**BRIGHTON & HOVE ALLOTMENT FEDERATION**

***Committee Meeting February 13, 2013@ 6.30pm***

**The Haven, Pankhurst Avenue, Brighton.**

**In attendance:**

John Burns, Steve Lucas, Anne Glow, Mark Carroll, Allan Brown, Tania Johnson, Emily Gardiner, Melanie Matthews, Lynn Long, Simon Powell

**Apologies for absence:**

Gary Johnson

**Minutes of the last meeting:**

Agreed

**Matters Arising:**

None

**Constitution Update:**

MC, SP & AB have already taken a look at the Constitution and penned some suggested amendments. We’ve referred to the new BHAF Objectives – this is reflected in the first paragraph. JB mentioned that there are two sites that are outside the B&H geographical area, but still under the jurisdiction of B&H Council. MC amended this. The other issue involves co-workers – should they be considered part of the Fed as they don’t pay a fee/ rent, so they aren’t technically members of the Fed. MC felt that we should include co-workers as part of the Fed. The membership fee is essentially a plot fee, so co-workers

*Vote taken: Co-workers to be considered part of fed? All agreed.*

It was agreed that the President shouldn’t have full powers, as (s)he has an honorary role.

The other amendment is to allow ‘Elected Site Association Reps’ to sit on the Fed Committee. JB raised the point that if all 37 sites formed associations and elected a representative, the Fed committee may become unmanageable. Most felt in reality this wouldn’t be a problem. MM said we should differentiate between ‘Site Reps’ and ‘Site Association Reps’.

A vote was taken as to whether a council officer should have an automatic place on the Fed. As the Fed have liaison meetings with the allotment officer, it was agreed that it wasn’t necessary for them to have an automatic position on the Fed committee. All voted in favour.

JB felt that the ‘Quorum’ phrase should be replaced. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Quorum at Committee meetings should be 4, at AGM’s it should be higher, say 25.

It was agreed that we should have copies for the AGM. MC suggested we use a projector. MM said as a community group we would be able to access the Brighton Resource Centre. The Brighthelm Centre may have one we can use. Generally agreed that this would be better than physically printing everything out.

MC asked whether we should put it up on the website before the AGM. It was agreed that this should be done. MC will put up the current constitution on the website with suggested changes highlighted in red.

**AGM**

JB queried whether we took notes at the SGM. He took notes, but as there was no secretary no official minutes were taken.

JB went through last year’s AGM. The format for last year ran:

***Obituaries***

***Apologies for Absence***

***To approve the minutes of last year’s AGM***

***Annual Report***

***Treasurer’s Report***

***Constitution***

***Election of Officers***

***President***

***Chairperson***

***Vice-chairperson***

***Secretary***

***Treasurer***

***Publicity Officer***

***Plot Holders Liaison Officer*** *(this needs to be put in the constitution.)*

***Election of Committee Members***

***(Anne glow, Lynn Long, Steve Lucas, Simon Powell, Melanie Matthews)***

***Election of Vice Presidents***

***Any Other Business***

*(JB to officially invite Gillian Marston, Lizzie Dean and Pete West.)*

Are we supplying refreshments? Tea and sweet biscuits.

JB has printed out and laminated a number of AGM notices. He’s done a number of the Hove sites already and various Committee members agreed to cover the remaining sites between them.

MM is to send out a BHAF newsletter early next week and will include details of the AGM with details of the Agenda.

**Strategy Update:**

MC gave a brief summary of the Strategy thus far. We’ve had two meetings and have agreed the TOR and Strategy Objectives. MC gave an outline of timetable and outlined details of the Working Groups. In our next newsletter we need to refer to the TOR and Strategy Objectives. (It was agreed at the last Strategy Meeting that we make these documents available before the AGM.) We also need to invite plot-holder/ site-rep contributions to the Working Groups.

1. Governance/ Democracy
2. Use of Land
3. Information & Analysis
4. Engagement & Consultation

**Selecting Site-reps for Strategy Working Groups:**

Mel will advertise for plotholder/ site rep contributions to the various Working Groups in the newsletter.

**Whitehawk Food Project Training Proposal.**

SP was interested if there was any feedback on this proposal of BHAF contributing funding for the WFP to run training courses for new allotment holders/ people on waiting lists etc. to help empower novice growers so that we have fewer ‘first year failures’.

EG said she was unclear as to how this would benefit sites as a whole. MM mentioned that there are a number of similar courses being run in the City and questioned whether there would be sufficient demand. There was some support for the proposal and SL suggested this would be a good use of BHAF funds, but it was agreed that we would need to have a more specific proposal and SP said he would work on this.

**Additional Secretary.**

MM agreed that she would help cover some secretarial duties as and when the need arises, as Allan Brown was finding it difficult to cope with the workload as he is also taking minutes for the Strategy Process. As a result it was deemed unnecessary to formally advertise for an additional Secretary.

**Compensation for Sites Affected by Vandalism.**

Several sites have had sheds burnt down and site huts robbed. MM asked whether sites have insurance. MM felt that compensating individual sheds was unrealistic, but that Association sheds with communal property should be compensated. EG felt that replacing stolen equipment would just encourage more equipment theft. Brief discussion about NSALG insurance. JB felt that all applications to the development fund would be considered, if it was for the benefit of the site as a whole. MM felt the Fed’s responsibility was to inform plot-holders of the risks and warn them about storing expensive equipment on site.

**Development Fund Application & Policy.**

SL – application from Eastbrook for skip. £259 plus VAT. 8 cubic yard. JB stated this was purely for metal and glass. Committee members (Eastbrook) will oversee the filling of the skip and would only take a couple of days to fill.

Vote taken - majority in favour.

SL also mentioned the Moulscoomb Estate request for hedge whips, but unable to get in contact with Maureen. MC to contact Maureen to chase this up.

Also Racehill – they’ve requested a strimmer (to unwieldy for most people to use) and a rotavator. AB asked whether we had a list of what items where at what sites. Tracebility/ accountability of items. MC felt that only site associations should have expensive equipment bought for them. He felt that this was the only way to get people to create associations. MM felt the request should have specific details about where the item will be stored, how will other plot-holders gain access to the equipment. SL said that he had the data to compile such a list, but it would take a while to pull together.

**Allotments Competition.**

JB asked whether we will be running the competitions this year? LL and AG will take this on, under the auspices of the City in Bloom. City Bloom have a meeting at the Town Hall on Feb 24th, 2.30pm. MC to do a poster for Allotment Competition, we need to have details up on the website. Two posters – one for children’s competition, one for adult competition. JB to give details of dates/ judging etc. to MC. MM said we need to clarify exactly how people enter. JB to draft entry form, this will be updated and put up on the website.

**Festival of Nature.**

BHAF have been invited to run a stall at Brighton Festival of Nature. LL and AG volunteered to represent BHAF at this event.

**Sussex PHD Research Project.**

Request to interview plot-holders. AB will direct them to Pete Ferris on the Weald and/ or either of the Roedale Sites. They will share the results of their research with the Fed.

**Plot Chopping (Full plots/ Half Plots).**

GJ would like the BHAF to write to the council to request a moratorium on plot-chopping. The BHAF promotes a policy of a choice of plot sizes and is concerned that with the Strategy due to run through to March 2014, the amount of full plots lost in this period (due to the current BHCC policy of halving all plots that become available) will have a detrimental impact on B&H allotments

A vote was taken and the majority of the Committee agreed that we should write a letter to the Council requesting a moratorium on plot-halving until we have the proper research and data on which to make an informed decision on the best policy.

**AOB.**

JB received a letter from site rep from Manton Road stating that he was resigning.

*Meeting finished at 9.30pm.*