



SHIPSTON ON STOUR TOWN COUNCIL

NOTES OF ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ANNUAL MEETING

Monday 22nd April 2024 at 1830hrs at
The Townsend Hall, Shipston on Stour

Present:

Shipston Town Council:

Councillor Tony Booth, Councillor Hilary Kelly
Emily Booth and Debbie Hardiman (Admin assistants)

Allotment Reps:

Maurice Trapp and Anne Wagenhauser (New Street)

Allotment Holders:

Approx 27

Apologies:

Stephen Lockwood – Shoulderway Rep

Welcome and Introduction:

Councillor Tony Booth welcomed everyone to the annual meeting and introduced himself as Town Councillor and chair of the General Purposes Working Group. Councillor Hilary Kelly introduced herself as Town Councillor and co-chair of the Environmental Working Group. Emily Booth introduced herself as Admin Assistant to the Town Clerk and in charge of admin for the Allotments. Debbie Hardiman introduced herself as Admin assistant to the Town Clerk.

Minutes of previous meeting:

Councillor Booth discussed the minutes of the previous meeting.

Discussion of Reps Meeting:

Held at New Clark House on Tuesday 27th February 2024 at New Clark House. Comments were made with regards to decisions made by the Town Council over bonfires, communal composting and dogs being permitted. Cllr Booth reiterated that the Council have voted on these subjects and the decision has been made not to allow these items. Although may be a possibility of a trial for incinerator bins if Council agree. This has since been taken to Council and Cllr Booth informed that it was not agreed.

Power point presentation:

- The waiting list for the Allotment has now gone down from 28 last year to 17 this year.
- Moreton Show entries for 2023 no prize. 2022 – New Street won 3rd Prize.
- Fees this year are to remain the same as last year for both sites.
- Projected annual income for 2024-2025 - £2315
- The water trough leak at the Shoulderway Site has now been sorted.

- Fencing at the New Street Site has been installed.
- Allotment agreements are to be updated and sent out via email or by post to those who don't use email. Requested that Allotment holders get in contact if they want their copies by post rather than email.
- Received various reports on vandalism, reported that we are looking into the possibility of having some deterrents put into place. Advised allotment holders to ensure valuables are locked away or taken home.
- Wooden stakes have been delivered and are in the process of being labelled with plot numbers and will be placed at both sites. To ease identification of plots.
- The Trial for incinerator bins was taken to Council, but was not agreed.
- Council decided that bonfires will not be permitted due to environmental issues and concerns over fires spreading. Asked Allotment Holders for any alternative ideas.
- Commercial composting is not an option, this has been explored by Emily. Looked into a green bin subscription, this is also not an option for commercial waste.
- Pets remain banned from both sites

The floor was then opened to the Allotment Holders to bring up any issues or make any comments:

- Report of the old plot at the Shoulderway site, which used to be the communal compost site, is now in need of sorting as there have been rats on site here. Cllr Booth mentioned the possibility of getting Lawns2mow involved to help sort this area out.
- Reports of bonfires being held by the Scout hut team on Gibbons Field. It was discussed that these were not bonfires, but in fact cooking exercises, not burning of waste. Emily to have a word with the Scouting Group to ensure they are not burning waste.
- Allotment holder wanted to thank the Council for the fencing that has been erected around the New Street site and wanted to ensure that people are not climbing over this new fencing as they were before, to make sure the fencing stays in place.
- Allotment Holder from the New Street site stated they have put together a shelf for holders to place surplus produce on for others to help themselves to.
- A query was raised as to why receipts were not given out once payment has been made for their allotment plot. This was discussed at length and was decided that a receipt book will now be organised. Allotment holders were reassured that once their payment has been made it is logged on the system that is shared by both Emily and Debbie.
- Allotment Holder made another query as to why he was sent an invoice even though his payment had been made. He was reassured that all Allotment Holders were sent this invoice, regardless of if they had paid or not. The invoices were sent out later than expected due to a technical issue, which has now been sorted.
- Allotment Holder also reported that when they came to pay their Allotment fee with cash, he wanted change, this was discussed that the office do not keep petty cash on site, so perhaps correct change should be advised if paying by cash.
- As the discussion became quite heated, Cllr Booth advised that Office staff should be treated with respect and if not there could be repercussions. He noted that the office had received a phone call that again became quite heated and this will not be tolerated in future.
- Allotment Holder asked for the reasoning behind the communal composting ban, Cllr Hilary Kelly informed that they were not being used correctly and would find bits of rubbish, cans, plastic and even tyres in the heap. It was discussed that if there are 3 plus holders from each site, as well as the reps to manage and maintain the area, this could be a possibility going forward. It could be possible to involve Lawns2mow with this, to shred once or twice during the year. This would need to be presented to Full Council for a decision before going ahead.
- Reports on unattended plots were discussed, plot numbers were given and discussed. Emily will write to these particular holders, issuing them with a warning letter.
- Allotment Holder thanked Emily for the maps that she has produced for both sites and suggested putting these onto the Allotment Noticeboards.
- Allotment Holder asked why Dogs are not going to be permitted onto Allotment Sites. It was discussed at length by both Council Staff and Allotment Holders. Cllr Booth again informed the Allotment Holders that as a decision has been made by Council to not permit dogs onto the site, this will not be happening. Signs have been ordered and are due to be put up at both sites. Emily added that this issue would be very hard to police and that dogs have never been allowed on the sites.

- Allotment Holder asked if it is possible to have an Agenda sent out for future meetings and have the option to put questions and queries forward before the event. Also asked if minutes from meetings could be made available once written. It was discussed that going forward we can make a section on our website for Allotment meeting agendas and minutes. Issues can be raised at any time with the Allotment Reps or with the Office Staff, Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 1pm. Allotment Reps also added that they have a Facebook group to add any queries or discussions onto at any point and have a face-to-face reps meeting with Council Staff before the annual Town Meeting.
- Allotment Holder asked why finance details have not been added to the presentation. It was discussed that the Office have had a turnover of staff and were unaware that this needed to be put on, but will be done in the future. Emily informed Allotment Holders that she has finance details and discussed various expenditure. Water Charges, Fencing, Water leak, Allotment Society Memberships. Also advised that as Lawns2mow have the town contract it is not easy to identify exactly how much is spent on Allotment maintenance per year. Emily will schedule a meeting with Lawns2mow to discuss possibility of this in the future.
- The subject of Allotment Agreements was brought up by an Allotment Holder. They discussed that as they have not had an updated agreement in the 20plus years they have rented the plot they will continue to have bonfires as it states they can. They were advised that new agreements have been sent out over the years and that this was not advisable as they will be in breach of their agreement. Emily advised that new Agreements are being drawn up and will be sent out ASAP, these will need to be signed by all holders and returned to New Clark House, they will be chased up if not. Emily asked that anyone without access to emails or would prefer a paper copy to let her know as soon as possible so she can arrange these to be posted to them.

Meeting Closed at 1940hrs