



YACIO Site Secretary Meeting

20th November 2017

Attending: **Tony Chalcraft [TC]**, **Colin Smith [CS]**, **Simon Wild [SW]**, **Adam Myers [AM]**, **Anna Pawlow [AP]**, **Dave Meigh [DM]**, Phil Renshaw, David Gash, Warwick Iver, Jane Thurlow, Brian Strudwick, Mary Harlington, Nigel Collinson, David Brinklow, Malcolm Hainsworth, Paul Graham, Chris Adams, Mike McPeake, Andy Cattell, Christine Robertson, Angela Johnson, Claire Pickard, John Shirbon, Sarah Daniel

Chair: Tony Chalcraft

Minutes: Anna Pawlow

1. Introduction

TC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself and asked for everyone in attendance to introduce themselves with their name and site role.

TC outlined the structure of YACIO and confirmed that YACIO will be leasing the land from CYC and taking over management of the allotments. TC confirmed the Trustees commitment that there would be no rent rise in 2018/2019 and that the rent rise planned by CYC for 2018 would not go ahead.

TC confirmed that there will be no significant changes to the tenancy agreements other than changing from CYC to YACIO.

TC confirmed that the Site Secretary role will remain the same.

TC explained that the charity had a registered postal address but that this was not a staffed office. Email, telephone and postal contacts had been circulated.

TC confirmed that a part time administrator had been contracted to carry out the day to day administration of the charity but that Trustees would be hands on in decision making and addressing issues.

TC confirmed that there were currently five Trustees but that there was scope for more and that once set up had been finalised this would be addressed.

TC confirmed that all allotment holders were members of the Charity and could vote at the AGM.

TC thanked Dave Meigh for all his help in getting the charity to this stage.

2. Budget

CS explained that he had taken a keen interest in the budget and keeping this updated throughout the process of setting up the charity. CS confirmed the Trustees' aim to offer an increased level of service and prevent a rent rise for the next two years. CS stated that due to the reduced staffing costs alone there were significant savings made from the beginning and that he was confident that he had built in allowances for most eventualities.

TC confirmed that the best projections the charity were able to make indicated a surplus.

Questions were asked regarding whether a rent rise might actually be a good idea. It was reiterated that the management structure was now significantly different from that employed by CYC. It was also confirmed that budgets had been circulated and made freely available throughout the process.

CS and TC confirmed that once the predicted figures were finalised a full budget would be made available.

3. Contractors

CS confirmed that YACIO were in the process of appointing a contractor to take on the site maintenance of grass cutting and hedge trimming.

Several questions were asked regarding hedge cutting, the specifics of which will need to be worked out on a site by site basis.

A question about clearing overgrown plots was asked and CS stated that the costs for doing this for all vacant plots would be astronomical but this could be addressed on an ad hoc basis.

TC confirmed that more consultation on site specific issues would be occurring.

4. Banking

LT stated that YACIO were using a charitable bank account with Co-Operative Bank and explained the set up.

5. Invoices/Payments

LT confirmed that she had been processing payments for set up costs and that procedures were in place for secure banking.

Questions were asked regarding deposits. It was confirmed that for the return of deposits for the time being CYC still held these but that the deposits would be being transferred.

Queries were raised about how people with no ability to pay online could pay and LT explained that this was something that was being investigated.

6. Colony

SW gave a brief overview of the Colony system and confirmed that YACIO intend to utilise all aspects of the system for invoicing, payment processing as well as a tenant database.

SW confirmed that he would be setting up a pilot program of site secretaries to test using the Communities module but that this would be after the Trustees had gained a more thorough understanding of the system themselves.

SW confirmed that all Trustees had had training on Colony and that SW and AP would be having more in depth training.

SW informed all that there were printouts for all sites of the current tenant and waiting lists for all to review and send back with any corrections.

Several site secretaries requested that waiting lists be circulated in an Excel format as well as a pdf format for ease of management. AP confirmed that this would be done.

7. Website

AM explained the functions of the website and how it would link to Colony so that information would be accurate.

The issue of search engine ranking was discussed with the consensus that it would take time. AM confirmed that it was a work in progress and AP asked that if individual sites had websites they add a link to the YACIO website as all back-links would help the ranking.

A discussion regarding the information available to site secretaries was raised as the council had previously supplied lots of printouts. It was confirmed that eventually this would be on the website but that the priority for the time being was to get the database up to date and to process invoice payments.

8. Legacy Issues

DM explained that the CYC website was in the process of being updated to point to all allotment providers in York.

DM confirmed that he and AP were meeting regularly to handover and update information.

DM confirmed that deposits were still held by CYC but that these would be transferred with the remaining financial settlement in due course.

DM outlined the legacy issues he was addressing, some outstanding tenant issues, short term maintenance work and longer term issues that would remain with CYC such as mature trees. DM stated that these needed further input from Site Secretaries and Associations before progressing.

DM confirmed that all issues should be reported to YACIO and forwarded appropriately to ensure all were aware.

Questions were asked regarding Public Liability Insurance. CS confirmed that YACIO held such for the Trustees, the organisation and all members and advised that a link to the policy would be added to the website so that all could read and make their own assessment.

9. Admin Matters

AP introduced herself and her role within the organisation and confirmed that she would be the first point of contact for all matters and would forward or address them accordingly. AP confirmed that all documents and correspondence should now come to YACIO using the contact details that had been sent to all site secretaries.

10. General Questions to Trustees/Administrator

No further questions were raised.

[BREAK]

11. New Tenancy Procedure?

TC explained that it seemed that there were several different models for dealing with new tenants in use. It was agreed that it would be preferable for one method to be used by all.

The two main methods were summarised as whether a tenant was granted a key and access at the point of signing a tenancy agreement or at the point of paying their deposit.

There was much debate as to which methods were in use and the pros and cons of each. It was stated that YACIO would be able to work much more efficiently and quickly than CYC had been able to so any process agreed upon could be carried out without long delays.

It was agreed that Trustees would produce a proposal for circulation and consideration by all site secretaries for use with future tenants.

12. Feedback, Comments and Questions

The provision of skips and manure for sites was questioned. AP to investigate further.

Dave Gash resigned as site secretary for Bootham Stray and confirmed that Warwick Iver and Phil Renshaw would take over. DM thanked him for his hard work over the years.

DM advised that YACIO review the locks in use across sites in due course.

13. Site Secretary Job Description

TC proposed that the Site Secretary Job Description needed to be reviewed and possibly updated. AP to circulate to all site secretaries for consideration.

It was confirmed that the honorarium would continue as it has.

14. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Site Secretary Meeting should take place at the end of January and a date would be circulated in due course. The venue of The Black Swan was confirmed as suitable.