

# Scythes at dawn!

## Hippy haven torn apart as 'takeover' lands veteran in the dock

By Neil Sears

YOU'D never see Tom and Barbara Good getting up to such hair-raising shenanigans among the radishes on their allotment.

But now a Good Life-style hippy community has been torn apart by allegations of bullying and theft.

Since 1940, idealists at Monkton Wyld Court – a Grade II-listed Victorian rectory near Lyme Regis in Dorset – have been exploring 'co-operative living' and sustainable self-sufficiency, while hosting yoga retreats and even the odd orgy.

### 'Injustice is quite extraordinary'

They have lived off their 11 acres by rearing pigs, harvesting fruit and veg, and producing cheese from their micro-dairy. Long-serving resident Simon Fairlie, 73, even led the dozen 'intentional community' members in mowing the lawns with scythes.

But that all ended last year after newcomer Stephen Williams, 47, a petrol mower-loving handyman, applied for residency. Within a day, he had complained of being bullied by Mr Fairlie – and was backed by a new group of trustees running the charity that oversaw the commune.

Mr Fairlie was accused of stealing the communal car, with the row ending in court last month.

Mr Fairlie, a former editor of the Ecologist magazine, appeared before Weymouth magistrates to



At the sharp end: Cleared Simon Fairlie with his scythe

deny taking the 22-year-old Honda CR-V four-wheel-drive.

He was cleared – and blamed new trustees Laura Guest, Steven Slavin, and Richard and Juliet Johnstone, none of whom are residents. Mr Fairlie told the court: 'The community has been more or less abolished by the new trustees. Everything I'd built up over 13 years was being taken away from me. And not just me, seven people were ordered to leave.'

In return for their skills, each community member had been given free accommodation, food and a nominal wage. But then Mr Williams claimed he had been bullied, and an internal probe – hotly disputed – agreed. The court heard locks were put on the main building's doors for the first time and Mr Williams even brought in a petrol lawnmower.

Head gardener Jasmine Hills, a yoga teacher and hairdresser, was



New boss: Stephen Williams

evicted after rallying support for Mr Fairlie and his yurt-dwelling partner Gill Barron, 74. Ms Hills' partner, farm assistant Jon Hill, was last October accused of 'stealing' juice bottles; grounds-keeper Jared Hills, Jasmine's brother, was evicted, accused of trespass, and two office workers sacked. Then in November, police arrested Mr Fairlie for 'theft' for using the communal car despite being evicted. He was cleared after saying he had spent £1,500 on the £500 Honda's upkeep.

Mr Fairlie, Ms Hills, and Mr Hill have now relocated to create a new 'intentional community' near Exeter in Devon, taking the cows with them. Back at Monkton Wyld, Mr Williams is manager.

A spokesman for the trustees said: 'Following a professionally-led investigation into allegations against Mr Fairlie, upheld by an HR consultant, the trustees were obliged to remove Mr Fairlie's community privileges.'

Ms Barron, now evicted from her yurt, told the Mail the community had been 'struck by lightning in this hostile corporate takeover', adding: 'The injustice is quite extraordinary.'

## National Trust plans menu that's half vegan

By Meg Byrom

THE National Trust faced a fierce backlash last night after plans to make half of its food vegan were revealed.

Amid efforts to reach Net Zero, the charity – which has 280 cafes across Britain – will vote on making their menus 50 per cent plant-based at their next annual general meeting.

Trust bosses are reportedly backing the resolution, arguing that limiting meat and dairy-based items on menus would reduce their environmental impact. They also described animal agriculture as 'inherently inefficient'.

But ex-Tory MP Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg called it a 'silly attention-seeking proposal'. And Tom Bradshaw, president of the

### 'What we eat is a personal choice'

National Farmers' Union, told The Daily Telegraph that 'what we eat is a personal choice and not something which is imposed'.

It comes after the Trust launched a review into its 'colonial history' and sparked concerns over encroaching 'wokeism' at the charity.

Earlier this year, The Mail on Sunday revealed a secret plan by the Trust to make its scones vegan – swapping butter for a vegetable-based spread in the recipe.

The charity's cafes currently offer a menu that is 40 per cent plant-based nationally.

A National Trust spokesman said: 'The planet can't sustain billions of meat-eaters.'

'Moving towards a majority plant-based food system would allow more than 70 per cent of farmland to be freed for nature restoration, a change that would capture massive amounts of carbon and increase biodiversity while still providing enough nutritious food for our growing population.'

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