the access track. **Recommended:** The Allotment Warden continues to take down the fence every six month and to take photos and to minute this to ensure that right of access is maintained.
- 222/15 **Fly Tipping:** Cllr Carter reported that six months ago he reported fly tipping on the public footpath behind the allotments and queried the outcome of this. The Clerk said that an enforcement officer had attended, but did not know if all the rubbish had been removed. Cllr Carter offered to investigate this.
- 223/15 **It’s Your Neighbourhood Awards – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015:** The Clerk reported that following the Parish Council’s entry of the Allotments to the RHS

It's Your Neighbourhood" Competition that the Assistant Parish Officer was going to attend the awards ceremony in Dartmouth. There was a charge to attend this ceremony and the Clerk asked the Committee if they would consider paying this charge. **Recommended:** *The Council pay the charge for the Assistant Parish Officer to attend the ceremony to represent the Parish Council and also to give a contribution towards the petrol costs.*

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Chairman, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2015