

Open Meeting Thursday, 14th April 2011

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Good evening everyone – thank you for attending the Open Meeting.

How many here this evening are attending an Open Meeting for the first time, or who are new allotment holders in the last 12 months?

I take this opportunity to introduce the Allotments Group members and officers and Chesham Town Councillors. I also extend a warm welcome to Mike Allenby, Secretary and Treasurer of the Chesham Horticultural Society.

The workload since the AGM last September 2010 has been quite hectic for the Allotments Group Committee, and I wish to thank them for their unstinting support for organizing and present the social events on and off the allotments, and also issues and projects that have taken up their voluntary time. Likewise I express sincere thanks to you, the allotment holders, for your commitment and support for the social events and coffee mornings we organise through the calendar year.

We truly have a dedicated community spirit on and off the allotments, for example Cheese and Wine evening at the Focal Point last July, the Open Day event last August, the Fish and Chip evening with quiz last November and of course the coffee mornings all through the summer.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the valued support of Bill Richards, Town Clerk, and his support staff. Bob Ayres, Parks and Premises Manager, and his ground staff, Councillor Alison Pirouet, Chair of the Recreation and Arts Committee, and also the Chesham town councillors seconded to the Allotments Group – Councillor Gill Walker and Councillor Francis Holly.

The Allotments Group also benefit from the very active and supporting community spirit with other horticultural groups in the town, the Chesham Horticultural Society and the Chesham in Bloom Committee. It is worthy of note that Allotments Group members Yvonne, Jim, Vince and myself are on the Chesham Horticultural Society Committee. Yvonne is Chair and Vince is Membership Secretary. Vince as Vice Chair and myself are also on the Chesham in Bloom Committee.

Town Council Inspections

The revised Tenancy Agreement has been in force since 1st October 2009 and the increase to four Town Council Inspections are now incorporated during a calendar year in April, June, August and late September/early October. The four recorded inspections through the first full calendar year of 2010 has proven beneficial in speeding up the follow up process of notifying Allotment Holders not adhering to the discipline of maintenance and cultivation of their plots under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement. Also noted is the beneficial effect of splitting full size vacated plots into two halves.

For example:

April 2007 – March 2008	15 new tenants
April 2008 – March 2009	19 new tenants
April 2009 – March 2010	19 new tenants
April 2010 – March 2011	35 new tenants

As of 12th April 2011 there are sixty names on the Cameron Road and 23 on the Asheridge Road Waiting Lists.

Britain in Bloom National Competition

Chesham is entering the 2011 National competition and the judging will be a date in July. In 2009 the judges were very complimentary at the appearance of the Asheridge Road and Cameron Road sites and also commented on the community spirit engendered by the developed site of the Focal Point. I am confident that allotment holders will do their best to consolidate this position.

Web Site and Allotments Induction Welcome Pack

Over the winter period I initiated two projects by sub committee overseen by various members of the Allotments Group. Project One was the setting up of a website to explain our aims, provide information and advertise our social events on and off the allotments. Further detail will be explained by Kate and Yvonne later on this evening.

The second project was the creation and implementation of the Induction/Welcome Pack to explain in detail the necessary disciplines of working an allotment to potential allotments holders on the Chesham Town Council Waiting List. I take this opportunity to thank Andrew Sinclair – a member of the Allotments Group who tirelessly volunteered his time and effort in putting this document together with the valued support from other Group members. Bill Richards, Town Clerk, and Bob Ayres, Parks and Premises Manager, have endorsed the Induction/Welcome Pack and copies will be sent out to the top twelve potential allotment holders at the top of the Chesham Town Council waiting list. This information brochure is also available at the Town Hall Offices and the Town Council web site. Copies are available this evening to new tenants.

Best Kept Allotment Competition

The judges on the Chesham Horticultural Society Committee, Mike Allenby, Brian Beningfield and Leslie Mountain volunteer their services to judge the allotments at Cameron Road and Asheridge Road sites twice a year in early June and late July. Currently the Vince Crompton donated cup is for Best New Tenant, the 10” salver is awarded to the Best Kept Allotment – full size plot – Cameron Road and 8” salver is awarded to the Best Kept Allotment – full size plot – Asheridge Road.

As vacated full size plots are now divided into two for new potential allotment holders, there are now more small plots than full size plots. To take this anomaly into account and to assist the Chesham Horticultural Society judges in adjudicating to Royal Horticultural rules, I have donated a 7” cup to be awarded for Best Kept Allotment Small Plot at either Cameron Road or

Asheridge Road. The Allotments Group has also agreed to a Roll of Honour Board, and previous Best Kept Allotment winners will have their names added going back to 2002. This will enable current allotment holders to remember two previous winners who sadly are no longer with us. The Allotments Group and Chesham Horticultural Society hope that the overall scope of the awards will have a renewed impetus amongst the allotment holders and encourage them to cultivate and maintain their plots to their full potential.

5 Focal Point Hut

I am pleased to announce that the Focal Point Hut is now finished and fully operational. The Allotments Group wish to thank the valiant effort and volunteered time of Larry Faulkner who finished off the guttering and fitment of two water butts and more importantly the fitment of two very secure slide bolt and padlocks to the door.

Focal Point Garden

We are indebted to the time, effort and expertise of Lorraine and Larry Faulkner who have tirelessly transformed the wild patch behind the new Hut into a manicured tiered garden with casual seating. There is still work to be done and I take this opportunity on your behalf to say thank you very much.

Focal Point – Grass Area

The lower area is being landscaped by Neil Page. This will tidy up the rough ground area which will be infilled with sub soil and boarded with sleepers.

I take this opportunity to remind the Meeting that the Focal Point is available to all allotment holders, especially at the weekly coffee morning. Allotment holders with their families and friends are invited to use the slabbed patio area, tables and chairs for picnics if there is not a suitable rest area on your allotment.

6 Treasurer Report

In the absence of Andrew Reynolds, Treasurer, I present to the Meeting a Statement of Account from July 2010 until March 2011.

Opening balance as at 1st July 2010 was £362.99 in Lloyds TSB Account with cash of £430.56 gave a credit balance of £793.55.

As at 31st March 2011 opening balance of £1071.82 in Lloyds TSB Account with cash of £36.26 gives a credit balance of £1,108.08.

8 Annual General Meeting Thursday 16th September 2011

Election of Officers, members and representatives. The Allotments group has consolidated its position as a proactive positive team and it is very important that the Group remains focused on behalf of the Allotment Holders to ensure continuity of the community spirit on and off the allotments. In the event that the position becomes vacant I take this opportunity to

invite keen and enthusiastic allotment holders to put themselves forward for election in due course, to be nominated at the Annual General Meeting in September.

9 Any Other Business

Chesham Town Council Annual Mayoral Awards will be presented by the Town Mayor at the Annual Town Meeting on 19th May at Chesham Town Hall. There are three Awards:

The People's Award

The Rafe Chiles Young Persons Award

The Business Award

The Awards are bestowed on a resident of Chesham who has made a contribution to the well being, advancement or welfare of Chesham and its people.

The Allotments Group has taken the opportunity to nominate Vince Crompton, the Vice Chair, for the People's Award. I am also reliably informed that the nominations from the Chesham Horticultural Society, Chesham in Bloom Committee, The Trinity Baptist Church (Fellowship Group) and also two Allotment Holders have put in their nominations in support of Vince. I am sure that we all wish Vince as being a successful candidate.

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