

Briar Road Allotment Holders Association

Minutes of the AGM of the Association held in the Communal Hut Saturday 29th June 2019

Committee members present: Gill Ware (Chairperson), Graham Day (Vice Chair), Alison Horwood, Alan Charles, Dennis Leigh (Site Coordinator), Helena Fogel, Jim Boocock

Plot holders present: Maggy Ramsay, Gerald Manning, Ralph Cox, Keith Goodsir, Dennis Marks, Jean West, Angela Marks, John

Apologies for absence: Tom Crossland (Treasurer), Philippa McCabe, Eileen Clifford

Matters arising

- The hot composting bin trial to compost pernicious weeds has not worked well. The bins were put in the wrong places and needed closer management. We will trial them again in different areas
- Graham Day has resumed his role as Vice Chair, after stepping down last year
- A tenant who wrote to the Council about difficulties caused by the new Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in Andover Road received only a standard reply

Chairperson's report

- Gill has been Chair at BRAHA for 12 years and will be stepping down as Chair in December 2019
- Sara Steinke, Kathryn Harrison, Valerie Stevens and Natalie Low resigned as committee members during the year and Philippa McCabe joined as a new member. We now have ten members on the committee
- Ben Renton has taken on the Membership Secretary role and Alison Horwood is now running the BRAHA website
- Gill thanked everyone who helped with the charity fair on Twickenham Green, where we raised £1167.42. We also won first prize for having the best stall at the fair
- Following discussions with the Council about the new CPZ in Andover Road, and issues with the Ringo parking concession, BRAHA has been allowed to purchase five parking permits for use by tenants:
 - Any tenant who would like to use a permit is asked for a payment of £3 to help cover the cost of purchase
 - Storage and distribution of the permits is working well, but we will continue to monitor this
 - No-one has reported unavailability of permits, but on occasion, all five permits have been in use simultaneously
 - There may be an issue soon with having just five permits, as the Council are currently discussing whether to include Meadway in the CPZ
 - There has been an increase in the number of uncultivated plots recently, which may be due to the recent parking difficulties
- The committee have decided not to proceed with Voluntary Management (VM) of the site. Members worked very hard to prepare for VM but were disappointed with delays by the Council, unanswered questions and their general lack of support. Without Council support, the committee felt that we did not have the manpower, resources or expertise to continue with self-management of the site
- Bonfires on all allotment sites are now completely banned by the Council, and this has affected our communal composting system:
 - We can no longer collect, dry and burn material unsuitable for composting, eg woody or diseased material and pernicious weeds
 - We currently have a large pile of material already collected for burning that we now cannot deal with
 - The Council have not yet replied to our request for suggestions on how to deal with the disposal of uncompostable waste
 - We will send a note to all tenants asking them to not add any more waste to the drying pile
 - It was noted that some houses backing onto the site have had bonfires in their gardens since the ban
 - The Twickenham Gardening Association are not affected by the ban as they are not an allotment site
- The site now has its own insurance cover for the communal hut and communal sheds and tools. The insurance also covers public liability for volunteers working on site on behalf of the association. Council insurance only covered the areas they own, eg the paths and boundaries. Tenants are not covered

whilst working on their own plots – insuring tenants would cost £20 each and would require everyone to contribute

- We had a break-in on site where several shed padlocks were cut, but nothing appeared to have been stolen. The perpetrators came in through the privately accessed gate by the river
- Dead hedgehogs have been seen on site, so we urge tenants to use organic, ferrous sulphate based slug pellets. Metaldehyde pellets are likely to be banned nationally next year

Membership Secretary's report

- No report received

Site Coordinator's report

- The site needs to recycle more than it does and keep to the rules regarding green waste, eg no green waste should be put in the Council bin, nor woody waste in the communal compost bins
- Plots continue to be marked and numbered
- The committee requests that tenants let us know of any problems with taps
- The Andover Road gate is not always being locked. The committee will put a notice on the gate to remind tenants to lock the gate on arrival and exit
- The path through the site is uneven and uncomfortable to cycle or walk on. We could ask the Council about resurfacing it
- **Question:** Could the site have a community plot?
- **Response:** Gill Ware asked the Council before if this was possible and they said no. The charity MIND used to have a plot at Mill Road allotments, but after funding was cut, they could no longer employ a carer to assist them on site

Hon Treasurer's report

- Copies of the accounts as at 31st May 2019 were distributed – we have £1376.56 in the fundraising account
- We have asked the Council to pay for numbers and posts for plot marking
- The Council paid for the site's application for a postcode. Having a postcode makes the site easier for emergency services to locate. It also means that we will now be consulted on further CPZ consultations
- We have incurred expenses this year for hut maintenance
- Our letterbox on the Andover Road gate has been broken into, so tenants are asked not to place payments for parking permits inside
- **Election of officers**
- No nominations for new committee members have been received. The current committee members are happy to continue, a proposal was made to re-elect all current committee members - agreed
 - **Proposed:** Dennis Marks **Seconded:** Maggy Ramsay
- We need to find an auditor for our accounts

AOB

- The committee was thanked for their work in running the site
- For information, the Richmond bonfire ban was introduced after a complaint by two people living next to Old Palace Lane allotments. It seems unfair that a complaint by two people (from the same household) has affected 2000 ploholders in the borough
- Following the bonfire ban, BRAG have submitted ideas to the Council for disposing of uncompostable waste
 - **Question:** Should we buy a shredder to deal with our own woody waste?
 - **Answer:** The Council may agree to shred our waste on site and remove the shreds or give us a green waste bin. We may need to collect two piles of waste – one for woody material which we can compost after shredding, and another for uncompostable waste containing perennial weeds and diseased material (which will be removed)
- There is woodchip available on Meadway Orchard which our tenants can use
- There is a volunteer morning tomorrow to empty one of our compost bins and to tidy up the communal hut and the area and pots around it
- Gill was thanked for her work in chairing the committee for the last 12 years

End of meeting 1200