

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

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 7pm

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

### **Present:**

Hilary Denness – Old Palace Lane

Howard Fletcher – Manor Road (Minutes)

Rosemay Fulljames – Cavendish House

Duncan Hoadley – Hertford Ave, Palewell Fields, Palewell Pavillion, Priory, Triangle

Derek Lawrence-Brown – Hertford Ave, Palewell Fields, Palewell Pavillion, Priory, Triangle

Dennis Leigh – Briar Road

Ian Micklewright – Mill Road

Chris Morley Smith – Kew Short Lots (Chair)

Vicky Phillips – Bushy Park

Mike Wren – Hatherop

### **Apologies:**

Joyce Bentley – Walnut Tree

Paul Leonard – Cavendish House

David Mertens – St Anne's Passage, Westfields

Robin Hewitt – Bushy Park

Ian Hyde – Walnut Tree

### **1. Changes of Representatives**

Phil Iddison (Bushy Park) has been replaced by Robin Hewitt.

Mary Thorp (Hertford Avenue and East Sheen Allotment Group) has been replaced by Derek Lawrence-Brown.

Gill Ware (Briar Road) has been replaced by Dennis Leigh.

### **2. Previous Minutes (11<sup>th</sup> April 2016)**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **3.1. Council Meeting Actions**

Howard Fletcher reminded Pete Lewis that he has yet to complete actions agreed at the BRAG/Council meeting held in February. These include posting notices at each site of the Council's emergency contact telephone number. (for information: Council Contact Number is 020 8891 1411; Out Of Hours 020 8744 2442)

#### **3.2. Site Maps**

Dennis Leigh reported that the Council has engaged a student to produce a site map at Briar Road. This was one of the points raised at the February meeting. No other sites reported any such activity. Chris Morley-Smith will now contact Pete Lewis regarding other sites to follow up his action from the meeting.

#### **4. Bonfires**

The meeting was unanimous in expressing disappointment that, having sought advice from BRAG, the Council has imposed changes to bonfire rules which go against our recommendation. Bonfires will from now on be permitted only on weekdays between October and March. This completely disregards the needs of 'weekend' allotmenters.

It was agreed that bonfires are needed in certain circumstances such as destroying diseased or invasive vegetation, where even disposal at the local tip would not be good environmentally.

Disappointment is exacerbated by the new conditions being applied to all sites when only one has been the subject of significant complaint. The new rules seem to contradict logic in some cases – for example, Hertford Avenue is bounded by schools which would be inconvenienced more in winter than in summer. Winter bonfires may also not have water on hand for emergencies where mains supplies have been turned off. An appeal to allow for local variations has been dismissed.

It is clear that David Allister is not prepared to discuss this further. Accordingly, Duncan Hoadley agreed to make contact through Lord True to Cllr Pamela Fleming in an attempt to restart proper consideration of this issue.

#### **5. Semi-Devolved Agreements**

Chris Morley-Smith presented a summary of the position on Semi-Devolved Agreements.

Briar Road is the only site with a desire to progress devolvment. All other sites are content with the status quo, although it is recognized that there is considerable disparity between the facilities and responsibilities of various sites. Several arrangements are informal and undocumented, or without copies held by the Council. Chris Morley-Smith will now respond to David Allister's previous correspondence with view of BRAG members as above.

The Council appears to be in no hurry to move forward on this. The situation may change when the merger with Wandsworth takes effect, as it is believed their allotment services are outsourced.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

##### **6.1. Kew Brewery Malt**

Howard Fletcher said that Kew Brewery has been supplying Manor Road with spent malt (a by-product of the brewing process) which is a nutritious compost additive. This is delivered free of charge and avoids its disposal as a waste product. Other sites wishing to take advantage of their increasing output should contact David Scott at [david@kewbrewery.co.uk](mailto:david@kewbrewery.co.uk)

## **6.2. Pesticide/Herbicide Spraying**

Rosemary Fulljames reported that they have had some complaints at Cavendish House regarding the overzealous use of glyphosate sprays which can affect adjacent areas. Apparently it is necessary to be certificated in order to use a backpack spray, although a hand-held spray can be used with care. A report is due out soon which may clarify the rules on this, and Duncan Hoadley offered to make enquires. It is possible this should be added to the Allotment Terms & Conditions in the next revision.

## **6.3. Allotment Strategy**

Chris Morley-Smith reported that David Allister has told him work has begun on the Council's next Allotment Strategy (the last one having expired in 2015), and expects to invite BRAG's comments later this year.

## **6.4. BRAG Vice-Chair**

Once again Chris Morley-Smith asked for a volunteer to fulfil the BRAG Vice-Chair role, but none was forthcoming.

## **6.5. Allotment Administration Software**

Mike Wren asked if any sites used allotment-specific software for managing accounts, address lists, etc. He said that NSALG has an offering, but it was prohibitively expensive. Several representatives said they used Excel in various ways, including copying address lists into 'bcc' on emails to keep addresses confidential.

## **6.6. KHS Show**

This year's Kew Horticultural Society show will be held on Kew Green on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> August. Competitive showings are open to all.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 at 7pm. The venue will again be the Waldegrave Arms.