

**Minutes of a meeting of the Debenham Parish Council Allotment Committee held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 7:30 at Dove Cottage, Debenham.**

**Present:** Cllr S Phipps (Chairman of the Committee) Cllr R Blackwell (Chairman of the Parish Council), Cllr F Winrow-Giffin, , Cllr G Helm, Mrs J Baldwin, Ms J McIntyre, Mrs D Bedwell (Clerk) and three members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence:** No apologies had been received.
2. **Declarations of interest:** Mrs J Baldwin and Ms J McIntyre declared a pecuniary interest on items 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6: Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest on item 5.2
3. **To approve minutes of meeting held 03.07.2013: It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting held.**
4. **Meeting open to the public for ten minutes:** A number of comments were made by the members of the public with regards to the new Committee and their approach to tenants who did not appear to be following some of the current policies. These were addressed by the Chair and Clerk.
5. **Allotment matters:**
  - 5.1 Allotment site visit carried out on Wednesday June 26<sup>th</sup> 2013: update and to note response to further correspondence received. A number of communications had been received by the Clerk in response to the letters sent to tenants following the site visit of June 26<sup>th</sup>. The Clerk had circulated a summary of the responses to be issued. **It was resolved to issue all the responses to tenants** and a number of additional items were raised.

**It was also decided that all plots would be re-measured and tenants would, in future, be charged a rent according to the actual size of their plots.**

Plot 7A and 8A- It was discussed whether the tenant should be allowed to keep the status-quo following the receipt of correspondence to the effect that the Parish Council of the time had appeared to give permission for the paths between the two plots to be cultivated, However, as one of the Committee's objectives was to ensure that all plots followed the same policy and adhered to the same regulations, **it was resolved that as this was a long standing historic agreement, the tenant should be given twelve months' notice to re-instate the paths.**

It was reported that half of plot 10C was very weedy and there had been no response to the previous letter sent. The Clerk was asked to write to the tenant (following the next site visit) and suggest that the tenant could consider having only half a plot, which would be more manageable.

**It was also agreed to carry out the next site visit on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2013.**

- 5.2** Maintenance of paths & hedges: To receive update and consider any further works: *Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest.* It was reported that most paths had been cut down and maintained but there was still a problem with the path adjacent to plot A1, as it had been encroached by the actual plot. As the Parish Council was responsible for the maintenance of the southern path, **it was suggested that a recommendation should be made to the Parish Council to approve this expenditure.**
- 5.3** To receive and note accounts information re receipts and payments for the allotments for 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 and make any recommendations (including to consider displaying accounts information on allotment notice board). The accounts had been circulated to all members and it was noted that, for the past two financial years, the allotments had made a loss of £356 and £444 respectively. **It was resolved to display the detailed accounts information on the allotment notice board.**
- 5.4** To consider annual rent increase and prepare recommendation for approval by full Council. **It was suggested that a recommendation should be made to full Council to calculate future price increases on an acreage pro-rata basis from 2015. It was also suggested that a ten per cent price increase was recommended to full Council for 2014/2015.** It was noted that allotment rents in Debenham remained reasonable and below the national average.
- 5.5** To consider and review Allotment Tenancy Agreement: Deferred to next meeting.
- 5.6** To consider and review Allotment Policy and Procedures: Deferred to next meeting.
- 5.7** To consider the hiring of a large waste skip to be used in conjunction with the primary school metal recycling initiative (metal skip to be placed at allotment on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2013). It was reported that a metal recycling skip would be at the Primary School on October 2013 and that this facility may be available at the allotments in the following week. **It was resolved not to hire a waste skip at this point.**
- 5.8** Wasps and bees nests: update: It was reported that a number of wasps nests had recently been exterminated.
- 5.9** To consider final allotment map and numbering of plots: Deferred. Cllr S Phipps would be contacting Mr Steve Thurlow, a local sign maker, in order to request a quote for adequate signage.
- 5.10** Matters to report from Dalg: A report had been circulated to all members. There had been some negative response to the recently sent letters asking a number of plot holders to bring their plots to an acceptable standard. A number of personal accusations had been made and directed at members of Dalg and the Allotment Committee and derogatory remarks had been made about the personal conduct and perceived lack of

knowledge by some members. Some of these remarks had been addressed by the Chair and Clerk during the first public session of the meeting. It had also been made extremely clear that personal accusations against members would not be tolerated by the Committee.

It was suggested that an opt-out of insurance cover should be added to tenancy agreements. The current annual cost for the public liability and contents insurance taken by Dalg was £163 and it would only cost tenants £5 a year to be added to the policy.

6. **Agricultural Holding**: To consider existing agreement, to receive proposals for possible use of land and prepare recommendations to full Council. A number of recommendations for future use of the land had been circulated to all members. These included: A pig club, a bee club, areas for the keeping of hens or other fowl and further allotment plots.

**A recommendation would be made to the Council to offer the portion of land over the lake to Mr M Durie on an annual renewal basis and to incorporate the field next to the current allotments as further allotment land or to be used for a variety of clubs as required, ie chicken club, pig club, bee club.**

**Review of rent increase to be considered by full Council.**

7. **Matters to report for future consideration or addition to future agenda**: It was suggested that a standard letter for notices should be produced for future use and for displaying on the allotment noticeboard.
8. **Meeting open to the public for 10 minutes**: No public present.
9. **Date of next meeting**: 14 September 2013 at 12.00 at Dove Cottage (upstairs room)

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 10.30pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_