

Minutes for RGS Committee Meeting

9am Sunday 6 January 2019

1 Present: Helen Finch (Chair), Elizabeth Smart, Mariangela Renshaw, Janis Humberstone, Elaine Barnwell, Vivien Fowler, Ali Linton, Gill Tamsett, Catherine Maunsell-Bower, Patrick Crawford, Carol Martinez, Shirley Gillbe and Mike Cooper and Jackie Savage (Minutes).
Apologies: Brenna Latimore and Greg Willcox.

2. Minutes of meeting held on Sunday 4th Nov 2018, agreed ex committee, signed. (Already on website)

3. Matters arising (not agenda items)

i Lease / Charity update (PC)

- On 20 November, 2018 Helen Finch, Alan Strowger and Patrick Crawford (RGS representatives) met with Peter Tiernan (Property & Contract Manager) of Wandsworth and Ian Mitchell (Managing Director) of Enable Leisure & Culture to discuss the renewal of the Lease.
- PT and IM confirmed that the formal lease expired 6 years ago but is held over on expiring terms. They also confirmed that the RGS only kept 20% of revenues while there is a backlog of repairs which are becoming critical.
- It was agreed that Draft 8.6 of the Heads of Terms was the current lease proposal on offer. RGS stated that this draft was unacceptable to the RGS for previously stated reasons including a rent review to market value at a 10 year interval as well as the inclusion of a list of tenant's work which must be undertaken within 10 years.
- RGS asked whether Wandsworth Council had a policy on Allotments within the Borough as do a number of other Councils including Richmond & Barnet. Mr. Tiernan explained that they do not have a policy but Mr. Mitchell will liaise with Wandsworth about creating an Allotment Policy to be considered by the Council. RGS offered to assist with the formulation of such a policy.
- It was agreed that the RGS had a protected tenancy under the Landlord & Tenants Act 1954 Part 2.
- It was agreed that the RGS would review the current lease proposal and present their revised requirements to Wandsworth and Enable.

JCH reminded the committee of the undertaking by Enable that although the annual rent was to be paid in accordance with previously agreed terms, reimbursement of expenses over and above the 20% allowance would be discussed, with a view to reimbursement.

In brief discussions about becoming a Charity, JCH suggested reviewing the requirement for the trustees to assume ANY liability at all. Unless there has been a change to the specific provisions on trustees' liability in the Trustee Act 1925, the liability should only be, as set out by law.

Action: PC (& AS)

ii Store roof replacement project (PC)

As requested, PC prepared a Specification, drawings, etc so competitive tenders could be sought for the renewal of the Site 2 Store roof. The work included removing the asbestos roof and replacing it with a new insulated profiled metal roof. In addition, the rainwater disposal system would be taken down and replaced. Two roof lights would be provided to the North slope.

Tenders were sought from four firms. One firm declined to tender. PC asked for tenders to be returned by 4 January, 2019. In the event, only one tender was received. PC will continue to chase the other two firms as he felt three quotations are required; particularly if grant assistance is sought. If needs be, PC will approach other firms to tender.

The tender received from Advanced Industrial Roofing & Cladding Systems Ltd was in the sum of £11,252,25 plus VAT; a total of £13,502.00. Within this sum there were Provisional Sums and a Contingency Sum totalling £1,080.00 inclusive of VAT. They state that the work would take one week to complete. In PC's view, this sum is reasonable and accords with what he would have anticipated.

(Action: PC)

iii Notice Boards (HF)

Ian Finch was thanked for carrying out the replacement UV protected polycarbonate panels to the notice boards.

iv Wood chip and manure deliveries (VF)

- a) The wood chip deliveries have been so unreliable that we are now sourcing alternatives. VF has 2 possible options.
- b) The fact we pay rather a lot "in tips" to the drivers for the manure was discussed and alternatives have been sought. EB has discussed this with Derrick Ratcliffe who has organised these deliveries for many years and passed the information on to VF and GW.

Action: VF and GW

4 Chair's Report

- i. Amendment to "Breach of Agreement" procedure / rules document. The policy regarding an appeal says (now with amended text in red):

*Any tenant may appeal in writing to the Chair of the RGS Committee against a decision made against them **before the deadline for quitting the plot**, giving full reasons for the objection. This appeal will be heard by a sub-committee of appropriate committee members with no conflict of interest and the tenant invited to bring their own supporter and / or witness. **Once a time and date has been agreed an email and hard copy will be sent stating the agreed time, the date and stating if the appellants fails to attend, the appeal will go ahead in the appellants absence.***

The committee agreed to this amendment. HF to update the policy and send it to the website manager.

Action HF

- ii. An evicted tenant has requested to go on waiting list and HF would like to know the opinion of the committee although the Site Secretaries opinion holds more weight. Being denied entry on the waiting list was discussed but it was decided being evicted was punishment enough. Other options are:
 - a. Join the waiting list like anyone else then offered a plot in 3 years at the earliest.
 - b. Join the waiting list with a note that the person has been evicted.
 - c. The applicant is put in the addendum section at the bottom of the list that JS holds with a date to join main waiting list in 2 years so a plot would be offered in about 5 years. A note of explanation is made.
 - d. Same as 'c' but dated 7 years hence so offered a plot in about 10 years

JS suggested adding the name to secondary list but with a time delay of either 3 or 5 years. The person would not be contacted when the time had elapsed, it would be up to the person to contact the RGS. It was agreed this option should be implemented with a 3 year time delay.

(Action: JS to write to evicted tenant)

- iii. Invoices for plot holders and members – plans
Wording on the invoice has been agreed. Only the rent is going up in line with Enable's recommendation. The new rent levels are: Full £24 (+£1) Senior £19.50 (+90p) Disabled £18.5 (+£90). The invoices to be sent out the week of 18th February 2019 by Robert Linton. EB has agreed to send an email warning that plot holders must give a month's notice if want to give up ie by the 28th February 2019. We will be asking for payment by direct bank transfer or by cheque. We will not be accepting cash unless there is an individual problem.

Action: RL, EB & HF)

5 Treasurer's report (JH) - Nothing to report

6 Allotment Secretaries' reports GENERAL

- We agreed to use our version the Enable site inspection sheets. Stages 1 - 4. These will be used if gentle prompts by text, email or personal contact fail.

- Plot numbering - can anyone suggest more a more robust numbering system? As mentioned in the Bulletin.
- Problem plot holders - what do we do when tenants pull out a handful of weeds before the inspection and continue to neglect their plots?

Site 2 (ES)

Lettings:

Plot 20B (2 rods) has been let to the next person on the Primary Waiting list from 10 November 2018.

November Plot Inspection: Neglected plot letters (together with Enable check-list) were sent to the following plot holders:

- 5B Plot holder replied saying that she realized that she had not been on top of things but had started to clear the plot.
- 27B No reply received.
- 38A Plot holder replied saying that child care responsibilities had made it difficult to devote as much time to her plot but she planned to improve things.
- 40C. Plot holder replied saying that a very heavy workload was making it difficult to devote the time but he hoped to improve as soon as possible.
- 41C No reply received.
- 40F & 18A Reply received explaining their unique method of gardening..

Post-inspection informal follow-up

Plot 17 It was noted that this plot showed no sign of recent cultivation. A text message was sent to the plot holder asking if he wished to downsize or if he needed any assistance. He replied to say that personal circumstances had made it difficult to devote time to the plot and that he would let us know if he wished to downsize.

Plot 28A: not much cultivation during the year while bindweed being controlled and plot very weedy. Barry is in Australia but is back in February and will begin to bring the plot under control. has a bad back so cannot do much other than look after the chickens but he was adamant that they want to keep the plot, not just the chickens, and will cultivate in 2019.

Plot 29 parts of his large plot were untidy and weedy, especially the end furthest from the main path. His intention is to bring the whole plot under control before rents are due but to notify Liz if he decides to relinquish part of his plot. He is going to speak to his neighbour (30A) about the messy area near the fence to clarify the boundary and ownership of one of the bins at the back which sits between the two plots.

Plot 30B; plot neglected. He was asked if he wanted to continue and he said that he had not got round to clearing up but confirmed that he does want to carry on cultivating his plot.

Site 3

Site Secretary Report – Outer Area (VF)

Lettings 82D let on 25 November 2018

Problem Plots

51B, 56A – weeds and paths, 95B letter sent re blocking of communal path

82D and 95A - no sign of activity

Several plots need emails on minor issues

Problems with neighbours

Plot 50A – neighbours at rear have arranged for apple tree to be cut back end January to be funded by the householder

Other issues

Plot 65C – concern over amount of rubbish requiring removal

Site 3 (plots 101 to 127 inner area) (AL)

Lettings:

Plot 115C - is in the process of being relet

Plot 101A - I have just received an email saying that owing to extra work commitments they wish to relinquish their plot. I have suggested the secondary waiting list, asked for a date and will then relet the plot.

- 7 Trading Secretary's report (GT)** The Store was given a spring clean and tidy-up on Saturday 5 Jan, the seeds organised and the potatoes, garlic, onions and shallots put out in readiness for the Store re-opening.

There is a delivery of Country Natural this week and I will be ordering seed composts for delivery in a couple of weeks' time.

- 8 Bulletin Editor's report. (CM)** Carol was thanked and congratulated on her first Bulletin. She remarked that she would make sure a photo was on the front cover in future issues. March Bulletin Deadline: Mon 25 February.

- 9 Site Manager's report (SG)**

Helen, Liz and Shirley Gillbe attended the Site Managers' meeting on 29 November, chaired by Valerie Selby, Parks Development and Biodiversity Manager, Enable L & C. Necessarily, not all the areas of discussion were pertinent to the RGS.

10. Diary dates:

- AGM venue and date discussed. It was agreed to keep the Cricket Club as the venue but to move the date back to the "traditional" month of November. EB to book Thurs 14 November.
- Autumn Show. CM is away on 14 Sept. So she will see if 7th or 21st possible with the Church instead.
- Summer Show Event. This will probably be held on Sunday 16 June (*The date is to be decided nearer the time so we can show the roses etc at their peak.*)
- Trips. A Spring visit to Wisley and / or another garden discussed but held over as BL not at meeting.

- 11. AOB** CMB requested details of the negotiations already taken to become a Charity. JS to forward them to her.

Date of the next meeting **Sunday 3 Feb 2019** 9am at the store