

Borough of Richmond Allotment Group (BRAG) – Ordinary Meeting

Date: 3rd October 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

Richard Ward – Townmead

Apologies:

Robin Hewitt – Bushy Park

Paul Leonard – Cavendish House

David Mertens – St Anne's Passage, Westfields

Mike Wren – Hatherop

(The meeting expressed concern at the paucity of apologies from non-attenders)

1. Previous Minutes (11th July 2016)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

For clarification on point 4, the Council's changed regulations allow bonfires on weekdays only between 1st October and 31st March.

2. Matters Arising

2.1. Site Maps

Chris Morley-Smith has been in contact with Pete Lewis on this. The student doing the mapping has now left, but it is the Council's intention to continue the work. Pete Lewis had sent Chris Morley-Smith a draft of Kew Short Lots. Cavendish have produced their own schematic version. Any sites having existing maps should forward them to Pete Lewis.

2.2. Semi-Devolved Agreements

Chris Morley-Smith has written to David Allister confirming that all sites are content to continue on their existing arrangements with the exception of Briar Road which would like to be fully devolved. David Allister responded that he intends to cancel all current agreements and replace them with a single standard semi devolved contract that sites can decide whether to accept or not. Alternatively, sites could progress to a fully devolved status. Some were unhappy with this approach but Chris Morley-Smith confirmed he had already asked David Allister that BRAG is consulted on this

proposed new agreement and has offered to work with the Council to reach a mutually acceptable result.

2.3. Herbicide and Pesticide Spraying

Duncan Hoadley circulated an article from The Guardian stating that the EU had deferred a proposed ban on the licensing of glyphosate by 18 months pending further research into alleged carcinogenic properties. Spraying of herbicides and pesticides using other than small hand-held containers should only be done by trained and certificated practitioners. Care must be taken to avoid drift onto non-targeted areas and to protect the user.

Duncan Hoadley and Rosemary Fulljames agreed to draft some wording to be forwarded to the Council for inclusion in the Allotment Terms and Conditions.

3. Bonfires

Chris Morley-Smith has, through Cllr Monica Horner, contacted Cllr Pamela Fleming on this matter and suggested that we should work with the Council to arrive at a compromise on their recent pronouncement limiting permitted times for bonfires. David Allister has asked for 'a couple of months' (more) to see how it is working in practice.

Experience of some sites has shown that limiting bonfires to weekdays has the opposite effect to that required where sites are adjacent to schools. Hilary Denness said also that alternative means of disposal must be found as some plotholders do not have the means to transport, e.g. ivy cuttings to the tip. It is clear that it would be preferable to have these rules tailored to individual sites and local variations should be permitted.

Chris Morley-Smith has arranged to have contact with David Allister and Cllr Fleming in November to pursue a compromise. It is hoped that this could lessen the period of the ban and allow fires on at least one day at the weekend, and perhaps suggest fires only later in the day (pre-dusk).

4. Comments from Site Reps

4.1. Bushy Park

- Committee reduced by recent resignations
- Expecting new committee members at imminent AGM
- Several empty plots
- Difficulty obtaining new names from Council

4.2. Old Palace Lane

- 400 on waiting list (self managed); no empty plots
- Invasive ivy from neighbouring properties

4.3. Cavendish House

- Recent fruit thefts

- Own waiting list; no empty plots
- Pete Lewis helpful

4.4. Briar Road

- Ongoing talks on devolution with David Allister

4.5. Mill Road

- 3 plots to let
- Pete Lewis helpful providing new names
- Council tree officers helpful dealing with dangerous trees
- Recent use of commercial rubbish disposal (Ian Mickelwright to circulate contact details)

4.6. Townmead

- Pete Lewis generally helpful

4.7. Hertford Avenue

- Difficulty getting Council to help with evictions

4.8. Sheen Group

- Difficulty getting Council to help with evictions
- Meeting with David Allister; acknowledged should do more
- If cultivation rules are too strict to enforce they should be changed

4.9. Manor Road

- Several plots empty
- Recent visit by Pete Lewis helpful
- Some new names just now provided, but plots vacant for months

4.10. Kew Short Lots

- Own list and evictions – small site, low volume
- Little call on Pete Lewis
- David Allister responsive with Councillor assistance helpful on fencing.

5. BRAG Vice-Chair

Duncan Hoadley agreed to stand for election to this position at the next AGM.

6. AGM

The proposed date for the AGM is Monday, 28 November. Chris Morley-Smith will ask David Allister to provide a room at York House.

David Allister will be formally invited and given a slot on the agenda as he requested.

7. AOB

7.1. Allotment Competition

Richard Ward noted that the results of the Allotment Competition are not shown on the Council's website. Competition winners are to be recognised at a Mayor's reception on 11th October to which some site representatives have been invited.

7.2. Allotment Strategy

There has been no sign yet of the Allotment Strategy document promised by the end of the year, and on which BRAG is due to be consulted. If nothing is heard beforehand, we can question this at the AGM.

7.3. Spent Malt

Howard Fletcher reiterated that Manor Road is supplied with spent malt by Kew Brewery and would be made available to others. Contact David Scott at david@kewbrewery.co.uk

7.4. KHS Show

Chris Morley-Smith reported that this year's Kew Horticultural Society show was very successful, although more exhibits would have been welcome.

Next year's show will be held on Kew Green on Saturday, 26th August 2017.

8. Next Meeting (NOTE NEW VENUE)

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 9th January 2017 at 7pm at The Triple Crown pub, 15 Kew Foot Road, Richmond TW9 2SS (room on 1st Floor).