



# YACIO Site Secretary Meeting

15<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Attending: **Tony Chalcraft [TC]**, **Adam Myers [AM]**, **Lisa Turner [LT]** **Simon Wild [SW]** **Anna Pawlow [AP]**, Christine Robertson, David Brinklow, Paul Graham, Jane Thurlow, Brian Strudwick, Mary Harlington, John Shirbon, Phil Renshaw, Claire Pickard, Celina Gee, Sarah Daniel, Kelvin Brookes, Barbara Whitwell

Chair: Tony Chalcraft

Minutes: Anna Pawlow

## 1. Welcome/ Apologies

TC Welcomed everyone to the meeting everybody introduced themselves and which site they represented. Apologies were received from Graham Sanderson and Steve Cook. TC explained that once again we would be noting any off topic subjects on the flip chart to revisit later.

## 2. Trustees' Report

TC presented a report from the Trustees one year after taking over the running of the allotments. The rent had come in from tenants, exposing lots of problems with the data from the Council. The finances for the year were sufficient to cover all expenses and the Trustees were confident that YACIO could continue to run with a small surplus. A contractor had been appointed and working through the initial problems a level of service better than that provided by the council had been put in place. AP had been appointed as Administrator and had extended her contract to continue providing this service to YACIO. All sites were now represented by a site secretary and a handbook produced to help them and a YACIO manual of all policies and procedures was in the works. Trustees noted that the most time consuming issues were dealing with tensions on sites between ploholders and dispute resolution. He reported that YACIO were in the process

of adding new trustees. CYC were still dealing with the list of legacy works and as yet there was no timetable for this. He noted that there still was not a lease from CYC and that this would be followed up at the upcoming review meeting.

### **3. Finance Report**

LT presented a brief report on the YACIO finances. Approaching the end of year and with the bulk of invoicing done there was a clearer picture of the finances and YACIO was predicted to stay on course for having a small surplus by the end of the year. There were still some unknown costs for the year, such as water, but these had been budgeted for. LT confirmed that the year end was December and that full inspected accounts would be produced for the AGM in March.

### **4. Annual Project Bids**

Trustees presented the idea of having sites submit 'bids' for project work outside of the normal maintenance issues. Trustees clarified that these bids were not for issues of general maintenance but for new projects or ideas that would bring something to the site. One of the aims of this was to understand what people wanted to see on sites that they weren't already getting or how existing facilities could be improved. Site secretaries were asked to fill out the form that AP would circulate and submit this to the Trustees to decide what could be done. Trustees reiterated the need to retain a small surplus but that the aim was to reinvest some monies back into the sites to improve things for tenants. Site secretaries debated what sort of works they might like to see. It was noted that plot clearances could be submitted but ideally this would only be for plots that were in a significantly bad state. Where tenants could do the work themselves this was always the preference and site secretaries could offer 6 month on 1 year rent reductions to incentivise this. It was noted that legacy issues should not be submitted as these were being dealt with by the Council.

### **5. Site Inspection Notices**

AP outlined the agreed notices process and the stock letters that could be sent and answered questions on the process. It was noted that the stock letters could be modified but they had been formulated to be as general as possible and the

25% figure agreed at a previous meeting as attainable. Where there were particular issues bespoke letters could be sent. AP reminded everyone that they need to reinspect after the notice period expires (3 or 4 weeks) and let her know whether to remove the notice or send the next letter.

## **6. Contractor Feedback**

Trustees asked for feedback on the contractors. AP noted that in general she only saw the problems so this could lead to a negative bias. Site secretaries debated the issues and in general it was noted that it would be better if the grass was cut shorter and the same for hedges. Some issues with clearing away hedge cuttings were noted. Communication from the contractors was hit and miss with some site secretaries having not been contacted.

-BREAK-

## **7. Community Plot Reports**

Trustees circulated the survey that was being sent to all community plot holders for information only. Trustees stated that they were by no means against community plots, quite the opposite, but that this survey was a way to find out who is using these plots and for what. This would enable the Trustees to formulate a policy going forwards to support these organisations. Trustees also noted that where organisations were getting their allotment plots for free then they should be transparent about their uses. Once the data was gathered it would enable Trustees to look at what could be done in the future but without the data there was no way to assess these needs.

## **8. Invoicing**

Trustees updated the site secretaries on the plans for invoicing this year. It was planned to send out all invoices by post on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January. AP explained the timeline necessary to prepare for this with tenants on renewable concessions being contacted in November to resubmit their proof of eligibility.

## **9. Trustee Site Visits**

Trustees announced their intention to make individual site visits to all sites with a trustee, AP and the site secretary all meeting to discuss individual site issues. Trustees would be in touch individually to arrange these meetings.

#### **10. Feedback from Site Secretaries**

TC asked the site secretaries for general feedback.

CR raised the issue of dogs on sites and signage asking dog owners to 'scoop their poop' etc. Trustees agreed to look into this.

JS raised a question about ponds on plots. Trustees agreed to discuss this issue. Site secretaries debated the issue of Bonfires on allotments, with some in favour of a stricter ban. Trustees noted that where a complaint was received all tenants on site were written to to remind them of the guidelines. It was noted that this is always a sensitive issue and that it would be kept under review.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

##### **- Site Secretaries**

DB noted that the autumn show on Hempland went well and that they had submitted a bid for lottery funding to improve the disabled area.

CP noted that Scarcroft had applied for ward funding to enable disabled/wheelchair access to the shop. She also noted that there was a plot formerly used by the school that would be great for a community plot but they did not know who might like to use it. Suggestions were welcomed.

CS noted that Green Lane Association had been granted funding for an accessible plot next to the car park for those with mobility issues.

##### **- YACIO**

Trustees noted that they may need a place to store items in the future and welcomed any suggestions.

#### **12. Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting should take place before the AGM in March. Dates TBC.