

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING
OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL ALLOTMENT HOLDERS
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, 2 ASHLEY ROAD, NEW MILTON
ON MONDAY 21 OCTOBER 2024

Chairman: Cllr G Blunden

Councillors: R Murrow, K Trehorn, P Moores

In attendance: Mark Jeffries – Estates and Facilities Manager
Sam Welch – Administration Officer
36 Allotment Holders

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Allotment Holders Meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Reid and Cllr D Hawkins.

The minutes of the meetings held on 23 October 2023 were agreed.

The Estates & Facilities Manager reported that deer are still causing problems at Upper Ashley and noted that temporary fencing had been installed. He mentioned that maintaining the boundary fence is the responsibility of the owners, and despite contacting them, there has yet to be any positive response. Consequently, further action may need to be taken by the council, and this issue is currently on the program of work. Additionally, he stated that the idea of communal composting is still being explored and will speak to site representatives to see if they can assist.

1. **SITE REPRESENTATIVES**

The Site Representatives for 2024/25 were agreed.

Becton Lane	redacted
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Middle Ashley	redacted
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Lower Ashley	redacted
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Lymington Road	redacted
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Upper Ashley	redacted
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[Post Meeting Note: redacted has stood down from her position, with redacted now becoming the Site Representative for Becton Lane.]

The nominated councillors are:

Becton Lane	Cllr Bob Murrow
Middle Ashley	Cllr David Hawkins
Lower Ashley	Cllr Bob Murrow
Lymington Road	Cllr David Rice-Mundy
Upper Ashley	Cllr David Hawkins

2. ALLOTMENT ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Officer reminded everyone to keep the gate locked when entering and exiting the site and any dogs brought onto site should be kept secure on a lead and under control.

The water will be shut off shortly for the winter and will be turned back on in the spring.

3. CURRENT WAITING LIST

The Administration Officer reported that recently several individuals had given up their plots or parts of their plots. This, combined with appropriate action taken against other plots where little to no work was being done, and the further division of plots, has resulted in 22 vacant plots, the majority of which are quarter plots.

The division of plots has helped address the waiting list backlog, which last year had 48 people.

Currently, there are 16 people on the waiting list, three of whom are only interested in a plot at Becton Lane, where none are available. Ten people have been contacted to arrange a viewing.

4. DEMENTIA COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

Cllr R Murrow provided an update on the Dementia Community Allotment situated at Becton Lane with a summary of activity during 2024 as follows:

- The Dementia allotment had been open to visitors since April and was now closed for Winter.
- There are 5 regular volunteers who attend. Cllr Murrow expressed his gratitude to the volunteers for their continued commitment and support.
- In the summer there were several visitors including residents from care homes and people living with dementia in the community.
- Two events were held: one was a flower arranging session, and the other featured music from the Coda Memory Band. Both events were well received.
- Grant funding received last year was used for the two events. This year's funding will go towards a new shed and a revised planting scheme in 2025.
- A team meeting will shortly be held with Dementia Volunteers to discuss plans for next year.
- If anyone would like to get involved, please let us know.

5. REPORTS FROM ALLOTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

The following issues were raised:

Lower Ashley

- Cemetery trees are preventing light from reaching plots.
- Oak trees along the side of site are encroaching.
- The site gate appears to be quite narrow, potentially making it difficult for authorised vehicles to enter the site when needed.
- The bottom wooden supports on the water taps have rotted.

The Chairman mentioned that we usually do not cut trees for light purposes and that the gate will be investigated.

[Post Meeting Note: The Estates & Facilities Manager added that the posts are scheduled to be replaced once the taps have been shut off.]

Lymington Road

- The outer west gate is balanced on bricks.
- The inner gate padlock on western side is stiff.

The Estates & Facilities Manager will investigate these issues.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman invited all allotment tenants to provide any feedback they may have. The following issues were raised at the respective sites:

Becton Lane

- The gate at Becton Lane needs another lift.
- Some of the new plot holders aren't maintaining their plots, resulting in weeds encroaching on adjacent plots.

The Estates & Facilities Manager stated that he will arrange for the gate to be readjusted again.

The Chairman mentioned that new tenants are given some flexibility before any action is taken.

Lymington Road

- The numbers on the locks are not being spun.
- Hedge cutting is currently done once a year; it was asked if this could be increased to twice a year, noting that locks become hard to see. Additionally, it was noted that internally, there are many overgrown hedgerows.

- There was a query on the location of the communal pathways, and that to get to some plots, tenants have to walk across other tenants' plots.

The Chairman stated that hedge cutting will only be done once a year and will not be done earlier, partly due to nesting birds. It will often be left until October because of the amount of growth.

The Estates & Facilities Manager noted that the internal hedges will be trimmed, but also mentioned that some borders are private.

Middle Ashley

- The Hedge is overgrown and requires cutting.
- Concern was raised about possible flooding of the communal path.

The Estates & Facilities Manager mentioned that this hedge is on the plan and will be cut shortly.

Upper Ashley

- Concern was raised that the unused plot 17C is being used to dump rubbish.
- The hedge at the far end requires cutting.
- A query was raised about whether the council is enforcing rules on shed sizes, noting that size restrictions are not specified in the Tenancy Agreement.

The Chairman said that plot 17C will continue to be monitored.

The Estates & Facilities Manager explained that the Sycamore tree is being inspected to determine if any work is required. He also mentioned that one problem the council is facing on the lane side is that, in some parts, sheds and compost bins block access for cutting. He assured that any accessible areas will be addressed.

The Chairman referred to the Tenancy Agreement and informed tenants that the council will be reviewing it. He reiterated that, as stated in the agreement, tenants must inform the council before erecting any structure.

Site Representatives

The topic of Site Representatives was brought up, with many tenants being unaware that the role existed.

The Chairman explained that Site Representatives serve as a point of contact for allotment holders, and questions specific to individual sites can be directed to them. He, along with the Estates & Facilities Manager, mentioned that the role of Site Representatives will be improved in the coming months.

7. NEXT ANNUAL MEETING – to be arranged.

8. GUEST SPEAKER

The Chairman introduced Rachel Foster, Head Gardener at Patricks Patch / Fairweather's of Beaulieu, who gave an interesting talk on Patricks Patch and the work they do there. She shared some growing tips and then gave people the opportunity to ask questions.

The Chairman thanked Rachel for a very interesting and informative presentation.

There being no further business to discuss, The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.44pm.

CHAIRMAN..... DATE.....

Distribution

Allotment Holders

Allotment Site Representatives

Town Councillors – for information

Estates & Facilities Manager