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

**Date:** 24th July 2017, 7pm

**Venue:** The Triple Crown, Richmond, TW9 2SS

**Present:**

Wendy Akers – Old Palace Lane

Bill Collis – Manor Road

Graham Day – Briar Road

Howard Fletcher – Manor Road (Minutes)

Derek Lawrence-Brown – Hertford Ave

Dennis Leigh – Briar Road

Paul Leonard – Cavendish House

Ian Micklewright – Mill Road

Susan Moore – Palewell Park, Palewell Pavillion, Priory, Triangle

Chris Morley Smith – Kew Short Lots (Chair)

Brian Nicholls – Hatherop

John Padgett – Palewell Park, Palewell Pavillion, Priory, Triangle

Richard Ward – Townmead

Mike Wren – Hatherop

**Apologies:**

Robin Hewitt – Bushy Park

David Mertens – St Anne’s Passage, Westfields

1. **Changes to Representatives**

Duncan Hoadley is now working abroad; his place as East Sheen Allotments chairman and BRAG representative is taken by John Padgett, with Susan Moore as secretary.

Hilary Denness and Martin Postle are no longer representing Old Palace Lane; their place is taken by Wendy Akers.

1. **Previous Minutes (24th April 2017)**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

1. **Vice-Chair Position**

Derek Lawrence-Brown replaces Duncan Hoadley as BRAG Vice-Chairman.

1. **Matters Arising from April Meeting**
   1. **Waiting Lists/Outstanding Rent Payments**

Yvonne Kelleher has explained that council systems are not sufficiently robust to provide definitive lists on outstanding rent payments, but Pete Lewis will investigate and respond to enquiries about specific plots.

* 1. **Strategy**

The Council’s new Allotments Strategy is still not available for review. The appointed contractor, Steve Marshall, has apologised for the delay and has promised a draft by mid-August. Chris Morley-Smith will monitor.

The new strategy will provide an opportunity to update the Allotment Terms & Conditions. This will include the limitation of pesticide application as proposed by BRAG.

Pete Lewis has mentioned to Mike Wren that he would like to discuss with BRAG a revision of the inspection/warning/eviction procedure. Chris Morley-Smith will contact Pete Lewis to take this forward.

The amended Council bonfire rules are causing problems as they concentrate bonfires into just a few hours on the first Saturday of each summer month, resulting in excessive smoke and annoyance to neighbours (and other plotholders!). Chris Morley-Smith will suggest reverting to BRAG’s original proposal of a 3-month total ban in the summer with no limitation (other than due consideration) for the remainder. Pete Lewis has suggested the use of containers available for a brief period, but this may not be practical at all sites. Further discussion is needed.

Pete Lewis has indicated that he would like to investigate further the insurances used by various sites. Currently, the Council provides general public liability insurance as the landowner, but insurances for events and activities organised by site committees are not covered by the Council and sites should provide their own. Most sites organise this through the NSALG and some, but not all, have costs reimbursed by the council.

Old Palace Lane has ceased to be semi-devolved and has handed back control of the site to the Council. However, they still have an active site committee and will allow the split of responsibilities between the site and the Council to settle.

1. **Comments from Site Reps**
   1. **Hertford Avenue**

* Trees will not be maintained by the Council unless a H&S issue.
  1. **East Sheen (Palewell Park/Palewell Pavilion)**
* Recent issue of social media abuse to committee referred to Council. Should be included in T&C’s (currently only verbal abuse). Code of Conduct being prepared by site, to be shared with others when complete.
  1. **Old Palace Lane**
* In discussion with Council over maintenance of common paths and trees.
* Recent open day very successful with >£1,000 raised for charity.
  1. **Manor Road**
* Two trees removed by Council; one dangerous, one overhanging boundary.
* Successful BBQ day held, attended by Cllr Speak.
  1. **Briar Road**
* Reviving interest in self-management; working with Steve Marshall on draft lease.
  1. **Townmead**
* Borough-wide Allotment Competition open to all; notices sent by Council for display at sites.
  1. **Hatherop**
* Successful open day held, attended by Vince Cable MP.

1. **AOB**
   1. **KHS Show**

The Kew Horticultural Society show will be held on Saturday, 26 August on Kew Green. Entries for all competition classes are encouraged.

* 1. **Barnes Show**

The Barnes Horticultural Show will be held on Sunday, 3 September.

* 1. **Allotments Week**

The National Allotments Society (aka NSALG) has declared 14-20 August to be National Allotments Week and encourages activities and events during that period.

* 1. **AGM**

Monday, 27 November was proposed as the date for the 2017 BRAG AGM. Chris Morley-Smith will ask the Council for a room.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next BRAG meeting will be held on Monday, 16th October 2017 at 7pm at The Triple Crown pub, 15 Kew Foot Road, Richmond TW9 2SS (room on 1st Floor).