

**BRIGHTON & HOVE ALLOTMENT FEDERATION**

***Committee Meeting September 24th, 2013@ 6.30pm***

**Essex House, Montague Street, Kemptown, Brighton.**

**In Attendance:**

Allan Brown, Mark Carroll, Richard Howard (Moulscoomb Site Delegate), Russ Howarth, Steve Lucas, Anne Glow, Alan Phillips.

**Apologies for Absence:**

Emily Gardiner, Simon Powell

**Minutes of the Last Meeting:**

There was a brief discussion about the Weald site reps having not attended the last couple of site rep meetings. (The subject arose because the minutes of the last Committee Meeting included a discussion about the Weald Traffic Light system.) SL said he intends to visit the Weald to chat to the site reps. AP said that we should revisit this topic in the New Year to see if bridges can be built.

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

**Matters Arising:**

1. **Report back from Liaison Meeting:**

DC raised about evicting problem tenants.

RH said that DC is looking for solutions to making the inspection process more efficient and to shift the responsibility of inspections to site reps, or a body of site reps that act as an independent inspection process.

AP the second inspection needs an independent body to safeguard against personal vendettas. Site reps

MC – 10 years ago all inspections were done by the allotment officer. He feels that this is another step towards devolved management but without proper representation.

SL – the first inspection is done by the site rep, so the second inspection by an independent site rep would be merely to ascertain if the necessary work has been done. The original site rep would accompany the independent inspector.

AP – feels that there will be a reduction of council employee hours, in order to reduce the costs of the allotment service. So he feels that there is merit looking into an alternative means of conducting experiment. We should look at this creatively and see what further can be done through local Associations, we need maintain the 10 – 15% ‘worst plot’ inspection process and ensure there is some suitable course for appeal.

**2. Report back from Site Rep meeting:**

RH brought up the issue of deposits for new plots, which had been discussed at the site rep meeting. RH – how do we deal with new tenants wanting plots all strimmed and rotavated, but not leaving their plots in a similar state when they leave. RH feels we need to agree a position on this before the next Liason Meeting.

RiH says that at Moulscoomb Estate they have tools that they can hire out to new tenants so they can do the clearing themselves.

SL – perhaps a way forward was to have enterprising individuals on sites who can be hired to clear plots, so there is a range of choices for new tenants. ie. pay a deposit, do it yourself, or hire someone personally to do it.

RH raised the issue of some sites not having received their gate posters about the Strategy. This is ongoing – MC says some of these sites still have not received them.

**3. BHAF Budget**

AP read EG’s budget report. (See appendix 1.)

There is £5200 left in the ‘Dev Fund’.

Site reps have usually submitted requests for equipment to the BHAF.

SL says that traditionally we’ve never exceeded this sum from direct requests. AP clarified the purpose of budgeting in order to clarify specific sums for the various purposes

AP we need a contingency of about 10%, but perhaps up to 3 months before the end of the financial year we will reassess this

Miscellaneous expenses – we’ll also keep a 10% allocation (virement)

Budget for Associations - £500

Budget for equipment - £2,500

Budget for security. - £1,000

RiH suggested that we should budget for insurance for Associations to whom we allocate funds for equipment. MC felt that individual Associations should carry out their own insurance. AP said that we need to ensure that Associations – if they are renting out equipment – need to take out insurance.

Action: Check with the council about insurance.

AP feels that the BHAF should be insured to guard against possible claims against the BHAF for possible accidents picked up as part of BHAF duties. This would need to come from our levy.

MC – should we be carrying out site security, or is this part of the Council’s remit? MC feels that we need to be more creative with the development fund. For example the BHAF purchasing an apple press which will be of use to a range of people and sites.

SL is keen to ensure that the development fund is used, as traditionally the fund is under utilised.

AP asked how we promote the fund?

Action RH to draw up a list of suggestions for the sorts of things the fund could be usefully spent on. Examples like:

Apple Presses & Scratters

Containers for tea huts/ sheds

MC said we should let plot holders know about the dev fund, through the newsletter.

SL feels that we need to go ahead with purchasing a security camera for the BHAF and get it up and running on a site with known

Action. Allan Brown to send letter Jessica and Lisa to thank the PSCO’s for the £250 that was raised for Racehill. (Ask Gary for details.)

SL to be in charge of BHAF security issues.

£200 for hiring a hall for AGM’s

Hosting website is about £240 pa, the email mail out program about £200

Patcham Hall is about £16 per meeting.

**4. Communications**

MC suggested we need to send out a e-newsletter in the next few weeks as there are a number of items coming up to share with our members.

BHAF/ Harvest videos.

Allotment competition results.

A piece on the forming of Associations.

Discuss the Strategy

Results from the survey.

Development fund.

Action: We need to update the site rep details on the BHAF website.

AP thanked MC for all the work he’s done on the database and website.

RH queried the system whereby decisions are made by email, as opposed to having been decided in meetings with a show of hands. This ties in with requests for dev fund – there will be a cut-off date for submissions with any late applications going over to the following month.

Working Group for the various budget areas:

Equipment – RH, AG, EG, AB

Association Start Up – EG, MC

Security – EG, RiH, SL

**5. Competitions**

AP thanked AG for the work she’s done on the competition.

JB would like us to continue with the Coronation Bowl. AG suggests we need to review the rules if we continue to run the competition.

RH suggested that site reps judge plot holders as part of their inspection process.

Action: Ask site reps at next site rep meeting whether they’d be interested in this idea. We could make a sum available (£100) to individual sites to run local competitions. We would allocate £500 to this, this is about the sum we have traditionally spent on running the competitions.

RH suggested that the Coronation Bowl could be awarded to the best newcomer.

**6. Progress on Strategy**

AP has shared a document on key issues – see Appendix 2.

AP brought a number of survey papers in order to shore up an apparent gap in the survey demographic, namely those who’ve had an allotment for over 4 years. AP requested that committee members distribute these personally to plot holders we know that fit this criteria.

**7. Resignations**

The recent resignations of TJ and GJ was discussed and noted with regret. The BHAF would like to formally thank them for their work over the past year. It is hoped that they will play some part with the BHAF.

Action – contact Nicky Cambridge’s dept. to see whether their expertise could be brought to bear on the situation.

RiH suggested that he could visit the site and initiate a discussion.

**8. AOB**

Action: Rotavator – we need to write to RN (Racehill) to inform him that no decision was ever made about purchasing a rotavator. SL said to remind RN that he had said that he would deal with one item at the time as requests for both strimmer and rotavator were made at the same time. It is unprecedented – we’ve never bought a rotavator at all.

RiH – alerted the BHAF to a national initiative ‘Walk on the Wildside.’ (25th to 30th October)

Next meeting Thursday 21st November.

*Meeting finished at 9.00pm.*