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**Attending. Mark Carroll, Jim Mayor, Maureen Winder, Richard Howard, Giuseppina Salamone, Jane Griffin, Alan Langridge.**

**MINUTES OF THE BHAF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 2 NOVEMBER 2016**

1. Apologies were received from Allan Brown. Mark Carroll would chair the meeting on this occasion. There were no minutes to approve.
2. **Site Rep Elections Update**
Richard Howard provided an update on Site Rep elections. Most sites now had elected Site Reps, and in one or two cases, existing reps had stepped down and new reps had been appointed via a second election. The process had led to increased openness and would potentially encourage more plot-holders to put themselves forward as reps. The role description was in the process of being finalised, and the next Site Reps Workshop would bring discussions to a conclusion. It was anticipated that all Site Rep elections would be completed by Spring 2017.
3. **BHAF Submission to the Committee on Environment, Transport and Sustainability meeting held on 29 November 2016**

Mark reported that the BHAF submission had been re-edited to reflect support from councillors who felt that large and immediate increases in rents were not justifiable, and it should be argued that cuts needed to be more targeted and where needed, should be dependent on a refined strategic approach to upholding service principles and improvements. This would mean a BHAF submission focussed on IT system improvements, clear plans for water savings, and a new subsidy category for people on low incomes.

Jim Mayor would prepare a summary of the report, which would be presented to the Committee by the BHAF Deputation. Five named supporters of the Deputation were needed, but Mark Carroll and Jim Mayor would present the case to the Committee.

1. **Discussion of concerns regarding medical evidence**

Giuseppina Salamone presented her analysis of issues to regarding medical evidence:

1. It is not appropriate for plot-holders to be asked to provide medical evidence of why they have been unable to work on their plot.
2. It could lead to discriminatory practices – all kinds of evidence could end up being required in various circumstances.
3. If medical certificates were required, those who are retired may be expected to pay for a certificate.
4. Evidence of ill physical or mental health should never be circulated by email. We could not be sure who would have sight of it.
5. The Allotment Office does not have procedures in place to handle such confidential information.
6. All plot-holders must be advised that they should inform their Site Reps or the Allotment Office in writing of any extenuating circumstances – this advice should be included in any letters sent to plot-holders following inspections.
7. **Budget issues**

Mark Carroll and Jim Mayor had met with Belinda Cootes (plot-holder at Roedale Valley) regarding her queries about the Allotment Service Budget. She remained unhappy with the perceived lack of clarity over the costs involved. She had been asked to do further comparisons with other local authorities. BHAF Committee is fully aware that there is confusion over what constitutes the Allotment budget and what constitutes the Parks/Gardens budget. This needs to be raised at the next Strategy Meeting, as it could impact on the level of subsidy and potential savings required.

1. **Development Fund**

Hannes Frolich reported that only £1300 had been spent from the Development Fund. It was important to encourage Site Reps and Associations to consider different ways they could improve their sites. This could include water saving, Site Hubs, composting, incinerators, water butts, and other shared resources to support site activity and community. It was suggested that the Development Fund could support sites where difficult situations had arisen. It was agreed to help the Site Rep at Coldean Lane, where the toilets for the Disabled Group remained in a bad state of maintenance and the Allotment Service had not yet provided a long term solution.

1. **Site Rep Meetings/Workshops**

It was agreed that Site Reps would continue to meet twice a year as part of a series of workshops/discussions around Site Rep issues and concerns. The meetings would not involve the Allotment Officer, but be a means by which Site Reps’ roles would evolve and respond to current problems across the City. The discussions would form a basis for feeding issues into the BHAF Strategy meetings to be taken forward at an appropriate policy level.

1. **Meetings**

It was agreed that BHAF Forums would continue to be held at Patcham. The BHAF AGM would be held at the Brighthelm Centre.

Committee meetings could be held at the Brighthelm Centre or in the Rooms at the Level. Hannes would investigate the availability of rooms at the Brighthelm Centre, and Maureen would look into the use of rooms at the Level, starting in February.

The next Forum would held on 18 January 2017 at Patcham.

**Close of meeting.**