

Dear Kim,

I wanted to report to you so you are up to date. I think I've made some progress and hope that this will make things easier for us all from now on.

Pat was kind enough to phone me on Wednesday morning to explain her reaction at the Advisory on Tuesday. She expressed fears about statutory status and losing plots to development. I reassured her that I was conscious of these concerns. I also reminded her that I had not set out to make an enemy of John Martin. She knows more than most how committed I've been and she maintained good relations I established when Annette Setterfield was president in the '90's.

The Advisory was much as I imagined it would be – the public face of an ongoing stitch-up and fundamentally undemocratic. I was pleased to get through most of the meeting without too much antagonism: John avoided eye-contact with me throughout. I was appalled by their response to my request for a review of the orchard allotment issue – they giggled at each other like naughty schoolboys - in a public meeting!

It was this expression of contempt and derision which stimulated me to contact John Mothersole, the Deputy Chief Executive of SCC, and request a meeting to discuss issues I'd first raised in September. He seemed quite keen to meet and arranged a time for Friday 11a.m.

Quite by chance, this week, the "Orchard City?" article, was printed in the Wildlife Trust quarterly magazine. This was very timely since this week's confirmation of the new permissive ruling on fruit and perennials on allotments. I think this happened because Mary Bagley could see the common sense arising from the destruction of the orchard allotment and has made a firm ruling. I hope that this article announces to the world in general that perennials are now permitted, but most existing allotmenters will still remember 20 years of restriction and removals unless they are formally informed of the changes.

John Mothersole was personable and honest. I first established my credibility and contribution over the years. He understood my credentials and said he thought I was "one of the good guys". He appreciated the Green Food Map and the Allotments songs CD. Also he'd had an allotment in Newcastle and understood the practical challenge.

I explained that I had detailed evidence based on one individual issue, but was also representing the wider allotment community and indeed the interests of the Council and its democratic processes.

He readily acknowledged and accepted the points I made which are summarised on the attached sheet. He acknowledged and admitted that he was aware of ongoing concerns about the administration of allotments. He confirmed that Mary's appointment was meant to produce a change of culture. He explained that this process may take a time and there may be slips back to old practices.

John asked me what I wanted. I explained that the evidence I've accumulated was very serious and that we need a signal that things will be different in future.

I suggested that Mary needs more support.

I explained that the community needs reassurance.

My recommendations were based on existing examples of good practice, like if local Fed groups have responsibility for lettings, the benefits of sharing and the function of community allotments in weaning people onto sites – everything we already do without official recognition.

I also mentioned positive ideas like a conference and forum to generate wider debate and engage more interested parties. I explained that I could be a catalyst and had many useful contacts who could contribute.

He liked these ideas and explained that he wanted the Council to be **progressive**.

He said that the council will apologise to me, look for constructive resolutions and commit to a positive future for allotments.