**YACIO Site Secretary Meeting**

**30 June 2025**

7:00-9:00pm

Holgate Allotments

**DRAFT MINUTES**

Chair: Tony Chalcraft

Minutes: Nick Smith

Attending:

David Brinklow [DB] (Hempland Lane), Helen Butt [HB] (Holgate), Tony Chalcraft [TC], Janet Cordingley [JC] (Fulford Cross), Rob Eastman (Scarcroft) [RE], Gary Flakes [GF] (New Lane, Holgate), Norah Godfrey [NG] (Glen), Mary Harlington [MH] (Green Lane), Warwick Ivel [WI] (Bootham), Andy Maycock [AM] (Scarcroft), Christine Robertson [CR] (Low Moor), Nick Smith [NS] (Admin), Jane Thurlow [JT] (Carr), Lisa Turner [LT] (Wigginton Terrace), Heather Whittaker [HW].

1. Welcome

TC opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence have been received from:

Sarah Daniel (Wiggington Road), Janet Devlin (Admin), Matthew Gray (Hob Moor),

Sarah Harrison (Low Moor), Adam Myers (Trustee), Phil Renshaw (Bootham), John Shirbon (Strensall), Colin Smith (Trustee), Simon Wild (Trustee).

1. Minutes and Action Points from Last Meeting

Administration

Simplify Waiting List reports.

**Action:** Administrators. On hold until we see how the proposed new software (Orkastrate) manages reports (see item 4.3).

Can items left on plots by departing tenants be used to raise funds?

**Action:** Trustees to consider. This issue is now part of a wider conversation, see item 7.

Can rabbits be kept on YACIO’s allotments?

**Action:** Trustees to consider. Trustees have considered and concluded that no further rabbits should be kept on plots (not applied retrospectively).

**Action:** Admin to initiate updating Tenancy Agreement re rabbits on plots.

Repeat Non-Cultivation

**Action:** Advice is now in the Site Secretary Handbook; effectiveness of advice should be monitored.

New Tenant Information

It was suggested that we should spell out what new (and current) tenants need to do, e.g. keep weeds off fences. This was discussed further at the meeting and concluded that a simple one page document highlighting key points was more likely to be read than the Ts and Cs. This will be handed or emailed to new tenants.

**Action:** Who will produce this?

**Action:** Trustees to give further thought to the range of structures on sites (such as wendy houses and play equipment) and decide policy, including whether an additional deposit would be appropriate. See item 7.

It has been noted that some tenants like to weave willow into bed edges. Do we need a willow policy?

**Action:** Trustees will support AM to consider this as part of his tree responsibility but no update in AM’s absence.

1. Trustees’ Reports

4.1 General

TC described the progress with obtaining a new lease. With Councillor Kent's assistance a constructive meeting was held with Dave Meigh of City of York Council. We are on track for a 35 year lease. We have been asked for our plans and need to provide these soon, so please let either Tony or Admin know of any site specific requirements that would require funding. We will also be in a position and must consider longer term plans for YACIO, such as succession arrangements.

**Action:** Site Secretaries to let TC or Admin know of any site specific requirements that would require funding. By when?

4.2 Finance

LT reported that most invoices have now been paid, following issues with sending invoices and PayPal, and that alternatives to PayPal are being considered within the new software system. NG asked if there could be ways to pay other than cheque or via PayPal/online. LT outlined the options.

This year’s budget aims to be balanced, i.e. neither in surplus or loss, and we are currently on budget.

Tenancies with invoices unpaid since January this year have been terminated. All such tenants who have contacted YACIO and wished to be reinstated have now paid and been reinstated. All bar one of these were due to having outdated or incorrect email addresses in the system. CR asked whether Site Secretaries can be informed of impending terminations for non-payment. This would be a policy change. Reasons for and against were expressed.

**Action:** Trustees to consider how we could handle this better.

4.3 Other Trustees

HW reported that she would be contacting Site Secretaries soon to arrange H&S site inspections, and will be following up on unsafe sheds.

HB explained plans for the new website and requested feedback from Site Secretaries (as recently circulated). Additionally could all Site Secretaries provide some information about their site: Up to 5 photos, a description of facilities, and a general description.

Action: Site Secretaries to provide information by when? Would end July be early enough?

HB also described the plans to replace the current software system, Colony, with a new product called Orkastrate. The aim is to set up the system, test it and go live at the end of August, i.e. at a ‘quiet’ time of year.

4.4 Administration

NS asked Site Secretaries that if they become aware of changes to tenant’s contact details, especially email addresses, to let us know or ask the tenants to let us know.

4.5 AGM. Not required on the agenda. Nothing to report.

1. Reports from Site Secretaries.

DB reported quite a lot of anti-social behaviour including fires at Hempland Lane over the last couple of months. TC asked for all such incidents to be reported to YACIO as we can collate them and ensure that the police have a joined up picture of incidents at allotments.

HB reported that Holgate Allotments are having their best summer.

RE reported the difficulties and challenges experienced at Scarcroft over recent months. Following the arrest of 3 teenagers things have calmed down, though there is still a need to be vigilant.

JC asked for advice or current policy on the use of hosepipes on allotments, following the report of unattended sprinkler watering an area of grass on site. TC explained that policy has changed over time, for example that using hosepipes for watering is permitted as some tenants have difficulty using watering cans especially if taps are some distance away from their plot. Nevertheless there are restrictions - see Tenancy Terms and Conditions 27 “The Tenant shall only use the water supply made available to tenants for watering crops and animals. The Tenant must not use free standing sprinklers or other automatic, non-attended, watering devices.”

**Action:** JC will inform TC of the plot number and TC will write to the plot holder.

JC also asked about requirements for using webcams or equivalent on plots. It was agreed that a camera on a plot facing the plot but not the path/road was permissible, and an appropriate sign should be put on the plot not on the site.

CR raised the increasing problem of car parking. GF and HB added site specific examples. TC said this will be looked at as a general issue (across all sites).

**Action:** Admin to add to future Trustee meeting agenda.

WI reported that a dispute between tenants was calm at present.

MH reported that after a tricky time earlier in the year things were now quieter.

NG reported difficulties with a particular neighbour have been reported to the police and housing officer. She also reported a disagreement between tenants re ‘excessive’ use of weedkiller including on a path; TC said that the obligation to maintain boundaries and paths does not require or expect excessive use of weedkillers.

GF has sent a tenant’s advice on watering to Admin.

1. Issues for Discussion/Decision

6.1 Identity card or badge for Site Secretaries

The concussion amongst those present is that these are not required. If anyone does prefer to have some form of identification they can create something suitable, within reason.

6.2 New website

Discussed under 4.3

6.3 Standards and timeframes for issuing non-cultivation letters.

MH had raised this but the prompting issue has been dealt with. Nevertheless we should come back to it in the future.

1. Tenancy and Rule Changes Paper

The contents of this paper are still to be treated as confidential as they are neither policy nor proposals, but options to raise awareness and prompt discussion of sometimes difficult subjects. As it is the work of CS and SW who are absent today we don’t have the background to these. Additionally, any item to be taken forward would require further development and review before implementation.

The point by point discussions concluded that items 1, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 13 would be considered and/or developed further.

Action: Trustees to review and develop these items further.

Discussed terminations and how non-cultivation warning notices are used.

**Action:** Admin to check whether use of non-cultivation warning notices is described in the Site Secretaries Handbook, and to include a description if not.

1. Any Other Business

8.1 Hopepipes.

Already discussed. In current circumstances there may soon be a ban on the use of hosepipes.

8.2 Bonfires.

Also in current circumstances a bonfire ban could be appropriate. If so this must include and specify other fires such as incinerators and BBQs.

**Action:** For Trustees to consider.

8.3 Best Plot competition.

The number of applicants has been much lower than previous years. Entrants are keen, so an alternative may be arranged such as making it a photo competition.

**Action:** Trustees will decide at the next Trustee meeting.

1. Next meeting

Monday 20 October at Priory Street Centre.