



YACIO Site Secretary Meeting  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

Attending: **Tony Chalcraft [TC]**, **Adam Myers [AM]**, **Maria Lewington [ML]**, **Simon Wild [SW]**, **Anna Pawlow [AP]**, John Shirbon, Brian Strudwick, Graham Sanderson, Sarah Penn, David Brinklow, Phil Renshaw, Steve Cooke, Jane Thurlow,, Janet Cordingley, Claire Pickard, Mary Harlington, Paul Graham, Christine Robertson, John Harper Warwisk Ivel,

Apologies: Colin Smith, Lisa Turner, Sarah Daniel, Katherine Lancey

Chair: Tony Chalcraft

Minutes: Anna Pawlow

## 1. Welcome

TC welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the procedure for the first Site Secretary Meeting using Zoom. Participants were asked to mute their microphones unless they were speaking to reduce background interference and questions would be taken at the end of each item. AM would be in control of microphones and if things got noisy then he would have the power to mute participants. Participants were asked not to use the chat function but to raise questions in th meeting.

## 2. Trustees Report

TC gave a report outlining activities since the last site secretary meeting a year ago. Most related to the coronavirus pandemic. The AGM had had to be cancelled at short notice and Trustees themselves had only had two in person meetings outdoors in the summer and all other meetings had been taken online. Contactless Letting had been introduced and site inspections cancelled until August and procedures had been adapted to allow for social distancing and lockdown measures. It had been a year

full of challenges. Trustees had announced changes to the tenancy agreement in October and these had been sent to all tenants in the newsletter. This tenancy agreement was now in use for all tenants. There was still no Lease in place from CYC but Trustees were hopeful that it was nearly there. CYC had requested the inclusion of the Site Structures Guidelines as a part of that Lease and Trustees noted that site secretaries should not hesitate to report any structures going up contra to policy. The financial outlook was good and once again YACIO had not raised the rents for the fourth year running. Demand for allotments had surged and there were currently about 1100 people waiting for a plot, that being almost a 1:1 ration of applicants to total plots.

Site Secretaries asked clarifying questions on the changes to the tenancy agreement and these were discussed further. It was noted that one of the new systems in place was that each Trustee was taking a role with a specific responsibility. Site Secretaries were urged to continue to send communications through the central contact email and not direct to Trustees to ensure proper logs were maintained. Site Secretaries were also reminded that they should not be making out of pocket purchases for site maintenance items without authorisation and this should only be for exceptional items. Routine purchase of new keys was still fine.

### **3. Finance Report**

LT had prepared a report to be read in her absence. TC noted that YACIO was in a healthy financial position and not only had rents not been increased once again but Trustees had allocated extra money to make improvements to sites this year.

### **4. Administrators Report**

AP outlined the challenges that had occurred in the last year and the administrative changes made to accommodate these. It was noted that considerable disruption was down to IT issues with the reports from the database being unreliable for much of the year. She also noted that there were frequent challenges around GDPR restrictions in what

information could be shared with whom. She hoped that following a recent large update to the software the reports issues were now resolved and hoped that the year ahead would go much more smoothly now that the changes made to accommodate coronavirus restrictions had been adapted to and new processes were more familiar to all.

## **5. Site Bids**

The proposals for Site Improvement Bids had been circulated prior to the meeting for all. In CS's absence AM reviewed the paper and priorities were discussed.

**-BREAK-**

## **6. Site Security**

Following on from recent issues on Low Moor with vandalism and arson as well as other antisocial behaviours Trustees had hired a security company to make patrols in the hopes of discouraging such activities. This was a trial and if good results were seen then any other sites experiencing such issues could have this as an option. It was noted that each incident, no matter how small, should be reported to the police so that an accurate picture could be seen and resources allocated appropriately. It was noted that Site Secretaries should not take risks in challenging any people onsite without permission.

## **7. Co-Tenant Policy**

The paper on the updated co-tenant policy had been circulated prior to the meeting. The need for co-tenants was clear but how to manage that process while closing loopholes used to exploit the system and skip the waiting list needed addressing. There were certain restrictions based on what the database software was actually capable of that had informed

the policy. The policy was discussed and it was agreed that Trustees should continue to develop the policy based on the feedback received.

## **8. Inspections**

ML asked for feedback on the inspection process so that site secretaries' experiences could be included in developing policy. It was noted that a key goal for YACIO this year was to increase cultivation standards following a decline in overall standards of cultivation last year due to the uncertainties of the coronavirus restrictions. The inspections process was discussed further with site secretaries giving feedback. It was agreed that provision of admin support was an area that needed improvement to allow quicker response times and Trustees should look at investing in increasing availability.

## **9. Water Usage**

AM had noted that certain sites were using more water per plot than others and this would need to be investigated. The amendment to the tenancy agreement that meant that direct watering with hosepipes was now allowed but no sprinkler was discussed.

## **10. General Issues Raised By Site Secs**

**Ornamental Shrubs** - SP queried the planting of ornamental shrubs on plots and this was discussed. It was agreed that any issues with shrubs should be dealt with in site inspections, ie. Shading, getting overgrown, etc.

## **Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled for June/July when it was hoped that an outdoor in person meeting could be held providing restrictions allowed.