****

**AGENDA**

**Allotment Forum Meeting**

6.30pm, Wednesday, 10th June 2015

Patcham Community Centre

* **6.30-7.00pm – Surgery: Individual / Personal issues**

**Allotment Federation:**

Allan Brown – Chairman

Mark Carroll – Publicity Officer

Hannes Froehlich – Treasurer

Bill Parslow – Secretary

Richard Howard - Committee member
Giuseppina Salamone - Committee member

Maureen Winder – Committee member

**BHCC:** No one in attendance (see apologies)

* **Apologies for absence**

David Cooper – Operations Manager, City Parks (illness)

Tina & Jude (Nevil)

* **Welcome & Discussion**

Alan Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There was an informal discussion about the sarsen stones that had been put on the grass verges at the Rottingdean Site – this had the effect of not allowing some of the less mobile plot holders to park nearby. It was suggested that the plot-holders write to the owner of the land – the Duke of Devonshire apparently!

* **Empty plots**

There are a number of empty plots at Coldean, but because there is no current allotment representative, there is n o one to show any of the sixteen prospective tenants on the waiting list around. Proposed that a letter from to each tenant should be sent

* **General News**

Food Partnership / BHAF have made a grant application to produce a spruced up and useful introductory package, which would include the allotment rulebooks along with practical information and guidance on starting with your allotment.

* **Thankyou to volunteers event – Brighton & Hove Council**

Site representatives had been invited to a “Thank you to volunteers” event by Brighton & Hove Council at the Museum. Those who attended said it as a very pleasant event.

* **Rules Revision**

The open group looking at revising the current rulebook has met twice and is highlighting improvements, hopefully to produce a draft for the next forum.

* **Site Inspections**

Some site representatives report that early inspections had been submitted, but there had been no follow-up visit by allotment officer some months later. Discussion at the meeting centred around the fact that carrying out all the Brighton & Hove inspection appears to be too much work for one person.

There was a question about how many terminations there were each year? Perhaps the process would be quicker with elected reps? Sen as too hot an issue to be ignored, as many on waiting list while ots were lying abandonded. There was a suggestion that site reps could do both inspections [Q. How many site reps would be willing to take this on!] . Allotment office could than arbitrate on disputed results. There were examples of plots left for two years, and nothing done. It was the Council’s responsibility to follow through with evictions.

**Decision:** Ask for notice / eviction timescales / numbers to see how big a problem this is.

* **Key Deposit Money**

There was a proposal to use uncollected key deposit money, where ex-tanants who were long gone had not handed their key in, and therefore not collected their deposit . It’s an accruing, unused pool of money. For example, Moulsecoomb using some of their “dead” key money to help pay for a new allotment association hut roof and repairs.

There was discussion around the standardisation of the amounts collected for key deposits – although pointed out that some associations had different costs, and some key deposits were held by the council directly.

Proposed that after a 3 month moratorium if an ex-tenant had not returned their key, the deposit would be available to the assoication

* **Site Rep Job Description and Role**

Food Partnership / BHAF were organising (with funding from both) a Site Rep consultation event on the role of the Site Rep at the Brighthelm Centre–, date to be decided. A number of people had expressed interest.

Site Rep job description – Maureen drafting. It was recognised that Site reps take on a lot of responsibilities. Setting out what these are would help recognise the skills and abilities needed - recognition that it’s a complex job.

* **BHAF Appeals Procedure**

Potholders organisation, therefore are available as advocates to help people. Good resolutions using the process that Jospehina designed. This is on the website.

* **Site Rep Elections**

Richard nominated Site Rep Officer – to help sites elect representatives.

Mark (Publicity) has designed posters for those with or without allotment associations. Call for nominations put up on the gates. Postal election if more nominations than posts. The goal is an Open and transparent process.

Richard will be trying to work with all associations and plot-holders to encourage nominations and process.

* **Development Fund Applications**

There was a reminder to put bids in for projects to be of benefit to the site – shops, notice boards, equipment. Please do check out the website and download the application form. Last year’s grants included:

A new roof for the Lower Roedale site shop

* **Alternative Growing Methods**

Discussion about the fact very specific and different gardening methods have now evolved, and perhaps these should be recognised as valid ways of cultivating on allotment sites . E.g. permaculture.

 Discussion as to how this is opposed to an allotment covered in couch grass. Particular weeds are a no-no – e.g nettles, convolvulus because they spread so quickly. Any allotment needs to keep clear boundaries to prevent spreading from the edges.

* **Question Time.**

Carrots!

Suggestions. Plots, fleeces, raised beds raised net , don’t leave thinnings nearby. Cow parsley allows carrot fly to over winter.

Slug killer. Copper rings. Fabric with copper woven in. Nematode worms. Organic pellets – ferric oxide.

Take all asparagus stems right down

* **List of allotment shops that are open.**

Portslade, first sun of month 9am to 1am

Windelsham close. Membership #2.50 year.

RAGS Facebook page as details of the two site shops and q you can ask there about what is in stock.

* **Up and coming event.**

Dave Goulson – a bee expert – is coming to give a talk on 7th October, Community Base, top conference room. Should be a really interesting event. BHAF will advertise.

* **AOB.**
* **Date of next meeting:**