**Borough of Richmond Allotment Group (BRAG) – Ordinary Meeting**

**Date:** 11th January 2016, 7pm

**Venue:** The Waldegrave Arms, Teddington, TW11 8LX

**Present:**

Hilary Denness – Old Palace Lane

Howard Fletcher – Manor Road (Minutes)

Rosemay Fulljames – Cavendish House

Phil Iddison – Bushy Park

Ian Micklewright – Mill Road

Chris Morley Smith – Kew Short Lots

Mike Vile – Walnut Tree

Richard Ward – Townmead

Gill Ware – Briar Road

Mike Wren – Hatherop

**Apologies:**

Joyce Bentley – Walnut Tree

Robin Hewitt – Bushy Park

Duncan Hoadley – Palewell Fields, Palewell Pavillion

Ian Hyde – Walnut Tree

Tim McGough – Manor Road

David Mertens – St Anne’s Passage, Westfields

1. **Previous Minutes (19th October and AGM 16th November 2015)**

Mike Vile said that items he had raised in July had not been minuted, but these have been carried forward onto the list of items to be discussed with the Council.

The minutes of the previous meeting and the AGM were approved.

1. **Hedgehogs**

Due to the unexpected unavailability of the speaker, the planned talk on hedgehogs was postponed to the next meeting.

1. **Chairman**

Tim McGough has resigned as chairman of BRAG. Chris Morley-Smith agreed to act as chairman for the time being until a replacement is found, but is unable to take on the role in the longer term. Phil Iddison and Duncan Hoadley have agreed to help out with matters such as correspondence.

There were no volunteers for the chairman’s position at the meeting. All Representatives are asked to consider themselves or others appropriate for the role and to contact Chris Morley-Smith if interested.

1. **Matters Arising**
   1. **Council Services**

Chris Morley-Smith will contact Pete Lewis asking for a meeting. He will also suggest that the new Parks Services Manager, Yvonne Kelleher (now Pete Lewis’s manager following David Allister’s promotion) be invited. Depending on dates and availability, it is intended that BRAG is represented at the meeting by Chris Morley-Smith, Phil Iddison, Richard Ward and Howard Fletcher.

The list of topics for discussion was summarised as follows:

* Formal recognition of BRAG to be confirmed
* Allotment Strategy 2015-2020 and BRAG’s contribution (incl. rents)
* Semi-Devolvement and the Council’s current position
* Revision of T’s & C’s – to be redrafted as a BRAG initiative
* Additional Allotment Sites and the status of BRAG’s previous suggestions
* Waiting Lists and the need for rationalisation of Council policy
* Service Levels– areas which would benefit from a common approach
* Site (and/or Water) Maps as promised by the Council in previous strategy
* Keys and the need for improved control, especially of returns
* Bonfire policy and the status of BRAG’s suggested approach
* Websites – whether BRAG can be linked from Council pages, etc.
  1. **Conditions Survey**

The Secretary will reissue survey forms to Old Palace Lane and Briar Road for completion.

The Secretary will prepare a version of the survey responses containing just those points relevant to the discussions with the council.

* 1. **Rents**

Ian Mickelwright presented the results of his review of allotment rents in the various London boroughs. Whilst it is difficult to arrive at direct comparisons it is clear that Richmond is one of the more expensive boroughs on a £/rod basis.

Chris Morley-Smith has contacted the NSALG for information and is awaiting a response.

Ian Mickelwright will send a copy of the review to the Secretary for distribution.

1. **Any Other Business**
   1. **Rats**

Phil Iddison said that a large number of rats have been caught using traps provided by the Council.

* 1. **Shacklegate Lane**

It is still expected that the Shacklegate Lane site will close over the next 2-3 years. It is likely that plot-holders will be given waiting list priority for other sites.

* 1. **Probation Period**

Mike Vile suggested that the current 6-month probation period is too long. Several Representatives said that the 6-month period is viewed as a back-stop and that probationers who are clearly not working their plots would be spoken to after 2 or 3 months.

* 1. **Thanks**

The meeting offered a vote of thanks to Tim McGough for his work as Chairman during the inaugural period of BRAG.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 11th April 2016 at 7pm. The venue will again be the Waldegrave Arms.