Rowhedge Allotments Committee Meeting

Wednesday 31st May 2023 7pm

Upstairs at The Albion

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attendees | Wendy Fransella (chair), Louise Burcombe, Sam Burcombe, Paul Warner, Zoe Hart, Martin Chapman, Caroline Bates, Christian Langlois, Anne Jones, Debbie Antoniou, Penny Sturt, Sarah Sprackling (minutes) |
| Apologies |  |
| Change of Chair- handover | Wendy introduced herself as new acting Chair. She has agreed to step up from Vice Chair as Penny needed to step down. |
| Sale of allotment produce | An enquiry was received from an allotment holder regarding sales of allotment produce and the possibility that this could lead to someone using an allotment for commercial use. There was a request for clarification on this.  Wendy sought advice from The National Allotment Society who advised: *It will depend on what you lease states, but it would be classed as a business even if it was for a charity as the produce is being grown specifically for this.  Therefore, it is not to be recommended.*  There was discussion about whether exceptions could be made and about the distinction between growing specifically for sale and selling excess produce. The Allotment Act specifies that allotments are not for commercial use.  **Action:** It was agreed that allotments are not used to grow produce specifically for sale and that this will be added to the tenancy agreement when this is updated. |
| Tenancy agreements | Tenancies run from 1st February to 31st January each year. In recent years there has not been annual updated tenancy agreements signed by plot holders. It was agreed that this should be reinstated. The tenancy agreement is being updated with current fees and will be available online at:  [Rowhedge Allotments (rowlots.org.uk)](https://www.rowlots.org.uk/)  **Action:** An annual meeting will be reinstated in January for tenants to sign their annual tenancy. The tenancy agreement will be given to all new plotholders and will be circulated via email to existing plotholders in January. |
| Contacting EDPC | It was agreed that Wendy would make contact with EDPC Parish Clerk following the purchase of the allotment land to begin the process of liaising about the lease and allotment management. |
| Official channels of communication | Communication channels were discussed following the raising of the produce sales issue. There is an informal Allotment Facebook group and an informal Allotment WhatsApp group. It was agreed that any communication regarding queries about allotment use should be addressed through the authorised allotment group email:  [rowhedge-allotments@googlegroups.com](mailto:rowhedge-allotments@googlegroups.com)  or allotment committee email:  [raa-committee@googlegroups.com](mailto:raa-committee@googlegroups.com)  **Action:** To ask admin of Facebook and WhatsApp groups to add a note on the groups that these are not official channels. |
| Date for summer social | There had been a query about possible clash of dates with other Rowhedge events but consensus was that any date will have a possible clash so it was agreed to stick with **Sunday 25th June at 3pm** - picnic/ bring and share.  **Action:** Date to be publicised to plotholders by email. |
| AOB | Wendy reminded Committee members about the importance of kindness and consideration in how we communicate.  Paul raised about Derek mowing the field adjourning the plots. It was agreed that it would be left until later in the year to preserve insects.  There is a public email address on the website for plot enquiries etc. These emails go to Zoe as Membership Secretary and Wendy will be added as second person.  There was discussion about Cadmans’ previous lease requirements that there be no ponds or fruit trees on plots. There is opportunity now to review lease conditions with EDPC as the new landowners.  There are now bees being kept on a plot at the allotments. This was agreed as positive.  There have been continued issues with the gate not being secured. It was agreed that a reminder email be sent to remind plotholders that last car out needs to secure the padlock. |

