

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
ALLOTMENT SECRETARIES MEETING
14 FEBRUARY 2024

In Attendance

Bowbrook	Kieron Duff
Castlefields	Richard Steadman
Column	Martyn Aires
Greenfields	Lesley McAleavy
Heathgates	John Burrows & Eddie Edwards
Meole	Sharon Skelton & Kerry McKechnie
Monkmoor	Elaine Marpole

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Operations Manager) & Danny Powell (Operations Manager)

Introductions

Helen Ball welcomed everyone to the meeting. It had been a long time since the Town Council had organised face-to-face meetings with Allotment Holders; she was keen to resurrect those six-monthly meetings. Dates would be sent out to all Allotment Secretaries.

Stuart Farmer & Danny Powell introduced themselves as the two Operations Managers covering the original Head of Operations post following Gary Farmer's retirement. They had been contacted by some Allotment Secretaries already and they were happy to help where they could. If any site needed scalplings or bark chippings to contact them.

Those present asked whether the Town Council would be running the Allotment Competition. Enquiries would be sought with the Town Council's Bloom Committee.

Contact details

Stuart Farmer stuart.farmer@shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 07976 021000

Danny Powell danny.powell@shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 07976 190588

Love Plants

Tom Poutney & Max Ball from Love Plants attended the meeting to update Secretaries on activities and products directed to Allotment Gardeners. They were to host an Open Day for Allotment Holders at 2pm on 3 April 2024. Any Allotment Gardener attending any showing proof of being on one of the Town Council Allotment sites would receive a 10% Discount Card.

Monkmoor Update

Ronnie Howell (Treasurer) had recently passed away and arrangements were being made to cover finances. There were 16 half plots available, and rents were due on 1 February which were likely to increase vacancy numbers. Plots are inspected 3 times a year. There was a Waiting List so hopefully these wouldn't be vacant for long. The AGM is scheduled for March and Miles Kenny continues to be President. Kier undertook a community project and laid scalplings at the St Peters entrance.

Meole Update

There were 4 half plots on Stanley Lane, 1 half plot on Vicarage Road and Washford Road was full. Luigi Valducci had recently died; he had maintained a national Brugmansia collection on the Vicarage Road site; the Committee might require some help removing the debris from his plots. There continued to be a boundary issue at Washford Road with the housing developer; this had been referred to planning and Mike Pugh was dealing with matters.

Column Update

There were 13 vacant plots and 12 on the waiting list; they were currently not letting the plots until the weather had improved. Rental letters had gone out and were due 1st March. AGM was due in March where there was to be a discussion about keeping bees. Plots were inspected on an ad hoc basis; the Committee operated a 2 warning letters then eviction approach. The Committee has sought help in addressing the high hedge on the corner of Robertson Way/Cornelia Crescent.

Greenfields Update

Most of the Committee had retired due to ill health. The dynamics of the site had moved from predominantly retired to families. AGM was scheduled for May. There were 4 vacant plots and there was a waiting list of 20. The Committee requested Woodchip and some assistance in a rough sleeper sleeping in a shed.

Heathgates Update

There was likely to be 5 vacant plots by March. Most plot holders were compliant. The keeping of bees had now been banned as were bonfires; the Committee requested help in removing non-compostable waste. The Operations Managers offered help in removing metal, wood and recyclables as long as they were separated. The rest plot holders would have to dispose of. The Committee had written to Shropshire Council about the lack of hedge cutting reducing sight lines; it was reported that the Town Council undertook the hedge cutting but it was done on a contract to Shropshire Council; this couldn't be changed.

Bowbrook Update

The number and health of Committee members was declining, and the management of communal areas was becoming more difficult. Many new plot holders were only bothered about their

individual plot and not the wider site. There were 6 empty plots and 19 on the Waiting List. The Committee asked for another tap on site. The AGM was shortly at which there was a motion to ban dogs on site.

Castlefields Update

All 121 plots were full with 13 on the waiting list. The site had suffered from vandalism with 20 sheds broken in to. The Committee had secured £9k Lottery Grant to purchase a container and Ride-on Mower. They had hired a skip to remove any non-compostable waste. The Committee asked for help with reducing the height of the trees as Avondale; the Operations Managers would investigate ownership. The Committee thanked the Town Council for their support over the last 12 months' it had been excellent.

Next Meeting

Thursday 12th September 3pm