



YACIO Site Secretary Meeting

24th June 2019

Attending: **Tony Chalcraft [TC]**, **Simon Wild [SW]**, **Anna Pawlow [AP]**, **Colin Smith [CS]**, **Maria Lewington [ML]**, **Tina Funnell [TF]**, **Lisa Turner [LT]**, Celina Gee, Paul Graham, John Shirbon, Brian Strudwick, Mary Harlington, Warwick Ivel, Sarah Penn, Jane Thurlow, Katherine Lancey, Christine Robertson, Claire Pickard, Sarah Daniel, Janet Cordingley

Chair: Tony Chalcraft

Minutes: Anna Pawlow

1. **Welcome/ Apologies/Introductions**

TC welcomed everybody and everyone introduced themselves and which site they represented. Apologies were received from Steve Cooke, Graham Sanderson, Adam Myers, Phil Renshaw and John Harper.

2. **Trustees' Report**

TC noted that this was a period of consolidation and review for YACIO. Trustees and AP were working to regulate and simplify the procedures used and consolidate these into a Manual for Trustees to refer to so that every issue would be treated fairly and equitably. This was not yet completed, in fact it would be constantly evolving, but had been compiled and was being thoroughly reviewed. This would eventually be made available to everyone but was primarily an internal document to guide Trustees. AP had been working on amending the Tenancy documentation and updating the Site Secretary Handbook. There had been lots of discussions regarding the Cultivation Policy and this had been updated to bring improvements. It was felt that poorly cultivated plots were

unfair to existing tenants and those on the waiting lists and that there were greatly differing standards on different sites. Trustees hoped to bring these standards up gradually.

Colony had been mostly fixed, though there were still some small issues where functionality was not what it could be. It was noted that the company, MCPC had recently been purchased by a Croatian company.

TC noted that there were not site secretaries for all sites with new site secretaries from Fulford Cross and Hob Moor joining us for the first time and ML representing Howe Hill until at least the new year.

TC noted that lots of Trustees time continued to be taken up with disputes, particularly on Glen allotments and that consultations were ongoing between YACIO, the local Councillor and representatives from the NSALG.

It was noted that YACIO still had not received a finalised Lease from CYC despite frequent attempts. Many Legacy Issues remained outstanding too. YACIO had taken over paying for the water from July this year but the previous bill had still not been finalised with CYC.

Trustees were pleased to announce that no rent increase would be occurring this year and that policy reviews on Concessions were ongoing with a hope to present new policies, if agreed, to the AGM next year but with no changes implemented before 2021.

The second newsletter had gone out in October to all tenants and AP had a plan in place to deal with the 2020 invoices. There were currently seven out of the nine possible Trustees and it was likely that YACIO would be looking to add to this in the next few months.

3. Finance Report

LT presented a brief report on the finances. She noted that there had been slightly more spending this year, and this was mostly accounted for from bid work, but that things were roughly the same.

4. Updated Tenancy Documents

AP presented updated Concession Application Forms and Tenancy Agreements to the site secretaries. The Concession form had been thoroughly updated to be more approachable and the tenancy form had had some sections added to the rear page for site secretaries to complete when competing the tenancy to assist with admin processes and cut down on duplications.

5. New Notice Letters

Following on from Trustee discussions all of the notice letters had been updated to refer more to the terms of the tenancy agreement and ask for a 'majority' of a plot to be cultivated rather than just 25%. It was hoped that these new letters would bring greater clarity to tenants as to what was expected of them and help to increase the standards across the city. The reference numbers remained the same and AP asked that site secretaries use these when asking for letters to be sent so as to avoid confusion. If no reference were given then a letter 1A would be the standard.

6. Site Secretary Handbook

AP presented the updates to the Site Secretary Handbook. These were changes to the Waste Disposal section following the changes to skip availability and new processes in place for this and a new section clarifying YACIO's stance on antisocial and abusive behaviours.

There were some discussions of best practice on waiting lists and also discussion of whether to add a new size band to plots to account for 3/4 sized plots. It was agreed that this would require an awful lot of extra work to be achieved, with all plots needing remeasuring, but was perhaps worth considering in the future.

Further clarifications on the new policies for Waste Disposal were made by CS. If a site secretary felt that a plot needed clearance work prior to reletting then

they should contact AP to arrange for Dave the handyman to clear this. It was noted that site secretaries should make new tenants aware that disposing of rubbish was their responsibility so as to encourage people to think carefully before bringing items on to site. If there were any issues then AP encouraged site secretaries to contact her for advice.

7. Legacy Issues

Discussion of outstanding Legacy Work took place. It was agreed that AP would circulate the updated works list from DM and any comments should be submitted to AP by email so that these could be addressed at the next review meeting.

8. Maintenance Issues (as distinct from Bids)

CS noted that last year a number of bids had been received that Trustees felt were actually routine maintenance work that should be reported to YACIO as a matter of course rather than special projects to enhance sites. CS & ML outlined the kinds of projects that were envisaged for project bids and noted that this year a closing date for spending agreed funds would be stated as the uptake on promised matched funding had been surprisingly low this year. It was noted that most sites were happy with the contractors, though there were still some minor issues. AP requested that any maintenance issues be reported to her so that she could arrange works.

9. Site Maps

ML noted that she had discovered on taking on the site secretary role for Howe Hill that the maps provided by CYC were rather out of date. This was known to be the case for most sites and it was requested that Site Secretaries keep this in mind and if they had the time over the next few months take time to update their maps, even if this was simply with a marker pen and tipex, so that these could be

updated and made more fit for purpose. Trustees noted that this was an ongoing project but that it would be of long term benefit to update these.

10. **Feedback from Site Secretaries**

Rats - Discussion of issues with rats took place. CS noted that YACIO had in its possession some rat traps that could be provided to sites but that responsibility for these traps must be undertaken by someone on site. AP asked anyone in need to email her to arrange this.

Hedges - Queries were raised regarding plot boundaries and what was acceptable. AP noted that the tenancy agreement specifies 1.5m and that she had worked with several site secretaries to send letters, usually in the winter, to tenants whose boundaries needed work. Anyone wishing to send such letters should contact AP.

Music - A query regarding the playing of music on a plot was raised. All agreed that this should be kept to a reasonable level.

Termination of Tenancies - A query regarding notice of termination was raised. AP stated that notice in writing from the tenant was preferred and if approached site secretaries should ask the tenant to do this but that they should also notify AP as many tenants forgot and AP needed to serve the correct legal notices to end a tenancy before it could be relet and that not being notified caused delays.

Livestock - AP asked all site secretaries to notify her of any livestock keepers on their sites, or anyone who had given up, so that accurate invoices could be raised and new emergency contact forms sent to tenants. This included beekeepers.

Site Visits - Trustees would again be trying to visit all sites over the winter to discuss any issues. They would be in touch to arrange this.

Associations - AM & TC were arranging a meeting with Associations as YACIO wish to develop relationships and liaise better with Associations.

Site Signs - YACIO were arranging for new signs to replace out of date CYC signage on site, this would be ongoing over the winter.

Newsletter - If anyone had anything they wished to suggest or write for the January newsletter they should contact AP.

11. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be prior to the AGM and a Monday in February would be chosen nearer the time.

CS & TC thanked everyone for coming and for all of their hard work throughout the year on YACIO's behalf. Honorarium cheques were then distributed.