**Minutes**

**Attendance:**

Mark Carroll (Chair)

Jane Griffin

Andrew Amos

Giuseppina Salamone
Hilary Standing (Minutes)

Milda Liuolyte

Angela Jane Swinn

**Apologies**

Simon Powell , Hannes Froehlich, Heidi Watts, Allan Brown

1. **Welcome and introductions**

Mark opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing the new members. Mark gave a brief background on the history and role of the committee. Its key functions are to represent plotholders and liaise with the Council on all allotment related issues. He also outlined how BHAF is financed, via a levy on allotment rent income. Through this, the committee manages funds for development grants which allotment sites can apply for and which are intended to benefit all plotholders on the site. He noted that reimbursement is available for any out of pocket expenses incurred by committee members.

Following the Council elections, the Chair contacted the new Council leader asking her to nominate a Councillor for allotments. He is Alan Robins. Mark in the process of arranging a meeting with him to discuss the strategy review and other issues.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting on 27th February 2019 were approved with one correction on item from Josephina: Under item 5 Allotment rules – amend third sentence to *No changes have been made to the order of the* ***new*** *rules.*

Any matters arising were dealt with under the following agenda points.

1. **Update on site elections and site rep issues**

Concern was expressed that the site rep elections at Windmill Hill have still not taken place. Mark will contact Bruce to find out what is happening.

There has been no further response to the formal complaint about bullying and misuse of the private database of tenants' email addresses by a former site rep on one of the sites. Josephina will contact Bruce for an update.

Mark will discuss BHAF’s proposals on how site rep elections are run with Alan Robins

Amos has been appointed by the Committee as BHAF’s site rep training person and liaison officer with the Council. An email will be sent round to site reps, introducing him, offering mentoring and asking what site reps would like by way of further training. It was noted that site inspections are done very differently and unevenly across sites. This is an issue that training needs to cover.

1. **Applications to the development fund**

Three applications have been received.

In response to a question from a new committee member, the development fund criteria were outlined. Applications must clearly benefit the site as a whole and all the plot holders, not individuals. Where possible people are encouraged to find cheap, free or recycled sources of items such as wood and wood chippings.

* One application was approved in full (notice board)
* One application was approved in part (roofing felt, timber and nails and paint for a shed)
* One application (shed and associated items) was deferred pending further information on the beneficiaries and whether an association is place, and a possible site visit.

This round of applications raised two issues:

First, in one case, funding was being requested retrospectively. It was emphasised that items should not be purchased before approval and BHAF will not necessarily pay if the expenditure has already happened.

Second, where the application is for a project rather than a one-off item, the committee needs the whole specification first.

1. **Internal procedures**

*Code of conduct*

The committee agreed to adopt a simple code of conduct for committee members covering basic issues such as confidentiality. A draft will be circulated for discussion shortly.

*GDPR compliance*

The Council, BHAF and allotment associations are required to comply with the recent EU-wide General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) as the penalties for breaching these are significant. The BHAF website has been checked and found to be compliant. The main areas relate to information sharing and data storage where it concerns specific individuals, and the use of email lists. All email communications should be treated as public, not private – even when personal email accounts are being used. They can be copied on by others. A major concern is the use of email lists of plot holders for purposes for which the sender does not have their prior permission. Email lists must not be used by other BHAF members to send out messages without the consent of the plot holders concerned.

Where a number of plot holders are being contacted on an issue, bcc should be used. GDPR compliance needs to be part of site reps training. BHAF will raise this with the Council as it is their statutory responsibility to ensure that all communications to and about tenants comply with the law.

It was agreed to put up a page on the BHAF website with a list of current BHAF committee members and a few lines on each of the members and their responsibilities.

**6. Committee roles**

The committee considered a short paper by the Secretary on roles and responsibilities in the light of the new committee membership. Simon has agreed to take on the vacant role of Deputy Chair. As more support is needed to communications, Milda will work with Mark on how to increase website engagement and Angela will support uploading of information.

It was agreed to have an informal working group for the upcoming review of the Allotment Strategy. This is a comprehensive and progressive document that will not need rewriting but may need some updating.

Hilary and Josephina agreed to take forward diversity and inclusion issues for possible further action by BHAF.

1. **Any Other Business**

The next site reps allotment forum is on Wednesday 19th June at 7 pm. Allotment Association committee members are also invited.

**Action points (Committee use only)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Contact and meeting with Alan Robins | Mark |
| Site rep training email to site reps | Mark/Amos |
| Follow up to Bruce email on bullying complaint | Josephina |
| Follow up emails on development fund applications | Mark - *done* |
| Draft code of conduct | Hilary |
| Follow up with Bruce on GDPR and several other outstanding issues | Mark - *done* |
| Comms - Sign up of Milda and Angela as admins. Milda to send ideas about website engagement | Mark, Milda, Angela |
| Informal working group for strategy review: Josephina and Amos offering to contribute. Need someone to lead. Alan Phillips and Russ Howarth to be approached to see if they would join. | Mark/Simon/Hilary |