

1.) **“Minimum Requirements of Allotment Associations to be Federated with BHAF.”**

Sally Griffin

This is an aspect of the all-important matter of the relationship between the Federation and Site Associations. We appreciate that over the past couple of years a great deal has happened on the allotment front in Brighton and Hove, and that nationally we live in “interesting times.” To fulfil the laudable overall objectives of the Federation as expressed in its constitution, with which we wholly concur, it is essential that we get this relationship right.

We believe that our affiliation to the Federation should be in the nature of a voluntary and mutually respectful relationship between equal parties. To this end we propose that the title and status of the above document be rephrased as “Guidelines for the formation of Constitutions for Allotment Associations.” That is, if the document is necessary at all, which is open to debate.

We maintain that it is for our members, the plot-holders, to determine whether we are sufficiently “representative, transparent, and democratic.” We certainly make every effort to be so, but we are in no doubt that they will tell us if they think we are not. We have great respect for the work done by the Federation and its Committee, but we consider that we are accountable to our members, not to the Federation, and we do not acknowledge that it has a right to “police” our Association.

This resolution was passed at a Committee meeting of MAHS on Sat 18th January 2014. M. Wallis (chair), J Francis (treasurer), J. Kalinska (seed secretary), J. Grozier (minutes secretary), G. Salamone (site rep.), M. Winder (site rep.), R Howard (site rep.), S. Griffin (shop manager).

2.) **“Resolution ref. Strategy Framework Consultation, and Revision of Allotment Rules.”**

Sally Griffin

Moulsecoomb Allotments and Horticultural Society recognises the sterling work of the officers of the Federation, and the Council’s Allotments Officer, in conducting the city-wide consultation on the Allotment Strategy during 2013, and wish to express our appreciation of their efforts in relation to this mammoth task.

We believe that Allotment societies such as ours should be able to make continuing input into the formulation of the final Strategy Document, and we should like to be kept up to date on the progress of this work so that we may remain in dialogue with the Federation. We believe that, if necessary, the deadline for completion of the Strategy Document should be extended beyond the end of March 2014 to allow for more input from sites.

In relation to the forthcoming revision of Allotment Rules, we should like to understand better the process by which this will happen, and, likewise, we wish to ensure that contributions to the discussion from Moulsecoomb Estate site will be considered, and we should like to be clear about the channels through which the views of Site Associations can be expressed and taken into account.

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3.) **“Facilitating new Allotment Site Societies in Brighton and Hove.”** Sally Griffin

MHAF heartily applauds and supports the Federation’s stated aim as enshrined in its constitution (Article 7) to encourage the formation of autonomous allotment societies on sites throughout the city. To this end, we propose that:

1.) The Federation compile, and offer to Allotment Site Associations in the process of formation, a list of resources, such as the website of the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, and, more locally, the Resource Centre at Tilbury Place in Brighton, which offer useful practical guidelines including suggested outlines for constitutions and for the functions of officers, in civil society and voluntary organisations such as Allotment Associations.

2.) Since the existence of a meeting-place on site is a prerequisite for a democratically functioning Allotment society, we propose that the Federation give serious consideration to grant-funding a site hut (this could be an inexpensive wooden shed with sufficient room to accommodate a meeting and some chairs) for each new or embryonic Association. Where two or more small sites are joining to form one Association, they would share a hut and make arrangements for access to it for their colleagues from the other site.

3.) Given the reluctance of the majority of plot-holders to engage, during their limited free time, in what they may see as the bureaucratic business of signing up to and participating in an Allotment Association, there has to be a tangible benefit to membership; we propose that consideration be given to facilitating “pop-up” shops at each site hut, where members can buy seeds at a discount in return for a nominal annual membership fee. Sites should be encouraged to collaborate so that they can bulk-buy from one of the suppliers that have schemes for allotment societies, where a 30% or 50% discount is available on orders.

The advantages of this arrangement, beyond the obvious, of enabling plot-holders to purchase necessities inexpensively and conveniently on site, are that it facilitates informal communication, and helps to consolidate a sense of community on site, as well as creating a focus point where information can be exchanged on allotment matters both horticultural and organisational (e.g. between sites and the Federation). In particular this is essential for those allotmenters who are not internet users, and who are liable, therefore, to be inadvertently left “out of the loop” by an over-reliance on electronic forms of communication.

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4.) **“Self Management.”** Maureen Winder

The committee of MAHS recognises that, in the current financial climate, Brighton and Hove City Council is under pressure to reduce expenditure and to cut jobs. At the same time, we are aware that there is a move to encourage self-management of sites by voluntary committees of plot-holders. We propose that BHAF, while encouraging active participation by plot-holders in many aspects of improving and managing sites, should resist any developments which result in job losses in the allotment department, or in the substitution of unpaid workers for salaried employees.

Proposed and agreed nem con at committee meeting 29th January 2014.

M. Wallis (chair), J Francis (treasurer), J. Kalinska (seed secretary), J. Grozier (minutes secretary), G. Salamone (site rep.), M. Winder (site rep.), R Howard (site rep.), S. Griffin (shop manager)