

Notes of a Meeting with LBM Allotment Societies on Thursday 23 June 2011 held at Paddock Allotment.

Allotment Society Members

Jean & Richard Hancock – The Paddocks
Annemarie Hedges – Havelock Road
Sue & Ian Burgin – Havelock Road
Jessica Lawrence – Cannizaro
Jocelyn Gladwyn – Cannizaro
Mike Gannaway – Brooklands
Fred Taylor – Cottenham Park
Bill Bailey – Cottenham Park
Hazel Norman – Tamworth Farm
Kathleen Stevens – Tamworth Farm
Emma Townsend – Tamworth Farm
Claire Shackleton – Western Road
Bev Stansfield – New Barnes Allotments
John Hitchman – New Barnes
B. Fisher –
Maire Denny – Thurleston Avenue
Caroline Trumper – Martin Way
Phil Neale – Martin Way
Peter Obermuller – George Hill
Howard Watson – George Hill

Doug Napier – Greenspaces Manager, London Borough of Merton

- DN summarised the context and background to the allotments transformation project for the benefit of new attendees.
- There was a discussion around the make-up of the Gold, Silver and Bronze service offers. The current Council support for The Paddock was queried. Confirmed that Council currently supplies skips but not manure.
- There was a discussion around insurance matters and the relative responsibilities of the society/association and the Council. In DN's view day-to-day operational business would generally be the responsibility of the local society to insure with the Council being responsible for significant infrastructure.
- There was a discussion on the issue of compulsory membership of the society/association as this has generated some conflicts in the consultation process so far. On the whole reps agree that all tenants should be members of their relevant local society but anticipate some resistance. It was generally felt that this would be a problem mainly with some existing tenants and much less so for new tenants. Members could simply exercise their right not to participate in allotment

business and in effect passport that responsibility to their elected/nominated officers; the only real issue other than that would be one of membership subscriptions and, of course, these could be a very nominal sum or even nil if the society so chose

- Some members expressed continuing concerns in relation to future fees and charges, especially in relation to the imminent water levy and what the fee increases might be for self-managed sites.
- The disposal of waste and fly tipping was again raised as an issue. It was emphasised that under a self-management model tenants would be more inclined and empowered to take individual action to prevent abuses.
- Concern was expressed about the liability that might be imposed upon individual officers/committee member should the societies/associations encounter financial difficulties under the self-management model. CB suggested in general terms how this might be tackled and provided details of some relevant internet sites that provided further useful details in this respect. These were:

As discussed at our recent collective meeting, here are a couple of links that might be of interest to the other associations. The first is taken from a forum on the Allotments4all website where each option is described in brief - the recommendation is to set up as an Industrial & Provident Society:

<http://www.allotments4all.co.uk/smf/index.php/topic,66470.0.html>

The second link is to the appropriate page on the FSA website containing the registration document, prices and all the information regarding to go about setting up as an IPS.

http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pages/doing/small_firms/msr/societies/index.shtml

- The allotment representatives indicated their current or likely position in relation to the current options, recognising that some have not yet held a meeting/AGM to confirm the situation and that the Cottenham Park allotment site is keen to hold a ballot of all of its tenants very soon.

Site	Preference	RAG rating
Brooklands		
Cannizaro		
Cottenham Park		
Durnsford Road		
Eastfields		
Effra Road		
Eveline		

Havelock		
Martin Way		
New Barnes		
Phipps Bridge		
Tamworth Farm		
Thurlston		
Western		

- DN was asked to consider how the allotment reps might be updated on the situation on “live” Notices to Quit.
- There was a discussion around the Council’s terms in relation to the time period for tenants to rectify problems relating to non-cultivation. There was unanimous within the group agreement that these should be formally reduced to 2 months.
- It was agreed that the next meeting of the steering group should occur at the end of July by which time most of the allotment sites should have firmed up their preferences as the Council would like to conclude this matter in time for the annual allotment billing time in order to advise all tenants of the forward plan and future fees.

London Borough of Merton:
Doug Napier (DN)