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***Committee Meeting, July 22nd, 2013@ 6.30pm***

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

**In attendance:**

Allan Brown, Mark Carroll, Emily Gardiner, Anne Glow, Richard Howard, Russ Howarth, Gary Johnson, Tania Johnson, Steve Lucas, Alan Phillips.

**Apologies for Absence:**

Melanie Matthews, Simon Powell

**Minutes of the Last Meeting:**

The minutes of the last BHAF Committee Meeting were formally approved.

**Matters Arising:**

The Weald ‘Traffic Light System’. RH and MM will endeavour to get in touch with PF and the Weald Association to discuss any misunderstandings that may have arisen with regards the ‘TLS’. SL offered to liaise with the others on this. (It would appear that the Weald Site Reps aren’t currently running the system and the notices have been taken down off the gates.)

Action: RH and MM to get in touch with Weald Association.

**Security/ Allotment Watch**

GJ, David Cooper and Lisa Funnell (PCSO) are intending to have monthly meetings to discuss all the latest developments with regards allotment related crime. (Sasha from Worthing Allotment Watch will attend one of these meetings.)

In addition PC Funnell intends to send out a monthly email to the 160 people that have signed up to Allotment Watch.

It crucial that we encourage tenants to report all allotment related crime to the police.

In terms of preventative measures, it has been decided for both practical and legal reasons, CCTV and barbed-wire are both unrealistic options.

One idea that has been circulated, is that tenants could organise patrols of their respective sites. GJ and SL did a patrol on Racehill, Craven Vale and Whitehawk last week as a trial and hoped the idea could take root.

DC suggested wildlife cameras with motion sensors. GJ feels we should invest a couple of these and we move them between sites, to wherever problems are occurring. RH said that we just need one arrest, as the publicity would help our cause. AP enquired whether it’s vandalism, theft or arson that’s the main problem.

MC asked whether the images captured by these sensors are clear enough to identify faces. EG stressed the importance of protecting/ hiding the cameras.

Richard Howard said that alarms on sheds has worked for some tenants at Moulscoomb Estate. AP asked what more the Fed could do. GJ said that solar powered, motion triggered floodlights are actually an affordable option but tenants need to be around for many of these options to be viable.

RH enquired whether there are any patterns that can be extracted from the reports filed with the police. GJ to follow this up with PC Funnell.

GJ informed the Committee that there are crime surgeries happening on various sites, but they need to be well publicised. RH said that PC Funnell had visited Moulscoomb Estate but that he not been forewarned and requested that in future site reps are kept better informed of such patrols. (He was not keen on letting PCSOs on site without prior warning.)

EG suggested that DC contact all tenants. GJ said he thinks DC has done this.

GJ and SL agreed to be the BHAF team that will concentrate on security issues. They’d like DC to contact everyone on the Whitehawk, Craven Vale, Racehill and Tenantry Down sites to volunteer for patrols.

There have been reports from Whitehawk that the padlock is being locked to the gate in order for Whitehawk Food Project volunteers to get onto site. GJ and TJ will discuss this with SP.

Action: MM to send out email to all BHAF members.

Put on ‘security’ on agenda for the next Site Rep meeting. Pilot a couple of options (ie. lights, motion camera etc.) Racehill could be a good trial site as they have got some funding.) Contact DC at next liaison meeting to get in touch with all community plots to inform them about leaving the gates open for volunteers.

(Following this meeting GJ has done some further research)

GJ had a telephone conversation with a rep from <http://www.flyonthewall.uk.com/>

15 -20m is the visible range of images taken by these spec cameras.

Protecting the cameras:

<http://www.flyonthewall.uk.com/steel-protective-lockbox-for-12mp-wildlife-camera.html>

Cameras:

<http://www.flyonthewall.uk.com/wildlife-cameras/3g-wildlife-cameras/hd-mobile-mms-wildlife-camera-dvr-with-motion-sensor-invisible-infrared-940nm-12-0mp-vga-16gb.html>

or <http://www.flyonthewall.uk.com/wildlife-cameras/3g-wildlife-cameras/1080p-mobile-mms-wildlife-camera-dvr-with-motion-sensor-audio-invisible-infrared-940nm-12-0mp-32gb.html>

(Both of these cameras send instant email images and have invisible infrared.)

**Minimal requirements for Associations to be Federated.**

MC said that there are currently 2 or 3 sites working to form Associations and felt that we need a set of minimal requirements.

AP suggested a model of good practise – for example encouraging engagement with all tenants. TJ suggested notice boards for sites that are forming Associations. The BHAF could fund this as part of the development fund. We could also do laminating for fledging Associations, in order to keep their set-up costs to a minimum.

MC wrote up a draft document to this end:

‘The Brighton and Hove Allotment Federation are keen to support existing Allotment Associations and encourage the forming of new Allotment Associations. We have a duty to ensure that Associations federated with us are representative, transparent and democratic. To that end we have a list of minimum requirements of Allotment Associations.

**Minimum requirements of Allotment Associations to be federated with the BHAF**

1. **The Association must have a Constitution that is made available to the BHAF.**
2. **The Association must have a Committee of at least 4 people whose names and contact details are made available to the BHAF. There is no minimum membership number.**
3. **The Association should hold at least 4 meetings a year. One of which can be the AGM.**
4. **The meetings should be advertised so that all local plot holders are aware of them, with ample notice given. We suggest laminated posters on all gates or notice boards.**
5. **Plot holders on your site should have access to your meeting agenda and minutes. We suggest printed minutes should be available at the site hut or on a website. The BHAF can give you web space on their site.**
6. **The Association should invite the BHAF to their AGM and also supply us with minutes from the AGM.**

We hope these requirements are easily met, and if you have any concerns in this regard please don’t hesitate to get in touch with us. We will be happy to help.’

**BHAF Finances**

* **Fixed equipment spec**

EG has discussed this idea with DC. The Fed will only fund certain types of equipment and all purchases will go through AMP. AP suggested that we should break up the budget and once we allocate how much we’ve set aside for equipment for example, EG will have the freedom to take executive decisions.

Action: RH to discuss equipment specification with EG. (RH works for City Parks so has good experience of what is the best equipment for allotment use.)

* **Site rep expenses**

Site Reps expenses will have to be agreed by DC before BHAF will cover them. DC needs to clarify exactly what we will cover.

MC asked SL what expenses we have traditionally covered. SL said primarily postage but in addition phone calls are difficult to get receipts for, so as a result we also cover these expenses, as the council can only honour expenses that have receipts.

Action: Inform all site reps that they have to agree all expenses with DC prior to us paying them. Put this on agenda for next Site Rep Meeting. (We need to ring-fence an amount in our budget, to ensure we have enough funds to cover these expenses.)

* **Bank account**

We currently bank with Natwest. EG asked whether we could switch accounts to the Co-op for example. RH queried whether this is something that needs to be agreed at an AGM and as a result it would be better to postpone a decision until the next financial year.

* **Development Fund application form**

EG is going to revamp the Dev Fund Application form. Are there any alterations that we need to make? AP wondered whether we should ask how much the site in question will be contributing to the project.

AB queried whether we should only allow dev fund requests for equipment to be granted to sites that have an Association. There was general agreement that this incentive may be the best tool we have to encourage sites to set up Associations.

RH queried whether the BHAF have an obligation to replace equipment. Shouldn’t we be encouraging Associations to purchase their own equipment? For example renting out strimmers to plot-holders (or Association members as is currently practiced at RAGS) generates an income that can be used for maintenance/ repairs and even eventual replacement.

AP wondered whether the dev fund should be primarily used for developing Associations. (The intention of the Dev fund was for the nurturing of communities on site and all uses of the fund must be for the benefit of the site as a whole.)

A portion of the dev fund being used as a ‘Start Up’ fund for fledgling associations was generally considered a good idea..

* **Funding and the website**

Revamp the dev fund on the BHAF website to ‘How do I develop my site.’ Have examples of alternative funding for Associations. Interlink it with Harvest – courses on how to fund raise.

* **Transparency**

EG – we want to be transparent but we also want to prevent publicising where equipment has been bought for specific sites. Details only given to enquiries from registered members.

Action: EG to produce a budget report for next meeting.

**Competition report (Anne Glow)**

Mayberry have pulled out of their sponsorship. (Mayberrys - £300, Meakers £300. City in Bloom are trying to make up the difference by contacting other possible sponsors. This has subsequently been done – another sponsor is in place.)

The competition is the BHAF’s responsibility. We are working in partnership with City in Bloom.

SL has spoken to JB and the details are in an email. City in Bloom used to fund the competition but now the extent of the partnership is a presentation event at which the prizes for the allotment competitions will be given.

RH suggested that site reps nominate people for competitions.

TJ suggested in order to save money that the Fed runs the competitions themselves.

Action: AP to get in touch with John Burns to get a breakdown of the budget.

Competition to come up on agenda for next meeting, once we’ve got budget figures.

**Harvest/ BHAF video project (Mark Carroll)**

Harvest/ FP are keen to work with the BHAF in producing a series of short films aimed initially at helping novice growers and new allotment holders. They are providing funds for a pilot series of films and it was agreed that we would contact all plot-holders that entered the ‘Best Newcomers 2013’ competition and see whether they would be willing to discuss their experiences on film. A shortlist of 4 or 5 plot-holders will be decided on.

A local videographer/ film maker has been contacted and filming will start in August.

**Strategy review (Alan Phillips)**

AP requested that anyone on the Committee that would like to get further involved they need to make this known to him.

The Council basically haven’t had the staff to do engage properly with the Strategy. The BHAF is therefore driving the process forward.

Action: AP to write a short summary to be included in the minutes.

**7. AOB**

**Hedge-whips for use at schools.**

A request for any unused hedge whips was put to the BHAF from a member, for use at various local schools. It was agreed that we would postpone a decision until the autumn, to see whether further sites/ tenants would like to make use of the remaining whips that are currently heeled in at Racehill.

**Next Meeting.**

SL – The Haven is closing down permanently, so we need to find an alternative venue. RH suggested meeting at the Harvest Offices Brighthelm Centre. AG suggested Essex Place as a venue, this has subsequently been agreed.

So the next meeting will be on:

September – 24th Tuesday at 6.30pm at Essex Place.

*Meeting adjourned at 9.45pm.*