

Allotment Managers meeting 25.04.17

Meeting notes

Item	Notes	Action
1	<p>Cultivation guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to help plot holders understand what's required. & help managers through the process • Managers to issue to all new plot holders, and to display on gates/ noticeboards or to distribute by email for all existing plot holders. • CW clarified that the 3 week notice period of eviction for non-cultivation ran from the date of the letter. 	Managers
2	<p>Allotment Rules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated version now on EAP and Council websites. • CW confirmed that new rules supersede the old ones. • Mike Bunyan queried how long after somebody was evicted should managers wait before removing any belongings left on their plot. CW said this could be done after the 3 week notice period was up. • Tony Lewis requested that eviction letters should mention key return. Some sites reported that they charged new plot holders a key deposit, e.g. £10.00, refundable when a key was returned when a plot holder left. 	
3	<p>Works List</p> <p>Managers were reminded of the reporting process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First report issues through the allotments@ealing.gov.uk email • Contact their allocated Ranger if urgent <p>CW reported that 2016-17 list had been mostly completed.</p> <p>There had been a lot of rubbish collections and site clearances, and lots of new plots had become available to rent.</p> <p>Amey had a few problems with their overtime quotas, but new back-up contractors were now in place.</p> <p>The Council had a schedule of regular work e.g. clearing public footpaths through allotments.</p> <p>The Council were now compiling a new work list for 2017-18 (£40k funding available). Last years' backlog would be given priority.</p> <p>Requirements should be emailed to David by the end of July.</p> <p>CW confirmed that the Council hold records of ownership of alleyway access.</p> <p>CW reported that there had been some issues with travellers, and that drop bollards were being installed where necessary.</p>	Managers

Mike Bunyan queried liability when a site did their own repairs on water systems. CW said the Council accepted liability, but asked that Managers ensured that any repairs were done by suitably skilled people.

CW stated that the Council encouraged self-management, but that LBE would reimburse minor repairs with receipts. Receipts should be supplied with the rent collection, and the sums deducted from the rent collected.

A query was raised by a site that had a mares tail infestation. CW said it could take 3-4 years to eradicate and could be costly. He asked that managers should ask the Rangers to do the work, and any expense the site incurred themselves will be reimbursed.

4 Colony Implementation

- David reported that Colony was working, and would be used for the October rent collections.
- Associations can request their own individual login to their own sites' records (other sites' data cannot be seen). Use of the system is not mandatory, but will greatly help the Council.
It was noted that the Council should stress the need to keep logins/ passwords secret due to personal data being held for individual tenants. A privacy statement should be made.
- Pictures and waiting lists can be uploaded.
- Data can be populated from Associations own spreadsheets.
- Some training sessions have been held, more training is available on request.
- It is recommended that sites should start entering data soon in order to ready for October, as it can take a while to collate the necessary data.
- LBE will be able to review vacancies v waiting lists, and advertise on the LBE web site (if the data is accurate!). This should reduce the number of calls to managers.
- In response to a query, it was noted that Colony can calculate a sliding scale of rent, e.g. if a plot is taken midway through the year.

LBE

Mike Bunyan demonstrated a new interactive map that he has developed which will be available via the EAP and LBE websites. This will inform the public as to where sites are, whether there are vacancies, and who to contact.

Managers were asked to check the details, and inform Mike of any corrections needed. The map can be found at:
<https://mbunyan.github.io/allotments/>

Managers

5 Cluster Working

- Rangers will co-ordinate cluster working, and can help with work days.
- It was noted that only 2 Rangers would be on duty at weekends across the whole borough.

Managers

6 Funding

- The Council have a core allotment budget of £40k PA for

- allotments.
 - Additional amounts become available from development work.
 - Ward forum funding is available – this can take up to a year to come through
 - Composting toilet project – grant applications. Hilary Jayne reported that she was putting in an application the next day. A Lottery grant application was nearing completion, pending confirmation of which sites are interested in the toilets.
 - Managers should direct all requests via the Council. Managers
- 7 Borough Biodiversity**
- Ealing is competing in Britain in Bloom for the second year running. A focus this year is on preserving biodiversity, and the Council are preparing a Biodiversity Action Plan. Allotments are seen as a fundamental part of this.
 - The Rangers are to supply prompts and check lists.
- 8 Cashless Service**
- LBE's cash accepting service is to be significantly reduced in the coming year. Rents should thus be paid by cheque/ bank transfer in the future. Bank transfers should be via the Associations account, rather than directly to the Council. Managers
 - Rent paid directly to the Council, rather than the site manager, cause difficulties to issuing receipts due to the way the Councils' systems are set up.
 - The rent letters will make clear that the rents should be paid to the Council only. LBE
 - Managers can contact David with any queries.
- 9 AOB**
- CW stated that LBE have four approved tree surgeons who are always happy to deliver wood chip to allotments – he can provide contact details to managers if required.
 - In response to a query, CW stated that the minimum age for someone to hold a tenancy in their own name is 18. A student union card would entitle a discounted rent.