Meopham Parish Council

St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AA - **Tel:** 01474 813779
Email: enquiries@meopham-pc.gov.uk **Website:** www.meopham-pc.gov.uk

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

A Civility & Respect Pledge Council

Allotment News & Update

We would like to share a few updates on the allotment site, the work underway and some important reminders for all plot holders.

Getting to know our plot holders

We currently have contact details for 124 of our 160 plots, and of these, three have been confirmed as vacant or are in the process of being vacated.

Of the 36 plots for which we have no contact details, 10 appear to be in use, 18 appear abandoned and 8 need further investigation.

We are keen to establish the status of all plots so that allotments can be put to good use. For the 18 plots which appear abandoned, we will need to follow the formal process of issuing breach notices. As we have no contact details for these plot holders, we cannot assume that the plots are abandoned or that rent has not been paid.

Breach notices will therefore need to be placed on these plots. We appreciate that this may cause some concern, which is why we wanted to let everyone know in advance. This is simply a necessary step in establishing the position properly.

A reminder about your tenancy

As previously advised, 12 months' notice of termination has been served on all plot holders, meaning your existing tenancy agreement will end on 29 September 2027.

Until then, the current tenancy conditions remain in force. We have identified a number of instances where these conditions are not being met and would encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with their agreement. Where necessary, the Council will continue to issue breach notices.

Good news for polytunnel owners!

We are pleased to confirm that under the new tenancy agreement, polytunnels will be permitted all year round, provided they are securely anchored and maintained in a safe condition.

Although this is not permitted under the current agreement, the Council will not be enforcing this restriction in the meantime, so you are welcome to keep your polytunnel in place throughout the year, provided the other tenancy conditions are met.

Ponds

Existing ponds are permitted to remain, although no new ponds may be created. All ponds must meet the health and safety requirements set out in your tenancy agreement.

We have previously advised those plot holders with ponds of the requirements, so please ensure these are being met. Where necessary, breach notices will be issued.

Rent payments – please remember!

Please cancel any existing direct debits or standing orders that you have set up to pay rent to the Allotment Association.

Your next rent invoice will include the Council's bank details and payment instructions for future payments.

Site improvements

We have recently received a number of requests for maintenance and are pleased to confirm that the Council has agreed to purchase a replacement padlock, as the existing one is nearing the end of its useful life, and a bag of Type 1 aggregate to assist with roadway repairs.

We are particularly grateful to those plot holders who have offered to carry out the roadway repairs themselves – your help is very much appreciated!

As site management and maintenance now sit with the Council, the MDAA has acknowledged that this responsibility rests with us. However, the funds previously collected by the MDAA from plot holders have not been transferred to the Council, as we have no legal entitlement to them.

The MDAA is also no longer responsible for the purposes for which those funds were originally collected. Plot holders may therefore wish to review the MDAA constitution and consider what they would like to happen to the funds currently held by the Association, which, including this year's rent, are understood to exceed £20,000.

The MDAA is no longer recognised as a representative body acting on behalf of plot holders in dealings with the Council, but is now treated in the same way as other plot holders.

Thank you!

We would like to thank everyone who has contacted us to raise issues, offer assistance and help us establish which plots are genuinely vacant. It is encouraging to see people willing to help improve the site.

Plot holders are always welcome to attend Full Council meetings, and we will be happy to answer questions wherever we can.

We look forward to working with you to make the allotment site a well-maintained, productive and enjoyable place for everyone.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

The Council