YACIO

Site Secretaries Meeting

7pm Monday 24th June 2024 at Low Moor Allotments

Tony Chalcroft opened the meeting, and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

1. Attendance:

Tony Chalcroft, Trustee Chair, Gary Secretary of New Lane, Jayne, Secretary of Carr Lane, Sarah, Secretary of Hospital Fields, Janet Secretary of Fulford Cross, Sarah Secretary of Low Moor, Claire Secretary of Scarcroft, John Secretary of Strensall, Simon Wild Trustee, Christine Secretary of Low Moor, Warwick Secretary of Bootham Stray, Heather Temp Secretary of Hob Moor and Trustee, Helen Secretary of Holgate and Trustee, Graham Secretary of Scarcroft, Lisa Secretary of Wigginton Terrace and Trustee.

1. Apologise:

Anna Admin, Phil Secretary Bootham Stray, Mary Secretary Green Lane, Laura Secretary Glen, Dean Secretary Howe Hill.

1. Site Secretary Agenda requests.

Gary New Lane Allotments: Letting vacant plots to current tenants.

Gary explained this came about after one of his tenants who has done a good job with their current plot has asked if they can take on a vacant plot further down the lane, and would like to know how other secretaries answer these types of requests and are there any set YACIO rules.

Tony advised that the rules state that a tenant can only hold one full plot and otherwise it has been up to each site secretary to apply their own rules.

Claire commented that they do not offer vacant plots to current tenants as people on the waiting list should be given a chance to have a plot.

There was then a general discussion with regards the issues found with the current waiting lists, people not getting back in touch, people taking on a plot but then not working it, plus other issues.

Christine stated that she will only give a current tenant an extra half plot if the tenant has worked well for a year, with no letters etc.

Jane stated that on Carr any existing tenants who wish an extra plot must go on the waiting list, unless the vacant plot is next door to the tenant’s current plot.

Tony asked if we should have a fixed rule where tenants should go on the / a waiting list?

Lisa stated she felt it should be a fixed rule and tenants should go on a waiting list. Other Secretary’s felt it should stay the same.

**To move this forward Tony decided:**

**The trustees to go away and discuss this further, looking at whether things stay as they are, with it being a Secretary’s decision as different sites have different needs, or Tenants should go on a waiting list.**

**It was also decided that a policy/procedure is required regarding splitting full plots, [Must be aware of issues ie checking plot sizes)**

**HW stated she could draw up a draft procedure / policy for Trustees to look at.**

Christine – Residency

Christine advised that a tenant took on a plot and was living locally at the time but then moved, the Co-tenant was not listed anywhere and there were severe issues making contact when there were issues with the plot.

Tony advised that the tenancy was clear in that the tenant must be living in the York area and this appeared to be two separate but co-working issues and we would discuss residency first.

Lisa stated there was a lack of clarity on what happens when they move with regards to keeping plots.

Christine suggested that we make it plain that we need names of people who work on sites.

Heather suggested that if tenants leave the York area, they are allowed to keep their plot until the end of that year, when it should be returned to allow it to be re-let to another York tenant.

Janet felt this was a bit harsh.

Tony reiterated that the tenant’s main residence must be in York as per the tenancy rules.

**It was agreed that the Trustees should discuss this further and if necessary, the tenancy rules would need changing to stop abuse of the system.**

John stated Strensall site had to follow YACIO rules as it was in the agreement when the site was created.

Christine – Co-tenants:

Christine advised that she was concerned that she was not notified with regards to co-tenants, she does not know who they are or any contact details and this has caused several issues. She asked who managed this as there was a gap in communication?

Jane asked if when they get the list of tenants could there be an extra column giving co-tenant details if this was relevant to the plot.

Several secretaries stated that co-tenants were being given plots and the secretaries are not involved and know nothing about it.

**Tony accepted that there were different procedural issues here and that the Trustees would look into this further.**

Gary – Capital Funding

Gary asked about Capital Funding / budget for each site ad how does YACIO look at how this works, who gets what and how much?

Lisa advised that we don’t have a Capital Fund. Our only income at the moment is the rents. We have to put money aside for deposits from tenants in case YACIO folds so this money can not be touched. The rest of the money mainly pays largely for maintenance, which at the moment we are trying to catch up on hedge and tree maintenance due to health and safety. The rest pays for admin, phones etc. We are not here to make a profit and our overspend this year is mainly on maintenance, hedges and tree management. It has also been difficult to budget this year due to not knowing exactly how much income would come in this year due to the rent increases and concession changes. That being said the majority of the tree work and hedges should be caught up by the end of the year and we will be in a better position to budget and allow site secretaries to have more say in prioritising work.

Gary advised their main entry gate to New Lane is very old and he had priced up a new one for approx. £1000.

Tony stated that in an ideal world we would have a maintenance plan and we did have a bidding plan, with a bidding process. We could look at bringing this back once it is clearer how much we would be able to budget. Tony admitted that we need to be more transparent on our spending and how we budget. Maintenance has been high and some sites have had more spent on them than others due to tree and hedge work and clearances of plots. But we are never going to have enough money without outside funding which is why we are going for a longer lease.

1. Trustee Report

Tony advised that our lease runs out in November and we are going for a 99-year lease. The next stage is for Colin Smith to have a walk round with Dave Meigh from the Council to discuss legacy issues and then we hope to get the lease signed off and finalised for November.

Adam advised that the length of the lease would lead to funding as there was a much better chance with a long lease.

Tony also advised that our Admin Anna has handed in her resignation to go to pastures new and thanked her for her hard work over the years. We are now in the process of advertising for two part time Admin Staff and the closing date for applicants is 12th July.

Chrisitine queried where it had been advertised as she was unsure if the tenants were aware.

Helen advised that the adverts were in this last issue of the Newsletter, The Local Link and on the website.

**Helen advised that we could arrange an email to tenants**

Tony advised we currently have site secretary vacancies at both Hobmoor and Hospital Fields.

Heather updated that there were two tenants who were interested at Hobmoor and that she was bringing this to the Trustees at the next meeting.

Graham and Claire are stepping down at Scarcroft but already have two replacements currently in training.

Tony advised there had been an issue brought up at the AGM with regards to hedges, and there was a need to follow DEFRA guidelines and moving forward we would look at putting a policy in place.

1. Finance

Lisa advised we are half way through our financial year and have spent more than half of the budget. She does not anticipate any issues unless there are some further large maintenance bills.

1. Maintenance

Colin is away on holiday at the moment and has left no report.

Gary states he was having issues at New Lane with the quality of the grass cutting and that he was already brought this to the attention of Colin.

Claire stated Scarcroft was awaiting information from Colin with regards to a very overgrow plot.

Helen stated that overall she is very happy with the contractors.

**Adam stated they were now using a sit on mower which was not suitable for all sites. Colin to speak with contractors.**

Helen stated that we do have a better quality of contractor but that has increased the price. There are not too many local contractors out there who would be in the market for our business as this is our 3rd one in not many years.

1. Plot Competition

Claire updated everyone, there are 55 entries over 14 sites. The same judges as last year will be judging the plots over the next 2 weeks. They have been advised to bear in mind this years weather conditions and the increase in slug activity.

Janet asked if Secretaries could be advised who won on their site.

Claire advised the presentation of the prizes would be on either the weekend of 11/12th August or 17/18th August as we are awaiting the result of the elections before approaching someone to present the prizes. Helen has offered Holgate again as the location.

Claire agreed that after the presentation a full list of the results could be sent out to Secretaries.

1. Site Secretary reports

Claire advised the new shop at Scarcroft was happening later this summer.

9.Any other business

No comments

1. Date of next meeting will be in October.