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Summer in full swing - but where is the rain?

At times like this we can give thanks for our supply of water through the kindness of our Town Council. Most allotments have no water supply and have to rely on butts. I hope everyone is well and you are remembering to pick the produce that you have so lovingly cared for.

Please note in your diary Tuesday 18th October at 7pm for our first real live AGM for three years. Newcomers note that we make these meetings people-centred. We don't do boring. It will be in the small hall of the Somer Centre and all are invited.

Goodbye to one of our number

I have had the unpleasant but necessary duty of asking one of our number to resign his plots. I am writing this email because I don't want any misconceptions to spread and also that our AGM on Tuesday 18th of October will not contain unnecessary noise.

I do not wish to go into the details of the eight points of difficulty but more recently it centred on the parking of a car for a long period in the upper car park and the secret dumping of rubbish on the area between the river and the boundary fence.

In a nutshell - natural justice would ask the question 'What would happen if everyone did it?' and there can only be one answer - chaos.

In both cases, the person was asked informally and written to, to move the car and remove the rubbish. In both cases he took no action and it was necessary to involve the council (a meeting had to be requested). Only as a last resort did we have to ask the Town Clerk to write to the tenant about these two misdemeanors - whereupon action was finally taken. This is unworkable as a precedent.

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resolve our problems locally. It is not the job of the Town Clerk to write to one of our allotmenters.

However in mitigation even with a perfect and well-functioning committee, it is difficult to see how this situation could have been avoided due to this exhibition of insensitivity.

There are written rules of our contact as tenants but also an unwritten rule that we respect and consider the effect of our actions upon other tenants. If this is shown to be consistently ignored then the person concerned disqualifies themselves from membership of this community.

The informal committee were consulted about the infractions, but I finally had to take it on myself to write a definitive 'charge sheet' (horrible legal term but that's what it was).

I realized, inter alia, that the person concerned would be far happier 'ruling his own roost' as he does not take kindly to suggestions or instructions from others and indeed shows no contrition for not doing so. I therefore suggested that he should seek his own plot of land.

He will be vacating by 30th September 2022.

The tenant was given the opportunity to reply to the ruling, and was even sent the email addresses of other tenants who he could complain to, but no response was forthcoming. He was also given the opportunity of escalating the matter at an extraordinary General Meeting but he declined this as well.

With the matter resolved we as an association are left with a somewhat tarnished reputation; it will require some effort and consistency to repair this. However if we take notice of any warning signs and are vigilant and consistent, such repair will be achieved over time.

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reluctance to join a committee. However now that it is over (in this form anyway) a well functioning committee is very good for the maintenance of democracy and representation. We have a handful of people at the moment who have kindly volunteered to correspond and give their views on contentious situations, of which there have been very few.

However we need a some more volunteers for a committee, so if you would like to be on a committee note that the main task is to check your emails at least once a day to see if there are outstanding questions and simply give your view.

I can only do my best with the information and feedback I get from others so the more people are involved, the more likely it is that we get a true and accurate reflection of the wishes of the average tenant.

Having said that, we are in good order and near 100% occupancy.

Brian Snellgrove
Chair and Secretary
25th July 2022



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