

Notes of the Allotment Site Secretaries Meeting

Thursday 18th August 2022

Council Chambers

ITEM		ACTION
	<p>Present:</p> <p>Cllr Julia Hilton Judy Clark (Bembrook) Mike Moore (Lower Torfield) Geoff Childs (BOS Field) Neil McKinnon (Pauls Field) Peter Agar (Collier Road) Sue DeHaviland (Choice) John Funnell (Choice) Terry Drinkwater (HBC) Clive Read (HBC) Marian Hollingsworth (HBC)</p>	
	Cllr Hilton welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.	
	<p>Apologies for Absence and non attendance</p> <p>Andrew Colquhoun, (Lower Torfield), Dianne Huggins (Downs Road), Colin Blackman (BOS), June Walsh (Collier Road), Jill Kaye (Marina), Andrew Johnson (Tivoli), Claire Humm (Fernbank), Holly Clamp (Lower Clive Vale)</p>	
1.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd February 2022</p> <p>Agreed as read.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>Item 7: MM – <i>asked with regard to the fencing on two sides at Lower Torfield no provision was made for it in the Condition survey. He explained it was the north side of the site as there is no physical fence there.</i></p> <p>CR explained that there is a bramble barrier there – the lower fence was repaired but not by the council. CR will carry out a site visit and can provide fencing and posts to stop up gaps.</p> <p>Item 4: TD informed that trees that poses a health and safety risk on allotments will be included as part of an inspection regime. CW has been asked to carry out</p>	CR

	<p>these inspections.</p> <p>There are other trees at Lower Torfield which poses health and safety risk. CR has carried out a site inspection with CW and will confirm when works will be carried out.</p> <p>MH informed that a works order has been raised for action to trees on BOS Field and Lower Torfield as scheduled in the 5 year programme for this current budget year. Works will be carried out in the autumn.</p>	<p>CR/CW</p> <p>Note</p>
2.	<p>Expenditure Progress Report</p> <p>Progress reported distributed to Site Secretaries. CR went through report. Many orders have been completed. Remaining budget of £1147 rapidly depleting.</p> <p>TD said that we are trying to expand our allotment budget not covered by our current health and safety using other budgets for clearing up sites, providing skips, buildings inspections, ash dieback, etc</p> <p>JC asked about the timetable for skips on site? TD not able to advise of timetable just yet but informed that skips provided will be for rubbish from communal areas first. CR will be co-ordinating this with site secretaries – requires work parties.</p> <p>BOS Field has already been done. Site Secretaries help will be needed as skips will need to be dropped off, filled with the communal rubbish and taken away quickly. We cannot leave skips on site for a considerable length of time as they could be filled by household rubbish brought in by tenants.</p> <p>Lower Torfield unfortunately jumped the gun and provided their own skip. Invoice was sent to HBC for reimbursement – payment is delayed as it needs to be signed off properly by Finance auditing. AC is to contact CR with regard to the invoice.</p> <p>It is hoped that all the communal areas on allotment sites will be completed this year and then we can concentrate on rubbish left on vacant plots.</p>	<p>CR</p> <p>CR/TD</p>
3.	<p>Condition Survey</p> <p>Condition survey summary list distributed. CR advised that many of the items for this current year is under review as there are insufficient funds in the budget.</p> <p>TD informed that funding from S106 (Section 106) from</p>	<p>Note</p>

	<p>development could be included in the green infrastructure policy and maybe could include Allotments/community growing/open space/and sports/play.</p> <p>S106 can only be spent on what is agreed with developer. We have an annual S106 spending programme.</p>	
4.	<p>Allotment Rules</p> <p>TD proposing to remove rule 15.2 “Tenants may terminate Allotment Garden Tenancies by giving the council one month’s notice in writing no later than the end of February each year otherwise they will be liable for the next years invoice”</p> <p>He advised this rule was agreed for the benefit of the Accounts department and not of the Allotment section. Too much pressure was being put on tenants and unfair for payment to be expected when they genuinely could not retain the tenancy of their plot.</p> <p>Site Secretaries agreed that the rule be removed.</p> <p>MH to update the Rules and resend to all plotholders. Website to be updated with revised copy. TD to inform Accounts.</p> <p>Allotment Rules review will remain as a standing item on the Agenda.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>MH/TD</p>
5.	<p>Tenancy Situation</p> <p>Table distributed to Site Secretaries. MH informed that there are 580 currently waiting. Average waiting time now across the borough is about 5 years with the exception of 2/3 sites. 78 plots to include the 14 vacant on the table have been let since the last meeting.</p> <p>CR advised process of issuing Notices to Quit for non-payment and non-cultivation and consequent inspections over last 4 months.</p> <p>Since April, we have divided 6 (larger) plots therefore creating new plots. We will continue to divide those vacant larger plots as and when they become available.</p> <p>She advised that if there are any plotholders struggling with the size of their plots to contact her and she will discuss with Clive with a view to splitting them.</p> <p>Choice allotment continues to have a high turnover of tenants – 28 plots have been relet since last meeting.</p>	

6.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Karmabank Community Kitchen contacted HBC requesting surplus produce from allotment sites. MH responded to them advising that she would let Site Secretaries know and if anyone wanted to participate they could contact Karmabank directly. Leaflet was distributed to the Site Secretaries. MH also advised that she put the request on the Allotment website under Announcements with the contact details of Karmabank. 2. Proposal by TD not to send out anymore the monthly Site Secretaries reports generated by the Allotment Database. After some discussion, Site Secretaries felt that these were of great benefit to them particularly where there is high turnover of plots as they are able to see when new tenancies have been taken up. It was agreed that we will continue to send the reports for the time being. 3. JC – Non tenants permitted to take water from Fernbank allotments for use outside the site: implications for all ploholders and other sites. JC asked if HBC gave permission? TD said that no permissions were given by HBC. CR carried out investigation of access to mains supplies. 4. Growing Hastings: How to get more land for growing food locally? Document compiled and previously distributed by AC/JC. <p>The document outlined that since the last meeting, finding more land locally on which people can grow food was explored. There would seem to be three ways of possibly securing additional land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring old allotment sites back into cultivation • Create a Planning Obligation into the new Local Plan for space for communal growing • Look for privately or publicly owned land which might be possible for cultivation. <p>Former sites i.e. Upper Clive Vale, Apps Field and Lewes allotment sites were looked at but have become so overgrown with trees that resources would be unrealistic. The same to be true for the Old Speckled</p>	MH
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	<p>Wood site.</p> <p>Planning Obligation – HBC officers currently working on the draft Local Plan. A number of planning obligations will be included. We would like to see the Plan include a planning obligation to get developers provide some land for communal growing of food by local residents.</p> <p>JC/AC request that HBC update Site Secretaries about work to draft a Planning Obligation and provide information about a timetable for consultation on the draft Local Plan. Site Secretaries consider lobbying their Ward Councillors for the inclusion of the Planning Obligation.</p> <p>TD informed that the document which is to be sent to the Secretary of State has been delayed. Possibly next year before it is sent. Cllr Hilton informed that there is another stage of consultation before it goes out.</p> <p>Other land for growing – HBC Officers have concluded an audit of land suitable for housing.</p> <p>JC/AC request that HBC Officers share information from the recent audit of building land about potential sites for cultivation?</p> <p>If any Site Secretaries know of land that would be suitable for allotment use to share the information with HBC</p>	TD/CR
7.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>To be arranged (February 2023)</p>	