Rowhedge Allotments Committee Meeting

Tuesday 31st January 2023

Upstairs at The Albion

Attendees: Penny Sturt (Chair), Paul Warner, Sarah Sprackling (minutes), Caroline Bates, Wendy Fransella, Christian Langlois, Debbie, Zoe, Martin, Clive

Apologies: Anne Jones, Barbara Chaplin.

Penny welcomed everyone and confirmed the agenda.

**1. Security cameras and pole** – Wendy explained that Matt had originally quoted £1600 +vat for camera, solar panel and installation. However, Paul has expressed concern about the existing pole. It is not strong enough and position is unsuitable – can be accessed by climbing on container and is located close to trees. A quote has been received to supply and mount a new pole at £1052 +vat. A vote was taken and all agreed the need for a new pole. It was suggested that the most appropriate location would be the triangle of land not allocated to an allotment at the top of the plot. Range would be approximately 30m at 180 degrees, covering gate and container.

Cost in total therefore = £2652 +vat, which would be £3182.40. In addition, a data sim will be needed at a running cost of £6 a month.

Possible additional measures include motion-sensor trail cameras positioned in some sheds for recorded footage. Police were able to locate the person whose crash helmet was left on the plot but without camera footage had insufficient evidence to prosecute.

There was agreement that the current signage and dummy cameras have had a positive effect. It was also agreed that a PIR activated flood light would be helpful as a deterrent.

**2. Update re: funding request** – There is currently approximately £3.5k in the allotment account (Caroline will confirm exact amount). £500 was received from the EDPC for security. Caroline liaised with Councillor Kevin Bentley to apply for a locality grant of £2k from ECC. No update on this has yet been received. It is possible that a further £500 grant could be applied for from CBC. Increase in plot fees in January 2023 will result in a further £500.

**Actions:**

Caroline will follow up with Councillor Kevin Bentley and approach CBC Councillor re: further grant application.

Camera and pole to be purchased once sufficient grants have been received to cover the cost.

Paul will purchase one PIR floodlight from existing funds.

**3. Bonfire social** – This has yet to be arranged – conditions were too dry and therefore high risk previously to have a bonfire but there has been rain since and there is a pile of wood. There was a discussion about potential date and type of food would be preferable.

**Actions:**

Date agreed **Sunday 6th November 4.30pm.**

Volunteers Penny, Wendy, Sam, Louise, Paul, Janet, Caroline and Barbara will meet at 3pm on the day to set up the bonfire.

Sarah will email the membership to ask anyone with a large barbecue that they would be willing to offer for the occasion to email Janet.

Allotment members to be invited to bring their own food for barbecue and their own plates and mugs. Louise and Sam will provide vegan soup.

**4. Plot maintenance –** It was agreed that it has been a difficult year with poor conditions for cultivating the allotments. A few plots have not been cultivated. It was agreed that responsibility is to cultivate plots rather than keep them tidy. Anne pointed out that this should be assessed over a season rather than making a snapshot assessment. Some members have had health issues that have impacted their ability to cultivate plots.

There was discussion about the best ways of assessing plots, reminding people and offering help. A covered noticeboard, letters and emails were all suggestions. There are currently only two people on the waiting list.

**Actions:**

Penny, Barbara and Janet to provide regular monitoring of plots to keep note of any concerns.

Any reminders or actions addressing concerns to be deferred until the New Year.

Next site inspection will be in early January before membership and site fees are due at the end of the month.

**5. AOB**

Email contacts and information for new Committee members:

Allotment group email: rowhedge-allotments@googlegroups.com

Allotment website: [www.rowlots.org.uk](http://www.rowlots.org.uk)

**Actions:**

Christian to liaise with Zoe (Membership Secretary) to share spreadsheet of members contact details. This will then sit with Zoe for her to provide any Committee member specific details for a specific purpose.

New applications will be directed through the website to Penny and Zoe.

Wendy to set up Committee member WhatsApp group.