



# YACIO Site Secretary Meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018

Attending: **Tony Chalcraft [TC]**, **Colin Smith [CS]**, **Adam Myers [AM]**, **Lisa Turner [LT]** **Anna Pawlow [AP]**, Malcolm Hainsworth, Jane Thurlow, Brian Strudwick, Mary Hartington, Celina Gee, Phil Renshaw, Chris Adams, Claire Pickard, Christine Robertson,, Steve Cooke, David Brinklow, John Shirbon, Warwick Ivel, Andy Hankey,

Chair: Tony Chalcraft

Minutes: Anna Pawlow

## 1. Introduction

TC welcomed all attendees to the third site secretary meeting under YACIO and asked everyone to introduce themselves. TC explained the format for the meeting, checked that everyone had an agenda, and confirmed that there would be a chance to discuss any other business at the end of the meeting as per the agenda. For any topics that were off the agenda and needed revisiting later there would be a white board where AM would write down topics to be revisited.

## 2. New Tenant Procedure & Tenancy Agreements

TC reminded attendees that at the last site secretary meeting a new procedure for new tenancies was agreed and asked for feedback on how site secretaries were finding the new system. Several site secretaries asked for clarifications on some of the points, which was given to them by AP.

## 3. Plot Inspections and Procedure

LT explained that YACIO had been working to compose a new standard set of letters based on Judith's old letters to be used to issue warnings to tenants who were not cultivating their plots. There would be three stages of letters, a first

friendly enquiry, a second letter including giving notice that the tenancy may be terminated if progress was not seen and a third letter terminating the tenancy, each to be sent at three week intervals. LT explained that it would be left to the discretion of the site secretaries which letters were sent and that they could ask to skip straight to the second letter but the second and third letters must be sent to be able to legally terminate a tenancy. Trustees and site secretaries debated how much progress should be seen. It was felt that frequently a small patch of ground would be worked on in response to a letter but no further progress made. Some site secretaries expressed a wish to make a first informal approach before sending warning letters and LT confirmed that if they were comfortable with that then they should go ahead. It was suggested that the letters specify a certain percentage of cultivation that we would expect to see in order to prevent repeated small patches of cultivation but no real progress. This suggestion was debated by all attendees and the contents of the tenancy agreement were also discussed to see whether there were specific guidelines that could be enforced. It was agreed that fruit trees did count as cultivation where any grass or ground surrounding them was kept well maintained and weed free. It was agreed that Trustees would take all of the suggestions on board and finalise the letters in discussions between themselves. TC confirmed that there would be three weeks given between each letter and that site secretaries could ask the Administrator to go straight to letter two but letters two and three must be sent before a tenancy could be terminated. It was noted that there were also letters that could be sent suggesting that a tenant might like to downsize their plot if they were having difficulty maintaining the whole plot. Caution was noted by some site secretaries that this wasn't always possible and it was explained that which letters were sent would be decided by the site secretary so if they did not feel that it was possible to offer a plot split then it would not be offered. It was also suggested that a line was added to the letters advising tenants that if their plot were not brought back into cultivation then they may lose their deposit and this was agreed as sensible by all.

#### **4. Contractors**

CS noted that all sites should now have been visited by the contractors first for a winter hedge cut and second for a first grass mow and asked for feedback. It was noted that on Hospital Fields certain tenants mow the main path but that the side path had been missed. Some other sites felt that some areas had been missed or the work was less good in some parts and other sites felt they had done a wonderful job. Trustees were asked whether it might be possible for them to text before visits so that they could be present and advise. CS felt that this would be possible to arrange. Attendees discussed whether there were plans for what had been agreed would be done and whether they could have sight of these plans. AP noted that she had plans but they were rather dishevelled due to the rain on the day that they had done site visits but it would be possible to draw up some digital copies and make them available to site secretaries in due course. It was confirmed that the main paths only were to be done, side paths between plots remain the responsibility of the tenants as per their tenancy agreements. Some concerns regarding the health and safety practices of the contractors were noted and it was agreed that these concerns would be raised with the contractors. The subject of weed spraying by both contractors and tenants was raised and it was agreed to table that discussion for a later date when more advice could be sought. The possibility of the contractors being hired to clear plots was discussed and it was noted that in some circumstances this would be possible and that there were also there options such as Community Payback teams or Associations funding the work if they felt it was appropriate but these would be decided on a case by case basis. It was agreed that it was always preferable for the new tenant to do the clearance work but in certain circumstances YACIO would look at alternatives. The option of offering a rent discount for overgrown plots was raised but tabled for discussion at a later time.

#### **5. GDPR**

AM introduced the topic of the new General Data Protection Regulations with an overview of the new legislation and explained that this meant that not only would

YACIO have to make sure they handled data correctly but site secretaries would also have to make sure they were handling data in the proper fashion. AM explained the definition of personal data and how site secretaries would need to treat this. AM stated that the information was confidential and should never be given to another person or party. Any printouts of the tenant contact information available to site secretaries should be kept secure and confidential. The minimum requirement for storing digital copies of YACIO data would be that your computer was password protected. If a situation arose where personal data needed to be shared then the tenant's permission must be sought and given before any such action took place. This extends to all tenant information, such as whether a warning letter has been sent, or whether a tenant has health issues that are preventing them from tending to their plot. It is all confidential. Attendees discussed this new legislation briefly and the important points were reiterated: Data must be kept secure and confidential. Data must not be shared without express permission. Computers must have password protection on them.

Site secretaries were requested to display a poster with GDPR information on all sites briefly to make sure that all tenants had been given access to the information. It was stressed to site secretaries how important making sure all tenants were notified was. Site secretaries requested that all posters be sent to them by hard copy and laminated in the future. Trustees agreed that this could be done.

**-BREAK-**

## **6. Finance Report**

LT presented a brief report on the finances of YACIO and explained that at the present time finances were healthy and that it was predicted that YACIO would stay in budget this year. LT explained that as this was the first year of operation there were no previous figures to compare this to so predicted expenditure was still mostly estimated. TC restated YACIO's intention not to raise rents for at least

the first year and it was confirmed that this could be discussed at the first AGM when a full budget report would be presented. It was noted that the budget presented by the Council during the initial discussions about setting up a charity was not overly helpful as there were a number of items that YACIO needed to budget for that the Council had not, such as insurance and some figures given for other items were not accurate. It was confirmed that the financial year runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. LT finished by reiterating that she was keeping a close eye on the finances and that at present we were on target to stay within budget this year.

#### **7. Bonfires**

TC reminded all attendees that the Bonfire policy had been circulated to all and that it had been endorsed by the Environmental protection Officer at the Council. Some discussion of the policy took place and site secretaries were asked to use a common sense approach to deal with any issues that arose. A minor wording change of 'damp' to 'cool' was proposed and agreed. TC confirmed that this poster would be updated soon.

#### **8. Bloom Festival**

TC explained that Bloom Festival was to take place in July and YACIO's involvement this. YACIO are to have a stand in the Shambles Market on the 8<sup>th</sup> July to promote the allotments and there will be an Edible Gardeners' Question Time on the 5<sup>th</sup> July at Bootham School, which will be a ticketed event. TC expressed a need to have people volunteer to staff the stand and asked for anyone who might wish to help to get in contact with AP. It was noted that several allotment sites would be opening in conjunction with the festival. TC stated that he hoped people would get involved as it was important that the allotments be represented.

#### **9. Photography Project**

TC explained that he had been contacted by a photographer called Dan May who wanted to do a project for an exhibition about allotments. The photographer was sourcing external funding and the photographs produced

would be available for YACIO to use on a non commercial basis. The project was discussed further and TC presented a brief outline of the project on paper to all and asked that any sites that would be interested in participating get in touch with him to express their interest.

#### **10. New Trustees**

AM explained that YACIO were looking to add new trustees to the board. At present there are five trustees but the constitution allows for up to nine. He noted that a little more diversity in trustees demographics would be welcome so as to accurately reflect the make up of the allotments and asked that site secretaries encourage anyone who they think might be able to bring something to the group to apply. AM noted that the current committee was a great, positive and constructive group and that maintaining that was important. The time commitment required of a trustee was queried and trustees confirmed that at present they were meeting twice a month for about 3 hours and then any project that a trustee had agreed to take on would probably take a few hours. The 'on call' system was explained in that trustees have a rota to deal with any queries that the administrator is unable to deal with and that when a trustee was 'on call' there was slightly more work to do in response but that this duty rotated between trustees so was at present only every five months. TC reminded everyone that YACIO was a new organisation but that it had to last and be sustainable and therefore needed 'new blood' to keep moving forwards.

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

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

Claire Pickard noted that there would be a performance from travelling theatre company Micron Theatre at Scarcroft Allotments on the 5<sup>th</sup> June and invited anyone to come and watch.

John Shirbon questioned how emergency maintenance work was going to be carried out. Trustees noted that this was something that was still being developed as there had been few issues thus far but that getting a reliable plumber to assist with issues was a priority. It was noted that in the event of a

water leak the water should be turned off and the issue reported to YACIO if it could not be immediately resolved. The policy regarding hose pipe use was queried and trustees confirmed that hosepipes should only be used to fill waterbutts and containers, not for watering plots and that sprinklers should not be in use.

David Brinklow suggested that invoices should be sent out in November or December for payment in January. Trustees noted the idea to look at further. Malcolm Hainsworth queried what progress was being made with legacy work from the Council. AM stated that he would be talking with Dave Meigh and would raise the issue.

- YACIO

None

## **12. Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on a Monday at the end of July at the Black Swan, with the earlier start time of 7pm if possible.