

## Notes of the Allotment Site Secretaries Meeting

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

Birch Room

ITEM		ACTION
	<b>Present:</b>  Richard Miller (Bembrook and Apps Field) Colin Blackman (BOS Field) Neil McKinnon (Pauls Field) June Walsh (Collier Road) David Jex (Choice) John Funnell (Choice) Steve Allam (Lower Cornwallis) Stuart Balkham (Marina) Diane Huggins (Downs Road) Claire Humm (Fernbank) Terry Drinkwater (HBC) Clive Read (HBC) Marian Hollingsworth (HBC)	
	In the absence of Cllr Roark, Terry Drinkwater chaired the meeting. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.	
	<b>Apologies for Absence and non attendance</b>  Cllr Roark and Lesley Bickerdike (Lower Torfield) sent in apologies. Non attendance from Andrew Johnson (Tivoli) and Holly Clamp (Lower Clive Vale)	
1.	<b>Minutes of the last meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023</b>  Agreed as read.	
2.	<b>Matters Arising</b>  <i>Rubbish Removal:</i> Skip provision at Bembrook, Collier Road, Choice, Lower Cornwallis and Pauls Field have now all been completed. Some excess metal remaining at the top gate to be removed from Pauls Field separately.  The remaining sites yet to be completed. Vehicle access to these sites to drop a skip off is not possible so other means of transport for rubbish removal is being considered. CR investigating this means. Fernbank allotment to be the next site, dependant on funds.	CR

	<p>JF (Choice) informed that if anyone has any metal to get rid of, he has contact details. JF to email MH with contact.</p> <p><i>BOS Field Toilet:</i> TD said that he wants to try and do things differently with toilets on sites to avoid Associations having to pay the Public Liability Insurance of £10m.</p> <p>HBC retain the ownership of some structures on sites to include communal sheds and toilets. BOS Field toilet - the suggested proposal is the Association keeps the responsibility for maintenance then an Agreement/licence would be drawn up. HBC will add the toilet structures to our list of Health and Safety inspections which would then be covered by HBC insurance but the toilet is to be maintained in good condition.</p> <p>Must ensure HBC has controls in place to reduce liability as far as is reasonable to protect against the event of likely insurance claims.</p> <p>TD to discuss this fully with the lead officer for Insurance on her return from leave.</p> <p>The toilet at Lower Cornwallis had to be closed as it was in very poor condition.</p> <p>Safe storage is a concern, hazardous materials have been removed from the container at Lower Cornwallis.</p> <p><i>Site reps showing prospective tenants around vacant plots:</i> TD advised there is no capacity to do this at the moment.</p> <p><i>Pauls Field Rubbish/materials on main path:</i> This was removed.</p>	<b>TD</b>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Expenditure Progress Report (Circulated prior to meeting)</b></p> <p>Everything has been completed as per the table distributed. Remaining budget is £750.70. This is all we have left in the budget now – some items were supplemented from other budgets.</p> <p>There was a discussion concerning high cost areas i.e. padlock repairs and standpipe/water supply repairs made – carried out by approved contractors. It was noted that this work often involves welding and high security locks.</p> <p>It was suggested that water could be turned off by Site Secretaries. CR to investigate any implications.</p>	<b>Note</b>

	<p>TD mentioned that HBC receives a number of requests for community and voluntary to engage in helping or providing assistance in the delivery of our parks and gardens maintenance, but because we are concentrating on the work involved to bring the grounds maintenance contract in house, there are no resources to deal with the community requests at the moment. It is hoped, however, that we will be able to revisit these requests again after Christmas and before the end of the financial year. HBC are keen to develop a community/voluntary engagement model that will allow this to happen.</p> <p>Noted that Choice allotment had applied and been awarded grant funds from the Community Safety budget and the police for security improvements following a break-in.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Allotment Action Plan</b></p> <p>TD went through the Action plan which was drawn up in 2021. Clarifying;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue with our random allotment inspections for non cultivation.</li> <li>• Condition survey on buildings on our land carried out and continue to be inspected</li> <li>• Developing an Environmental Plan i.e. carbon footprint, herbicide use reduction etc – we will need to work on this when the grounds maintenance comes in house.</li> <li>• MH continues to update the website with information</li> <li>• The 5 year agreed programme of tree works funded from the arboricultural budget ends this year. Trees will be inspected by the council's tree officer on allotments and any work will be based on health and safety only and from ash dieback.</li> </ul>	<b>TD</b>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Allotment Rules</b></p> <p>This is to remain on the Agenda for any amendments. Anyone that wants to suggest changes to the Allotment Rules is to do so by emailing <a href="mailto:parks@hastings.gov.uk">parks@hastings.gov.uk</a></p>	<b>All</b>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Tenancy Situation Table (Circulated prior to meeting)</b></p> <p>MH went through the table and informed that there are 570 prospective tenants waiting for an allotment at the time of producing the table – a few more has been added since.</p>	

	<p>The average waiting time continues to be 5 years with the exception of one or two sites which is about 3 years. When responding to requests for an allotment, they are advised of the wait time.</p> <p>Following inspections in May/June for non cultivation, a total of 61 Notices were issued. 8 Notices to Quit were also issued for non payment of rent.</p> <p>62 plots have been relet since last Site Secretaries meeting (some by giving prior notice of vacating, some voluntarily giving up and others by Notices issued)</p> <p>Also since last meeting, we have divided several plots on a number of sites. We will continue to do this as and when plots become available and if they are big enough to divide.</p> <p>If there are any plotholders struggling with cultivating the size of their plot, they need to contact the council and discuss if the plot could be divided. We will consider each individual request.</p> <p>SB (Marina) advised they have now 170 lettable plots on site with a waiting time of 3 years.</p> <p>TD also informed that additional land for growing and funding from S106 (Section 106) developments as part of the Local Plan could be included and may provide opportunities to negotiate with the developer regarding projects for community growing provision within new housing proposals.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>One item received from BOS Field with regard to the insurance for the toilet. This was covered in Matters Arising above.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> To be arranged</p>	MH