

Minutes of Malford Allotmenteeers Meeting

Sunday 6th Dec 2015, Rising Sun

Present: Kevin Watson, Mary Davies, Justin King, Steve & Clara Hudson, Neil Chambers, Mike & Liz Wilkins, Lynne & Rob Patchett, Giles Wareham, Derek Townsend, Pam & Roger Carter

Apologies: Katie Pearce, Morag & Terry Johnson, Albert Pace, Mike Harlowe, Adrian Barrance, Jackie Chenier, Les & Gill Sells

Purpose of the meeting: an informal year end catch up, update about the shed situation, review house-keeping & the role of Chair of Malford Allotmenteeers.

Review of the year

- The Chair advised that although Christian Malford Parish Council (CM PC) support us, and are our landlords, we must be a self-sustaining group.
- The water situation was a success and any potential application for 106 monies for a water storage tank has been cancelled. The pump has been hibernated in Mike Wilkins' garage for the winter.
- There is a lot of interest in the allotments from walkers through the Meadow, who all seem to think it is an asset to the otherwise rather uninteresting Meadow.
- A green plastic chair has appeared next to where the pump would be. **Action:** Whoever put it there please remove it from the allotments.
- There was a general agreement that 2 more benches would be nice. **Action:** Committee to consider for purchase if funds permit.
- Rabbit-proof fencing (additional chicken wire against original fence) seems to work, but the gates were not done. **Action:** Chicken wire to be put on gates before the Spring.

Shed

- As Wiltshire Council (WC) still currently owns Malford Meadow, planning permission would be required to erect a shed (of any size or type of foundation). If CM PC owned the land, no planning permission would be required.
- A Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is underway to transfer ownership of the Meadow from WC to CM PC, but this has been in negotiation for over 18 months, and when it will be concluded is unknown. **Action:** Kevin to ask Ian Bell if he can give an update & estimation of when ownership might transfer to CM PC.
- It was agreed that we should press ahead with the planning permission route, which will involve 6 weeks consultation, and maybe some objections. We will need full scale drawings to do this. **Action:** Kevin to advise CM PC of this decision. **Action:** Mike Wilkins to do the drawings. **Action:** Kevin to send Mike what already exists in terms of drawings & plans to get started.
- A £2,000 budget has been requested from PC S106 funds for the shed, a base & solar lighting, but it will require self-assembly.

House-keeping

- Some plots are not looking their best & the tenancy agreement requires them to be kept smart, tidy & maintained at all times. This includes the adjacent grass areas. We all owe it to both our fellow Allotmenters and to villagers in general, to avoid any complaints.
- More specifically, we must all keep on top of weeds (it is particularly frustrating when they go to seed and spread to adjacent plots), cut the grass around our plot, and in the winter months, remove all unused props such as frames, canes, sticks, plastic bottles, tarpaulin, etc. **Action:** All to review their plot and take the necessary action in accordance with these requirements and standards.
- If people do not have sufficient time to commit to maintaining their plot as above, ask for help from fellow Allotmenters, or consider having a smaller plot size that you can adequately maintain. (*N.B. Steve & Clara would like some more plot area, and they also know someone who would like half a plot*). **Action:** Advise Kevin if you would prefer a smaller plot area.
- There is still a need for some signage – safety ones on water butts and a welcoming one on the gate to the allotments. **Action:** To be completed over the Winter.

Role of Chair

- Kevin Watson reiterated his intention to step down from his role as Chair of Malford Allotmenters, after 5 years, at the next AGM in April/May 2016. By then the shed should have been completed, so the role should not be too onerous – ensuring standards are maintaining, managing any issues and being the point of contact with CM PC. **Action:** All consider being Kevin's successor.

Finances

- The Treasurer reported a balance of £466 in the Malford Allotmenters bank account. This will soon be depleted by £100 for manure and £32 for drinks bought at the meeting, leaving a balance of £334.
- This will be further depleted by about £200 if 2 more benches are bought in the Spring, plus any additional requirements for the shed that may not be included in the 106 monies budget. **Action:** All to ensure Malford Allotmenters has a significant presence organising the 2016 fete, if there is one (initial meeting is on 12th Jan in Rising Sun at 8pm) to ensure we receive a share of the profits; also propose ideas for a fund-raising event.

AOB

- **Seed bank** – everyone to let Allotmenters know if they have surplus seeds (or plants) to share. Steve Hudson advised that by ordering from Marshall's, seeds are delivered when they are needed, despite only applying one P&P charge. Roger advised they use Dolby's.
- **Web site** – could with be on the village one (which is currently under renovation by CM PC), or have a separate one, if costs are small or non-existent, with a link to the CM village one. Photos could be uploaded. **Action:** Steve to look into it.
- **Social event** – the one that Lynne arranged last summer was very enjoyable, despite the less than warm weather, and another would be nice in the Spring. **Action:** Lynne to organise.

- **Weed membrane** – this has been acquired from the Recreation Ground (thanks to Mike & Liz Wilkins), and needs to be put around the well to stop gravel “getting blinded”.
Action: Working party to do this over the winter.
- **Back fence:** to enhance the visual aspects of this part of the land, plant things against it near your plot, like clematis, sun-flowers, etc. **Action:** All
- **Hedge:** this has a short back & side courtesy of Mike & Liz Wilkins a few weeks ago, which will be needed on an annual basis to both keep it at a suitable height and encourage it to bush out. Mike reported only 3 had died, but that a few needed staking up, which Mike & Liz kindly agreed they would do.
- **Vegetable Boxes:** in the recent Promises Auction the Allotmenters donated a box of produce (flowers, fruit & vegetables) for each of the months of June, July & August 2016. The winners were David & Jenny Pike. **Action:** Lynne to coordinate contributions from all plots for those months.