



Rowhedge Allotment Association
Committee meeting
Sunday 2 October 2011, 6pm
Ye Olde Albion pub

Present: Paddy Adams (Membership Secretary), Joy Magna (Chair), Mandy Jones (Secretary), Carole Heddle, Paul Wurn, Rob Watson, Zoe Gibson-Hart, Meg Proolingheurer, Yvette Wetton, Andy Randall, Maria Jackson.

1. Minutes and matters arising

2. Adoption of logo

- 2.1 Joy passed round the original logo and the versions that Chris had simplified for ease of reproduction (one without green and one with green added). It was agreed that we adopt the version without the green in future (see attachment sent with these notes and above logo).

3. Length of service for officers on committee

- 3.1 It was agreed that three years is the maximum term of office for officers on the committee (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary). It was also agreed that for continuity this could be staggered, that is 2 or 3 leave after the second year to let new members in and then the remaining long serving 1 or 2 members leave after 3 years.

4. Approval of cultivation policy

- 4.1 The attached cultivation policy developed by Yvette (see Appendix A) was adopted. It was agreed that it was not designed to be overly punitive and if someone has special circumstances that then the committee help them to clear or tend their plot as much as they feel is possible.
- 4.2 Where non cultivation is an issue, the member will be sent an email in the first instance and then if the member does not respond or cultivate/clear a letter is sent. If there is still no response the third contact will be via a letter and the member will be given one month from sending the letter to clear/cultivate the plot before they are evicted. This cultivation policy will be adopted from 1 January 2012.

5. Health and safety

- 5.1 Paddy circulated the risk assessment paper (which is a statutory requirement) which was agreed for adoption (see Appendix B).

- 5.2 Paddy suggested that we change the membership form to include next of kin and emergency contact from April 2012 required by the risk assessment. This was agreed.
- 5.3 Paul suggested that we have an emergency contact sheet on the outside of the container in Perspex or laminate with plywood from that time and this was agreed by the committee. Paul and Rob will research the cost and sort out the notice board.
- 5.4 Andy has put together the First Aid kit which is now underneath the container in a B&Q box for members to use.
- 5.5 The use of bonfires was discussed as someone had been over to complain about smoke in their garden. It was agreed that we remind people that they must be sensitive about lighting bonfires both to the other plot holders and surrounding residents, checking which way the wind is blowing so the smoke blows away from the residential properties especially
- 5.6 The issue of chemicals was discussed as there had been some problems with someone reacting to the use of ammonium sulphate on an adjacent allotment. A discussion was had on which chemicals could or could not be used according to different standards and it was agreed that this was too complicated for a decision to be made on which to allow (or ban) and that this would be researched a future meeting and some general guidelines circulated. I think we said we would remind people that we could only use DEFRA approved chemicals, as per our lease, and we would find a link so that people could look this up. I said I would write a simple guide to spraying e.g. weather conditions etc.
- 5.7 However, an agreement was made that if a plot holder wants to use any form of non organic chemical they must discuss it with their neighbours in adjacent and opposite plots. Being safe and sensitive to others is to be the key principle for the association in reference to the use of chemicals. If there was an issue a committee member would mediate before chemicals were used and make the final decision after discussing it with the rest of the committee.

6. Renewal of membership to National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG)

- 6.1 It was agreed that we include in the subscription to the society a fee for membership of the NSALG. As we have 61 members @ £2 per person this equals a fee of £122.

7. Financial update

- 7.1 Joy gave a financial update, saying that we are in credit of approximately £1800, this is in hand for the cost of the lease of £1000 in January and the water bill. As we do not know how much water has been used Paul will read the water meter to give us an idea of how much we have used up to date. [Note: this was completed and Paul

estimated we had used £180 of water to 4 October 2011+ £50 standing charge].

8.0 Any other business

- 8.1 All agreed that the Harvest supper had been a success and we will have one next year (with possibly a Spring party also to mark the beginning of the growing period with some music). £37.50 was taken from donations. [Another £5 has come in since the meeting].
- 8.2 Allotment members had entered produce for the Rowhedge Society's annual show and the following winners were reported (apologies to other winning members who the committee were unaware of!):
- Vicky Helliwell had won 1st prize in the onion category
 - Yvette Wetton had won 2nd prize in the onion category
 - Zoe Gibson-Hart and Clare Bush had won 2nd prize in the mixed vegetable category.
- 8.3 There is a party on in the village that many of the potential people for the Ghost Train Porters event on 26 November will be attending. It was agreed that this be postponed. Andy will cancel the hall and Zoe will talk to Jake about contacting the band themselves for alternative dates.
- 8.4 Rob and Paul agreed to turn off the water on the 1st November with a view to cleaning the troughs out later in the month once some of the water had been used up (we don't want to drain full tanks). It was decided that they would be refilled after this for security purposes – as we were advised that empty they are a bigger target for theft. Rob and Paul said they would look at cutting some wood to fit over the top of the troughs to prevent the build up of algae.
- 8.5 There have been some weeds dumped in the ditches and paths and borders, including tomatoes and potatoes which had blight. It was agreed that members should be reminded not to dump their weeds in the paths and borders as it spreads disease and they must dispose of their weeds themselves. Mandy to send an email reminding members of this.

APPENDIX A

Rowhedge Allotment Association Cultivation Standards

Plots must be maintained to a minimum standard of cultivation outlined below. If you need any help with this issue any member of the committee will be happy to give you advice.

Why do we need to manage non cultivation ?

- It is unfair on people on the waiting list if plots fall behind minimum standards.
- Poor cultivation of plots results in the spread of weeds and disease.
- It is a requirement of your tenancy agreement.
- In order to seek funds for site improvements it is essential that the site is well maintained.

Expected Standard

Allotments must be kept clean and maintained in a good state of cultivation (25% of the plot within three months of the start of the tenancy and 75% by the end of the first year) and fertility throughout the year. An area that is annually cleared of weeds yet remains un-cropped or un-planted during any one year will be considered as non-cultivated.

As a minimum plots should be cultivated in a way that does not interfere in a material way with the enjoyment of neighbouring tenants. The following basic cultivation standard is expected:

- Removal of weed seed-heads before the seed has set
- Control of pernicious weeds, such as couch grass, ground elder or brambles
- Keeping paths free of hazards to allow free and unimpeded access
- Removal of waste and noxious or hazardous materials
- Maintain the fertility of the soil

The cultivated area is defined as the area used for crop production.

Cultivation requires the tenant to regularly dig or mulch, or prune and weed 75% of the plot. Compost bins, glass houses, water butts, poly-tunnels and fruit cages are also included within the cultivated area, as are ornamental flower crops. Areas of lawn or meadow are not included within the cultivated area.

Enforcement

Plots will be monitored by the committee to assess whether sufficient progress is being made to reach and maintain the cultivation standards.

Tenants who fall below the expected standard will initially be given the opportunity to remedy the situation, should they wish to do so, and be given in writing a clear indication of what is expected of them (by a reasonable deadline) if the tenancy is to be allowed to continue.

This will be coupled with an invitation to explain any special circumstances of a temporary nature that may make it impossible to meet the standard required by the deadline specified. If there are personal issues preventing you from

maintaining these standards please inform the committee as soon as you are aware of the problem so that help and advice is given.

Where it is justified for social reasons (for example where a tenant otherwise in good standing is facing a temporary disability), a formal "buddy system" might be suggested to bring in support for cultivating the plot from a volunteer who is already on site or on the waiting list, or an offer might be made to cover the plot with a black membrane, or to reallocate it temporarily for use by another plot holder.

Where the tenancy is of a full plot, another choice that can be offered is to reduce the holding to a half plot with immediate effect, thus freeing up half of the land quickly for a new tenant.

For long-term tenants whose health and strength are failing, but whose quality of life has been defined by the companionship of the allotment, the possibility will be considered of offering a solution that allows continued access to the site without the obligation to hold a tenancy.

In the event of no special circumstances being identified to the committee and if the member fails to remedy the situation following the initial letter then a second standard letter will be sent terminating their tenancy within one month in accordance with the tenancy agreement with no refund of Membership or Rent fees.

In order for the committee to act consistently, fairly and reasonably it will follow the standard procedure for managing non cultivated plots for all issues of enforcement.

APPENDIX B

Risk Assessment – Rowhedge Allotment Association

Introduction

Under civil law, the Rowhedge Allotment Association has a common duty of care to ensure that their allotments are run in as safe and appropriate way as possible, as set out in the Occupier's Liability Act, 1957.

This duty of care is extended to all people accessing the allotment site and its boundaries, including ploholders, officers of the association carrying out their duties, members of the public, bona fide visitors, intruders, volunteers and allotment authority staff. Ploholders also have a duty of care. The National Allotment Association provides free legal advice.

Hazards that need to be considered and risk assessed on our site are listed as follows;

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Hazard category	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Personal accident	Plotolders and others using the site could suffer injury or death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of first aid kit. All plotolders sign terms & conditions stipulating safety measures. 	High risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next of kin to be indicated on membership form in case of serious injury or accident. Emergency contact system to be devised and information circulated to members. 	Membershi p sec. to amend form Committee	March 2012 ASAP	
Obstruction on communal paths/roadways	Plotolders and others using site, particularly small children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plotolders are responsible for ensuring that communal paths are kept clear of tool and other hazards 	Mediu m risk				
Perimeter fencing and hedges	Unauthoris ed access through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackthorn trimmed annually 	Low risk		Paddy Adams Andy		

